

## BOOK REVIEWS

PARISH AND PLACE: MAKING ROOM FOR DIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. By Tricia Colleen Bruce. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. x + 254 pp. \$24.95 paper.

At first glance, sociologist Tricia Bruce offers a book-length study of a relatively rare (8 percent) organizational form of Catholic faith community known as the *personal parish*. What *Parish and Place* actually provides, however, is an in-depth sociological analysis of (1) how Catholic faith communities work as organizational structures and (2) why institutional structures matter a great deal more than we might expect in attempts by religious organizations to accommodate difference. *Parish and Place* tackles these important questions through a well-designed, multiyear mixed-method research project whose quantitative section produced an enviable 80 percent response rate from diocesan officials, and whose qualitative section elicited a level of detail and candor from bishops and priests that seems to have surprised even the author.

Permitted by church law, personal parishes exist as a small but important exception to the vast territorial parish system by which the Catholic world is partitioned into discrete geographical units for the faithful. Driven by purpose instead of place, “personal parishes carve out sanctioned spaces for expressing Catholicism in ways that distinctively cater to Catholics’ identities, preferences, and needs” (p.3). In the first two chapters, *Parish and Place* lays down the history, canon (church) law, and organizational structures of both the personal parish and the territorial parish. Focusing her attention on personal parishes established since 1983, she finds that such parishes primarily serve ethnic communities, especially Asian communities (43 percent) and, to a much lesser extent, groups like traditional Latin Mass (TLM) aficionados, Anglican converts to Catholics, and university parishes. Dr. Bruce then apprises us of how bishops decide to create personal parishes, giving us further insight into such decisions as a purposeful if some-

what ad hoc strategy, uncovering in the process some of the economic, political, and pastoral considerations that shape such higher-level institutional decision making.

The weightier analysis, however, comes in the three chapters that follow, where Bruce considers in turn (1) the way personal parishes reveal Catholic institutional approaches to difference; (2) how they manage the tension between unity and fragmentation within U.S. Catholicism; and (3) what personal parishes indicate about community life. Here, *Parish and Place* shows how the territorial parish as a generalist organization often fails to accommodate racial and ethnic difference. My own worry here is that Bruce’s interlocutors have blurred the distinction between a prescriptive theological ideal with ancient and contemporary relevance (unity across diversity) and an institutional strategy. The territorial parish as institution emerged historically against a backdrop of late medieval and early modern standardization and is itself a standardized form; in short, it was not designed to accommodate difference or diversity. *Parish and Place* does, however, make an impressive argument for how the personal parish as a specialist organization, rare as it may currently be, effectively establishes safe space and a power base for marginalized groups. In some cases, these personal parishes appear to serve as an explicit strategy to “contain” minority groups, though generally not ethnic or racial communities but rather ideological communities viewed as “troublesome,” including Catholics devoted to the TLM.

This important book helps to transcend some sticking points in previous research about Catholicism in the United States. It bypasses the debate on how “congregational” Catholic parishes are, and focuses on the way the parish as organizational form is decisively shaped by top-down structural decisions made by bishops and higher officials. They do so reflecting not just on the local community but on the entire regional context of the diocese. Dr. Bruce reminds us that to bishops, though perhaps not to parishioners, it is the diocese that is primarily church. One might imagine reading this book alongside Jerome Baggett’s *Sense of the Faithful*, a deep exploration of the social construction

of parish life at the individual and local level, and coming away with a fuller sociological understanding of the parish.

*Parish and Place* is the work of a sociologist who knows Catholicism; the ecclesial and theological vocabulary (explained for the non-specialist) is consistently accurate. A rare slip is the use of *subsidiarity*, a term from Catholic social teaching that has a much broader range of meaning than a simple preference for local decision making, as Bruce contends. Scholars of U.S. Catholicism and sociologists of religion will find it deeply persuasive. I found that this rare organizational form, the personal parish, is more revelatory about institutional dynamics, ecclesial and otherwise, than I would have assumed (there is an interesting comparison to charter schools). While most of the exploration of ecclesial power dynamics in *Parish and Place* proves incisive and honest, I would have preferred a more explicit discussion of the power differences among different kinds of personal parishes. Proportionate to their numbers in the Catholic population, Asian Catholics are overrepresented by personal parishes, while Hispanic/Latinx Catholics remain underrepresented. TLM Catholics also appear to have pull beyond their numbers, and African-American Catholics do not. We learn that funding (perhaps as an indicator of affluence) and priest support have an impact on these decisions, but unequal attention from bishops toward a group poised to become the majority of American Catholics requires a bit more exploration.

