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**A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND AMERICAN  
MUSLIMS STRATEGIES OF INTEGRATION IN THE US AFTER 9/11, 2001**

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**Abstract:** In the course of the founding history of America, the American Sacred Ground has been a contested territory where people who do not share a single history or a single religious tradition have engaged in the common tasks of civil society to broaden the contours of religious pluralism in the US. This paper studies the post 9/11 phase of the public debate on America's religious identity as the Muslim moment in the long-standing pilgrimage in American religious history towards participatory pluralism. It underscores the challenges that both Americans and American Muslims have had to face to help one another make sense of the startling religious diversity incurred by the 1965 immigration reforms. My contention is that, compared to the Jewish and Catholic experiences, it is only since 9/11 that American Muslims have carried through the traditional role of religious outsiders, abiding by the principles of the American Sacred Ground.

**Key Words:** Religious Pluralism, American Muslim, religious identity, the American Sacred Ground, responses to diversity, Jewish and Catholic contributions

## Introduction

This paper is part of a research project I have conducted on religious pluralism and the American Muslim responses to 9/11. My interest in religious pluralism in the US as the theoretical framework for my study stems from the great contribution made by the US to global religious life by demonstrating, as many scholars of religious pluralism have already shown, that “however vast the pluralism, a vital religious culture can flourish”<sup>1</sup>. The US has a culture of pluralism because, as an “*E Pluribus Unum*,” it has been the setting for a multitude of responses to religious diversity<sup>2</sup>. Most of these responses reflect attempts on the part of Americans at redefining their religious “*Unum*” (unity) in light of the changing face of the American people. This paper, which has been stimulated by the protracted and contentious history of religious pluralism in the US, studies the post 9/11 phase of the public debate on America’s religious identity as the Muslim moment in the long-standing pilgrimage in American religious history towards participatory pluralism. In tracing the major steps in the development of the pluralist state of mind, we will focus on the experiences of the American Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic Communities for comparative reasons.

## What is Religious Pluralism?

The term pluralism, as applied to religion and American society in general, has surged into prominence and common usage over the past decades to underscore its multicultural aspect<sup>3</sup>. Pluralism has always been associated with the term diversity and understood as the acceptance and encouragement of diversity. It is with this understanding that some social critics and religious historians have worked since the mid-80s to chronicle the diversities that their predecessors ignored or slighted<sup>4</sup>. Yet, pluralism is more than simply chronicling or mapping diversity. Pluralism is a culture, a state of mind that evolves as communities revise their conceptions of ethnicity, refine their responses to diversity and broaden the meaning of such widely accepted concepts as religious freedom and mutual respect as they are passed on from one age to the next. Pluralism is not a given, but an achievement.<sup>5</sup> It is more than toleration and inclusion of “deviant” groups; it means engaging in the common tasks of civil society people who do not share a single history or a single religious tradition. How is this engagement possible with people coming from so many different places of origin, holding different world views, and not sharing the same language?

One interesting answer to this question was provided by the American scholar, Barbara McGraw, in *Rediscovering America’s Sacred Ground: Public Religion and Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America* (2003).

She shows us that the common language can be derived from the political framework and the principles on which America stands. According to McGraw, the American Sacred Ground has a two-tiered Public Forum: the Civic Public Forum and the Conscientious Public Forum; each is governed by some guiding principles. Pluralism is the unifying principle of both Forums. McGraw argues that for a community to contribute to an open debate on America's religious self-identification (self-definition), they have to abide by the principles of the American Sacred Ground. Firstly, they have to channel debates on the Conscientious Public Forum to define who they are (their identity) and the interests they, as a community of conscience, want to pursue in the society at large. Once they have gone through this self-empowering stage, they can engage one another and their fellow Americans in debates on the Civic Public Forum, where they can support their claims by relying on the bridging language of the Constitution. A possible outcome of these debates is a new definition of the religious identity of America, which flows naturally out of its many streams. Accordingly, as long as the diverse religious people in America act responsibly in accordance with the principles of the two-tiered Public Forum, they can contribute to the advancement of the course of pluralism.

