



Making Faith Public: How Faith-Based Social Justice Groups in Regina use Religious Resources

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January 2008

Public Policy Paper 53

\$5.00; ISBN# 978-0-7731-0626-0

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ISBN #: 978-0-7731-0626-0
ISSN #: 1702-7802

ABSTRACT

This study uses interviews with leaders of faith-based justice groups in Regina to examine how they apply their religious resources for the goal of social change, and in this way make religious faith public. There has been a global resurgence of religion in the public sphere in recent decades, but not all such religion is violent or conservative. Indeed, many instances of religious resurgence are the activities of groups interested in social transformation for the benefit of all, not only of their co-religionists, and who work well with groups of other ideological commitments. Regina has a handful of such groups—some locally based and some which are the local branches of national organizations—so Regina may be a microcosm of larger phenomena. This study finds that faith-based social justice groups in Regina are closely connected with each other and with other non-governmental organizations, even across religious and secular differences. They act primarily in the realm of civil society instead of in direct political contestation, and in most cases their activities are oriented to changing the mentalities and practices of their own co-religionists. While their criticism of many practices of mainstream society, business, government, and sometimes even mainstream religion, places them within the margins of their sponsoring religious bodies, nevertheless, they are all strongly supported, materially and morally, by these same bodies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The January 2007 edition of *Witness to Justice*, the newsletter of the Regina Roman Catholic Archdiocese's Social Justice Department, opens with an editorial about Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan entitled, "Are Canadian Soldiers Up To Any Good?" The editorial begins like this:

Recent media reports have been upbeat. They tell us that the real work of development in Afghanistan is almost ready to begin because Canadian soldiers are corralling and killing off the Taliban. Is this the good news¹ we have been waiting for? There are those who tell us to take a hard look at the bigger picture.²

The concern raised in this paragraph is supported later in the newsletter by a one-and-a-half page position statement on Afghanistan from another Roman Catholic social justice group, a national one, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which is the official development and social justice non-governmental organization (NGO) of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.³ The newsletter continues with a one-page update from the regional branch of a national ecumenical Christian social justice group called Kairos, which recommends to the readers' attention, among other things, Kairos's national campaign on justice issues about the use of water.⁴ The newsletter features two other main articles. One is by the Catholic Archdiocese's new refugee coordinator, who especially recommends that readers interested in refugee sponsorship attend the monthly meetings of the Regina and Area Refugee Support Group.⁵ The other is a one-page article by the Regina branch of an international secular NGO, Amnesty International, asking readers to support a bill currently before the Parliament of Canada that would give asylum-seekers the right to appeal a negative decision in regard to their claims from the Immigration and Refugee Board.⁶

This newsletter presents a microcosm of the world of faith-based social justice groups in Regina. It expresses their concerns about social injustice, and their hopes for social change that would benefit all people, irrespective of their religious affiliations; it also illustrates their connections to each other. The articles demonstrate an orientation toward mobilizing the various religious communities in the city in order to advocate for change in government and business policy and practice, when such changes could build social justice. The newsletter also shows the willingness of the faith-based groups to work together across religious and secular boundaries. Finally, the fact that groups of diverse religious and secular commitments are promoting their causes in this Catholic newsletter indicates the willingness of the publishing group, the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, to offer material and organizational support for other social justice groups, and the willingness of these groups to receive that support. Generally, and perhaps most importantly for this paper, the newsletter demonstrates religious activism and public religion in Regina. This paper focuses on faith-based social justice groups in Regina, Saskatchewan, and the involvement of religion in politics in this city.

In the context of the apparent public resurgence of religion over the past few decades,⁷ at least as covered in the North American and European press, the involvement of religion in politics can be a frightening proposition. For people of European background and culture, it can raise the spectre of the religious wars fought in Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and cause them to wonder if the solution to these and related

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conflicts is under threat today. This solution was the privatization of religion, that is, the removal of religion from an explicit guiding role in public life, allowing it to remain active primarily or only in the private realm of family life and personal conscience. Currently, it seems that at least some religions are resisting privatization. But, as the example of the newsletter *Witness to Justice* suggests, many, if not most, instances of religions seeking to affect the social and political aspects of life and public policy are not violent or fundamentalist. Many of them are not politically conservative. Not all religious activists are bent on changing, at all costs, the world according to their religion. There are many religious activists located at various points along the political spectrum who seek change not only for their co-religionists, but in a disinterested manner for the welfare of all, and who seek change not necessarily in their own image, but in partnership with groups of varied religious and ideological commitments, provided they share some form of commitment to the common good or to general human welfare, loosely defined. This paper will examine this form of public expression or religious action. Such socially engaged, politically left-wing, religiously inclusive activism has grown since the 1960s,⁸ but has received little attention in the media, and is only beginning to in scholarship. This paper will address this lack.

In Regina, there are a handful of organized religious groups who seek to promote social change for the benefit of all, and who thus may be characterized as religious activists who practice forms of socially and politically engaged religion. The city contains many more religious groups who engage in direct social service of one form or another, but this study looks at only those who are self-consciously committed to the transformation of social, economic, political and cultural structures, and who are explicitly religious. The commitment to structural or systemic transformation can sometimes seem to pit religious groups against government and business, and lead them to offer “counter-policies.”⁹

This paper investigates how these groups use their religious resources (such as theology, spiritual practice and ritual) and the material and organizational resources of institutionalized religion (such as buildings and office equipment). By researching how they use their religious resources, I hope to gain some insight into how these groups make religious faith public and how their religious activism works in the context of one city. In this way, I will examine how this research can illuminate better methods for investigating and understanding engaged religion at international and even global levels.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

I understand “religion” as a set of practices and beliefs that relate individuals and groups to a supernatural or superhuman reality, which is considered beyond the empirical world, and which is also considered somehow “ultimate,” the source, support or norm for life and existence.¹⁰ I use the definition of “politics” to mean the pursuit, maintenance and regulation of power to achieve not only individual but social goals.¹¹ While both have important personal aspects, this study is interested in religion and politics as communal or social practices.

This understanding of politics allows the world of civil society to be included in its ambit, which is the space of public action where the groups in this study operate. Often the world of politics is understood to be that of governments, political parties and their management, and elected representation, which is a highly public world. Civil society includes those voluntary organizations that form on their own initiative and are not

directly engaged in politics, as described above, nor are in business for the purpose of profit.¹² While this category can include everything from an office bowling team to a group like Amnesty International, this study is interested in the part of civil society composed of NGOs, social movements, and other self-constituted groups that have an altruistic interest in social transformation for the welfare of all. Such an interest makes them essentially political and can place them in contentious relationships with governments and business, although not necessarily so. While not all the groups studied here should be considered NGOs, for NGOs are often made up of professionals, NGOs are their close partners, and the analogy of these groups to NGOs sheds light on their potential significance. NGOs have become more numerous since the 1960s and the early 1990s, especially since the end of the Cold War in 1989.¹³ They have also become more politically significant. For example, the Charter of the United Nations (UN) allows formal consultative status for international NGOs whose work can further the UN's goals, which gives some legitimation to their freedom to act politically.¹⁴ Furthermore, in 2000, *The Economist* estimated that NGOs distribute more funding than the World Bank.¹⁵ More directly related to the topic at hand, a number of current NGOs are identifying themselves as religious.¹⁶

Can religions and their typical institutions be considered part of civil society? Some scholars understand them in this way. However, insofar as members are ascribed their religious identity by being born into it, or not questioning it, and especially since they might have little direct power over their religion beyond the level of the local congregation, religions can be understood as not part of civil society. I will understand religions as such in this essay. Indeed the structures, energies and leadership of large religious bodies are generally oriented toward the well-being and development of their own members. Religious NGOs, on the other hand, are voluntary in their membership and tend to be more outwardly oriented than their sponsoring religious denominations.¹⁷ By behaving like NGOs, the religious groups studied here constitute themselves as political, at least in a civil society way.¹⁸ Indeed, co-religionists who do not share their positive interest in the world beyond the religious community will often criticize the religious NGOs as being too “political.”

Finally, in the context of general presuppositions about religion in the Western world, it is surprising to see religious groups behaving as socio-political actors. There have always been religious figures active in public life. Nevertheless, since the Enlightenment, people in the Western world have expected religion to be private and to be primarily about the individual's relationship to the divine, or however the supernatural might be understood. We will see something different in this study of nine faith-based justice groups from Regina.

3. METHOD

3.1 Formation of the Question

The question to be answered is always the chief heuristic tool of any investigation. This investigation started with the question, “How do faith-based social justice groups in Regina use their religious resources?” My curiosity had been piqued by an impression that many of the Christian NGOs that I was familiar with wanted to use their resources of spirituality and theology better, but did not know how to do so often because they felt embarrassed about expressing religious identity in non-secular ways. Secular modernity's marginalization and privatization of religion has shaped the education and expectations of all people with Western-based education, including people with formal religious education, such as the

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Society of Jesuits, my religious order. This strong cultural influence—indeed secularization is one of the “grand narratives” of modernity¹⁹—partly explains the apparent inability or perhaps reluctance of many faith-based NGOs to use the religious language of their own traditions in a public way, except to explain the motivations for their work and perhaps its ultimate goal, both of which would generally be reserved for more private conversations. This inability also makes it difficult for them to answer the charge from more conservative co-religionists that they are simply secularizing the religion. By examining the handful of faith-based justice groups in Regina, I hoped to gain some insight into this phenomenon by ascertaining how the Regina groups used their religious resources. I formulated the question broadly as one about the use of religious resources, without specifying what that meant, in order to avoid affecting the groups’ responses. While I learned much about how they used their religious resources, I was surprised to find that most used religious discourse and practice comfortably, at least internally.

Let me say something about my own social and intellectual location. I live and work in two worlds: the world of the academy and of faith-based social justice activism. I am an assistant professor of religious studies at Campion College at the University of Regina and have academic training in both religious studies and theology.²⁰ My primary research interest is engaged religion, especially in Catholicism. I have also worked in a faith-based NGO, the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice in Toronto,²¹ with which I have remained associated. Thus, I have direct experience with the world of faith-based NGOs, especially the Christian ones in Canada. The Catholic religious order of which I am a member, the Society of Jesus (more commonly known as the Jesuits), also sponsors many NGOs²² around the world, including the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice. I have regular contact with some of these. While I am not a member of any of the groups I have studied in Regina, I already had some contact with most of them because of my own social justice interests. Because I participate in aspects of faith-based social justice activism in and outside of Regina, I am in some ways a participant observer.