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NETWORKS AND RELIGION: TIES THAT BIND, LOOSE, BUILD-UP, AND TEAR DOWN. By Sean F. Everton. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xxiv + 389 pp. \$94.27 cloth, \$32.72 paper, \$28.00 eBook.

Academic books where the author tries to change the field are like natural pearls. Each is unique, standing out among books that, while often insightful, look and feel the same. I feel it important to start by calling *Networks and*

*Religion*, the latest book by Sean Everton, a pearl: much like the pearls in the biblical tale about porcine appraisal practices, this book has great worth. But natural pearls are known for their defects, and this one is no exception.

There are five parts to the book, each comprising two chapters. Part 1 is quite literally the introduction: the first chapter is written to introduce a neophyte to the state of social scientific research of religion and the second introduces the foundational theories and methods of social network analysis (SNA). Part 2 deals with ties that bind, focusing on theories of conversion, especially Stark and Bainbridge's open network theory of conversion, ecological theories of organization, and fuzzy religiosity. Part 3 looks at ties that loose, using examples of the Jewish diaspora and proximal point analysis to discuss religious diffusion. This is followed by a network approach to new institutionalism and a discussion of the political activities of congregations in the 2012 National Congregations Study—a somewhat dated sample in light of the 2016 election. Part 4 examines ties that build up, examining Stark's theory that new religious movements recruit among the middle class, before discussing the relationship between ego networks and religious tradition. Part 4 ends by using network methods to support arguments from Christian Smith and Melinda Denton's *Soul Searching*, Emile Durkheim's *Suicide*, and Rodney Stark's *Rise of Christianity* about the relationship between religion and health. Finally, Everton concludes with ties that tear down, discussing religious fission using balance theory to analyze Randall Collin's *Sociology of Philosophies* and introducing longitudinal SNA methods to analyze how religious groups radicalize.

That this gloss is so extensive yet incomplete should speak to how rich the book is with content, though possibly to its detriment. Many of the arguments used by Everton, a sociologist at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School who uses network analysis to study dark networks, are borrowed from other academics (most frequently Stark, and especially *The Rise of Christianity*) and then explored using SNA methodologies. Unfortunately, a good deal of real estate is devoted to repeating the results of other scholars: Chapter 8 is a good example.

For every page devoted to SNA, there are two devoted not to summarizing but restating the conclusions of others' work. Even Durkheim's typology of suicide receives three and a half pages of introduction and analysis before SNA is even mentioned. An editor with an eye for concision should have been brought in.

In the preface, Everton identifies four audiences he wishes to reach: social network analysts who are interested in studying religion but do not know where to begin, social scientists who study religion and have an interest in SNA but are unfamiliar with its theories and methodologies, professors looking for a text that teaches SNA in a religious context, and students seeking to introduce themselves to SNA.

Which of Everton's potential audiences would get the most utility out of this work? As a member of the second, a sociologist of religion with an interest in SNA, the way this book teaches the current state of scientific religious research is problematic. As fond as I am of Rodney Stark, Roger Finke, Christian Smith, and Laurence Iannaccone, I find his overreliance on their work to be troubling. The ink used in citations of Stark's work alone could fill a new book. When introducing the debate between secularization and religious markets/rational choice perspectives, the secularization argument is represented using authors from half a century ago. Where is more current research by Steven Bruce, David Voas, Pippa Norris, and Ronald Inglehart? If Penny Edgell's "A Cultural Sociology of Religion: New Directions" had been used as a reference, it might have helped to fill some gaps.

Additionally, I do not know that I would trust it as a text for students, graduate or undergraduate. The lack of consistent structure between chapters (some chapters go issue by issue, discussing SNA as it goes along, others start with heavy theory focus, move onto several examples, then discuss those examples in terms of one or two major SNA methodologies) would put a lot of work on the instructor to tie everything together, and students might get bogged down in the amount of detail given to recounting others' research.

This pearl does hold luster as a way to introduce a scholar or student who already has an understanding of religion, showing how cur-

rent arguments in the field (even if from a very narrow slice of the field) can be supported and made better by a stronger understanding of SNA and how SNA's assumptions fit better theoretically with how we understand religion to function than many of the methods we currently use. It explains these new methods in such a way that even the SNA novice will see ways to add them to his or her research agenda.

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**FROM POLITICS TO THE PEWS: HOW PARTISANSHIP AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT SHAPE IDENTITY.** By Michelle F. Margolis. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018. xii + 291 pp. \$95.00 cloth, \$32.50 paper, \$32.50 epub.