Notwithstanding the plethora of homegrown religions, prior to the liberalization of America's immigration policy in 1965, three main immigrant world religions helped change the religious definition of America: The various Protestant denominations which were numerically dominant at the inception of the republic, and the Jews and Catholics who immigrated in large waves to the US in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The latter, acting in accordance with the principles of the American Sacred Ground laid by the former, helped broaden the religious definition of America beyond its limited Protestant confines and substituted "the Judeo-Christian model" of religious pluralism for the "Protestant Establishment that nurtures diversity" model. A brief study of these models may assist us in gauging the advances that the American Muslims made on the road to pluralism prior to 9/11.

### **The American Jewish and Catholic Contributions**

#### ***The "Protestant establishment that nurtures diversity" model of religious pluralism***

At the time of the Revolution the people of America were predominantly foreign born: Europeans and their descendants. The religious mosaic that they spread throughout the American landscape reflected the spectrum of the sectarianism of a Protestant Europe. These groups had plural claims to religious Truth. Such claims did at times lead to the exclusion and persecution of dissent. When the Constitution was adopted and the "novus ordo seclorum" (a new order of the ages/a new world order) was established, denominationalism was the distinctive

response of these diverse groups while giving meaning to their diversity; an unofficial “Protestant establishment” was their answer to their competing claims to religious truth and the outcome of their debates on the conscientious public Forum.

Within the republic, where religious liberty was protected by law, denominations came to see themselves as part of a larger spiritual community of the Christian Church. This spirit of unity was not provided by any particular denominational doctrine. The real ground for unity was a set of national symbols and rituals that transcended and effectively neutralized the passionate religious identifications of various denominations on the Conscientious Public Forum of the American Sacred Ground. It is the religion of the Civic Public Forum or what Robert Bellah called in 1968 the civil religion of the American Revolution and Constitution: “By civil religion I refer to that religious dimension, found I think in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality”<sup>6</sup>. Its mythological cosmos has been broadened and enriched by the successive religious outsiders who have brought their particular myths to bear on those of civil religion in their make up as Americans.

#### ***The Protestant, Catholic and Jewish model***

With the advent of the 19th century, a severe reduction in Protestant Christianity’s numerical dominance in the American population was occasioned by the sweeping flow of Catholic and Jewish immigrants who started settling in America in significant numbers. Along with new “divergent” movements, such as Seventh-day Adventists, Christian Scientists, Pentecostals, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses, who had begun gaining ground after the Civil War, Catholic and Jewish public presence became highly visible in America. This proliferation raised nativist concerns that these strangers might be undermining the American “Protestant” way of life. Like the non-conformists of the colonial period, Jews and Catholics were marginalized and excluded from the mainstream and had, as outsiders, to reinvent themselves as Americans.

Measured against McGraw’s framework, the Jewish and Catholic experience on the road to pluralism from the margins to the mainstream was one that evolved on the undergirding common ground of citizenship: America’s Sacred Ground. Initially, each religious community experienced an internal debate about its self-identity, norms, and values, as well as negotiated the specific interests it wanted to pursue in society at large. Americanist Jews and Catholics - advocates of American Jewish/Catholic identities - engaged in protracted internal debates with advocates of Orthodox absolutism and exclusivist idealism within their diverse communities of conscience. Despite their internal diversity, American Catholics and Jews managed to commit themselves to defining American

Judaism and American Catholicism, which are culturally American and theologically Orthodox. Their discourse was premised on the repudiation of religious essentialism and the outright rejection of a crippling rigid traditionalism. Americanist Catholic and Jewish religious leaders expanded this rhetoric so far as to enthusiastically assert their claim that traditionalism was out of tune with the times, and that the future and welfare of their religions depended upon the willingness of the traditional establishments in Europe to undertake reforms based on American Catholic and Jewish experiences. In order to preserve American Jewish and American Catholic identities, they established religious institutions in the US. They also promoted interfaith institutions and interfaith dialogue with their fellow Protestant Americans in order to deflate anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish propaganda.

