

# **Affect Theology:**

## **A Roadmap for The Continental Gathering of Unitarian Universalist Seminarians**

Thandeka

This essay serves as a formal introduction to affect theology for the Continental Gathering of Unitarian Universalist Seminarians.<sup>1</sup> I will highlight the history of affect theology as an academic field and show how a foundational deficiency in liberal theology can not only be explained by this history, but also corrected by introducing affective theological studies as a new field of inquiry for liberal ministry today.

Liberal theology was created for atheists, theists, humanists, artists, scientists, seekers, persons from different religious traditions and persons without a religious identity at all. Thanks to this liberal theological tradition Unitarian Universalism can encompass an extraordinary array of personal interests, individual standpoints, and disparate beliefs. Our communities, by liberal theological design, are made up of religion's enlightened believers as well as its cultured despisers. There is just one major thing this rich theological tradition does not equip us to do as a religious movement: grow.

Liberal theology's loss of its own affective foundation compromised our ability to create Unitarian Universalist communities that grow stronger and more vibrant with each succeeding generation. Three major points explain why.

First, liberal theology – at its inception as an academic field of study two centuries ago – affirmed human feelings and the personal experience of an

exalted change of heart as foundational to liberal faith. But the investigation of the affective dimension of human experience was excluded from liberal theology's design.

Second, ministry students have studied faith traditions not to strengthen the heart of their own faith but instead to interrogate their religious ideas as an academic field of inquiry. Ministers thus learned how to sideline the heart of their own faith in order to focus their minds on the nature and structure of religious beliefs and doctrines.

Third, the sanctuaries these academically trained ministers served became "corpse-cold," as Emerson noted almost two centuries ago. The warmth was gone from their words, the feelings that spark thoughts and kindle ideas were vacated, the heart of liberal faith froze.

My essay explores how this emotionally disabling theological agenda took shape so that its history need not be your destiny. I begin with seven basic steps that take us from nineteenth-century Prussia to you. And then I offer an eighth step into the future.

### **The First Step: A Letter From the King of Prussia**

On September 27, 1817, Friedrich Schleiermacher, dean of the theological faculty at the University of Berlin and president of the United Synod of Berlin, received a letter from Friedrich Wilhelm III, the King of Prussia. The King, the highest bishop of Schleiermacher's own Calvinist tradition, wanted to celebrate the Lord's Supper with his Lutheran wife. So he asked Schleiermacher and the

synod of Lutheran and Reformed ministers to construct a service the couple could participate in together without violating their own respective Protestant traditions, doctrines, and beliefs.

Schleiermacher and the other members of the synod acceded to the king's request and wrote a United Evangelical worship service and celebration of the Lord's Supper for the King and his wife. The service took place with 63 heads of state and ministers present. Five years later, the full union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches took place. On Palm Sunday in 1822, the Evangelical Church of Prussia was born.<sup>ii</sup>

### **The Second Step: Schleiermacher's New Theology for the New Church**

Schleiermacher now set out to write a systematic theology for the Evangelical Church of Prussia that could be affirmed by both Lutherans and Calvinists. The shared foundation of their Christian faith, Schleiermacher reasoned, could not be their respective creedal beliefs and doctrines because these protocols separated the two traditions and made them distinct. What, then was left as their shared foundation of faith? Schleiermacher's answer: Feeling. More precisely, emotions, which thanks to a given religious community's practices and beliefs, were turned into pious Lutheran or Reformed feelings within its individual members. This process of altering raw emotions so that they become religious feelings, Schleiermacher concluded, is the foundational reference shared by both traditions. Religious communities transform and upgrade emotions into pious feelings.

To make this common ground of faith self-evident to his readers, Schleiermacher did two basic things. (1) He first redefined the term “affect” [*Affekt*]. He did so to help his readers think about *affect* as a physical fact of the human spirit rather than simply as another term that referred to the human spirit [*Geist*] as disembodied.<sup>iii</sup> (2) He then invited his readers to track how their own triggered emotions get changed into pious emotional states. Schleiermacher wanted them to gain first-hand self-knowledge of the role their own bodies play in creating religious experiences.

Schleiermacher thus invited his readers to pay attention to the physical state of their own souls using his newly defined term. To “care for souls,” in Schleiermacher’s lexicon, now meant to pay attention to human affections.<sup>iv</sup> And affects, in this new scheme of things, were the product of stimulated “nerves or whatever else is the first ground and seat of motions in the human body.”<sup>v</sup> They were the primal reference for discourse on faith, i.e., theology. Schleiermacher’s new theological system was thus an “*Affekt Theology*,” if you will, a way of tracking religious claims, feelings and ideas from the standpoint of triggered emotions.

Accordingly, Schleiermacher’s new theological system did not refer to God, the Holy Spirit, or to Christ as its first and primary reference. Rather, he made the somatic movements of the human nervous system, which he called the human soul [*Seele*], the new bedrock reference for theological studies.<sup>vi</sup>

Schleiermacher called the primary affective state for theological reflection the feeling of being utterly dependent upon and an inextricable part of life itself.<sup>vii</sup>

The first idea that comes to mind to make sense of this feeling, Schleiermacher argued in his *magnum opus*, *The Christian Faith*, is “God.” But the immediate reference point for this idea, Schleiermacher insisted, is not God but rather the human feeling of being absolutely dependent upon life itself – all of it.<sup>viii</sup>

He then went on to refer to the idea “God” as (1) **a result of** the personal, immediate self-awareness of this human feeling of absolute dependence. The term “God” is the first idea that comes to mind, Schleiermacher argued, to explain the source of the feeling. He also explained the idea “God” as (2) **simultaneous with** the feeling.<sup>ix</sup> But to claim that something is simultaneous with the feeling and also a later reflection on the feeling is confusing.

As a result, Schleiermacher’s theology was rife with conflicting claims, “concealments and ambiguities,” as Karl Barth put it. Barth, as one of Schleiermacher’s most influential twentieth-century critics, concluded that the basic source of these logical problems was Schleiermacher’s attempt to put human emotions where the Holy Spirit belongs. By so doing, Barth argued, Schleiermacher compromised “a proper theology of the Holy Spirit [by offering up a] theology of [human self-] awareness.”<sup>x</sup> Schleiermacher, according to Barth, stripped theology of its “third” element, the Holy Spirit, which is theology’s principle of mediation. As a consequence, Barth concluded, the distinction between man and God was lost.<sup>xi</sup> Schleiermacher, Barth insisted, had put culture – the acculturation and socialization process of human emotions – where it did not belong: in the “innermost sanctuary [of] his theology.”

