nerships with governments, providing a form of religion that is "for" the people rather than "of" the people. Many European churches, of course, do not share these characteristics, but even voluntarist and gathered and evangelical and pentecostal churches must operate in the shadow of Christendom and appeal to people who have been born into, or whose grandparents were born into, a particular kind of religious settlement unique to Europe. The contributors to this book are asking the right question: what has happened to Christendom during the last three centuries, and why? This will require an examination of the unique—the exceptional—characteristics of European religious history. The provincialization of Christendom has already begun, although there is much more to do.

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Challenging Dechristianization: The Historiography of Religion in Modern France

Over the past few months, the two leading journals in contemporary French intellectual life have opened their pages to a polemical battle between two historians of French religion, a French scholar Catherine Maire, and the American Dale Van Kley, who teaches at Ohio State University. The immediate object of the dispute between these two was the French translation of Van Kley's book on the religious origins of the French Revolution.[1] Maire's assault is both fierce and comprehensive, for she accuses Van Kley of fundamentally misunderstanding Jansenism, the movement of Catholic dissidents inspired by Augustinian theology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which he has been studying for the last three decades. According to Maire, Van Kley incorrectly interprets Jansenism as a form of Protestantism, which he uses as the basis of a Whiggish narrative that culminates in the downfall of the absolute monarchy. I do not think I am being unfair to detect a note of Gallic nativism in Maire's critique, a proprietary sense that an American scholar who claims expertise in this arcane subject must necessarily be overreaching himself. But I open with this exchange because it establishes two

1. Dale Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, 1560–1791* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); Van Kley's work was translated as *Les Origines religieuses de la Révolution française, 1560–1791* (Paris: Seuil, 2002); Catherine Maire, "Aux sources politiques et religieuses de la Révolution française: Deux modèles en discussion," *Le Débat* 130 (May–August 2004): 133–53; Dale Van Kley, "Sur les sources religieuses et politiques de la Révolution française," *Commentaire* 108 (winter 2004–5): 893–914.

introductory points about the "religious turn" in the historiography of France.

First of all, that the religious origins of the French Revolution should be the subject of such an exchange suggests that religion in general has in fact become much more central to discussions of French history over the past generation. The Revolution of 1789, the pivotal point for modern French history, and an understandably obsessive concern of French historians in France and elsewhere, can here serve as a kind of index for where religion stands in the field more generally. Second, the central position of an American historian in this debate suggests that French historians in the United States and England have played an important role in establishing the "religious turn." This is not to say that French historians have ignored religion, and I will discuss later in this essay some of the important work that is being done within both academic communities. But the approaches and attitudes of French and Anglophone historians of France vary in important ways because they emerge from different political and social contexts, which in turn have shaped contrasting dynamics within the historical profession.

For most of the twentieth century, and certainly through the 1970s, the dominant paradigm for understanding the origins of the French Revolution was derived from a Marxist model that emphasized the emergence of a bourgeoisie composed of merchants, lawyers, journalists, all representatives of a middle class deprived of both social status and political power by an entrenched aristocracy. This position can sometimes be reduced unfairly to a caricature, and anyone who has read the work of Georges Lefebvre, for example, knows how powerful and persuasive historical work done in this mode can be.[2] Insofar as religion entered the picture, it was as a declining force, with the erosion of Catholic belief and practice contributing to the delegitimization of the social and political order of the ancien régime. The classic work that seemed to provide an empirical base demonstrating the "dechristianization" of France was Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe Siècle*, first published in 1973, with an abridged edition appearing in 1978.[3] Drawing on the evidence of thousands of wills from southern France, Vovelle traced a decline in the bequests for masses for the souls of the dead and inferred from

2. Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947). The bicentennial of 1789 produced an avalanche of books on the Revolution. A good starting point for the historiography of the Revolution is Ronald Schechter, ed. *The French Revolution: The Essential Readings* (Malden: Blackwell, 2001).
3. Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1978).

this a declining concern for otherworldly salvation, an increasing preoccupation with earthly matters. For Vovelle, this gradual change over the *longue durée* is an essential context for the assault on Christianity in 1793 and 1794, which was in turn a central part of the agenda of the Revolution in its most radical phase.