3.2 Gathering Information

There is little scholarly literature that focuses primarily on faith-based social justice groups or, as they are also called, religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs). Indeed, the social sciences have not paid much attention to religious actors in public life.²³ One exception is J. Berger’s 2003 article “Religious Nongovernmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis,” which provides a survey of the relevant literature and a brief history of religious non-governmental organizations.²⁴ Drawing on some of the literature that deals indirectly with such groups,²⁵ and on my own experience, I designed the interviews to help me answer my question for investigation. While the specific questions and their order varied with the interview, I used the same interview with everyone.

I was interested only in groups that identified themselves as religious and as working for social justice. Their religious nature was expressed by their affiliation and sometimes by official religious sponsorship. They generally understood “social justice” to mean a goal of structural change in society for the benefit of all that could be worked toward through advocacy, education or public debate and by other means of social or cultural transformation. This definition of social justice does not include an exclusive goal of direct service to individuals and families in their physical, psychological or legal needs, although direct service was generally not excluded from their mandates. This understanding of social justice also meant that such groups did not proselytize. Both criteria, especially social justice, restricted the research field in Regina to a small number of groups.

With advice from people active in faith-based justice groups in Regina and from those familiar with the wider networks of social justice and service organizations in the city, these criteria gave me a list of nine organizations.²⁶ The nine groups were: the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina; the Regina branch of Kairos; the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry; Muslims for Peace and Justice; the Regina branch of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace; the Regina MultiFaith Forum; the Regina Area Ecumenical Restorative Justice Committee; the Steering Committee for Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) of Regina; and Friends on the Outside. Four of these groups were affiliated with specific Christian denominations; three were ecumenical Christian organizations, that is, with representation from various Christian denominations; one was Muslim; and one was an inter-religious group. Of the world religions with the most adherents in Regina—Christianity, Islam and Buddhism²⁷—only Christianity and Islam were represented among the groups. Indeed, most of the groups were Christian—the majority of Regina’s population identifies themselves as Christian. The largest Christian denominations in the city, the Roman Catholics and the United Church, had the most highly organized groups in this study.²⁸

I contacted all nine groups by letter and/or e-mail, and included a sample of my interview questions and consent form with the mailing. (Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the full interview questionnaire.) All of the groups responded positively and were interviewed. While I offered the possibility of conducting interviews with a group, all of the interviews were with the leader or contact person, except in one instance when I interviewed a two-member team together, and in another I interviewed one person for two groups.

In preparing for the interview, I first asked basic information about each group’s religious affiliation, mission, activities, clients, organization, partners and history. Then I tried to anticipate the kinds of resources the faith-based justice groups would draw upon from their larger religious traditions and organizations. In the interview, I asked questions about their material and social resources, as well as their spiritual resources of prayer and ritual, theology, scripture, sacred history, ethics or religious law that might influence their decision-making and other ways of proceeding. There were questions about how a typical meeting proceeds, and finally an optional subjective question about how the interviewee’s religious faith has been affected by their work.

In my consent form, for purposes of confidentiality, I agreed not to connect my general findings on the uses of religious resources with any specific group, although I could connect my findings to their sponsoring religious bodies. Hence, in this paper, I will not entirely summarize each interview. Instead, in section 4 of this paper, I describe each group’s affiliation and mission, the material support from their sponsoring religious body or bodies, their typical programme activities, what groups they typically collaborate with, and how they use prayer and ritual, scripture and theology. I try to give enough information to show how they are a faith-based social justice group and how they are connected to other groups. While these descriptions are based on the interviews, it is often information that can be gleaned or inferred from public documents such as their websites or other promotional materials. In the descriptions, I do not report in detail on specific uses of spirituality, theology or religious tradition; instead, I try to give enough information to communicate how each group uses their own religious practices and beliefs. Finally, in section 5 of this paper, I report on my findings about the uses of religious resources. Rather than painting individual portraits of each group, in order to respect my promise of confidentiality, I draw a composite picture of the Regina groups as a whole.

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4. THE GROUPS

The groups shared a number of characteristics. Almost all of the persons interviewed, and the groups that they chair or lead, were volunteers, some of whom were also retired. Some of the retired people did this work almost full-time. Only two of the Regina groups interviewed had permanent, paid staff. Three of the people interviewed had academic degrees in the intellectual disciplines of their religious traditions; some had received informal religious training through workshops and other forms of continuing education; about half had experiential training in the spiritual practices of prayer or other meditation techniques of their traditions; and all were self-taught in their own religious traditions to a great degree. Almost every group reported that some kind of communal prayer was essential to the success of their meetings. Only one of the persons interviewed was ordained or had an equivalent official religious designation for presiding publicly at rituals. While each group's mandate included supporting persons and problems beyond their sponsoring religious bodies, they nevertheless spent considerable effort on educating or sensitizing their co-religionists about the social responsibilities of their faith. Each group did a significant amount of its work with other groups, so networking was an important activity. As well, many of them relied on other groups for office support, such as photocopying and mailing, and sometimes for meeting space, building a supportive, cooperative web. Three of the nine people interviewed were women, and most interviews lasted approximately two hours. All of these groups were funded almost entirely by their sponsoring religious bodies or by member donations. The national offices of Kairos and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) receive government funding for various development projects, but the Regina groups do not. The Restorative Justice Committee receives some federal money.

4.1 The Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina

This department is an official office and function of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina and was founded in the late 1960s, a period of great ferment in Catholicism after the Second Vatican Council (a worldwide meeting of bishops, 1962-1965) opened up the church to the modern world and to social concerns. The department has three staff people: a coordinator, a part-time secretary and a half-time refugee coordinator whose main responsibility is to assist Catholic parishes and other groups with refugee sponsorship and resettlement. The department's formal structure reflects the hierarchical organization of the Catholic church: the office is physically housed in the chancery of the archdiocese and is part of the archbishop's office and administration; furthermore, the department's coordinator reports directly to the archbishop, the designated spiritual leader of Roman Catholics in southern Saskatchewan. This is a highly centralized organization, dependent on the religious leader, but in practice the coordinator and staff are given fairly free rein, and they work with others in a communal fashion.

The department's mission is to help Catholic parishes in Regina understand and use the social dimensions of Catholicism, especially Catholicism's official social teachings, in order to help parishioners analyze important local, national and global social problems, and formulate active and concrete responses to such matters. To put the matter bluntly, the department has a mandate to help the faith of Regina Catholics become more social and to involve the church in social issues as appropriate.

The department works usually in collaboration with others, especially through committees, conferences, workshops and educational materials, and by supporting the advocacy work of other groups. The Archdiocesan Social Justice Commission, which is appointed by the Archbishop and includes members from across southern Saskatchewan, meets about three times a year to support and animate the work of the department. One of the department's major programme activities is an annual social justice conference, which is held in different locations in southern Saskatchewan and organized with the local Catholic social justice group in that area. Two other significant events during the year are public displays of socially committed faith, which are co-organized with many other groups, most of which are Christian. One such event is called the "Posada," and it happens just before Christmas; the other is held on Good Friday, the spring commemoration of the death of Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. Both events are meant to associate the social problems of the people of Regina with the sufferings of Jesus and sensitize the social consciences of the city's Christian congregations. Kairos is the chief organizer of these two public events, so I will describe them more fully when I discuss Kairos. The Catholic social justice department plays a key supporting role in organizing these two events.

The department is funded entirely by the Catholic Archdiocese. The office also offers, at no charge, meeting space, office support, consultation and partnership, and website links to many other social justice groups in the city, some of which are Catholic, ecumenical (various Christian groups), or of no religious affiliation.

While the social justice department staff might have few meetings—only the coordinator position is full-time—the groups that meet to support its work, especially the Social Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Regina, open and close their meetings with prayer. The meetings begin with a long period of prayer together, where they share how they were affected personally by what they heard in a scripture passage, and by what they have experienced since the last meeting. They feel this practice makes their deliberations deeper and more attentive to each other than they would be otherwise, and that this makes them more sensitive to the action of God in their midst and to recognize God's action in their social contexts. This way of proceeding has been deliberately modelled on the methods of the base ecclesial communities in Latin America, which are inspired by liberation theology. One of the staff members also has a regular spiritual practice of praying daily with news from alternative sources such as Common Dream (www.commondreams.org) or Truth Out (www.truthout.org), and then uses this prayer to plan the day.

The department is in regular contact with Catholic parishes across southern Saskatchewan. Similar organizations in Catholic dioceses across the Prairie provinces have begun in the past two years to form a regional network, with the support of their bishops, in order to cooperate on social issues of common concern, and to share research on these matters. In Regina, the department is in frequent contact with, among others, Kairos, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the Regina and Area Refugee Support Group, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Regina Interfaith Committee for Restorative Justice, Circles of Support and Accountability, and Friends on the Outside. The coordinator participates in the activities and sometimes in the governance of many faith-based social justice groups in Regina. Indeed, many of the groups studied in this investigation would have difficulty doing their work if it were not for the support and involvement of the Catholic social justice department.

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4.2 Kairos: ²⁹ Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives - Regina (Prairies North Region)

Kairos is the Regina branch of a national ecumenical Christian social justice organization founded in 2001 and is officially sponsored by ten of the largest Christian churches and organizations in Canada: the Anglican Church of Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (the Catholic church), the Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada Corporation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the United Church of Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the Canadian Religious Conference (Catholic religious orders), and the (Anglican) Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. Thus, Kairos is the official public voice on social issues in Canada for these churches and groups, and is "dedicated to promoting human rights, justice and peace, viable human development, and solidarity."³⁰ In practice, many of these groups also have their own social justice organizations; the United Church of Canada, however, uses only Kairos as its social justice voice. While Kairos is relatively new, it is the amalgamation of a number of ecumenical social justice coalitions, some of which began as early as the 1960s, all of which represented the churches on particular social justice concerns, such as human rights in Latin America or poverty issues in Canada. Kairos is a way of combining and coordinating those efforts.

Kairos, especially in the national office in Toronto, conducts research on social justice issues on behalf of these Christian groups so that there may be a public Christian voice in Canada on issues of social concern. It advocates for social change by lobbying government and sometimes business. The national office helps local groups and congregations do the same, especially by providing educational and organizational materials, which it offers at modest rates. Kairos partners with Christian, religious and secular groups around the world concerned with similar social issues; these groups can be found through the links on its website. The national office also fundraises, although most of the funding comes from its member organizations.

The Regina Kairos group is composed of four to six people, depending on the year, all of whom are volunteers. They usually come from the Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic, United Church, Christian Reformed and Presbyterian denominations. The coordinator is a retired social worker. The group meets either in the coordinator's apartment or in various churches on Saturday mornings. Like the national organization, the Regina Kairos group has its roots in the previous ecumenical coalitions that were active in Regina. This particular group has roots that go back 30 years to groups that were involved in issues of international solidarity (the annual Ten Days for World Development campaign) and Canadian poverty (PLURA,³¹ which is still active). They choose their annual theme by consensus.