Once they had formed a community of conscience and established religious institutions, American Jews and Catholics were empowered to engage in public debates on the Civic Public Forum. World War I offered the American Catholics an opportunity to engage on the Civic Public Forum and dislodge some of the residual American Protestant fear that Catholics could never be loyal citizens because of their devotion to the Pope. The National Catholic War Council<sup>7</sup> worked with non-Catholic groups, such as the Salvation Army, to provide financial support for American soldiers, and mobilize Catholic support for the American cause. Moreover, Protestant contact with Catholics on the warfront opened doors to tolerance by fostering a sense of mutual humanity. It encouraged Catholic interest in influencing the political process by establishing organizations which promoted social and political action programs. The energetic crusades against anti-Catholic propaganda and the relentless efforts to weave Catholics into the American religious and political texture, which lasted for almost a century, bore fruit with the success of J.F. Kennedy's electoral campaign. Kennedy's election to office (1960) was an outright recognition that "Catholic is American."

American Jews, however, did not have a J.F. Kennedy to claim genuine participation and become subsumed to the post-World War II rhetorical campaign for 'the Judeo-Christian tradition.' Yet, they had something that was arguably more efficient: they had considerable control over this campaign. This was best reflected in the intellectual endeavor of Jewish thinkers who played an important role in preserving a distinct Jewish identity by helping it survive the Americanization crusades that followed World War I. Horace Kallen's version of cultural pluralism advanced in 1924 and Herberg's trinity *Protestant, Catholic and Jew* (1955) caught the attention of American liberals after World War II. Their ideas were essential in shaping the ideological foundations of pluralism in the US.

Rapid Jewish economic success also helped dramatize their move to the mainstream under the rhetorical embrace of the Judeo-Christian

model. The absence of ties to an ancestral homeland led to the assimilation of many Jewish immigrants into the larger culture. They established numerous agencies and institutions to help Jewish immigrants adapt to American society. They lent their support to philanthropic activity so that by mid-century many social and welfare organizations were supported by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Like their Catholic counterparts, Jewish immigrants entered the industrial workforce and endorsed the nascent labor movement efforts to improve the workers' situation. Yet, unlike the Catholics, who developed a powerful network of parochial schools, the Jewish Americans flocked to public schools despite their Protestant character<sup>8</sup>. The Jewish students excelled in academic endeavors and by mid-twentieth century they helped move the Jewish communities extraordinarily quickly from the margins of society to the middle and upper socioeconomic categories. "By 1955, more than twice the percentage of Jewish heads of households held college degrees as their white protestant counterparts and more than three times the percentage as their Roman Catholic counterparts."<sup>9</sup>

These endeavors stirred up anti-Semitism. Yet, when the atrocities of the Holocaust became evident, many American Jews who had been reluctant to endorse Zionism called for the establishment of a Jewish state. Zionism represented a cause that linked Jews to a collective memory and provided a cause that helped channel protracted Jewish debates on the Civic Public Forum of the US. Since then, an increasing number of American Jews have represented a potent political lobby urging the American government to maintain a steadfast pro-Israel foreign policy<sup>10</sup>. Almost a decade later, the nearly complete dominance of Protestants on the American scene was approaching its end. Of the 528 members of the 85<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1957, 416 were Protestants, 95 were Catholic, and 12 were Jewish. There was one Sikh, the first and so far the only Sikh to be elected to Congress.

Jewish and Catholic contribution to the advancement of America's religious self-understanding from "Protestant" or "Christian," excluding Catholics, to "Judeo-Christian," was celebrated in a civil rights era promising America's minorities full participation in the public debates on America's Sacred Ground. The fact that participatory pluralism was inscribed into public policy by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, making it possible for minorities, regardless of their gender, religion, and race to exercise cultural authority, raised pressing questions about the state of religious pluralism in "Judeo-Christian America". No sooner had Americans enthusiastically celebrated their new religious identity as "Judeo-Christians," than Congress, in an unprecedented move since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, liberated its immigration policy. The 1965 Act added to the complexity of the American religious landscape by making it possible for an unprecedented number of adherents of world religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism, to settle in the US. The numerical

presence of Muslims (the largest of these groups), their marked institutional growth, and their sizeable indigenous African American groups, with a proven record in public activism for minority rights have made them a potential challenge to the nascent Judeo-Christian ethos inviting us to study whether they had risen to the height of this challenge prior to 9/11.