And thus Karl Barth's core complaint against Schleiermacher: he had created a theological system that explained all Christian doctrines, practices, beliefs, and precepts as a study of the different ways in which human feelings are modified by the beliefs and practices of a particular religious community. Human experience rather than the Holy Spirit was now the place where pious feelings began.

Barth's critique was half right. Schleiermacher had indeed made human emotion and not the Holy Spirit the first reference for theological reflection. But Schleiermacher placed the study of human emotions and how they get triggered outside the academic field of theology. So Schleiermacher, contra Barth's claim, did not make the actual study of human emotions an immediate theological topic and concern. Instead, he relegated the actual study of the affective foundation of his theological scheme to ethics, psychology, philosophy, aesthetics and other academic fields and disciplines.<sup>xii</sup>

By consigning the study of the affective states of human consciousness to other fields, Schleiermacher kept human feelings out of the realm of his theology. But by so doing, he created a theological system without a delineated exploration of how human emotions function. His theology, in effect, lacked an adequate doctrine of human nature.

Unlike the use of *conscience* by Luther and Calvin,<sup>xiii</sup> Schleiermacher did not make *Affekt* an innate *religious* capacity implanted in human nature by God as a link between God and human beings. Rather, *Affekt*, in Schleiermacher's system, is an aspect of human nature that can be shaped into a pious expression

but is not in itself pious. It is simply a neurological impulse. Schleiermacher, in sum, placed liberal theology's human foundation (i.e., its doctrine of human nature) where no one could find it: *outside* his theological system.

### **The Third Step: The Search for the Foundation of Liberal Theology Begins**

The readers of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* could not find the foundation of his new theological system because it wasn't there. The study of triggered human emotions, for Schleiermacher, was not a theological discipline. Should it have been? Schleiermacher seemed to concede the point in a letter to his friend Dr. Friedrich Lücke. Schleiermacher had assumed, he now confessed, that the personal study by readers of their own triggered feelings would make his claims about the function of affect in the creation of pious feelings and religious ideas self-evident. Writes Schleiermacher:

I presumed – and I did not fail to say so – that all would somehow bring along with them in their immediate self-consciousness what was missing [in his text], so that no one would feel short-changed, even though the content was not presented in dogmatic form until later. But all these hints were overlooked because, as I said, many who were interested in the book . . . *did not bring with them anything that they would not receive first from dogmatics*. Should I not have rather begun my work with a description of Christian consciousness in its entirety?<sup>xiv</sup>

Was Schleiermacher's question rhetorical? It is not clear whether he was acknowledging the absence of detailed descriptions of the affective foundation of his theological system – and with it the absence of a clear delineation of the origins of "Christian consciousness" – as oversights he could or should try to correct within the boundaries of his new system. Nevertheless, his modern

theology, lacking this affective content, became cultural theology, as Barth rightly noted.<sup>xv</sup>

Liberal theology in America became prodigious in its creation of offspring: postliberal and postcolonial theologies, gender, racial, and ethnically defined identity-based theologies, and more.<sup>xvi</sup> The main achievement of American liberal theology toward the end of the twentieth century, Gary Dorrien observes, was diversity. And as American liberal theology became progressively “more liberationist, feminist, environmentalist, multiculturalist, and postmodernist,” Dorrien concludes, the contested pronouncements of these contested theologies revealed the present impossibility of American liberal theology claiming for itself an uncontested foundation of and for liberal Christian theological studies as a secular, academic field of inquiry.<sup>xvii</sup>

The requirements for academic membership in these respective theological guilds also created a gap, as Carter Heyward, professor emerita at Episcopal Divinity School observed, between the theological studies of students in the progressive seminaries spawned by liberal theology’s heirs and the ability of these students upon graduation to communicate with the congregations they were hired to serve. As Heyward pointedly notes, the students “spoke of transgressing religious and cultural boundaries while American politics and religion moved to the right.”<sup>xviii</sup> Seminaries, theology schools, and religious studies programs became progressive collections of interest groups without a shared foundational ground.<sup>xix</sup>



This is the present academic environment in which you are being trained as Unitarian Universalist seminarians, with a telling result. You are being trained to think about religion as cultural studies, historical investigations, pastoral care strategies and social justice venues. But you are not being adequately trained to create religious services that change and heal congregants' hearts through liturgical practices that uplift emotions, the experiences of which are then affirmed and expanded upon homiletically. Congregants thus lack the firsthand experience in Sunday services of standing strong and steadfast on the side of love.

Our ministers are trained *to think about religion* rather than also to *practice it* affectively through the ways in which they structure their Sunday services. Congregants, just like their ministers, focus on ideas.

A story brings home this point.

#### *The Roxbury Congregation*

Several years ago, I attended the Sunday worship service of an evangelical mission church in a blighted, inner city community in Roxbury, Massachusetts. While in Boston for a conference, another minister and I attended a Sunday service led by a newly-credentialed minister who combined her liberal, UU social justice work with traditional, Christian mission work.

The small sanctuary was packed to overflowing with the truly dispossessed and downtrodden in this drug ridden, desperately poor, black and brown Roxbury community. The evangelical spirit of the minister's traditional

religious background was present in full force. Toward the middle of the service, there was an altar call.

The congregants lined up, music played, and everyone was singing. Each person in line had a chance to whisper something into the minister's ear. Each person then received a personal blessing and now, aglow, rejoined the larger congregation.

As my friend and I left the church after the two-hour service, we talk about the altar call we had just witnessed.

"What do you think would happen if we initiated such a ritual in our mainline congregations?" I asked my friend. He replied, "Here's what would happen in my congregation. Everyone would line up. Each person would whisper into my ear: 'After the service, I want to talk with you about your sermon.'"

We didn't laugh.

My colleague had exposed a principal weakness of UU ministry: We don't "do" emotions. Most of us do not know how to grab hold of raw human emotions like anger, fear, rage, and anxiety and turn them into religious feelings that shore folk up when they are let down. Instead, we explore ideas, ignoring – or worse yet, running roughshod over – human feelings.

This incapacity is a liberal theological problem for ministers *and* laity. And its legacy can, in part, be traced back to Schleiermacher's failure to make affective theological studies part of the academic discipline of theology for liberal faith.

### **The Fourth Step: Schleiermacher's Creation of Liberal Theology for "Nones"**

Schleiermacher's decision to create a new theology was motivated by more than the letter from the King of Prussia and the union of two Protestant traditions. He also wrote his liberal theology for the nineteenth-century equivalent of today's Nones, namely, persons without religious identity or affiliation. He used two basic claims to help make his case.