This picture of religious decline from the perspective of social history reinforced the standard view of the eighteenth century as an age of Enlightenment, represented most tellingly in Voltaire's assault on established religion: "*écrasez l'infâme*!" As a result of the work of Dale Van Kley and others over the last generation, this emphasis on decline and skepticism now appears to be grossly overstated, if not completely wrong-headed. For Van Kley, to accept the characterization of the eighteenth century as an age of Enlightenment amounts to sanctioning the terms of analysis offered by the revolutionaries, who cast the Revolution as a battle of the "lights" against the darkness of a self-serving ecclesiastical establishment that retained power through a religion based on superstition and fear.[4] Such a view is replaced, in Van Kley's analysis, by an eighteenth century in which the persecution of Jansenism by the French state and the orthodox hierarchy generated opposition that eroded the authority of the monarchy and the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the debate over Jansenism was crucial in generating ideas about the constitutional rights of the French courts, and defending a "conciliarist" position that rested sovereign authority in councils rather than the Pope. Van Kley's argument is intricate, and he rightly complains that Catherine Maire oversimplifies his position when she claims he equates the *parti janseniste* with the *parti patriote*, which emerged in the 1770s. What Van Kley does show, nonetheless, is the central role of Jansenist jurists such as Adrien Le Paige, in bringing into the political crisis of the late-eighteenth-century ideas and attitudes about liberty and representation that arose first of all in debates about Jansensism.

Van Kley's work clearly represents a "religious turn" in the historiography of the French Revolution, one that is aligned with the more general revisionist school associated with François Furet.[5] Van Kley is

4. Dale Van Kley, "Introduction," *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. James Bradley and Dale Van Kley (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 1–45; see also Van Kley's review essay, "Christianity as Casualty and Chrysalis of Modernity: The Problem of Dechristianization in the French Revolution," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1081–1104; for a collection of articles that takes a similar perspective, see Louis Châtellier, *Religions en transition dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000).
5. For Van Kley's relationship with Furet, see his interview published in the internet journal "parutions.com," June 2003: http://www.parutions.com/index.php?pid=1&rid=4&srid=100&ida=3493.

by no means the only American to have made a major contribution to the repositioning of religion within the historiography of the French Revolution. Timothy Tackett has written the definitive account of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the major church reform pushed through by the National Assembly in 1790, and others, such as Suzanne Desan and Emmet Kennedy, have also produced important work suggesting the sustained power of religion as a cultural and social force throughout the eighteenth century and the Revolution.[6] It strikes me as particularly interesting that an attack on Van Kley comes from a French scholar, and moreover from someone who herself is a specialist in Jansenism, and who has devoted her career to defending its significance as an intellectual force in the eighteenth century.[7] A generation ago, perhaps even a decade ago, it would have been easy to imagine an attack coming from a Marxist-oriented social historian. What is it, then, that might have provoked Maire to take up arms against a colleague with whom she shares so much?

There is no simple response to this question, and a full answer would involve engaging in details about the theological views of Jansenists that would take me away from the question of a "religious turn." But it is certainly worth noting that Maire's article appeared in a journal edited by Marcel Gauchet, a leading French intellectual whose most prominent work has been translated as *The Disenchantment of the World*. Gauchet's work is a kind of philosophical history of the status of religion in human society, going back to prehistory, and taking the story down to the present, a lot to cover in just over two hundred pages. *The Disenchantment of the World* is a deeply paradoxical book, for Gauchet both challenges and reinforces the long-standing and now very much contested theory of secularization. Gauchet acknowledges a process whereby humanity increasingly defines its institutions and values apart from any collective recognition of the supernatural, and he sees this development as particularly

6. Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); Emmet Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); see also John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). McManners, however, does not take up as a central issue the relationship between religion and revolution. According to Van Kley, on the basis of the work of McManners and others, "the conflict between Christianity and the French Revolution [i]s a thorny problem to be resolved rather than . . . the foregone conclusion of a century of 'enlightenment.'" See Van Kley, "Christianity as Casualty and Chrysalis of Modernity," 1102.
7. Catherine Maire, *De la cause de Dieu à la cause de la nation: le jansénisme au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

noticeable over the past three centuries. But the sources of "disenchantment" are not to be found in either a rationalist intellectual critique of religion, or in social-economic developments that undermined the basis of priestly power. Secularization is instead seen as deriving from inside religious traditions, and particularly from Christianity, insofar as it posits a God standing apart from man, whose freedom to act in this world is thus dependent on this prior religious distinction.[8]