The Regina Kairos group uses theological materials purchased from the national office to promote understanding of social problems, and to promote social concern, responsibility and some forms of advocacy in the Regina congregations of the member churches. The group first seeks to educate themselves with these materials, then to educate and sensitize other Christians in their respective congregations. The materials might use the annual Kairos theme or come from some of the regular programme areas of the national office. They publicize their events or communicate their concerns through church networks, and through local press and television. With help from Catholic parishes and the Catholic social justice department, the Regina Kairos group is also responsible for the two ecumenical public outdoor prayer events, mentioned above, around major Christian holidays—Christmas and Good Friday—to draw attention to local and global social justice problems from various Christian points of view.

The Christmastime event is called the “Posada,” and is an adaptation of a Mexican Catholic commemoration of Mary and Joseph, the mother and adoptive father of Jesus, who searched in vain for a place to stay in order that Mary might give birth in safety. During the procession from church to church, those playing the roles of Mary and Joseph are refused hospitality, thus associating the problems of refugees, immigrants and other marginalized people with the needs of God, and stirring the social consciences of the Christian congregations. The second public event, on Good Friday, is called “The Stations in the City” and is modelled on the traditional Catholic “stations of the Cross,” a devotional practice where one walks and prays along a route that depicts a series of various events associated with the arrest, torture and crucifixion of Jesus. In the Regina adaptation, a numerous crowd walks along a downtown route with stops at various places associated with forms of social injustice or support, such as a soup kitchen, the law courts, or a welfare office. At each stop or “station” a group—often a social service group—reads a prayer for mercy and forgiveness, and discusses the social significance of the stop. This public manifestation of faith also associates the sufferings of God with social problems in Regina, in order to stimulate and even provoke the social consciousness and responsibilities of Reginsans in general and Regina Christians in particular.

These two public events are a new activity for Kairos Regina, partly because it involves Protestants using Catholic devotional and ritual practices. These seem to be among their most successful events, for they are concrete and physical rather than intellectual, and they tap into Christians’ religious imaginations. The group is quite enthusiastic. Although they are not sure how much impact they have on the churches, they get little overt opposition. They do know that the youth are interested in spirituality and justice, but less so in organizations. They have also discovered over the years that Protestants and Catholics can work closely together and well.

The Regina Kairos committee opens and closes its meetings with prayer. They feel so attached to opening the meeting with common prayer that they believe the meetings would be much poorer without it. The prayer gives added depth to the ensuing discussion of social issues, and framing the discussion with prayer helps them see social justice work as religious experience.

Kairos has the most contacts with the local congregations of the member churches, especially with the Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians and the United Church, the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, and Canadian Volunteer Initiatives.

4.3 Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM)

The Wascana Presbytery (i.e. the Regina area) of the United Church of Canada sponsors the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. RAPM’s Board, however, has ecumenical representation, usually from Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran or Anglican denominations, who also provide some financial support. The Board also includes low-income members. The RAPM has two paid staff members, who each work three-quarter time; I interviewed them together. One of them was once on social assistance. University students, especially from the social work and human justice programmes at the University of Regina, often help the RAPM by doing supervised practical experiences with them. While the two staff members are not ordained, the church has officially designated them as lay ministers, and they are informally called anti-poverty ministers. Their work is housed in the Knox-Metropolitan United Church in downtown Regina, which offers them free rent. RAPM’s governing structure is modelled on the committee-based

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organization of the United Church of Canada. RAPM was founded in 1996, although it has roots in a ministry of the church that began in 1991, which had grown out of an ecumenical effort in 1971 to respond to poverty in downtown Regina.

RAPM's mission and work combine direct service to individuals with social transformation through three programme areas: individual advocacy, public education and social justice. Individual advocacy involves working with and for low-income individuals to ensure that they receive the help they are entitled to by law, and that they are treated fairly by the institutions mandated to support them. Through their public education programme, RAPM educates the Regina public, especially the faith groups, about poverty and anti-poverty, using educational materials and workshops that RAPM prepares. Through its social justice programme, RAPM undertakes political mobilization by conducting research and analysis, community consultation and consensus-building, and by lobbying the officials of government and various political parties, who might be able to affect policy that could benefit low-income persons and victims of other forms of injustice. They are able to meet with members of the provincial cabinet and opposition party when they ask to, and their access to the media helps their advocacy with politicians.

RAPM is involved in local and national committees of the United Church. The multi-layered committee structure of the United Church is a characteristic feature of this religious body, and is used to make corporate decisions and exercise oversight locally, regionally and nationally. Thus, RAPM affects the United Church not only through its public education efforts, but also through its involvement in church governance structures.

The RAPM's monthly Board meetings open and close with shared prayer. The staff members feel that religious faith is their "driving force," and they seek to interpret both scripture and social policy in one unified action. They understand themselves as analogous to a Latin American based ecclesial community, interpreting their lives and the lives of those they work for in light of Christian faith, and Christian faith in light of their lives. This connection between Christian faith and political advocacy on behalf of the poor was colourfully expressed in their motto: "Building heaven on earth by bringing hell to others [to those who directly or indirectly cause social problems]."

RAPM works regularly with numerous social service agencies, municipal and provincial offices and politicians, United Church and other Christian congregations, various police agencies, and the social work and human justice programmes of the University of Regina. On its website RAPM includes website links to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canadian Social Research Links, Regina Work Prep Centre, and Povnet (a site for groups and individuals involved in anti-poverty work).

4.4 Muslims for Peace and Justice (MPJ)

MPJ is a local group of Muslims, which is informally related to the Islamic Association, and is responsible for the mosque in Regina. MPJ has about 40 members, including an executive of seven persons, all of whom are also members of the Islamic Association. The president and the executive are volunteers. MPJ was founded in 2002 out of a perceived need among Regina Muslims to counter the thinking behind the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York City. The group had origins in earlier Regina interfaith and peace groups, especially the Regina MultiFaith Forum, some of which began in response to the 1990-91 Gulf War.

MPJ's mission and objectives are to explain and contribute Islamic values of peace and justice to Canadian life; to build mutual understanding and appreciation between

Muslims and other faith groups, communities and organizations; to educate Muslims and other Canadians about Islamic humanistic and social values; and to facilitate the integration of Muslims into Canadian society.³² The members of MPJ participate in the activities of other peace and justice groups in the city. Together they work for social change oriented toward social justice, and, in particular, they work to build cultural and religious understanding between Regina Muslims and other religious and cultural groups. In terms of promoting Islamic social and humanistic values among Regina Muslims, they work hard at achieving an open interpretation of scripture and religious tradition, one that is politically disinterested, that is, not affected by political interests of various groups in the countries of origin of Regina Muslims.

The MPJ open and close their meetings with prayer, which they feel helps to build the listening and negotiation atmosphere necessary to reach decisions by consensus. Outwardly, the organization collaborates with many other groups, especially to foster intercultural and inter-religious understanding and appreciation. Internally, the group spends a lot of time interpreting the Qur'an, seeking an interpretation that is politically disinterested, that is, one not conditioned by particular political interests, especially from members' countries of origin. Immigration has been an important religious experience for the members of MPJ, because in Canada they have felt more freedom to be Muslim and interpret scripture than they did in their countries of origin. At the same time, there are concerns about being assimilated into Canadian society and losing the public aspects of their faith. This combination of concerns and opportunities has led to a rediscovery of their faith, which has led to the foundation of Muslims for Peace and Justice as a public expression of Islam.

In Regina, MPJ has the most contact with the Regina Peace Council, Amnesty International, the Regina Antipoverty Ministry (discussed above), the Regina MultiFaith Forum (discussed below), and the Saskatchewan Anti-Racism Association.

4.5 Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP or "D&P")

Founded in 1967, the CCODP is the Regina branch and official international development agency of the Canadian Catholic church. Its mission is to fight poverty in the "Global South"³³ and promote greater international justice by partnering with organizations in the South, and by educating Canadian Catholics about and mobilizing them around North-South issues and other issues of social justice.³⁴ CCODP creates and implements its development projects and advocacy campaigns in close association with partner organizations in the Global South. It uses data from these partners to promote a social consciousness, social faith and social responsibility among Canadian Catholics. Thus, D&P advocates structural change abroad, and attitudinal or cultural change at home.

While the provincial animator or coordinator, located in Saskatoon, is a paid position, the CCODP chairperson for the Catholic Archdiocese of Regina is a volunteer position. The chairperson helps the parish representatives use materials, free of charge, from the national offices in Toronto and Montreal to organize the major educational and fundraising campaigns in the parishes, which happen during Advent and Lent (the periods of religious preparation that precede the festivals of Christmas and Easter, respectively). Local meetings, usually about these campaigns, happen in various Catholic parishes. The archdiocesan chairperson also goes to provincial and national meetings of the CCODP where the themes of national campaigns are decided. The local group undertakes some lobbying, although this is normally the responsibility of the national office.

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D&P is a grassroots, democratic organization and, unlike a typical Catholic congregation, its members actively participate in church life. Because the organization's provincial and national meetings open and close with prayer led by lay people, and the worship services are more participatory and informal than in a typical parish, these meetings become important experiences of religious empowerment for the members. They also perceive their southern partners as their teachers. As a result, participation in D&P is a powerful experience of international solidarity, of learning from and helping southern partners, and of "building the Kingdom of God on earth," according to the interviewee.

The national body of the CCODP is the Canadian representative of an international Catholic development agency called Caritas Internationalis. CCODP is also part of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Kairos, and various international Catholic development agencies, and is in close contact with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Its funding comes from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, from an annual campaign in Catholic parishes called Share Lent, and from CIDA. Its website has links to its partner organizations and to many Catholic, faith-based, secular NGOs around the world. CCODP Saskatchewan is part of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation. The Regina group has frequent contact with Catholic parishes and schools across the city, Kairos, the Catholic archdiocese's social justice department, and other CCODP groups in Saskatchewan.

4.6 The Regina Area Ecumenical Restorative Justice Committee and The Steering Committee for Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) of Regina

The Restorative Justice Committee was founded in 1996 and the COSA Committee in 2001. The religious affiliation of these two groups is ecumenical Christian, with a strong Mennonite background and inspiration. One person is both secretary to the Restorative Justice Committee and chair of the COSA Committee. This person is a retired social worker and emeritus professor of human justice. Both groups are concerned with the criminal justice system, with finding alternatives to it, and with undoing the punitive attitude of many Christians toward offenders. Thus, they seek cultural transformation oriented toward the acceptance of ex-offenders, and in this way work for peace and harmony in society. While the work of both committees focuses on cultural transformation, especially of Christians, the Restorative Justice Committee focuses on education and the COSA Steering Committee focuses on direct service to ex-offenders. Sex offenders are the main recipients of the service as they are the ones who have the most difficulties being accepted back into society.