First, Schleiermacher argued that the human feeling of being an inextricable part of the universe was far more immediate and easily felt than the notion that there must be a God. Schleiermacher, in effect, raised the importance of human feeling and lowered the importance of belief in or talk about God. As Schleiermacher put it in his book *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, "the idea of God does not rank as high as you think."<sup>xx</sup> Schleiermacher then created, in effect, a theological perspective that made artists and other "cultured despisers of religion" the true priests of religion. And Schleiermacher argued they did not even have to believe in God to have religious experiences.<sup>xxi</sup>

Second, Schleiermacher insisted that in the realm of religious experience there is no mathematical proof to demonstrate that things must be so and not otherwise.<sup>xxii</sup> The only test, Schleiermacher concluded, is personal experience. And so he called upon his readers to examine the structure of their own piety through their own acts of "immediate self-consciousness." They must use this self-evidence to determine the veracity of his claims, Schleiermacher insisted. They must find the affective side of pious experience in order to complete,

through personal self-description, his theological claims. This is why Schleiermacher's new theological system was called "liberal." He made personal experience rather than church doctrine, liturgical traditions, the Bible, or belief in God the benchmark for pious feelings. Now, thanks to Schleiermacher, one could reject all of the religious traditions, beliefs and creeds of a community and still count oneself as pious. The role of a religious community was indeed to change emotions into pious feelings, but the words and beliefs linked to this change of heart need no longer hold absolute sway over the individual.

The result of Schleiermacher's theology for these "Nones" showed up in nineteenth-century Unitarianism in two basic ways: the distinction between man and God was lost; and the inherent worth and dignity of man was found and then lost again. Two brief examples provide the framework for the next step in our work.

#### *William Ellery Channing*

William Ellery Channing, as Conrad Wright put it, gave Unitarianism its party platform.<sup>xxiii</sup> This platform, however, had a hard emotional edge that can be easily seen when we review what Channing did at the age of 19 to overcome what he thought of as his "effeminacy"<sup>xxiv</sup> and then later explained in theological terms.

Channing would work at his desk until two or three o'clock in the morning. Frequently, the sun would rise before he went to bed. And when he did fall asleep, he would often use the bare floor as his bed. He would spring up at any hour and walk about in the cold in an attempt to toughen his heart.

As a result of these routines, he broke down his immune system and became infirmed for the rest of his life. Channing was quite clear about the theological principle that guided his harsh treatment of his body: human essence is the mind, and mind is independent from the body.<sup>xxv</sup>

According to Channing, true identity consists of an autonomous disembodied self.<sup>xxvi</sup> Channing also believed that there would be future retribution for human beings in the afterlife: “The miseries of disobedience to conscience and God are not exhausted in this life. Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring down future, greater misery. This Christianity teaches, and this nature teaches.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

Channing drew on two major sources for evidence to support his claims: traditional Protestant doctrine accepted and understood as divine revelation (i.e., God) and traditional Protestant doctrine affirmed through human reason and conscience (i.e., man). These two claims clearly are not part of Schleiermacher’s liberal theology. But the claims became associated with Schleiermacher’s liberal theology because the Transcendentalists and the tradition they represented and changed – Unitarianism – trumpeted Schleiermacher’s work.<sup>xxviii</sup>

*Emerson’s 1838 Divinity School Address*<sup>xxix</sup>

When Emerson defined the true minister as one who “deals out to the people his life . . . passed through the fire of thought” and then exhorted each graduate to become “a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity,” Emerson thought he was reaffirming insights by Schleiermacher.<sup>xxx</sup> And so, too, did Emerson’s audience. Andrews Norton, in his scathing critique of the Divinity School Address, called

both Emerson and Schleiermacher infidels.<sup>xxx</sup> Moreover, George Ripley, in response to Norton, devoted more than a third of his defense of the Divinity School Address to a delineation of Schleiermacher's religious work.<sup>xxxii</sup> Emerson, American Transcendentalism, and Schleiermacher were closely linked in the minds of both friend and foe.

But Emerson's claim in his Address that moral sentiment is the "essence of all religion" and that the "intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul" was alien to Schleiermacher's system. Rather, the source of this claim was Harvard yard's "common sense" philosophy.

### **The Fifth Step: Common Sense Philosophy**

Harvard Unitarians filled in the emotion gap in liberal theology using the work of philosophers from the nineteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment. This new liberal school known at Harvard as the Common Sense school of philosophy was moored in the work of Scottish Reformer Thomas Reid (1710-1796). Unlike the Protestant Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin, who both condemned humans as fallen and lacking innate moral worth and value, Reid reaffirmed the sanctity of human nature, which had, he said, an innate moral human faculty.

Liberals and conservatives, Unitarians and Calvinists, traditionalists and post-traditionalists, Federalists and anti-Federalists converged here on this common moral ground of the American Enlightenment. Thomas Jefferson admired the Scottish philosophers even though he dismissed their attempt to preserve organized Christianity. John Witherspoon, the president of Princeton,

championed a Calvinist “common sense realism.” Alexander Madison, James Hamilton and John Jay, as authors of the Federalist Papers, understood and affirmed the dignity and values of human faculties from the standpoint of the Scottish philosophers.<sup>xxxiii</sup> These men with their disparate and conflicting political stands and religious interests were strange bedfellows here because Common Sense realism was the bedrock claim for one and all. Human nature was no longer deemed helpless, savage, and totally at the mercy of a vengeful God. Rather, men and women now had moral agency because human nature was considered naturally and potently moral.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

This new moral standpoint framed the heart and soul of the American Enlightenment. Human nature, in sum, was no longer viewed by these Enlightenment Protestants as fallen from grace and damned as irreparable because of Adam’s (original) sin in the biblical Garden of Eden.

There was, however, a catch. Not all people, so it was now deemed, had innate moral capacities. Some people lacked these qualities not because of Adam’s bad deeds or God’s consequent wrath, but because of their own flawed nature.

Moral worth, Reid insisted, “is the true worth and glory of a man.” So knowledge of our moral responsibilities, Reid insisted, is a duty.<sup>xxxv</sup> Of what does this duty consist? If you have to ask, Reid insisted, you don’t have it. Why? Either you have a moral faculty that shows you what you ought to do and be – or you don’t have it<sup>xxxvi</sup> because duty is self-evident common sense for those who have it. Writes Reid: “To reason about justice with a man who sees nothing to be

just or unjust, or about benevolence with a man who sees nothing in benevolence preferable to malice, is like reasoning with a blind man about colour, or with a deaf man about sound.”<sup>xxxvii</sup>

To make certain he was clear, Reid offered a thought experiment. Imagine meeting a man who believes in polygamy. You now reason with the polygamist, Reid continues, showing him the negative consequences for humanity. But if the man persists in his belief, and “does not perceive that he ought to regard the good of society, and the good of his wife and children, the reasoning can have no effect upon him, because he denies the first principle upon which it is grounded,” namely, our human moral faculty.