### **American Muslims on the American Sacred Ground: Towards a broader meaning of religious pluralism**

#### *The American Muslim experience before 9/11*

American Muslims represent a microcosm of the Muslim world. They reflect its extraordinary ethnic, racial, cultural, and theological diversity. The massive post-1965 influx of Muslims from the Middle East and Asia brought a new basis for religious authority for American Islam. The primary authenticators of Islam in America were no longer the Black Americans, who had fought long battles to carve a space for themselves on the religious landscape of the US, nor were they the Arab Americans who were subsumed under the Federation of Islamic Associations. The primary authenticators of Islam were rather post-1965 immigrants who spoke in the name of historical Islamic jurisprudence<sup>11</sup>.

The immigrant Muslims, who joined the Arab American organizations (including Arab Muslims and Christians), championed the cause of public activism for Arab/Muslim American rights. However, the self-appointed new male Muslim leadership, who were disappointed by Arab nationalism and influenced by traditionalist Islamic revivalism in the Muslim world in the 1960s, tried to isolate themselves from the Western environment to which they had emigrated by choice. They saw in the Arab American activism a form of Westernization and of shedding one's Islamic identity. They wanted to reproduce the traditionalist models of the Islamic life of their homelands, which, they believed, were deteriorated by Western colonialism in the US/West. They formed their own organization in the US, known as the Muslim Student Association, which is the nucleus of the now largest community development organizations in North America, such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Unlike American Catholics and Jews, they did not try to make Islam part of the intellectual heritage of the US by strengthening ties with the African American Muslims who had contributed, along with outsiders of long standing, to the advancement of the understanding of Americans about how America can fully realize its promise as a pluralistic society after the Civil Rights era<sup>12</sup>. Instead, the intellectual elite of the late 1970s and 1980s, including (Shi'i) Sayeed Hussein Nasr<sup>13</sup>, and the late (Sunni) Ismail Al-Farouqi<sup>14</sup>, who played an important role in defining Muslim identity for the emerging Muslim communities in the US, had one overriding goal: to revive Islamic

civilization throughout the world, including the United States. They strongly believed that the key to achieving this goal was the intellectual revival of the Ummah (Islamic Community). As this was resonant with the Islamic revivalist fervor in the Muslim world, the cash-rich Gulf states promoted the establishment of Islamic institutions, including Islamic schools, Islamic centers, mosques, and institutes of Islamic learning all over the world and in the US. These institutions served as ideological vehicles through which these countries tried to reproduce the cultural hegemony of the Muslim world in the West/US. As Hisham Aidi puts it in "Jihadis in the Hood: Race, Urban Islam, and the War on Terror,"

"Saudi Arabia has historically exerted the strongest influence over the American Muslim community, particularly since the rise of OPEC in 1973. Through the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Muslim Student Associations, the Islamic Circle of North America, and the Saudi-sponsored World Muslim League, the Saudis have financed summer camps for children, institutes for training imams, speakers' series, the distribution of Islamic literature, mosque-building and proselytizing<sup>15</sup>.

The Muslim experience of the Conscientious Public Forum prior to 9/11 shows that the Muslims have done perhaps better than most other post-1965 immigrants in building networks and securing a public space for themselves on the American soil.<sup>16</sup> In my opinion, the sustenance of Islamic practices in the US was made possible by the freedom available in the US to further institutional development, the gradual transformation of America from a melting pot into a multicultural society, and the rapid rate of conversion of Americans to Islam within the African American and Caucasian circles. It did not follow that the unabated zeal of the immigrant Muslims established Islam as an American religion. Unlike the American Catholics and Jews, American Muslims did not attempt to redefine the terms of the Islamic discourse from within, i.e., in conformity neither with Western assumptions nor, necessarily, with the dictates of Islamic traditionalism. As such, the American Muslims did not reach McGraw's self-empowering stage. It is no wonder that engagement in the Civic Public Forum was not a priority on the immigrant Muslim agenda prior to the 1990s.