4.6 a)

The restorative justice movement has its roots in Saskatchewan, but the COSAs began in Hamilton, Ontario, in the early 1990s. All members of these two committees are volunteers—some retired and some engaged in full-time employment. The Restorative Justice Committee has official representation from Catholic, Lutheran, United Church, Mennonite, Anglican, and evangelical Aboriginal denominations, as well as the Salvation Army. Various churches and individual members supply material resources, but the Committee usually meets in the offices of the Circle Project, which is sponsored by an Aboriginal evangelical church.

The Restorative Justice Committee promotes the restoration of relationships damaged by crime as a constructive alternative to punishment, but not as a substitute for the

criminal justice system. Rather than focus on the deed of the crime, the principles of restorative justice seek to address the issues underlying it, including the relationships whose breakdown may have contributed to the crime, and support the offender's accountability for the crime.

The Restorative Justice Committee members understand themselves as “walking with” the offenders and visiting inmates, in imitation of Christ, in order to acknowledge their basic humanity irrespective of their deeds. The Committee finds that opening and closing their meetings with prayer helps maintain this religious perspective, and they readily blend the prayer practices of various Christian and Aboriginal traditions. They also find that diversity is a strong source of spiritual consolation for them, as is the experience of team work.

The Regina Restorative Justice Committee sponsors an annual conference, usually held in November, as its principal public activity. Through this means, and in other smaller ways, it seeks to change the mentality of people, especially of Christians, toward offenders, crime and punishment. The Committee members feel that they have had a positive impact on the context in which ex-offenders are reintegrated into the community.

This group has many contacts with the Regina Correctional Centre Advisory Committee, the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese (discussed above), Friends on the Outside (discussed below), the chaplaincy services of Correctional Services Canada, the Steering Committee for the Circles of Support and Accountability of Regina (discussed below), the member churches, and in particular the Mennonite Central Committee; the group also supports the Regina MultiFaith Forum (discussed below).

4.6 b)

The inspiration behind the COSAs flows from the principles of restorative justice, and grew out of an experience in Hamilton, Ontario, in the early 1990s when Correctional Services Canada asked a Mennonite pastor to supervise the social reintegration of a sex offender who had completed his sentence. The pastor formed a committee of parishioners to help with the task. Today, this committee of five or six volunteers offers trustworthy support and accountability to individuals convicted of high profile offences, usually sexual ones, who have completed their sentences and have been released. If the ex-offender accepts their support and commits to appropriate treatment and responsible behaviour in the community, then the COSA offers intensive support and accountability in the form of weekly or more frequent meetings, and mediates between the ex-offender (then called the “core member”), the police, the media, and the community, and otherwise helps the ex-offender adjust to ordinary life. COSAs are encouraged by the federal correctional services because they have proven effective in reducing the risk of re-offence. Indeed, the chaplaincy services of the Correctional Service of Canada will be providing some funding to support the Regina COSA work.

The Regina Steering Committee membership is distinct from other COSAs because, in addition to its ecumenical Christian membership (who are on the Committee as Christians), it includes professionals from the criminal justice system (psychologists, parole officers, social workers, etc.), who may be religious in their private lives, but who typically are secular in their professional approaches. Because of the religious/secular composition of the Steering Committee, the members do not open or close their meetings with prayer. While none of the groups studied in this paper proselytize, it is expressly forbidden in the job description of the coordinator of the COSA Steering Committee.

The important religious experience for the Committee seems to flow from their relationship with the core member, as well as from the relationship between those who are

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there as Christians and those who are there as professionals. In the former instance, the experience is one of becoming more understanding of and sympathetic toward people who are among the most excluded individuals of society. In the latter case, secular humanist traditions of professional commitment strengthen the Christians' faith, and the professionals have come to acknowledge the importance of spiritual development.

The COSA group has much contact with its member churches, social services, the police, the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the Correctional Service of Canada, and the Mennonite Central Committee in Saskatoon.

4.7 Regina MultiFaith Forum

The Regina MultiFaith Forum is not affiliated with any one religion or religious body; rather, it brings together people of many faiths. Currently, the Forum is composed of representatives from these religious groups: Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and the Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Region Spiritual Care Department. Various activities often involve official representation from other religious groups as well. The Forum succeeds the Regina InterFaith Committee, which was formed in 1991 at the invitation of the Regina Council of Churches in response to the 1990-91 Gulf War. Membership in the Forum can be either individual or organizational, that is, a religious body can be a member (i.e. Regina Council of Churches, and Muslims for Peace and Justice). The Forum has approximately 30 to 35 members, with an executive of six, all of whom are volunteers. They do not have an office but meet in the religious buildings of the members, especially in the synagogue. Their office support depends on who is on the executive and their religious affiliations; typically, this support has come from the synagogue and the Catholic Archdiocese.

The Regina MultiFaith Forum's mission is to promote understanding, appreciation, and acceptance across religious traditions, and to diminish or eliminate cultural and religious prejudices that might hinder the development of a just and harmonious society.³⁵ Thus, the Forum promotes cultural transformation toward greater appreciation and acceptance of diversity, and thereby greater social justice. They also understand social justice as a religious goal and religious diversity as a positive, if challenging, religious experience.

Their core activities include sending volunteers and speakers to schools, doing such presentations at their own meetings, and promoting sensitivity to religious needs in health care institutions, especially in regard to diet, and practices around birth, death and burial. The Forum has three major annual events. One is a series of public talks co-sponsored by the MacKenzie Art Gallery on topics of interest across religions and about religion in general. For example, in 2006, the series was titled "Religion: A Force for Good and/or Evil?" During three evening talks, the series explored the theme of religion, violence and peace. A second major event is the Forum's public interfaith prayer session for World Religion Day, which is held on the third Sunday in June. In May or June, the Forum sponsors a third annual event—a "dinner of understanding and spiritual service"—to honour people or groups who have contributed to faith-based service or to inter-religious understanding or cooperation.

They always open and close their meetings with prayer, that is, prayer specific to the tradition of whoever is hosting the meeting. This habit of using prayer to open meetings was particularly important to them immediately after the September 11, 2001, attacks at the World Trade Center in New York City. The Forum had a meeting scheduled for September 12, which they spent entirely in prayer. This seemed to make the talk at the

subsequent meeting, two weeks later, especially meaningful. In general, the prayer seems to increase their sensitivity to, and reverence for, one another.

The Forum will soon join the North American Interfaith Network. In Regina, in addition to regular contact with the religious groups of their members and the groups who provide office support, the Forum has contact with SaskCulture and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan from whom they receive grants for projects or speakers. Some of the smaller religious groups in the city, such as Jewish and Baha'i, seem to act through the MultiFaith Forum on social justice issues rather than set up their own groups.

4.8 Friends on the Outside (FOTO)

The religious affiliation of this group is Roman Catholic. It has 12 active members, all of whom are volunteers, and is led by two members of Catholic religious orders who are retired but still active: a nun and a priest. FOTO began in 1999 as an ecumenical group with members from the Roman Catholic and Mennonite denominations and the Salvation Army. FOTO is dedicated to providing moral, social and some material support for ex-offenders and their families, and for the families of inmates, regardless of their religion, still in the Regina Correctional Centre. As well, FOTO provides assistance to the chaplaincy services of the Regina Correctional Centre. While this aspect of FOTO's work continues and is still ecumenical, the group has gradually moved toward a new orientation, one which has become clear to them since the fall of 2006: cultural bridge-building and reconciliation between Catholics and First Nations people in Regina and the surrounding area.

This work receives moral and financial support from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, although FOTO is not formally under the direction of the Catholic Archdiocese. All current funding comes from the members, which means that much of the funding comes from the Catholic religious orders of the two leaders. Indeed, the two leaders try to keep a cordial but arms-length relationship with the Catholic Archdiocese, preferring to retain their independence from the majority of priests who they fear might not want to give resources to this project. While FOTO did rent space for a year, their "office" is the voice-mail boxes and e-mail boxes of the two leaders. Meetings are held in the Queen of Peace Centre, a Catholic drop-in centre in Downtown Regina, in members' homes, in the Albert Scott Community Centre in North Central Regina, and in numerous coffee shops all over the city. The group has recently acquired a formal volunteer coordinator and Board, which has brought FOTO a new level of organization, stability, and outreach.

FOTO's current work on cultural reconciliation and bridge-building is modelled on the activities of Intercultural Grandmothers Uniting, a 13-year-old local group of First Nations, Métis, and white grandmothers concerned for their grandchildren, and for building cultural bridges between First Nations and non-First Nations cultures in Regina, especially in the schools. FOTO hopes to organize workshops and other experiences for this purpose, in partnership with other groups. One such workshop is called "Returning to Spirit," which is designed to build community through sincere and truthful communication. The name can appeal equally to First Nations and Catholic spiritualities. The two FOTO leaders frequently combine elements of Catholic and First Nations' rituals, symbols and spiritual practices, and also introduce some Buddhist meditation practices.

While they do not usually open their meetings with prayer, the two leaders use various Catholic practices of spiritual decision making, with which they have much experience.

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The leaders feel motivated by responding to the sacred in other religions and cultures, and their goal is to create an inter-religious spirituality.

FOTO has frequent informal contacts with various Catholic parishes, a Catholic school with many First Nations children, many First Nations Elders in Regina, the Indian Métis Christian Fellowship, various evangelical Christian groups such as Aman House Ministries and Healing Hearts, the Catholic Women's League, the Circle Project, Intercultural Grandmothers Uniting, the Social Justice Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, campus ministry of Campion College at the University of Regina, the Regina Correctional Centre and its chaplaincy services, and the Albert Scott Community Centre.

5. THE USES OF RELIGIOUS RESOURCES: FINDINGS

The results of the interviews conducted for this paper were surprising. Four results in particular are of interest: the frequent use of spiritual practices as part of the context for group decision making; the general orientation of this sector's activities toward civil society rather than government policy; the focus of these faith-based groups toward changing the mentalities and mobilizing the energies of their own religious groups; and, the strong material and organizational support for the faith-based social justice groups by religious communities despite their arms-length relationships.