So you redouble your effort, Reid tells his readers. This time you “reason for monogamy from the intention of nature, discovered by the proportion of males and of females that are born – a proportion which corresponds perfectly with monogamy, but by no means with polygamy – this argument can have no weight with a man who does not perceive that [he] ought to have regard to the intention of nature.” You do not prevail.

Go no farther, Reid now counsels his readers, because the polygamist lacks a moral capacity. His moral character is innately flawed. The man is constrained by his very nature, Reid argues, from doing the right thing.

Throughout his work, he repeatedly lifted up claims from his own Northern European Christian values, such as monogamy, to a universal status. Reid, in effect, still divided individuals into the damned and the saved – as Protestants were wont to do based on their own traditional theological histories. But now, the



rationale for this division was no longer a human nature brought down by Adam's fall, but rather the individual's own innately fallen nature. Now, the exigencies of our own biology determined our moral fate. We are, by nature, born innately moral or not. Period.<sup>xxxviii</sup> One American historian called the "enlightened" Unitarian stance *Christian humanism*.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Channing could thus continue to treat human emotions as if they were something to be controlled rather than explored and Emerson could make moral sentiments rather than transformed feelings the "essence" of religion because liberal faith still had the markers of traditional Protestant theology but now written in an Enlightenment script.

### **The Sixth Step: Liberal Faith Loses its Religious Identity**

By the end of the nineteenth century, a secular rather than a religious worldview began to frame the internal life of liberal Christians and shape their public work.<sup>xl</sup> Liberal Christians began to move beyond affirmations of their original formative moral values as "Enlightened" religious beliefs. Walter Rauschenbush, a late nineteenth-century progenitor of the Social Gospel Movement or "New Christianity" explained why: "when I began to apply my previous religious ideas to the conditions I found, I discovered that they didn't fit."<sup>xli</sup>

The basis for social reform for liberal Christians like Rauschenbush was no longer revivals to purge men's hearts of sin, as social theorist James Davison Hunter points, but rather social reform movements to modify the institutional structures that spawned societal ills.<sup>xlii</sup> The focal point of liberal faith was now

“the social and economic problems associated with industrialization and urbanization (e.g., crowded and inadequate housing, conditions of labor in the factory system, a changing family structure, increasing crime and suicide rates and so on) . . . and the religious and cultural pluralism brought by the unprecedented influx of Irish and Italian (Roman Catholic) and Eastern European (Jewish) immigrants.”

This movement of liberal Christians into the secular domain to explain the sin of compromised moral souls, however, gutted liberal Christianity of its own traditional doctrinal claims about the human conscience and sin espoused by Luther and Calvin. It also severed ties with the “Enlightenment moral values” version of these same theological claims found in Common Sense Moral Philosophy.

As liberals backed away from their own American Enlightenment religious values, however, they disestablished American Protestantism as the foundation of their own liberal faith.<sup>xliii</sup> They rejected, in effect, the Christian values and claims about human nature and human emotions that they had previously affirmed. As a result, liberal Protestants began to move beyond the moral purview of their own theological traditions.

This is the conclusion German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer reached in 1930-31 when he studied at the liberal bastion of modern Protestant theology in America, Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan. Bonhoeffer was brutally frank in a letter to a friend about the state of liberal religion: “There is no theology

here.... The students...are unfamiliar with even the most basic [theological] questions. They become intoxicated with liberal and humanistic phrases....”<sup>xliii</sup>

Bonhoeffer reached a similar conclusion when attending the liberals’ churches. “The sermon,” Bonhoeffer moaned, “has been reduced to parenthetical church remarks about newspaper events.” Bonhoeffer now wondered “whether one here really can still speak about Christianity.... In New York they preach about virtually everything; only one thing is not addressed or is addressed so rarely that I have as yet been unable to hear it, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the cross, sin and forgiveness, death and life.”<sup>xliii</sup>

Liberal Christianity, Bonhoeffer found, had impaired itself. Moral values were no longer linked to Christian doctrines. By rejecting the Christian values and claims about human nature and human emotions that they had previously affirmed, liberal Protestants moved beyond the moral purview of their own religious tradition. They entered the domain of cultural critique, where critical analysis of the influence of social institutions on human behavior replaced religious talk about God and man.

Process theologian John B. Cobb, Jr. trenchantly summarizes the consequence of this move in his book *Spiritual Bankruptcy*. According to Cobb, the mainline Protestant churches that have gone the farthest in critiquing America’s inequitable economic and social systems “have had the largest losses in membership and resources. Prospects for reversal of these trends are poor, and morale is poor.” Why? Writes Cobb: “People like to feel good about the character and accomplishments of the groups with which they identify. For many

people, it has been demoralizing to participate in a community that is emphasizing the evils for which it has been responsible.” Thus Cobb’s basic point: when you conclude that your own religious institution is racially and economically compromised to the core by its own historic traditions and practices, you create a body of people who condemn their own religious institutions as racist, elitist, sexist, and more.<sup>xlvi</sup> The clergy in these congregations falter when trying to create congregations as sacred places that grow emotionally stronger, more resilient, larger, and enlivened anew in trying times.

For reasons including the failures in Schleiermacher’s system and the use of “Enlightenment” moral philosophy to reaffirm traditional Protestant doctrines of human nature, liberal clergy today by their own admission are not strong spiritual leaders. When, for example, 93% of mainline Protestant senior ministers define themselves as leaders, but only 12% believe they have the spiritual gift of leadership,<sup>xlvii</sup> these statistics indicate a gap between a burgeoning interest in spirituality in America today by its Nones on the one hand and by persons with liberal seminary training, on the other hand, who are capable of shepherding this incipient spiritual movement called the Rise of the Nones.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Consider the numbers. There are now 46 million religiously unaffiliated adults in America. Some believe in God, others feel a deep connection with nature and the earth, some define themselves as spiritual, and most believe that religious institutions strengthen community bonds and aid the poor and thus benefit society.<sup>xlix</sup>

Today, only a third of Unitarian Universalists define themselves as religious, while more than half self-identify as secular or somewhat secular.<sup>1</sup> How will you minister to their disparate secular and religious needs and interests? And will the strategies you use also draw in millions of spiritual but religiously unaffiliated Nones?

As the next generation of ministers, religious educators, chaplains, scholars, community organizers, and national UU leaders, can you bring millions of these folk into UU congregations? The study and application of affect theology may help you accomplish this goal.