Gauchet is no simplistic defender of "secularization" as a paradigm for understanding the place of religion in the modern world, if we take "secularization" to mean a process whereby rationalistic and materialistic explanations replace religious ones in answering fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of human existence. He repeatedly disarms such criticism in his text, emphasizing the myriad ways in which religion can still play a significant role in the lives of individuals. But Gauchet insists repeatedly on the definitive nature of the rupture that has separated the sacred from the profane in the public sphere. In doing so, he seems to have confused the particular history of France, and its enunciation and enactment of a policy of *laïcité* in the course of the nineteenth century, with the universal human experience. This policy, which culminated in the separation of church and state in 1905, seeks to restrict religious expression in the public sphere as a way of preventing the violent clashes between confessions that troubled France at least since the sixteenth century. The presence of a large and growing Muslim population in France (of between five and six million), and more particularly the recent affair of the "foulard" in France, has once again brought the problems of religious difference and conflict to the fore in French politics. *Laïcité* is once again an issue of great concern, and while some voices have been raised in favor of a more tolerant application of the policy, the consensus is clearly on the side of state-enforced restrictions against public displays of religion.[9]

8. A similar point, more clearly stated, was made by Peter Berger in *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), 110, where he raises "the question of the extent to which the Western religious tradition may have carried the seeds of secularization within itself." For a similar argument based on a careful analysis of eighteenth-century texts, see Michael Buckley, S.J., *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988).
9. For a good brief introduction to this issue, see Justin Vaïsse, "Veiled Meanings: The French Law Banning Religious Symbols in Public Schools," The Brooking Institution, U.S.-France Analysis Series, March 2004. Available at http://vaisse.net/. Jean Baubérot, a professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, has been a key figure in providing a generally positive account of laïcité; see his *Laïcité 1905–2005, entre passion et raison* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

What does all of this have to do with the debate over Jansenism and its role in the origins of the French Revolution? Although I here run the risk of moving too quickly through a series of inferences that would deserve more scrutiny, I want to suggest that Maire's critique of Van Kley in a journal edited by Gauchet represents a French position that acknowledges the power of religion as a historical force, sees the restriction of this power as a necessary and generally positive development, and fears the reintroduction of religion into the public sphere as retrograde and potentially dangerous. From this perspective, Van Kley's history is wrong insofar as it sees Jansenism as sustaining itself through its presence in the *parti patriote* of the 1770s and 1780s, rather than disappearing, to be replaced by a political movement that lacks all continuity with its religious antecedents. Maire's critique exaggerates the differences between the two, for she also wants to see Jansenism as necessary for understanding the origins of the Revolution. Their debate confirms a "religious turn," but it also suggests that for at least some French scholars this is a problematic development, in part because it raises questions about the possibility of a "religious turn" in contemporary French society.

This complicated relationship between French scholars formed in a tradition of *laïcité*, which presumes that religion can only enter the public sphere at great risk, may help explain why it is that French historians of religion in what the French consider the contemporary era (since 1789) have continued to focus, more than their American colleagues, on questions having to do with the institutional relations between church and state. This is, of course, a reasonable choice, given the central role that church-state conflict has played in France. But it means that in France the "religious turn" may have stronger continuities with the historiographical tradition of an institutionally and politically oriented religious history, coming as it does in part as a reaction to another wave of anxiety about the potentially dangerous consequences of allowing religion (in this case Islam) a place in the public sphere. Henri Tincq, *Le Monde's* principal journalist for religious matters, emphasizes the paradoxical nature of the contemporary preoccupation with religion in his recent book on Catholicism, where he writes that France "has never spoken so much about religion and, at the same time, been so irreligious. God is at once everywhere in France, and nowhere."[10] The contrast with the United States, where

10. Henri Tincq, *Dieu en France: Mort et résurrection du catholicisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2003), 12. For an overview of religion in the nineteenth century, with references to recent work, see Thomas Kselman, "State and Religon," in *Revolutionary France, 1788–1880*, ed. Malcolm Crook (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 63–92.

religion is both talked about and practiced at levels that are shockingly high by comparison with the French, is striking and helps explain a different tone and focus in the American version of the "religious turn."