Religious voters are Republican. Secular voters? They are Democrats. At least that is what the new book *From Politics to the Pews* claims. Data are analyzed from the General Social Survey, Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study, Faith and Freedom Coalition, and American National Election Study, to name but a few. Using change models and multivariate regression analyses, author Michelle F. Margolis concludes that yes, Republicans are religious, and Democrats are not. Across nine chapters, Margolis presents a strong argument that it is not religion shaping politics, but rather that politics are shaping religion.

Margolis, a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, is at her strongest in theorizing the mechanisms behind *why* and *how* politics shape religion. Life cycle theory may provide the answer. Margolis deftly outlines how religious attachments tend to wane in late adolescence and early adulthood. However, once fully into adulthood, and especially when marriage and children arrive, many people return to religious communities. Indeed, both marriage and parenthood are strongly and positively correlated with church attendance, identification with a religious community, and religious salience. While the importance of religion is reduced for many in their late teens and early 20s, this is precisely the time when

political identity becomes cemented. Margolis argues that partisan identities formed during those “impressionable years” shape the religious attachments that are reignited as people transition into parenthood and family life.

The value of this approach is that it gives us a theoretically grounded lens to examine the intersection of religious and political identities. Margolis then moves from one study to the next, outlining how we see this “God Gap” emerging. Parenthood really matters in whether people select back into religion, and Republicans show statistically significant stronger effects on average than do Democrats. And it seems that church attendance does not affect partisanship, primarily due to partisan identity formation in early adulthood.

One of the more curious things about this book is the treatment of “religiosity.” Margolis primarily discusses three aspects of religion—affiliation, attendance, and biblical literalism. Affiliation is simply whether one claims to be a member of a religious organization, but this should not be treated without nuance. The weight given to membership varies by religious group. Church attendance tends to be used as a proxy for salience: the more you attend, the more important your religion is to you. While salience could affect the rate at which one attends, they are distinct measures. Moreover, the use of biblical literalism as a measurement of religiosity is not without pitfalls. Belief that the Bible should be followed word for word without interpretation is a theological question, with an answer that is often culturally colored. And it is a belief that is a minority one among Christians both in the United States and internationally.

“Religious voters are disproportionately Republican and secular voters are overwhelmingly Democrat. This result is indisputable,” Margolis states (p. 37). Many sociologists who study the intersection of religion and politics would take issue with this statement. According to the 2015 Pew Religious Landscape Study, around 85 percent of Republicans say religion is somewhat or very important in their lives, while for Democrats that number is nearly 75 percent, hardly an indisputable “God Gap.” If we were to include measures of spirituality or of non-Christian religions, perhaps

the gulf would narrow further. The choice of variables and operationalization in the book could lead the reader to conflate the fact that irreligious people are more likely to be Democrat with the idea that Democrats are irreligious.

A highlight of this book is the discussion of historically black congregations. The Black Church has a long and complicated history, and Margolis notes that these congregations are exceptional—in religious belief, behavior, and political activity. On its face, this would seem to run counter to the argument Margolis has produced, but she does a great job recognizing why the results are particularly different. However, this is the limit of the discussion around race and religion. The author claims that limiting the responses to white only did not statistically or substantively change the results, but this suggests that the inquiry here only looked at nonwhites as a group. This camouflages the distinctiveness of different racial groups as all minority groups are not alike.

This tome is most appropriate for academics interested in the intersection of religion and politics. It could also be suited for good discussion in a graduate seminar. The criticisms levied here might lead one to believe that this book is critically flawed. On the contrary, despite its flaws, I find the book to be well written and compelling. It is a solid contribution to existing research and gives social scientists another theoretical lens to look at political and religious socialization. Still, we need to keep in mind that the argument presented is grounded in a white-conservative Protestantism. Scholars would be well served to investigate how and where the presented theory operates for nonwhites and non-Christians. This book, in many ways, inspires more questions than it answers, but it provides another useful arrow in the quiver of social science research.

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FAITHFUL AND FRACTURED: RESPONDING TO THE CLERGY HEALTH CRISIS.  
By Rae J. Proeschold-Bell and Jason Byassee.

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018. xxii + 196 pp. \$19.99 paper, \$19.99 eBook.

When a friend supported by The Duke Endowment invited Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell to research clergy health, her first instinct was to say no. Given that clergy usually are educated, religious, and have health insurance—each a factor regularly associated with better health—she doubted the urgency of focusing on clergy compared with other populations. After initial investigation, she concluded differently, discovering that conversations at clergy conferences persistently clustered around stress and burnout.