### **The Seventh Step: Entering the Lost Affective Domain of Our Liberal Faith – *Together***

I created affect theology to fill in the emotion gap in liberal theology. Affect theology studies the human emotions and affective states that guide, direct, and prioritize religious beliefs, creedal claims, liturgical structures, religious education programs, and pastoral practices by members and leaders of a religious community. As an affective analysis of religious experience, theological reflection, and leadership practices in a religious community, affect theology functions as a complement to a systematic study of religious belief systems and doctrines. It also rounds out the investigation of religion as cultural studies and social science disciplines by focused attention of the way emotions are altered by religious practices. Affect theology's antecedent, as we have seen, is Schleiermacher's *Affekt* Theology, which focused on the affective stimulations of

the human nervous system and made these movements of the “human soul” the first reference for all discourse on religious experience (piety).

Affect theology uses insights from the new field in brain research called affective neuroscience founded by Jaak Panksepp<sup>li</sup> to elucidate, correct, and expand Schleiermacher’s original insights about the role of the nervous system in creating pious feelings and religious ideas. The importance of affective neuroscience for affect theology is seen when we take into account two basic things. **First, codification of affective states into three basic types:** (1) affect that makes us aware of the internal state of our body (e.g., hunger or fatigue); (2) affect that makes us aware of the type of emotional system that has been triggered and thus aroused (e.g., the awareness of being enraged); (3) affect that makes us aware as commentary on bodily sensations (e.g. tactile and visual stimulation from sources exterior to the body).<sup>lii</sup> These affective commentaries on internal muscular and anatomical shifts, on our emotions, and on our sensations are the way we initially, consciously but non-conceptually, take note or become aware of what has just happened to our body. This awareness is indeed a state of consciousness, defined here functionally as the “bare awareness of ‘something.’”<sup>liii</sup>

**Second, analysis of “affective consciousness.”** According to Panksepp, affects are “pre-propositional feelings” that grab hold of our attention not through ideas, but through a felt sense that lets us immediately know how we are faring in the world, within ourselves, and with others at the somatic level of our lives.<sup>liv</sup> Feeling startled, fearful or anxious are examples of affective

consciousness as our immediate awareness of pre-propositional feelings felt as shifts in our own nervous system rather than through studied reflections using concepts and ideas. Babies, after all, can be startled, made fearful or anxious even though there are not yet any concepts in their minds to explain, analyze or reflect upon their triggered affective states.

To be sure, Panksepp argues, affective triggerings can be mediated by rational consideration as well as through dream work on alternative ways of responding behaviorally to the triggered feelings.<sup>iv</sup> Nevertheless, they are a way in which the brain neurologically assesses the surrounding environment in order to make affective judgments, links to motor movements that dictate approach or retreat, seeking, rage, fear, play, lust or other neurochemical systems constructed as physical value judgments that prompt actions by the organism in its exterior environment, its world.

And we affirm the primal importance of our emotions without claiming that our biology is our destiny, because, as Panksepp puts it, we do have the ability to make cognitive choices. But our neurobiology qualifies our destiny affectively. If, for example, the underlying groups of molecular structures produced by the brain that create our affective feelings of social solidarity, acceptance, nurturance, and love are compromised, our affective bonds with others will “probably remain shallow and without emotional intensity.”<sup>lv</sup> His findings concur with other recent brain investigations showing that “social bonding is rooted in various brain chemistries that are normally activated by friendly and supportive forms of social interaction.”<sup>lvii</sup>

These neuroscientific investigations reveal the role of affect in the creation of social bonds and the material content of what Schleiermacher called the human soul. It is here that the foundation of liberal theology is found and affirmed by affective neuroscience and its related fields in two basic ways.

***Affect as foundational for the creation of community.*** Affect, as Schleiermacher insisted, is foundational to religious community. Pious communities, he said, are created by the reproduction of affective states, “by means of facial expressions, gestures, tones, and (indirectly) words” such that the *contagion*<sup>lviii</sup> of collective affective displays becomes for others not only a revelation of the inward as foundational for religious community, but also creates and maintains pious communities through affective consciousness as an emotional “consciousness of kind.”<sup>lix</sup>

Schleiermacher’s fundamental claim here about “consciousness of kind” identifies affect as a foundational material enabling community to be created and maintained. Affective neuroscience and its related fields confirm Schleiermacher’s claim that the foundational material here is shared affect.

For Panksepp, consciousness of kind begins affectively. It is our “internal biological logic,” and it pertains to our “emotional minds.” Our emotional minds create our desire to express our deeply social nature to other human beings, “especially those with whom we shared attachment bonds, and to mutually glory in the kinds of deeply feeling creatures that we are.”<sup>lx</sup>

Consciousness of kind thus entails an acculturation process. Clinical psychoanalyst and theorist John E. Gedo, who uses insights from Panksepp’s



work, calls this acculturation process a “cybernetic loop between infant and caretaker.”<sup>lxix</sup> It pertains to the central nervous system of the infant and the caretaker as a dyad, Gedo observes. The unity of the self is thus a collaborative achievement.<sup>lxxii</sup> Here Gedo and Schleiermacher meet.

As Schleiermacher succinctly put it, “We never do exist except along with another.” Human consciousness, Schleiermacher notes, always entails the co-existence of an Other whose affective signals we have first received.

Schleiermacher understood the phenomenon, which Gedo terms the “cybernetic loop,” to be foundational to the creation and support of religious community.

***Affect as the neural content of the soul.*** Schleiermacher called the study of the core affective level of human consciousness a study of the material impulses of the human soul.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Panksepp makes a strikingly similar claim.

At the foundational level of consciousness, Panksepp suggests, we are aware of “our ineffable sense of being alive and an active agent in the world.”<sup>lxxiv</sup> Panksepp describes this ineffable sense as the “primordial self-schema” or “self-representation,” and refers to “it” using the acronym, the “SELF – A Simple Ego-type Life Form” – to refer to this primordial structure of agency found “deep within the brain.”<sup>lxxv</sup>

Moreover, as Panksepp suggests, this foundational fact of non-rational, affective conscious awareness can be thought about as a “core self” – or even as a soul. Perhaps it is now appropriate, Panksepp suggests, to “entertain neuro-psychological conceptions of human and animal ‘souls’”<sup>lxxvi</sup> Panksepp calls this

primal material “a subcortical viscerosomatic homunculus,”<sup>lxvii</sup> a SELF, and a soul. Here, Panksepp and Schleiermacher meet.

Neurologist Antonio Damasio also investigates this primal, affective level of human experience. He, too, talks about a self – a “proto-self” – where consciousness begins. Moreover, Damasio affirms Panksepp’s work on the link between the body and the self “by means of an innate representation of the body in the brain stem.”<sup>lxviii</sup> Damasio concludes that neither the mind nor the soul can be adequately discussed today without attending to a neurological analysis of the subcortical structures of consciousness.<sup>lxix</sup> Here, Damasio and Schleiermacher meet.