5.1 Relationship to Religion: Use of Prayer and Ritual

I had originally expected to find that the groups surveyed did not use their spiritual and theological resources in an intentional and communal way. I expected that these resources might affect them primarily in regard to personal motivation and ultimate goal, but not significantly in regard to choice of concrete objectives and of the means and practices to implement them. From the outside, most faith-based social justice groups, at least those on the political left, look and behave similar to secular NGOs (their colleagues with whom they interact and cooperate frequently and easily). I expected that in their weekly programme-level activities and modes of decision making, the faith-based social justice groups would also resemble their secular colleagues, but I did not find the degree of secularization within the groups that I had expected.

Instead, almost all the groups interviewed used communal prayer at the beginning of meetings in such a significant way as to affect the proceedings for the rest of the meeting. The public and communal nature of the prayer made the activity also a ritual. Sometimes the prayer was structured and prepared in advance, sometimes it was spontaneous, and always it was too lengthy to be simply a formality fulfilled in a perfunctory manner. When they were asked what would happen if the prayer were skipped, every one of those surveyed who typically began their meetings with prayer responded confidently that the group would protest and that its lack would negatively affect the meeting. Opening and ending the meeting with prayer seemed to frame the intervening exchanges and deliberations in a spiritual context, construing those practicalities as religious matters and not as "profane" or secular.

When asked about how prayer affected the meeting, all respondents said that they felt it made the participants pay closer attention to each other, that is, it made them attend to not only the cognitive content of participants' communications, but also to their

emotional states and to the speakers and participants as persons. The respondents felt that the prayerful context helped prevent their exchanges from taking on a polemical or argumentative tone, even when there was disagreement. Instead, they turned their exchanges into ways of listening to each other, and of constructing communion as part of pursuing a shared objective or of seeking a common answer to a common question. In short, the expected prayerful context meant that the consideration of relevant data was not restricted to “objective” data from research and analysis or from experience and involvement in the wider community, but also had to include the participants’ subjectivities as fundamental to the data.

This common pattern of group deliberation was achieved in various ways, depending in part on the religious tradition involved. One group, in addition to opening and closing their meetings with prayer, paid particular attention to the dissenting voices in group deliberation, and then used negotiation as a way to reach consensus. In another group, participants were explicitly encouraged to bring their personal subjectivities, such as emotions, hopes, fears, ideas and insights, into discussions of the matters in debate. In another group, the leader used his personal experience and the news as the subject matter for group prayer, thus treating the data from his own action for and reflection on justice as fundamentally religious. Thus, he turned the economic, social, political and cultural data he was dealing with into religious data by combining, in personal ritual practice, news reports with his personal prayer and moral convictions. Then, as he felt appropriate, he would share the results of his prayerful reflection with whomever he might be working.

These practices of prayer and ritual give traditional religious practices new meaning by situating them in a new context with a new goal. In a normal context, prayer can be a communal part of participating in a congregation or a personal and private prayer of the individual. The normal goal of prayer is to build up communal religious identity and to gradually transform an individual into the tradition’s religious ideals for the ideal human being. Unlike a religious congregation at prayer, where the personal content or individual prayer would not normally be heard, faith-based social justice groups use prayer to deliberate goals and strategies in order to bring about social transformation. Thus, in these meetings, the typical spiritual practices of a tradition are transposed from personal transformation and intra-religious community building to general social transformation, while maintaining the “classical” contexts and goals in personal and congregational worship. Furthermore, by treating the subjectivity of the data as part of the matter for deliberation within the group, the transposition of personal prayer practices into social forms makes the private and subjective become public and therefore political, at least within the context of the group. As a result of this sharing, the group’s decisions and consequent actions become public and political in partnership with other activist groups.

As pointed out at the beginning of section 4, most of the people interviewed for this study were lay people, that is, not ordained or otherwise designated to preside publicly at the communal rituals of their respective traditions. The ritual parts of the meetings of these Regina faith-based justice groups were more informal than a typical public, communal ritual of their traditions. Furthermore, if they sometimes use a typical major ritual from their tradition in their meetings, such as having an officially designated person preside over the meeting, this ritual would be performed in a more informal and spontaneous manner, with the participants playing more active roles than they would in a typical instance of the ritual. This active ritual practice gives the members of these groups more engagement in, and therefore power over, their rituals than normal. There may be a strong positive correlation between empowerment in ritual and empowerment and active

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participation in other parts of life, thereby enabling activism of various forms. Ritual empowerment can promote politicization and vice versa.

There is a family resemblance across these faith-based social justice groups in Regina. Each of them tries to highlight the social dimensions and implications of their religious traditions for the sake of their own transformation in their groups, in their wider religious communities, and in the world they share and construct with other groups. In their own practice of religion, the faith-based justice groups transpose traditional religious beliefs and practices into social and activist terms without changing the formal content of those practices and beliefs. In other words, they practice their religion in a more social and activist way than is typical, but without starting a new or separate religion. By doing so, they claim to address the hitherto neglected social dimensions and consequences of the foundational elements of their traditions. Their uses of prayer and ritual, and the general pattern of the social re-expression of traditional practices and beliefs, serve to make religious faith public. Thus, they overcome or at least ignore the typical modern dichotomy between private and public, subjective and objective, and religious and secular.

5.2 Relationship to the World: Involvement in Civil Society

Given the faith-based justice groups' strong critique of many policies and practices of government and business, as typified by the opening quote from the newsletter *Witness to Justice*, I expected to find many of them seeking to change directly those policies and practices by lobbying municipal, provincial and federal politicians, and business leaders. I did find some of this, practiced with skill, confidence and even with success. But, by and large, I found that the activities and contacts of these groups were concentrated within civil society.

There are many definitions of civil society.³⁶ I mean the world of self-organized not-for-profit groups that operate in the intermediate space between the state and organized political groups and for-profit businesses on the one hand, and the private citizen or the family on the other. In civil society, I am more interested in the activities that represent active citizenship, that is, an extension of participation, autonomy and democracy where people try to influence the conditions in which they and others live.³⁷ This "space," this type of group, and these kind of self-organized activities presuppose the political security of the rule of law and the economic security of the market; yet, this space can also be one of pluralism and contestation where groups seek to change the policies and practices of states and for-profit organizations in order to transform the conditions in which we all live.³⁸ Civil society is a public space where many people work together to affect common life and the circumstances that affect life beyond themselves and their families. The public character of this activity makes it political, although it does not have the visibility of state actions. In the context of secularized modernity, organized religion is sometimes considered to be part of civil society and faith is considered to be part of the private realm. Before modernity, organized religion in Western culture often was an aspect of the state level of socio-political reality, and is still today in cultures where religion is not strongly differentiated from politics, society, economics or culture.

The faith-based groups represented in this study acted primarily within civil society. Prescinding from their relationships with their own religious groups for the moment, which I will discuss below, they interacted more with other civil society groups than with government or business. While I did not make a quantitative study of their contacts, most groups rarely mentioned governments or business, but instead often spoke of other civil

society groups. Indeed, each of the groups studied in this paper is part of a thick web of relationships with other civil society groups, and all of these groups are aware of each other. Indeed, they often collaborate on activities of common interest. Because of such connections, their activities and collaborations help to build the diversity and strength of civil society in Regina.

In addition, the groups in this study make religious faith public primarily in the context of civil society. Thus, they take religious faith out of the private realm where secularization seems to have placed it. This quality makes these groups religious activists. But, by locating religion in the public sphere of civil society instead of in the more visible space of state-level political activity, they give religion a different kind of public quality than it has had in years past when it was not strongly differentiated from the political, social, economic and cultural dimensions of life, before the beginnings of modernity in the European Enlightenment.

What kind of public quality does religion have in civil society? First, as a whole, these faith-based justice groups are not primarily interested in gaining political, economic or social benefits for their co-religionists. They do not proselytize. They see themselves as working for the benefit of all, especially for victims of social injustice, irrespective of religion, and they do so for the religious reasons of their own traditions. Furthermore, they are not as interested in the success of their social goals as they are in being faithful to their religious commitments, which means that the utilitarian logic of some kind of *realpolitik* is not the logic they use to make decisions. Thus, their activism and the public character of their faith have a disinterested or altruistic quality.

Second, this kind of public faith, regardless of the religious tradition, partners well with other religious traditions, which means it does not see religious pluralism as a threat. Indeed, it seems to view religious pluralism as a benefit, and does so for religious reasons of its own tradition, and without diminishing the strength of commitment to one's own religious tradition. This study has seen Catholics, mainline and evangelical Protestants, Aboriginal traditionalists and Muslims working together in various permutations and combinations, or at least aware of and interested in each other's activities and events.

Third, this kind of engaged religious faith is open to another form of difference—secular modernity. This openness can be called pluralism from a religious point of view, for while it does not accept the modern privatization of religion, it does presuppose and indeed use secular modernity's differentiation of religion from other dimensions of life. If it did not, this openness would be pushing a particular religion to play the role of the state. Furthermore, all of these groups use modern techniques and practices: some forms of bureaucratization or rational organization, social analysis and critique, critical social consciousness differentiated from religious consciousness, and mass media. In general, the members who are professionals or retired professionals bring their secular training to bear on the work of the faith-based groups. By presupposing and using modernity's differentiation of religion from other aspects of life, and by using secular forms of social consciousness, the faith-based social justice groups bring aspects and practices of secular modernity into their practices of religion.

Thus, openness to pluralism and willingness to be affected by others seem to characterize the activism of these faith-based justice groups and the ways they make faith public. They are willing to partner with others and to be affected by them for the sake of the common good, for reasons that they perceive to be religious. One could argue that openness to pluralism, and the absence of proselytization, suggest a weak religious identity. To the contrary, all the persons interviewed could name religious motivations for being

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engaged in faith-based social activism. Furthermore, the full-time workers could probably earn higher salaries in other pursuits, and the volunteers could enjoy their free time or their retirement in more leisurely activities, or in activities that yield more immediate results. A weak religious identity would not be a strong and enduring motivation for such relatively disinterested action, especially over a long period of time. Indeed, it seems that the openness to pluralism observed in this study is an openness for particular religious reasons found in the various religious traditions.

The openness to difference and pluralism of the faith-based social justice groups works in the other direction, too. Because other civil society groups collaborate with them, their faith-inspired public actions and cooperation with others are acknowledged as meaningful, at least within the public space of civil society. They might not agree on the religious meaning of those actions, but, because they are not rejected and because they are allowed to contribute to civil society, they are acknowledged and accepted in civil society as publicly meaningful.

In the context of civil society, do the faith-based justice groups differ from their secular colleagues? While there are many similarities, the faith-based groups seem to use a discourse of responsibilities to make their points, whereas the secular groups tend to invoke the language of rights.³⁹ Furthermore, the religious groups have access to ready-made sources of support in their religious communities, whereas the secular groups have to build up support from scratch.