Clergy recounted having unusually high health insurance fees. A prior Duke study documented clergy as submitting more health-care claims than the general population. Perceiving a cry for help, Proeschold-Bell began 10 years of research into United Methodist clergy health in North Carolina, the basis for *Faithful and Fractured: Responding to the Clergy Health Crisis*. The book has eight chapters, plus an appendix, “Recommendations for Clergy Health Programs.”

Proeschold-Bell sent her original 2008 survey to all United Methodist clergy in North Carolina. Their response rate was 95 percent. Follow-up surveys in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 continued to shape “the only existing self-reported longitudinal data set of clergy health, which allows us to see how individual clergy do over time” (p.xvii). Reflections by Proeschold-Bell’s co-author Jason Byassee provide a personal face to the data. Previously a North Carolina United Methodist pastor, Byassee is now Butler Chair in Homiletics at Vancouver School of Theology.

The authors outline “a true crisis in clergy health” (p.xxi), then suggest tools for clergy and other care-giving professionals to promote positive mental health habits that by extension nurture physical health. Chapters 1 and 2 look at clergy work expectations. Only 2 percent of clergy surveyed in 2016 said that church members demanded less than 40 hours of their available time each week. 14.1 percent mentioned about 40 hours a week, 40.4 percent 40–50 hours a week, 37.1 percent significant time beyond a 40+ hour work week, 2.8 percent

nearly all of their time without a day off, and 3.6 percent “all of my time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week” (p.4). Clergy energized by a sense of calling felt at the same time guilty for not doing more. They suffered stress from constant task switching, and criticism from parishioners who displayed little awareness or an absence of empathy for the diverse responsibilities clergy work requires.

Chapters 3 and 4 calculate clergy depression. Proeschold-Bell’s 2008 survey revealed that 8.7 percent of clergy who responded by phone qualified for depression, as did 11.1 percent of clergy who completed a self-administered questionnaire. In contrast, only 5.5 percent of U.S. adults overall suffer from depression according to Proeschold-Bell’s statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Male clergy in 2008 exhibited twice the depression rates of U.S. men generally (8.8 percent vs. 4.4 percent), though Proeschold-Bell concedes that men entering ministry may be predisposed to depression in some way. Her 2016 survey charts more specific symptoms. Drawing on the relevant data, she outlines concrete steps for cultivating clergy health through nutritious eating, rest, recreation, mutually supportive relationships, and enjoying nature.

Chapter 5 examines physical health. Clergy obesity in the 2014 survey was 41.4 percent versus 29.3 percent of demographically similar North Carolinians. Analogous were the rates for angina (4.7 percent vs. 1.9 percent), diabetes (10.5 percent vs. 6.2 percent), asthma (12.6 percent vs. 7.6 percent), and joint disease (26.6 percent vs. 21.9 percent). A mere 25 percent of clergy were neither obese nor overweight. Those aged 55–64 demonstrated even greater percentage variation in selected areas. Proeschold-Bell found comparable trends in assorted care-giving professions, as well as in clergy beyond North Carolina Methodism. She puts this health crisis into perspective with historic data from multiple European countries and the United States prior to 1910 when clergy were among the healthiest citizens.

Chapter 6 spotlights positive emotions, such as amusement and a sense of comradery, for reducing recovery time from stress, trauma, and terrifying experiences. It discusses clergy

life satisfaction data that seem to be in tension with depression. Proeschold-Bell hypothesizes that clergy sometimes displayed robust psychological and social functioning due to their resilient sense of meaning in life, but notes that this remarkably coexisted with depressive symptoms, physical illness, or self-neglect complicated by internal and external work pressures.

Chapters 7 and 8 sample anecdotes from “flourishing” clergy who embody various social scientific categories related to gender, age, career experience, race, and church size served. In addition to the considerations listed in prior paragraphs, characteristics that thriving clergy exemplified were balanced habits of physical, emotional, and spiritual self-care, service, and fulfilling family, colleague, parishioner, community, and supervisory relationships.

The authors critique the organizational challenge of one pastor being assigned to more than one church, effectively draining her or his energy and dividing his or her attention.

They also are critical of the practice of forbidding clergy from fostering deep bonds with their parishioners. Such well-intentioned cautions surround fears about objectivity, power imbalance, and transience in a system where clergy may transfer to different churches on an annual basis. Yet, attempting to ban clergy-parishioner social closeness isolates clergy. Byassee perceptively poses that prohibiting clergy-parishioner friendships contravenes Jesus as a role model who personified self-care and authentic friendships with his disciples and others.

Proeschold-Bell and Byassee recurrently quote Irenaeus: “The glory of God is a human being fully alive.” Reflection, research, and resources in *Faithful and Fractured* will contribute well to further inquiry into attitudes and behaviors that contribute or detract from such aliveness.

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