More broadly, Panksepp suggests that the analysis of affect is challenging regnant Western religious claims about the nature of the human soul and the human spirit as strictly rational entities. The human soul and the human spirit, like all other mammalian experiences, Panksepp notes, have neurological characteristics, constraints, and histories, and so they must no longer be described as disembodied, rational, emotion-less entities.<sup>lxx</sup> If the human soul and the human spirit are *human* experiences, Panksepp asserts, then they have to have *human* characteristics – and the foundations of such characteristics are neurological, affective states.

Affective neuroscience goes beneath concepts, below doctrines and creeds, and investigates the ineffable sense of being alive. For Schleiermacher, this affective sense is not religion, but its inception: the “natal hour of everything living in religion.”<sup>lxxi</sup> Schleiermacher did not make this sense the content of his

theology. He made it the foundation of his theology. Affective neuroscience has found and affirmed this affective, ineffable sense exactly where Schleiermacher placed it: outside the theological domain.

Panksepp has noted the possibilities for this new affective theological field in his latest book, *The Archeology of the Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions*, co-authored with psychologist Lucy Biven. Referring to my affective theological work, Panksepp suggests it “can provide a universal substrate for nondenominational religious experiences.”<sup>lxxii</sup>

This claim by Panksepp marks the first formal affirmation of affect theology by a neuroscientist as a theological system with affective neuroscientific integrity. And the link between affective neuroscience and Unitarian Universalist theology as an affective theological system gives us a cutting edge in an academic revolution Panksepp’s work, in part, has begun. Unitarian Universalism now has a constructive theology with its own doctrine of human nature.

The academy is presently on the verge of an “affective revolution,” Panksepp claims; one that will force the academic community to redefine the way in which it thinks about human nature, the human spirit, and the human soul. Nature, Panksepp argues, has encoded our organism with emotive organizing systems that help us decipher, interact with, interpret, and learn lessons from the world in which we live.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Affect theology is part of this cutting edge as a new field *within* liberal theological studies.

Contemporary academic theology, of course, has begun to take note of this emerging *neuroscientific* revolution, but there is more work to be done. The

new field, *neurotheology*, has emerged to explain old religious beliefs using the new scientific work. Theists are using brain science to explain how God gets into our heads.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Non-theists are using neuroscience to get rid of all such theistic claims.<sup>lxxv</sup> In other words, much of the current neurotheological work attempts to “*harmonize* scientific method and religious belief,”<sup>lxxvi</sup> rather than to reveal the hidden foundational claim that occurs before and beyond rationally explained and delineated beliefs.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

A more balanced and non-reductionist theological engagement with contemporary brain science can be achieved when we begin with insights from Schleiermacher’s *Affekt* theology and contemporary affective neuroscience, which challenge traditional notions of the human soul as a disembodied entity.<sup>lxxviii</sup> The human soul, like every other aspect of human nature, has neurological characteristics, constraints and histories.<sup>lxxix</sup>

Affect theology explains how and why Unitarian Universalism can draw on disparate religious and wisdom sources and also can include a vast array of persons with secular and religious interests in our communities: we love beyond belief.

Affect theology shows how this affective disposition – this feeling of love beyond belief – is established and sustained. And it explains how and why these personal and congregational experiences guided by affective theological insights can grow membership, expand financial stewardship, and send legions of UUs to the streets as social justice workers who stand strong on the side of love.

Three basic affective theological premises about our liturgical practices can inform your internship work as the next generation of UU ministers:

- 1. The Individual's Personal Experience of a Change of Heart:** Congregants should feel better by the end of the service than they felt before the service began so that they have new energy to handle the struggles, difficulties, trials and triumphs in their lives with wholehearted spiritual integrity.
- 2. The Congregation's Liturgical Template:** An ethos of care and compassion should be created liturgically within the sanctuary through music, song, and other practices that support and encourage uplifting experiences of a change of heart within the gathered community.
- 3. The Spoken Word:** Sermons and homilies should narrate, support, explain, and affirm how and why the personal experience of a change of heart takes place.

As seminarians in training to lead self-defined secular and religious Unitarian Universalists, you will need a *theological* course of studies that attends to the affective dimensions of their hearts using insights from the affective sciences. You can create conferences, workshops, courses, and retreats to do this affective theological work together. And you can invite musicians, poets, and dancers who can help you create Sunday services that will have emotional intelligence as well as intellectual integrity.

## **The Eighth Step: The Future of Liberal Religion**

A system of local, regional, and national weekend CGUUS retreats could be developed to provide UU seminarians with a deeper understanding of affect theology and its application to their work. Here's a vision for a series of in depth workshops:

- I. AFFECTIVE THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.** To provide the theological and affective neuroscientific tools needed to peer into the affective dimension of liberal faith and explore how triggered emotions create, sustain, fortify or derail liberal faith and progressive social justice work. Led by Thandeka, other affect theologians, and affective neuroscientists.
- II. LITURGICAL SKILLS.** To develop visceral as well as conceptual knowledge of how emotional intelligence is used in Sunday services to create liturgies that heal and transform world-weary UU souls. Led by musicians, theatre directors, dancers and voice coaches along with affect theologians.
- III. BASIC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS.** To teach business management skills and an understanding of the role and function of boards. Led by businesspersons.
- IV. PERSONAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES.** To help seminarians develop or fine tune their personal spiritual practices and clarify the connections between these practices and their work. Led by spiritual directors.

**V. SMALL GROUP MINISTRY PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES.** To help seminarians enliven congregations and expand participation in social justice work through small group ministry programs. Led by community organizers and affect theologians.

The choice to do this kind of affective theological work together as the Continental Gathering of Unitarian Universalist Seminarians is, of course, yours. You have the ability to succeed in this new work. Don't let the weight of the received liberal theological traditions and their contemporary spin-offs as religious studies venues for identity issues and social justice work crush your efforts. Together you can develop a roadmap for the creation of a Unitarian Universalist course of studies that restores what's been missing in our seminaries for two centuries: the practice of kindling the loving heart of our liberal faith.

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<sup>i</sup> This essay is an expansion of my 2013 keynote address at the inaugural meeting of the Continental Gathering of Unitarian Universalist Seminarians [CGUUS] at Harvard Divinity School. I draw heavily on my previously published work, which is cited in subsequent endnotes, to show how this work, collectively, serves as the foundation for affect theology as a 21<sup>st</sup> century constructive theology for liberal faith.