Does it make sense to try to understand these groups as analogous to NGOs? According to Berger's definition, religious NGOs or RNGOs are

formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level.⁴⁰

This definition applies to the nine groups examined in this study with the difference that many of them focused on local issues, although usually in the context of how those issues operated in national and sometimes international contexts. The groups were all independent of government and business, and even had a significant amount of independence from their sponsoring religious bodies. They generally formed their ideas communally, both within their organizations and within the networks in which they constantly interacted. Similar to many NGOs, the groups studied here were loosely organized in practice. These were not NGOs in the sense of having official consultative status with the United Nations (UN), but the expression is often applied more broadly than the UN context. Perhaps the largest difference was that these Regina groups were staffed mainly by volunteers who were not professional activists or advocates (although some were, and many had professional training in related fields); nevertheless, the groups behaved and were organized like NGOs. Therefore, the analogy of these groups to NGOs seems to be appropriate.

Finally, I would like to touch on a criticism of all politically active civil society groups, not only the religious ones, and that is the critique that they are undemocratic because they are self-appointed rather than elected. Kandor acknowledges that NGOs and similar groups are self-appointed, but rejects the critique that they are therefore undemocratic. She points out that through their own access to power and the political process, they

provide a vehicle for the voices of people and groups who are normally excluded from power: “[T]he issue is less one of representation than of deliberation” that is, of allowing the excluded voices to have some input in public deliberations, and thereby extending the agency of those not normally treated as agents.⁴¹

5.3 Relationship to Religious Communities: Focus on Co-Religionists

I had originally expected to see these faith-based groups as the public outreach of their wider religious bodies and, as I indicated above in section 5.2, because of the contestatory nature of many of their positions. Because of their location in civil society, I had also expected these groups to direct much of their energy toward changing government and business policies and practices. Instead, I found that, on the whole, and from their pluralistically-linked locations in civil society, these faith-based social justice groups tended to direct most of their energies toward changing and sometimes mobilizing their own co-religionists.

The efforts described above in section 4 are reflexive. They take a community’s religious practices and ideas, transpose them into social terms, enrich them with pluralistic interactions, and then apply or reflect the transposed ideas and practices back onto the religious community itself. Some of the faith-based groups direct more of their efforts to their own religious communities than others, but even the groups with substantial outwardly directed lobbying programmes still devote significant effort toward the education and mobilization of their religious communities. The faith-based social justice groups seek to help their sponsoring religious communities develop critical social consciousness and a more social faith by educating them about social problems, and by supplying the theological foundations for such concern. They also seek to mobilize the religious energies of their congregations for social change by offering them opportunities for action such as participation in letter-writing campaigns, attendance at demonstrations or other public events, or involvement in development programmes. Thus, while the groups studied seek social and structural reform, they do so largely as educators within their own religious communities and as long-term mobilizers of their communities’ religious energies toward social change for the common good.

The faith-based justice groups do not try to change their religious communities by imposing change, although they express disappointment when their efforts seem to fail. Rather, they propose change by showing how it is consistent with and even implied by foundational elements of the tradition. This domestic or intra-religious concentration of effort is basically a long-term strategy to culturally transform their own people, in the hope that this intra-religious transformation will provoke similar changes in the wider society.

However, by directing their religious educational and mobilizing efforts back upon their communities instead of outwardly toward government and business, and toward long-term cultural change instead of more immediate transformations, do the faith-based justice groups domesticate their own dissent? Perhaps. Since the reasons they give for social change are more religious than pragmatic, it stands to reason that the faith-based justice groups would want to share this insight first with their co-religionists. From this point of view, the reflexive quality of the activist religious groups’ action does not seem to be a domestication or deferral of their social critique.

On the other hand, while a long-term strategy of intra-religious cultural change for the sake of eventual wider social transformation may set a solid foundation for social concern, openness, harmony and justice in society at large, it may also be easier to focus

Some of the faith-based groups direct more of their efforts to their own religious communities than others, but even the groups with substantial outwardly directed lobbying programmes still devote significant effort toward the education and mobilization of their religious communities.

on one's own religious community than on the taxing and skilled work of advocacy with those who wield political and economic power. The strategy seems to keep social critique within civil society and the religious communities, and to deflect social and political agency from the faith-based justice groups onto their wider religious communities. While there is probably some substance to this critique, the strategy of long-term intra-religious change nevertheless seems to be a consequence of democracy. Those with political and economic power would listen to neither the faith-based justice groups nor the official religious leaders if the religious groups and leaders were not democratically backed up by their communities acting as citizens and making their voices heard.

There is another point of view from which the focus on co-religionists can be a domestication of critique. In this investigation, the religious activists advocating and modeling social critique, action and change were mostly lay leaders. The main formally designated or ordained religious leaders were busy exercising their normal religious duties that maintain the community. Since they were often overworked, they did not have time for the more activist and socially transformative functions of religion, even when they had the interest. So the ordained religious leaders tended to exercise the more conservative social functions of religion, while the activist lay religious leaders exercised the more transformative and mobilizing social functions of religion. The delegation of the transformative and mobilizing social functions of religion to lay leadership gives religion a public face in civil society. However, this same delegation can also diminish the religious status of these functions in the eyes of ordinary believers and marginalize the activist lay religious leaders, but without excluding them, simply because they do not have the higher religious status of some ordained leadership. If the ordained or official religious leaders would also share in the more transformative and mobilizing functions, then perhaps more of the religious community would take more seriously the message and example of their own faith-based activist groups. However, the above critical observations oversimplify the relationship between the faith-based social justice groups and their wider religious communities.

5.4 Co-religionists' Relationship with the Faith-Based Justice Groups: Religious Sponsorship through Material and Organizational Resources

When I began this investigation, I was interested mainly in how faith-based social justice groups used “uniquely religious” resources, that is, things understood to deal directly with the supernatural or divine, such as spiritual practices, rituals and theologies. It is important to ask about mission and programme, in order to understand each group's purpose, the means they chose for that purpose, and how a group uses its “religious resources.” Although the material and organizational aspects of their work are important —such as office space and rental, office supplies, access to their religious group's mailing and volunteer lists, etc.—I understood these matters as aspects of context or of the instrumentalities of religious motivations and goals, not as religious resources. As the interviews progressed, it became evident that these material and organizational resources were also religious resources, for they were providing important clues about the attitude and relationship of the sponsoring religious bodies toward the faith-based justice groups, and about the relationships between these faith-based activist groups. In other words, the uses of material and organizational resources were giving clues about religious identity and agency.

As indicated in section 5.3, there is a distance between the faith-based justice groups and their parent religious communities. The activists' engagement either in civil society or

in their religion is not shared across the wider religious community, so the engaged religious groups are somewhat marginalized within their own faith communities. Indeed, almost all the people interviewed noted that some of the ordinary believers and occasionally some of the official religious leaders saw them as “too political,” which usually also meant “not religious enough” or “not religious in a correct way.” However, sometimes an activist group might want to distance itself from the sponsoring religious body, in order to protect its freedom of action.

Despite their arm’s-length relationship with the parent religious body, the faith-based activist groups usually enjoyed strong material support from the parent body or bodies. This was expressed in support such as rent-free office space; free access to telephone, fax and internet; administrative support; ready access to mailing lists; free advertising in publications; and access to volunteers. Furthermore, those who had office space and administrative support generally could make their resources available for free to groups who did not have such resources, even if these groups were of other traditions. The parent religious bodies in Regina generally do not have abundant material resources at their disposal, so the decisions to be generous with the faith-based justice groups had to be made or at least tacitly approved by the designated religious leaders. While there may indeed be a gap between the engaged religious groups and their sponsoring religious bodies and traditions, the material relationships between them suggest relatively strong institutional and official support for the engaged groups.

The ease of access to religious material resources suggests a similar access to the congregations themselves, that is, to the grassroots membership. The ease of social contact is verified by the readiness of official religious leaders to allow the activist groups to make public announcements during services, offer presentations and workshops, or post announcements in public religious spaces. Thus, the official religious leadership at least tacitly supports the activists’ access to the religious congregations and grassroots membership. While the activists’ social access and their religious status might not be as great as that of the officially designated religious leaders, it could have significant political impact for long-term change. For example, should the threat of social conflict arise, many of the faith-based social activists could serve as good mediators because of their grassroots contacts in religious and other contexts.

In short, even the material and organizational resources of the faith-based justice groups are aspects of the social and therefore public practices of religion, and an important indicator of their positive relations with the wider religious communities.

Religion is a social phenomenon, so it cannot be marginalized or privatized for long; sooner or later it will be public and therefore political. The question is how.

CONCLUSION

As these examples demonstrate, something new is happening in religion: religion is back in the public sphere, but in a different way than before secularization.

A French philosopher of religion, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), speaks of a contemporary phenomenon in religion that he calls second naïveté or second immediacy.⁴² He uses the expression to explain how modern belief and modern relationships can use religious myth and symbol; I will expand on his use. Under the influence of scientific and emancipatory uses of reason after the Enlightenment, and critiques of the roles of religious difference in lethal conflict, the practice of religion was marginalized not only into the private realm of family and personal subjectivity, at least in theory, but also lost its immediacy and directness, for public reason and action were

differentiated, sometimes separated, from religion. But religion is a social phenomenon, so it cannot be marginalized or privatized for long; sooner or later it will be public and therefore political.⁴³ The question is how.

Using his theory of second naïveté or immediacy, Ricoeur posits a practice of religion and its disciplines that incorporates the post-Enlightenment, modern secular rational and critical approach into religious belief and practice. The old, pre-critical immediacy and cultural power of religion have not returned and are lost forever, perhaps happily so.⁴⁴ The new immediacy, when present, is neither naïve nor uncritical; instead, it is characterized by self-aware and self-critical religious practice and belief, by openness to other points of view and fundamental commitments, by interpretation rather than certainty,⁴⁵ and by an emphasis on human agency and responsibility in a divine milieu, where direct divine intervention and causality would have been the expectation in the past.

Second immediacy characterizes the forms of religious agency and identity found in the faith-based social justice groups whose leaders were interviewed in this study. It also characterizes the public quality of the religious faith that these activists bring to civil society, and serves to name and interpret the parallels between their religious consciousness and identity on the one hand, and their public religious agency on the other.