As the self-appointed spokespeople defined the identity of what has become known as mainstream Islam in America in light of the transnational model of the Muslim world rather than the one rooted in the American Muslim context and stemming from its many streams, the PACs that they had founded (after the Jewish model) since the early 1990s were spurred by the crises in the Middle East and Asia<sup>17</sup>. Ethnic and national background ties were so strong in these organizations that they were

likely to show more unity and support when it came to sponsoring political causes in their home countries rather than in the US. The Pakistani PAC activism in promoting a Pakistan-friendly American foreign policy in central Asia, and the predominantly Arab and Middle Eastern PACs' support for the Palestinian question are cases in point. Even the 2000 Muslim block vote, which was highly acclaimed within the American Muslim community as a sign of American Muslim political maturity, did not reveal any agreement on the well-defined domestic agenda. Muslims voted in block for George W. Bush because he had promised them during his electoral campaign to put an end to the "secret evidence" whose victims were the Palestinian nationals. This alienated many African American Muslims who had traditionally voted for the Democrats.

The absence of a well-defined American Muslim community of conscience that knows who it is and is able to define its common interests strengthened the bonds between the immigrant Muslim communities and their countries of origin. Due to mainstream Muslim leadership indifference to pressing community problems, which were deeply rooted in the American context<sup>18</sup>, a new largely African American group, the Muslim Alliance of North America (MANA), was formed in April 2001. The purpose of MANA as stated in its mission statement is "to pursue an agenda that reflects the points of view and experiences of the indigenous Muslims of North America and address their needs and aspirations." Imam Siraj Wahhaj, the elected leader of MANA, commented that "MANA is open to all Muslims but the focus of the Alliance is on the issues and problems that indigenous Muslims deal with in America. And by indigenous, we mean all Muslims raised here in America".<sup>19</sup> This clearly shows that the divergence rather than the convergence of histories seemed more likely to be governing the relations between diverse Muslim communities on the eve of 9/11. However, the tide changed after 9/11 as increasing sections of immigrant Americans, men and mainly women, followed the indigenous African American precedent in leading public debates on both the Conscientious and Civic Public Forums of the US in order to carve space for Islam as an American religion, and attempt to redefine America's religious self-understanding.

### **9/11 and the indigenization of American Islam**

The resurgence of hate crimes against Muslims, mainly veiled Muslim women,<sup>20</sup> and stereotypical media images associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism led many Muslims to embark on the process of self-understanding after 9/11. Muslim men and women engaged in interfaith dialogue with neighboring faith communities in order to teach them about their religious beliefs and to seek their support and protection. The interfaith open house became as regular an affair as religious observance. Mosques and Islamic centers across the US engaged in more exchange and

dialogue with neighboring faith communities than over all preceding decades.<sup>21</sup> Religious institutions turned into public forums helping Americans rediscover the American Sacred Ground in public discourse by reviving the traditional role of religion as the moral voice in public dialogue in times of crisis. As such, the interfaith forums offered the American Muslims, as religious outsiders lacking the required experience and tools to channel their debates for full participation, the golden opportunity of acquiring a common language, structure, and values for such debates within a moral context.