Let me now turn briefly to consider two recent works on French religious history in the post-Revolutionary era to illustrate this historiographical variation on the theme of "religious turn": Ruth Harris's study of Lourdes and Jacques-Olivier Boudon's history of Paris as the religious capital of France.[11] Harris's book, awarded the David Pinkney prize in 1999 as the best work in French history by a North American scholar, is a sensitive and sympathetic treatment of the dramatic events that began with the apparitions of Mary to Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. Harris places the apparitions and the development of the pilgrimage in both the local and national contexts, showing how religious and political interests coincided to make Lourdes into a showcase both for Catholics concerned to demonstrate the continuing presence of God in the world, and for anticlericals who saw the shrine as an example of popular superstition and ecclesiastical exploitation. Harris's book is remarkably evenhanded, but her sympathies are clearly most engaged on the side of Bernadette, of the sick who came for healings, and the women who used the pilgrimage as an instrument for both spiritual reflection and charitable action. Harris is concerned with politics and is perfectly clear in laying out the ways in which Catholic and anticlerical politicians used Lourdes to stake out claims in the culture wars of the late nineteenth century, which ended up producing the separation of church and state in 1905. Lourdes, in other words, plays a role in the development of *laïcité*. But these political motives never overwhelm the narrative, which continually returns to questions of belief and practice, observed from a humane perspective. Harris's work, in short, allows us to engage with the religious beliefs and feelings at the core of the pilgrimage, and in my mind serves as an exemplary case of the "religious turn" within the anglophone historiography of France.[12]

11. Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Viking, 1999); Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Paris: Capitale religieuse sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Cerf, 2001).
12. Two other works by anglophone scholars also take up Lourdes with insight and sympathy, though observed from a more narrow perspective than Harris's work: Suzanne Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univeristy Press, 2005); Therese Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes—Her Life, Death, and Vision* (New York: Burns and Oates, 2003). Raymond Jonas has also written with great sensitivity about visionaries and devotions in *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

Boudon's work explicitly challenges the thesis that France in the nineteenth century and Paris in particular ought to be viewed as undergoing a process of "dechristianisation." Through a comprehensive review of state and church archives Boudon argues persuasively for the *"haussmannisation religieuse"* of Paris, using the famous prefect's work of reorganization and reconstruction as a model for the history of Catholicism in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Parish boundaries were redrawn, an aggressive program of building created new and in many ways innovative churches, a working relationship with the state was managed effectively, and organizations such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul became the hubs of national and international networks of Catholic activism. Boudon is no simple flag-waver for the Catholic cause, however, for he carefully qualifies his argument where necessary, showing how curés in wealthy central parishes could stall and even block reforms at times. And Boudon acknowledges as well the difficulty that even a reform-minded church had in drawing in the growing community of working-class Parisians, whose religious practice became irregular and generally restricted to the famous *rites de passage* of baptism, First Communion, marriage, and death. But in Boudon's view, the failures of the Church were not the result of organizational or material failings as much as they were the product of pastoral attitudes and practices.

Boudon's book, like Harris's, self-consciously challenges the historiographical tradition that sees religion on the wane in the modern and inevitably secular nineteenth century. But Boudon approaches his topic much more from the perspective of the institutional church and the clergy. The laity make only brief and relatively insignificant appearances, while the clergy remain at center stage, as do their relations with the state administration. Boudon devotes one interesting chapter to "religion at the heart of the capital," in which he looks at ceremonial life, but closes with four chapters on the relations between the archbishop of Paris with his episcopal colleagues throughout France and with the French Ministry of Ecclesiatical Affairs.

Although there are important exceptions, other French historians of religion adopt a similar perspective to Boudon's, focusing primarily on religion in the public sphere.[13] This tendency has perhaps been fed

See also Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

13. René Rémond, *Religion et société en Europe: La secularization aux XIXe et XXe siècles, 1789–1989* (Paris: Seuil, 1998); Jean-Louis Ormières, *Politique et religion en France* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002). Jacqueline Lalouette, *La République anticléricale, XIX–XXe siècles* (Paris: Hachette, 2002); Corinne Bonafoux-Verrax, *A la droite de Dieu: La Fédération nationale catholique, 1924–1944* (Paris: Fayard, 2004). The work of Louis Pérouas, how-