What characterizes the religious identity and agency of faith-based social justice groups as activist? Internally, they seem not to compartmentalize their religious practice and belief into one segment of their lives, isolated from the others. They want religion to shape both their inner lives as well as their outwardly active lives, at least in the context of civil society. Indeed, for many of those interviewed, even the volunteers, their activism is almost full time. Externally, they bring religion into the public sphere, that is, from the relatively private places of conscience, family and religious community, they bring it into the public and pluralistic sphere of civil society. Going against the modern tendency to marginalize religion, whether socially or psychically, and being motivated by altruistic humanitarian values rather than by self-interest (at least to a significant degree) are enough to make one a religious activist. Their use of prayer in their deliberative processes, and their description of social justice activism as religious experience, suggest that they experience their world as permeated by the supernatural—as a “divine milieu.”⁴⁶ This makes the presence and action of the divine immediate in the world for them, yet they attribute events to human agency and responsibility, and therefore emphasize their own and others’ agency and responsibility. These qualities, combined with their religious literacy, give the groups studied here strong religious identities. Their view of the supernatural or the divine as active in the world and engaged with human life, yet in a way that emphasizes human responsibility, gives their religious agency a quality of immediacy for them. But is this similar to the self-critical, self-aware second immediacy that Ricoeur posits?

The groups investigated here represent a particular kind of religious activism. As this investigation has discovered, when these Regina faith-based social justice groups make their faith public in civil society, they do so in a way that is open to both religious and secular pluralism. Indeed, almost all the interviewees commented on how their personal faiths have been enriched by openness to religious and secular diversity; moreover, none of them complained of struggling against or feeling threatened by “secular modernity.” The groups are open to the negotiations and compromises involved in cooperating with different groups, but they do not seem to do so primarily for strategic reasons, nor is it because their religious identities are weak. Rather, their form of religious identity gives them skills or practices that allow them to express or use their religious agency without

domineering or totalizing, and therefore in a manner that is open to difference and pluralism. These skills or practices involve using modernity's differentiation of religion from other parts of life, without privatizing religion, and listening carefully to the other to correctly interpret their viewpoints, as in their practices of communal prayer with each other. Moreover, their religious convictions move them to seek change for the benefit of all, not only for their co-religionists; this disinterestedness also contributes to their openness to pluralism, whether religious or secular. This kind of religious agency is willing to be a participant, a player and a colleague with others; as such, it is also willing to be influenced and affected by others, and link its identity to others. Through these active practices, religion seems willing to decentralize itself, so that it is not viewed as occupying the centre of religious meaning in an exclusive way. The openness to pluralism, from a basis in a strong religious identity, is what makes this religious immediacy "second," and not pre-critical, and certainly not defensive with respect to other religions or to secularity. Finally, the emphasis on human responsibility and agency, instead of giving primary agency and responsibility to the divine, also qualifies this kind of religious immediacy as "second" in Ricoeur's sense. Because of these qualities of "second immediacy," religious and ideological differences need not and do not result in conflict, and can become sources of cooperation.

The characteristic that most distinguishes faith-based justice groups from the typical practices of religion is that they treat social, economic, political and cultural data as also religious; they do not seek religious data only in scripture, ritual or tradition. This characteristic makes them open to "otherness" and plurality, and causes them to rely on the skills of interpretation, for they expect to find the sacred in the "other" and in what is not typically considered sacred. They use the normal religious sources of their traditions to give religious meaning and motivation to constructions of social injustice and social justice by means of interpretation. While they are motivated to an important degree by moral and religious outrage at the sufferings of others and at social injustice, faith-based social justice groups nevertheless have a fundamentally positive attitude toward the world. They expect to encounter the divine, however that is understood, through involvement in society, economics, politics and culture, and in the strenuous and seldom successful attempts at changing these aspects of social life for the benefit of the general human welfare. These religious agents are not motivated to activism in order to fill a perceived lack in the world (although this motivational element is also present); rather, they expect to encounter the divine by being involved, whether in their religious community or not. This religious openness to data not normally considered religious by their traditions, and normally defined as "secular" by modernity, also characterizes the agency of this form of religious identity as a second immediacy.

Religious commitment to justice is not new. What is new is the willingness to incorporate modern critical social consciousness into traditional religious consciousness in a way that transforms religious consciousness and commitment into something more intentionally social. This transformation seems to have begun in the 1960s among marginalized groups experiencing the beginnings of decolonization: liberation theologies among Latin American Catholics⁴⁷ and Protestants; Black theology among American Protestants; feminist theologies among North American and European Protestant and Catholic women; and engaged Buddhism among monks and nuns in Vietnam who were seeking to make peace between the warring parties there. The expression that some religious studies scholars use to designate the kind of justice-oriented religious commitment analyzed in this paper, "engaged religion," comes from the Vietnamese

The characteristic that most distinguishes faith-based justice groups from the typical practices of religion is that they treat social, economic, political and cultural data as also religious; they do not seek religious data only in scripture, ritual or tradition.

Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, who coined the expression “engaged Buddhism” in 1963 to name his and his colleagues’ peace-making efforts.⁴⁸ Thus, the Regina examples of faith-based social justice groups fit into a global pattern in religion today, where engaged religion is one response to systemic injustice and one form of the public expression of religion. The patterns of religious activism we have seen show us that religion probably cannot or will not be kept marginalized for long. The examples also suggest how religious and other agents can use religion’s immense power for conservation, transformation or mobilization, for the construction of meaning to serve the common good, and to avoid taking on reactive and violent forms of religious identity and agency. Engaged religion seems to be a place where religion intentionally appropriates and uses its social character, instead of letting its social character simply happen in an ascribed and unintentional manner. If, in these circles, religion is indeed appropriating its social character in a self-conscious and self-critical manner, then this is indeed a second immediacy, a new development in religion, and probably the foundation of many new developments to come.

What implications might these findings have for public policy? First of all, they suggest that religion both can and should be taken seriously by public policy. This may seem a self-evident suggestion, but much of the modern Western political tradition, as well as many aspects of modern Western intellectual life, presuppose prescinding from divine revelation, and separate questions about the structure of society from religious questions about God and ultimate human destiny.⁴⁹ While there have been good reasons for such distinctions and separations in modern Western history, this also means that the Western political tradition now lacks a rich set of concepts and terminology to describe religious life and the relationships between religion and politics, both at home and abroad.⁵⁰ The need for such vocabulary presses on us now, for religion is once again coming to the fore in public life in many places, and it seems to have an ability to build social bonds that other aspects of organized life do not.⁵¹

The religious groups studied here are comfortable with the distinctions just mentioned, and at the same time they desire a vigorous faith for themselves. They are examples of people whose desire for a vigorous religious life does not break the bonds of civility with other groups but, instead, seems to strengthen such bonds, both with people of other faiths and with people of no religious faith. The basis for their particular combinations of citizenship and religious belief seems to be a desire for pluralism and diversity rather than a secular privatization of religion. Openness to diversity among religious groups may be encouraged by public policy—for example, by encouraging inter-religious cooperation—although each religious group would have to find the foundations for openness in their own traditions. Thus, the liberal state can encourage civil bonds of cooperation among practitioners of various faiths and provide channels for religious participation in public life, at least in civil society, that promote civility and the common good.

After completing this study, more questions have arisen. Further research needs to be conducted into each group’s literacy in its own religious traditions and how each group understands the connection of that literacy to their activism and to their openness to pluralism. I would ask more gender-specific questions to see if gender operates differently in religious leadership in faith-based justice groups than in religious congregations, especially in those groups that do not give women official leadership roles. I would compare how the distribution of religious affiliations in the faith-based activist groups compare to the census data on religious affiliation for Regina, and look more closely at the

smaller religious groups not represented in faith-based justice groups. I would ask how the groups knew when they had made a good religious decision and if new criteria for judging good decisions are emerging, especially with respect to diversity. Finally, I would ask more questions about the difficulties they encounter.

Religion seems to be here to stay, for good or for ill, and politicians, analysts and policy makers must take its various public involvements seriously. To this end, the academic disciplines of religious studies and theology will make a necessary contribution.

ENDNOTES

1. This is an allusion to the Christian gospels.
2. Pitzel, 2007, p. 1.
3. Development and Peace. 2007. Development and Peace's Position on Afghanistan. *Witness to Justice* 30: 5-6.
4. Peters, D. 2007. Kairos Prairies North Bulletin. *Witness to Justice* 30: 7.
5. Orban, D. 2007. Refugee Update. *Witness to Justice* 30: 3.
6. Amnesty International. 2007. Amnesty International asks for YOUR support for 'Bill C-280: *Give Refugees the Right to Appeal*.' *Witness to Justice* 30: 4.
7. What some scholars call the "resurgence of religion" is generally acknowledged to have begun with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which was based in part on Islamic inspiration. While this essay takes the view that there has been a resurgence of religion in the public sphere over the past two-and-a-half decades, this view depends on how one understands secularization, and whether one feels it is receding, advancing or changing form. Furthermore, there is also scholarly debate over whether the recent publicity about the political and social involvement of various religions is, in fact, a new emergence of religion into the public, political space, or whether religion has never left the public space but has become involved in new ways. For helpful discussions of various opinions about secularization and the "resurgence" of religion, one can refer to the following: Fox, J. 2005. Secularization. In *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. J. R. Hinnells, 291-305. London & New York: Routledge; and Haynes, J. 1998. *Religion in Global Politics*, 1-19, 209-220. Harlow: Pearson/Longman.
8. See Appleby, 2000, p. 6.
9. This expression comes from Considine, 2005, p. 1.
10. See Haynes, 1998, p. 6.
11. Haynes, 1998. p. 6.
12. See Haynes, 1998, p. 7-8, 209-210. For a good discussion of the evolution of civil society and its various concepts, see Kaldor, 2003, especially chapters 1-3.
13. Kaldor, 2003, p. 85-90; and Berger, J., 2003, p.18.
14. UN Charter, Article 71; and Berger, J., 2003, p. 18.
15. Berger, J., 2003, p. 16.
16. Berger, J., 2003, p. 16.
17. Berger, J., 2003, p. 16.
18. Berger, J., 2003, p. 35.
19. See Fox, 2005, p. 302.
20. Theology is usually a confessional academic discipline, and critically studies religion from the point of view of one particular religion. Religious studies also studies religion critically and academically, but from a non-confessional point of view. It seeks to examine all religions in the same manner, and usually prescind from direct discussion of the divine, supernatural or superhuman. Thus religious studies looks at religion from a "natural" or "human" point of view, not from the point of view of any religious or spiritual commitment.
21. As of November 2006, it is now called the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, but is still better known by its earlier name.
22. At last count, in 2005, the Jesuits sponsored 324 NGOs (Social Justice Secretariat. 2005. *Jesuit Social Centres: Structuring the Apostolate*. Rome: Social Justice Secretariat of the Society of Jesus, p. 13).
23. Berger, J., 2003, p. 17.
24. 2003, p. 15-39. There is a brief survey of the literature on p. 17-18.
25. I was especially helped by the following works: Smith, 1996; Nesbitt, 2001; Juergensmeyer, 2005; Kaldor, 2003; Queen and King, 1996; and Berger, J., 2003.