These interfaith encounters made the diverse Muslim communities, immigrant and indigenous, examine the theoretical - theological, historical, social and legal - implications of their loyalties to their religion and to their country (the US) within their community of conscience and bring the outcome of such a debate to bear on the wider Conscientious Public Forum of the American Sacred Ground. Since 9/11, many Muslim scholars of Islam have become more outspoken and advocated the fundamental right of Muslim men and women in the US to freedom of jurisprudential choice and to unmediated access to the fundamental sources of Islam: the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Mohammad<sup>22</sup> (21). Calling upon North American Muslims to adhere to the Qur'anic philosophy of change and gradualism, scholars such as Azizah El Hibri, Aminah Wadud and Khaled Abu El Fadl have urged them to integrate their religious beliefs and ethnic heritage with the American way of life so as to define the American Islam and prove that Islam is not merely oriental. Even though these ideas have been channeled by an increasing number of Muslim scholars, the Progressive Muslim Union<sup>23</sup> has provided a forum since 9/11 for competing and complementary discourses on and by American Muslim women and men. *Progressive Muslims on Justice, Gender, and Pluralism* (2003), a volume edited by Omid Safi, projects a wide range of perspectives on issues that affect the lives of Muslims in the US and adamantly reject sexist, racist, and authoritarian formulations as antithetical to justice and compassion, which are at the heart of Islam.

Interfaith encounters on the Conscientious Public Forum have also helped American Muslims build further permanent grassroots alliances to channel debates on the Civic Public Forum of the American Sacred Ground. As Muslims expressed their pain and fear of mass detention and the curtailment of their civil liberties to their neighboring faith communities in interfaith encounters, they gained sympathizers. With the growth of public activism against the Iraqi war in 2002-2003, American Muslims seized the opportunity and made alliances with Congressmen and human rights organizations, such as the ACLU. They participated in rallies and organized meetings to denounce the Bush administration's plans to further curtail the civil liberties of all American citizens in the name of national security, and they filed law suits against the government.

Since 9/11, Muslim voters have increasingly exercised their

constitutional right to vote in the elections. For the first time ever a domestic concern, the civil liberties of Americans, including American Muslims, has been at the top of their agenda. Muslims have also participated in community work to help the needy in their communities regardless of their faith. Their growing sense of civic responsibility and belonging helped them launch social projects to help the disadvantaged in the society. Communal religious holidays, such as Ramadan, have turned into occasions to help the poor in the community. In November 2003, for instance, Women in Islam Inc, CAIR New York, and ICNA launched their first Ramadan Food Drive to assist New Yorkers in need in the New York metropolitan area. Involvement in community work helped build trust between Muslims and their neighboring Americans in many states around the US. The election of Keith Ellison as the first Muslim congressman (for Minnesota's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional district) represents a victory for the American Muslims. His devotion to community work in his state rather than to his religion helped him win the vote.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper I tried to study the impact of the 9/11 events on the American Muslim experience within the omnibus context of religious pluralism in the US. I relied on Barbara McGraw's theory of the American Sacred Ground as a general theoretical framework for my study. With the Jewish and Catholic experiences in the background, this paper studied the advances that the American Muslim communities made on the road to pluralism before and after 9/11. The Muslim experience after 9/11 clearly shows that the American Muslim organizations' claim that the 9/11 events represent a setback on the road towards American Muslim full participation is unwarranted. 9/11 ended years of Muslim isolation in America. It made Islam and pluralism much more visible and an immediate presence that required a response. It is only after 9/11 that the American Muslims have come to understand the principles of the American Sacred Ground and realize that it is vital to engage in a process of self-critique and confront the challenges of reinventing themselves as Americans. Despite internal tensions within the American Muslim communities on the question of authority, the new thinking about Islam, which will shape its future and the future of religious pluralism in the US, owes much to 9/11.

## **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Lippy, *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharp, 2000), 162

<sup>2</sup> On the obverse of the Great Seal of the US (1782), the eagle clutches in its beak

the motto “*E Pluribus Unum*” (out of many one). This motto goes to the heart of the identity of the US as a land of immigrants and to the strength it derives from diversity, including religious diversity.

<sup>3</sup> After the 1960s, historians of religion started rewriting the religious history of the US. In their new accounts, they attempted to include in the main story the histories of minority religions or what came to be known later as the histories of “religious outsiders.” In his book, *A Religious History of the American People* (1972), Sydney Ahlstrom argues that despite the promises offered in America’s founding documents, throughout American history pluralism had at most been struggling to be born and that it was the post-1960 widespread acceptance of diversity that gave birth to pluralism.