<sup>ii</sup> Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*, trans. John Wallhausser (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 187; 188-199.

<sup>iii</sup> See Thandeka, "Schleiermacher, Feminism, and Liberation Theologies: A Key," *The Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Marina (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 290ff. On the evolution of the term *Affekt*, see Karl Bernecker's book, *Kritische Darstellung der Geschichte des Affektbegriffes: Von Descartes bis zur Gegenwart*, Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der philosophischen Fakultät der Königlich-Preussischen Universität Greifswald (Berlin: Druck von Otto Godemann, 1915), 1-3. Bernecker traces the first appearances of the term *Affekt* (from the Latin root *affectus*) in the German language in the seventeenth century. As Bernecker notes, the terms *affect* (*Affekt*) and the *movement of the disposition* (*Gemütsbewegung*) of a person very quickly became equivalent terms. The German term *Affekt*, however, was used to describe

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the spiritual condition (*vestige*) of a person. The term was almost never used to describe the physical condition of a person (*körperliche Befinden*). Schleiermacher broke this rule. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, Author's Preface to the Second Edition, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and James Stuart Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928. Reprint, with a forward by B. A. Gerrish, 1999), xiii-xiv; *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhang dargestellt* (1830-31), ed. Rolf Schäfer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 3-4.

<sup>iv</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Die praktische Theologie nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*, Aus Schleiermachers handschriftlichen Nachlasse und nachgeschriebenen Vorlesungen, hg. v. J. Frerichs (Berlin 1850), Friedrich Schleiermachers saemmlische Werke (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1850), I/13, 28. Photomechanischer Nachdruck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983). English translation of two selections from this work have been published in the book *Christian caring: selections from practical theology*, James O. Duke, trans., James O Duke and Howard Stone, eds., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 100.

<sup>v</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Freedom*, trans. Albert L. Blackwell (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992,) 131.

<sup>vi</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über den Umfang des Begriffs der Kunst in Bezug auf die Theorie Derselben*, Anhang (Akademie-Abhandlungen) 1831/32. *Friedrich Schleiermachers Sämmtliche Werke* (n. 5), III/3, 181-224. Schleiermacher read the first two parts of this essay on 11 August 1831 in the plenary session of the Royal Academy of the Sciences.

<sup>vii</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 4.1-4.

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>x</sup> Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl* (New York: Harper, 1959), 341-54.

<sup>xi</sup> Karl Barth, "The Christian Faith," in *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923-24*, ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. Geogrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>xii</sup> Thandeka, "Schleiermacher's Affect Theology," *The International Journal of Practical Theology* (December 2005) 9:2, 199. Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 197-207.

<sup>xiii</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 1-4*, Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 26: 120. Luther, for example, in his *Lectures on Galatians*, defined conscience as the bride of Christ designed by God:

Let [the Christian] permit the Law to rule his body and its members but not his conscience. For that queen and bride must not be polluted by the Law but must be kept pure for Christ, her one and only husband; as Paul says elsewhere (2 Cor. 11:2): "I betrothed you to one husband." Therefore let the conscience have its bridal chamber, not deep in the valley but high on the mountain. Here let only Christ lie and reign, Christ, who does not terrify sinners and afflict them, but who comforts them, forgives their sins, and saves them.

Calvin also defined conscience as a divinely constructed mean between man and God. Defining *conscience* in the *Institutes*, Calvin writes:

it first behooves us to comprehend what conscience is: we must seek the definition from the derivative of the word. For just as when through the mind and understanding men grasp a knowledge of things, and from this are said "to know," this is the source of the word "knowledge," so also when they have a sense of divine judgment, as a witness joined to them, which does not allow them to hide their sins from being accused before the Judge's tribunal, this sense is called "conscience." For it is a certain mean between God and man, because it does not allow man to suppress within himself what he knows, but pursues him to the point of convicting him. This is what Paul understands when he teaches that conscience also testifies to men, where their thought either accuses or excuses them in God's judgment (Rom. 2:15-16). A simple knowledge could reside, so to speak, closed



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up in man. Therefore this awareness which hailes man before God's judgment is a sort of guardian appointed for man to note and spy out all his secrets that nothing may remain buried in darkness.

John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John T. McNeill, ed., *The Library of Christian Classics* vol. XX (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 3.19.2. See Randall C. Zachman's *The Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) for a lucid analysis of the respective differences in the use of *conscience* by these two Reformers. For further elucidation of this overall problem see the present author's essay, "Schleiermacher's *Affekt* Theology," 206ff.

<sup>xiv</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, trans. James Duke and Francis Fiorenza (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 57. Emphasis added. See also Thandeka, *The Embodied Self: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Solution to Kant's Problem of the Empirical Self* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 8-9.

<sup>xv</sup> Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 420.

<sup>xvi</sup> Gary Dorrien, "Introduction," *The Making of American Liberal Theology: 1950-2005* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 1-8.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*, 529. See Carter Heyward, "We're Here, We're Queer: Teaching Sex in Seminary," in *Body and Soul: Rethinking Sexuality as Justice-Love*, ed. Marvin M. Ellison and Sylvia Thorson-Smith (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003) 78-96, quote, 93.

<sup>xix</sup> Thandeka, "Future Designs for American Liberal Theology," *The American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (January 2009), 30:1.

<sup>xx</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 138.

<sup>xxi</sup> Thandeka, "Schleiermacher's *Affekt* Theology."

<sup>xxii</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 100.3

<sup>xxiii</sup> Conrad Wright, "Introduction," *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing, Emerson, Parker*, second edition, ed. Conrad Wright (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 3.

<sup>xxiv</sup> William Ellery Channing, *Memoir of William Ellery Channing*, ed. William Henry Channing (Boston: Wm. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1848), 96-97.

<sup>xxv</sup> Thandeka, "New Words for Life," *A Language of Reverence*, ed. Dean Grodzins (Chicago: Meadville Lombard Press, 2004).

<sup>xxvi</sup> William Ellery Channing, "The Evil of Sin," *Discourses* (Boston: Charles Bowen, 1832).

<sup>xxvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Robert D. Richardson, "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists," *The Transient and the Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Context, Studies in American History and Culture* 5, ed. Charles Capper and Conrad Edick Wright (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1999). Moreover, as Howe notes in *The Unitarian Conscience*, Channing is often thought of as a Transcendentalist because two of his mentors – William Ellery Channing and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody – were Transcendentalists. But a close study of Channing's work, as Howe demonstrates, shows that Channing disowned the "rebels" as they moved beyond the bounds of traditional Christianity (18).

<sup>xxix</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing, Emerson, Parker*, second edition, ed. Conrad Wright (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

<sup>xxx</sup> This discussion of the Transcendentalists is based, in part, on insights from Richardson's essay, "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists."