26. As I interviewed, I got the names of three other groups or persons to contact, but did not have the time to include them in my investigation. While the initial information indicated that these were faith-based groups, there was not enough information to indicate whether they were social justice or service groups. In any case, one was a religious feminist academic group, one a Buddhist therapy group, and another a First Nations group.
27. Statistics Canada, 2001, p. 1.
28. Statistics Canada, 2001, p. 1.
29. The word “Kairos” is a Greek word for time; its theological sense denotes readiness: a time of grace from God and a time of human decision and choice—the fullness of time, or the opportune moment.
30. Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. *What does the world ‘Kairos’ mean? Basic information about KAIROS*. <www.kairoscanada.org/e/who/kairos.asp?id=1> (accessed November 9, 2006).
31. The acronym PLURA stands for “Presbyterians, Lutherans, United Church, Roman Catholics and Anglicans.” It is an ecumenical anti-poverty organization.
32. Muslims for Peace and Justice. *About Us*. <www.mpsask.org/about%20us.html> (accessed November 16, 2006).
33. The “Global South” is a term used by many groups today to mean the “Third World.” While it has the disadvantage of geographical ambiguity—not all countries in the southern hemisphere are poor, and there is plenty of poverty in the northern hemisphere—it has the advantage of avoiding the connotation of moral hierarchy of First over Second and Third Worlds.
34. Development and Peace. *About Us*. <www.devp.org/devpme/eng/aboutus/pf-aboutus-eng.html> (accessed Sept. 11, 2006).
35. “Regina MultiFaith Forum” pamphlet, [undated].
36. For a concise but good discussion of the range of the meanings of this category of political life today, see Kaldor, 2003, p. 2-14.
37. Kaldor, 2003, p. 8.
38. Kaldor, 2003, p. 8-9.
39. Berger, J., 2003, p. 19.
40. Berger, J., 2003, p. 16.
41. Kaldor, 2003, p. 140-141.
42. Ricoeur, 1960, p. 352.
43. See for example the discussions and debate about secularization and desecularization or resacralization in Martin, 2005; and Berger, P., 1999.
44. Ricoeur, 1960, p. 351.
45. Ricoeur, 1960, p. 352-357.
46. I borrow this phrase from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s work, *Le milieu divin, essai de vie interieure* (Paris: Editons du Seuil, 1957).
47. Broad changes in the Catholic church in the 1960s provided important stimuli to the growth of engaged forms of Catholicism, such as Catholic versions of liberation and feminist ideologies. Most of these changes were encouraged or even caused by a worldwide council of Catholic bishops, which met in Rome from 1962 until 1965 and was called the Second Vatican Council, or “Vatican II” for short. Among other things, it encouraged Catholics to take a positive yet critical view of the modern world, and to be engaged in it because one could expect to find God there.
48. Appleby, 2000, p. 135; S. B. King, “Thich Nhat Hanh and the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam: Nondualism in Action”, in Queen and King, 1996, p. 340-342.
49. Lilla, 2007, p. 298, 303.
50. Lilla, 2007, 304.
51. Lilla, 2007, 303.

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APPENDIX 1: THE INTERVIEW

Faith-Based Social Justice Groups in Regina and Their Use of Religious Resources: Interview Questions

While an interview might not use each of the questions listed below, it will likely cover all these topics, sometimes with the questions expressed differently, according to circumstance. Responses to some of these questions may lead to related, follow-up questions not listed below, for purposes of clarification.

Please feel free not to respond to any of these questions, as you judge fit. Not responding to any of them will not prevent your participation in other aspects of this research, or prevent your access to the final report of findings.

A. General Questions

1. What is the organization's official name?
2. What does your organization do?
3. Do you have a mission statement? If so, what is it, please?
4. What are the various roles or offices within the organization?
5. What clientele and/or problems do you most directly work with?
6. To whom is your educational or advocacy work directed (for example, general public, religious denomination, government)?
7. How old is your organization?
8. What aspects of your work do you consider to be oriented toward social justice? (advocacy, public education, empowerment, social analysis, social change)
9. What is the organization's religious affiliation?
10. What are the formal aspects of this affiliation or sponsorship (for example, direct financing, the religious body appoints or approves the appointment of the leader, etc.)?
11. How many employees and volunteers do you have?
12. Are all your employees and volunteers of the same religious affiliation as the sponsoring body? If so, is this expected? If not, would you identify the various religious affiliations, if you know them, without identifying persons?
13. Are you affiliated with any provincial, regional, national or international non-governmental (NGO) or religious networks?
14. Are you a registered charity?
15. Please describe a typical day in the life of your organization.
16. Please describe a typical meeting of your organization. How frequently are these held? Are they for all members?
17. With what municipal, provincial or federal ministries or agencies do you have the most contact, if any?
18. In your opinion, who pays the most attention to your organization and its work?

B. Religious resources: Material and Social

1. Is your organization housed in a building owned or rented by your religious organization? Do you pay full rent?
2. Do you use office equipment owned or rented by your religious body (for example, photocopiers,

computers, telephones, fax machines, furniture)? Do you pay a fee for this use?

3. Have any of your members received training from your sponsoring religious body (such as in theology, preaching, counselling, scripture, administration, etc.)?

4. When you publish or distribute information (social analysis, awareness campaigns, publicity, announcements, etc.), do you use any networks already set up by your sponsoring religious body (such as, mailing lists, phone trees, volunteers, pre-existing religious publications or websites)?

5. Do you publicize your work in other religious networks?

6. Do you publicize your work in non-religious networks?

7. What proportion of your funding comes from your sponsoring religious body?

8. Do you feel that your religious affiliation contributes to your public credibility?

9. In your opinion, why is your sponsoring religious body interested in your work?

10. In your opinion, how interested or committed to your work is your sponsoring religious body?

C. Religious Resources: Scripture, Ritual, Theology, Experience, etc.

1. Does your organization ever pray together? If so, please describe a typical prayer session.

2. If your organization sometimes prays together, do you have different kinds of prayer sessions? What determines the differences?

3. If you have prayer sessions, then do they differ from a typical gathering of your sponsoring religious body (for example, at weekly worship)? If so, how? And why?

4. In your judgment, how do the organization's prayer sessions affect the organization?

5. In your organization's discussions and publications, are there certain passages of scripture that tend to be mentioned or alluded to more often than others? If so, why? How are they used?

6. In your organization's discussions and publications, are there any accounts or stories from your religious tradition or history that tend to be mentioned or alluded to more often than others? If so, why? How are they used?

7. How would you describe the religious motivations of your organization? How do these motivations relate to scripture, ritual, tradition or belief?

8. What ethical values from the religious tradition are most important in your work? Why?

9. How would you describe the religious goals of your organization? How do these goals relate to scripture, ritual, tradition or belief?

10. In your opinion, how does your work for social justice make religion public, directly or indirectly? Why?

11. Do you ever use scripture, belief, ritual, religious experience or religious tradition in making decisions? How?

12. Do members of your organization see their social justice work as religious experience? If so, how?

13. How does your organization justify devoting itself to social justice work, rather than to work that might be financially more remunerative?

Personal question, only if willing, and under conditions of confidentiality explained on the consent form:

14. Has your own practice of religion (prayer, belief, use of scripture, practice of ritual, involvement in congregational worship, exercise of leadership, preaching, ethical opinions, etc.) been changed by your involvement in the organization's work? If so, how?

APPENDIX 2: THE CONSENT FORM

Title: Faith-Based Social Justice Groups in Regina and Their Use of Religious Resources

Introduction: Many faith-based NGOs (non-governmental organizations) feel some frustration now with their abilities to use the religious resources of their own traditions. This project seeks to investigate how faith-based social justice groups in Regina actually use their own religious resources in their work. Identifying actual uses may help other such groups use their own resources better.

Researcher: Dr. Peter Bisson, S.J., at Campion College at the University of Regina, 3737 Wascana Parkway, Regina, SK S4S 0A2; reachable by phone at 359-1240 or by e-mail at peter.bisson@uregina.ca. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions about this research project. This project is also sponsored by the Saskatchewan Institute for Public Policy in Regina. My research assistant, who might assist me with some interviews, is Megan Ashcroft, who can be contacted by phone at 761-9026 or by e-mail at ashen_croft@hotmail.com.

Procedure: Face-to-face interviews of one and a half to two hours (maximum). The interviewer will take notes during the interview and, if the interviewee permits, will also tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: There are no known risks involved in this study, and the only cost is the time for the interview. Potential benefits would be a greater awareness of how your organization uses its religious resources, and helping other faith-based groups have similar self-awareness.

Confidentiality: The organizations that participate in this study will be named in the resulting reporting, as will their religious affiliation. Particular findings will not be linked with any particular organization, but may be linked instead with the larger religious or denominational affiliation. No persons will be named in the study. Any information derived from your personal participation in this study will be kept confidential by the researcher. However, complete confidentiality may not be possible, for people in other faith-based social justice groups in Regina may be able to guess possible sources once they see a connection between a finding and a religious affiliation. The findings of this investigation will be reported in an upcoming publication of the Saskatchewan Institute for Public Policy, and possibly in other scholarly publications, always maintaining this same confidentiality. Interview notes, tapes and electronic files will be kept securely in Dr. Bisson's office, and will be destroyed three years after the study is completed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw at any time, even after signing this consent form, without any penalty, and will not jeopardize or influence any service from the University of Regina or Campion College.

Ethics approval: This project was approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina. If the research subjects have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as subjects, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at 585-4775 or by e-mail: research.ethics@uregina.ca

Having read the above, I agree to participate in this study and consent to the above. I also acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Investigator

Date

I agree to have this interview recorded: ☐ yes ☐ no

APPENDIX 3. CONSENT FORM FOR GROUP INTERVIEWS

Faith-Based Social Justice Groups in Regina and Their Use of Religious Resources Group Agreement for Maintaining Confidentiality

This form is intended to further ensure confidentiality of data obtained during the course of the study entitled *Faith-Based Social Justice Groups in Regina and Their Use of Religious Resources*. All parties involved in this research, including all group interview members, will be asked to read the following statement and sign their names indicating that they agree to comply.

I hereby affirm that I will not communicate or in any manner disclose publicly information discussed during the course of this group interview. I agree not to talk about material relating to this interview with anyone outside of my fellow group interview members and the researcher.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Project Director's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Adapted from: Bruce L. Berg
 Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences
 5th Edition
 Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004
 Page 141, figure 5.2

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