<sup>4</sup> These include R. Lawrence Moore’s *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (1986), Catherine L. Albanese’s *American Religions and Religion* (1992), Charles H. Lippy’s *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century* (2000), Diana Eck’s *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” has Become the World’s most Religiously Diverse Nation* (2001), and William R. Hutchinson’s *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Reuven Firestone, “Divine Authority And Mass Violence: Economies Of Aggression In The Emergence Of Religions”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 9, 26 (Summer 2010): 220-237

<sup>6</sup> Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), 3.

<sup>7</sup> It was formed in 1917 by sixty-eight dioceses.

<sup>8</sup> “In these decades of the late nineteenth century, Jews were accused of not assimilating to American culture and keeping themselves separate and aloof but were simultaneously refused admission to schools and universities, clubs, hotels, and resorts (...) During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Jews streamed into the United States from Eastern Europe and Russia, comprising about a tenth of the total number of immigrants. *McClure’s Magazine* called it the “Jewish Invasion.” By the 1920s, writers in the popular press could speak of the new Jews as “alienizing America” and as “unassimilable [sic], undesirable, and incapable of grasping American ideals.” Diana Eck, *A New Religious America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 50.

<sup>9</sup> Lippy, 59.

<sup>10</sup> To assert their loyalty to the US, advocates of the American Jewish identity portrayed America as their Zion. This was best reflected in the Central Conference of American Rabbis that convened in 1897. In this gathering American rabbis asserted that “We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation, but a religious community ... America is our Zion. Here in the home of religious liberty we have helped in founding this new Zion.” William R. Hutchinson, *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (New haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 126.

<sup>11</sup> By historical Islamic jurisprudence, I refer mainly to the four main schools of Islamic Jurisprudence of the Sunni tradition of Islam- the Hanafi, the Maliki, the Shafi’i, and the Hanbali schools- and the Jafari or Shi’a school.

<sup>12</sup> Participatory pluralism was inscribed into public law after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<sup>13</sup> “Born in Tehran, Iran, Nasr is a Shi’ite who speaks on behalf of the unity of Islam and the complementarity of its traditional doctrines and traditions (...) He is

an articulate opponent of such contemporary ideologies as modernism, rationalism, secularism, and materialism, seeing the immutable principles of traditional Islam to be their most effective antidote". Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 196-197

<sup>14</sup> The latter (1921-1986) was known for his Islamization of the Knowledge Project. He was instrumental in the founding of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Virginia, which is dedicated to the Islamization of social and natural sciences. Through their prolific literature, these institutions tried to bring about a universal Islamic revival of the Ummah (the large Islamic community or nation).

<sup>15</sup> Hisham Aidi, "Jihadis in the Hood: Race, Urban Islam, and the War on Terror," *Middle East Report* 224 (2002): 36.

<sup>16</sup> See Diana Eck's *A New Religious America*.

<sup>17</sup> See Paul Findley's *They Dare to Speak out* (1985) and *Silent No More* (2001).

<sup>18</sup> See Beverly Thomas McCloud, "African-American Muslim Women," in *The Muslims of America*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 184-186.

<sup>19</sup> M.A. Muqtedar Khan, *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom* (Maryland: Amana Publications, 2002), 21.

<sup>20</sup> The dramatic surge in anti-Muslim hate crimes was documented in the FBI hate crime statistics and the annual reports on the status of Muslim civil rights in the US published by CAIR.

<sup>21</sup> I had the opportunity to attend many interfaith meetings across the US in 2002-2003, especially during the month of Ramadan. Thorough studies of this post-9/11 phenomenon include Jane I. Smith, *Muslims, Christians and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue* (2007) and Eboo Patel and Patrice Brodeur, *Building the Interfaith Youth Movement Beyond Dialogue to Action* (2006).

<sup>22</sup> Their ideas were expressed in lectures and volumes such as Yvonne Y. Haddad, Jane I Smith, Kathleen M. Moore, *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today* (2006); Fawzia A. Khan ed. *Shattering the Stereotype: Muslim Women Speak Out* (2005); and Jamillah Ashira Karim, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah* (2009).

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.progressivemuslims.com>

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