<sup>xxxi</sup> Andrews Norton, *The "Latest Form of Infidelity" Examined* (Cambridge: Published by John Owen, 1839).

<sup>xxxii</sup> George Ripley, "Defense of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity' Examined: A Third Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton, Occasioned by his Defense of *A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity*" (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1840).

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<sup>xxxiii</sup> Daniel Walker Howe makes these points in his book, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy: 1805 – 1860* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), 31-32.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Thomas Reid, "Essays on the Active Powers of Man," *Inquiry and Essays*, eds. Ronald E. Beanblossom and Keith Lehrer (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), 352.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xxxviii</sup> This is why conservative historian Gertrude Himmelfarb can rightly stake out liberal turf as conservative terrain. As she notes in her book *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenment* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), the "driving force of the eighteenth-century British Enlightenment" lies at the foundation of both American liberalism and conservatism. So she urges her fellow conservatives not to turn away from these values when espoused by liberals. Rather, she suggests, simply add what the liberals leave out, namely, the "social virtues" and the "social affections." This added factor, Himmelfarb assures her readers, will make conservative change their minds about liberal cant, namely, "the usual litany of traits associated with the Enlightenment – reason, rights, nature, liberty, equality, tolerance, science progress – [with] reason invariably [heading] the list." The real ground of liberal moral values and religious belief, Himmelfarb insists, has always been conservative terrain – and always will be because the moral values found here are foundational to American faith.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 5 – 23.

<sup>xi</sup> James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 27-34.

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xiiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>xliv</sup> Cited in Eric Metaxas' book *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy – A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 101.

<sup>xlv</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>xlvi</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr. *Spiritual Bankruptcy: A Prophetic Call to Action* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2010), 175.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Summary of The Barna Report Examines the State of Mainline Protestant Churches <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/17-leadership/323-report-examines-the-state-of-mainline-protestant-churches> (accessed October 28, 2012)

<sup>xlviii</sup> "Nones' on the Rise," PewResearch Religion & Public Life Project, October 9, 2012 [<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>] (accessed February 7, 2014); "5 Facts About Atheists," by Michael Lipka, Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/23/5-facts-about-atheists/> (accessed January 7, 2014).

<sup>xlix</sup> The description of this "vision" is taken from the October 9, 2012 PewResearch Religion and Public Life Project, "Nones' on the Rise."

<sup>i</sup> **American Religious Identification Survey [ARIS 2008]:**

[http://b27.cc.trincoll.edu/weblogs/AmericanReligionSurvey-ARIS/reports/ARIS\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://b27.cc.trincoll.edu/weblogs/AmericanReligionSurvey-ARIS/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2014). Also see Lipka's "5 Facts About Atheists."

<sup>ii</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*.

<sup>iii</sup> Jaak Panksepp, "On the Embodied Neural Nature of Core Emotional Affects," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 12, No. 8 – 10 (December 2005), 169.

[<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.176.375&rep=rep1&type=pdf>]

<sup>iiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>liv</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-170, *passim*.

<sup>lv</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 135.

<sup>lvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 247-49.

<sup>lvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 247-48.

<sup>lviii</sup> This use of the term *contagion* in the above text to refer to Schleiermacher's notion, in *The Christian Faith*, 6.2, of the way in which consciousness of kind passes over into living imitation or reproduction (*in lebendige Nachbildung*) is based on Douglas F. Watt's important essay, "Toward

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a Neuroscience of Empathy: Integrating Affective and Cognitive Perspectives,” *Neuro-Psychoanalysis* 9 (2007): 130ff. In this essay, Watt discusses emotional contagion as a neurological process entailed in empathy.

<sup>lix</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 6.2

<sup>lx</sup> Jaak Panksepp, “The Emotional Antecedents to the Evolution of Music and Language,” 9-10. *Musicae Scientiae*, (September 21, 2009), 13:2, 229-259

[[http://msx.sagepub.com/content/13/2\\_suppl/229.short](http://msx.sagepub.com/content/13/2_suppl/229.short)]. Page numbers used in my essay refer to the original manuscript sent to the present author by Panksepp before it was published.

<sup>lxi</sup> John E. Gedo, *Psychoanalysis as Biological Science: A Comprehensive Theory* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 97. Writes Gedo:

Affectivity provides a cybernetic system of intrapsychic communication. In infancy, while executive control resides in the mother’s mind, the cyberspace loop must be completed through the caretaker’s ability to read the baby’s affective signals and by affective attunement within the dyad. One of the caretaker’s vital tasks is to teach the child the appropriate measures that will regulate affective intensities. Control of this kind is lacking in major affective disorders.

<sup>lxii</sup> D. W. Winnicott, “Physiotherapy and Human Relations,” in *D. W. Winnicott: Psycho-Analytic Explorations*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, Madeleine Davis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 566.

<sup>lxiii</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 3.3 and 5.1.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 310.

<sup>lxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>lxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 178. Panksepp also cites here the work of S. Gallagher and J Shear, *Models of the Self* (Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, 1999.)

<sup>lxvii</sup> Panksepp, “On the Embodied Neural Nature of Core Emotional Affects,” 178.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (San Diego: A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc., 1999), 156.

<sup>lxix</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>lxx</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 310, 320.

<sup>lxxi</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), ed. Günter Meckenstock (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 90. Crouter, *On Religion*, 113.

<sup>lxxii</sup> Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven, *The Archaeology of Mind: Toward a Neurobiology of the Soul* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 391.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 348-52.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Andrew Newberg, M.D., Eugene D’Aquili, M.D., Ph.D., and Vince Rause, *Why God Won’t Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), 37.

“Neurology makes it clear: There’s no other way for God to get into your head except through the brain’s neural pathway.”

<sup>lxxv</sup> Joseph Giovannoli, *The Biology of Belief: How Our Biology Biases Our Beliefs and Perceptions* (Rosettapress.com: Rossetta Press, 2000); Laurence O. McKinney, *Neurotheology: Virtual Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Cambridge: American Institute for Mindfulness, 1994).

<sup>lxxvi</sup> McKinney, 23. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>lxxvii</sup> A particularly telling example of the limits of rational reductionism is found in Laurence O. McKinney’s book, *Neurotheology*. McKinney tells us that his mother was comforted by his call for a universal rational perspective for religion using brain scientific studies, until she, on her death bed, “faded to ‘Jesus Loves Me This I know,’” 166.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience*, 310, 320.

<sup>lxxix</sup> *Ibid.*

Special thanks to my colleague and friend the Rev. Constance L. Grant for reviewing many drafts of this essay and for her fine editorial advice and editing skills.