over the past few years as a result of the scholarly gatherings to reconsider the laws outlawing religious congregations in 1901 and separating church and state in 1905, a centennial reflection on the origins of *laïcité*.[14] From the French perspective, it would seem that a master narrative is operating, comparable but not identical to the one described by Jeff Cox, which sees religion not declining in any simple sense, but being reduced inevitably and inexorably to the private realm through the development of *laïcité*, which culminated in the legal arrangements of the early twentieth century.[15] From this perspective, private beliefs are free, but not available for public scrutiny, and perhaps thereby veiled as well from the investigation of historians. When religious beliefs intrude on the public sphere, therefore, as in the case of Islam in contemporary France, they raise anxieties in the general public and provoke research on the part of historians that acknowledges the historical record of prior conflicts, but in many cases stops short of the kind of sympathetic engagement with belief and believers that can be found in anglophone scholarship. I hesitate to close with such a blunt observation that is also implicitly critical of scholarship that I greatly admire. So let me rephrase the point in more neutral terms: in both France and the anglophone world there is a renewal of interest in religious history that deserves to be labeled as a "religious turn," but the historical and contemporary situation of religion in France has inflected that scholarship so the emergence and maintenance of a policy of *laïcité* are the central concern. In the anglophone world, and particularly in the United States, where the presence of religion in the public sphere is contested, but also to some extent assumed, and where levels of practice remain high, the "reli-

ever, takes up questions of popular belief in *Culte des saints et anticléricalisme* (Paris: Boccard, 2002). To judge by recent surveys what Americans describe as "everyday religion" is beginning to make an appearance, but questions relating to institutional development, orthodox practice, and political relations remain central. See, for example, Philippe Joutard, ed., *Histoire de la France religieuse. T. 3. Du roi Très Chrétien à la laïcité républicaine* (Paris: Seuil, 2001); Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, 2 vols. (Paris: Privat, 1985–86). The range of topics pursued by French scholars specializing in the history of religion can be sampled in the collection of articles dedicated to Jean Delumeau, *Homo religious: autour de Jean Delumeau* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

14. Jacqueline Lalouette and Jean-Pierre Machelon, ed., *Les congrégations hors la loi? Autour de la loi du 1 juillet 1901* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 2002); Patrick Cabanel and Jean-Dominique Durand, ed., *Le grand exil des congrégations religieuses françaises, 1910–1914* (Paris: Cerf, 2005); "La Séparation des églises et de l'état—les homes et les lieux," Colloque organisé par l'Institut d'Histoire du Christianisme et le Centre André Latreille, Lyon, January 23–24, 2004.

15. Jeffrey Cox, "Master Narratives of Long-term Religious Change," in *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000*, ed. Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

gious turn" necessarily includes references to institutional developments and political contexts, but is more likely to link these to a sympathetic consideration of beliefs and devotions regarded with either ambivalence or suspicion by their French colleagues.

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A Religious Sonderweg? Reflections on the Sacred and the Secular in the Historiography of Modern Germany

If one had to identify the moment at which religion officially "arrived" in the Anglo-American historiography of modern Germany, one might point to the publication in 1993 of David Blackbourn's *Marpingen*. This study combined the methods of social, economic, and cultural history to reconstruct the background and experiences of three young Catholic girls, who in 1876 reported seeing the Virgin Mary near their village of Marpingen. Blackbourn analyzed the motives of the villagers and local clergy who believed these reports and petitioned for official recognition from the Vatican, as well as of those in the Prussian government and the Protestant public who sought to debunk the girls' story. But he did not himself take a stand on the truth of the apparitions, declaring it a question beyond the competence of a historian. In this way, Blackbourn granted religious beliefs a dignity and relative autonomy that was, until that point, quite rare in the postwar historiography of modern Germany.[1] Over the past decade and a half, this type of engagement with religion has moved from an isolated phenomenon, to a distinctive trend, to a mainstay of the field. Yet while there is widespread recognition that religious beliefs, institutions, and conflicts played a role in defining the modern German experience, there is still little agreement about the significance of religion for many of the key debates that have divided historians of Germany since World War II.[2]

1. David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); for *Marpingen*'s significance, see also Thomas Albert Howard, "A 'Religious Turn' in Modern European Historiography?," *Historically Speaking* 4:5 (2003): 24–26.
2. Given the inherently synthetic nature of religious movements (combining institutions, doctrines, rituals, narratives, and ethical codes in a manner that is seldom coherent or revealing of an "essence"), it behooves the historian to avoid treating "religion" as an autonomous force or universal category and to focus instead on theological, ecclesiastical, and liturgical phenomena in their historical specificity. On these matters, see esp. Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8:3 (1996): 225–27: "To practice history of religions in a fashion consistent with the discipline's claim of title is to insist on discussing the temporal, contextual, situated, interested,