

Religious Studies in Canada and Brazil: Questioning Normative Pluralism and Anti-Theology¹
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Summary: The values that motivate the academic study of religion are partly internal (e.g., the best means to achieve the end of knowledge or truth) and partly external (e.g., accommodating political norms). Religious studies can be more effective if it is critical of these normative allegiances. To support this claim, this paper explores two value-stances that have shaped the institutional status of the Canadian field and its theoretical leanings: anti-theology and pro-pluralism. The former in part reflects American church-state relations (the creation of a space for a “neutral” and “secular” study of religion in the wake of 1960s Supreme Court decisions). The latter resonates with post-*Charter* concerns over religious freedom in Canada. It thus raises the possibility that highlighting the potential contributions of religious studies to the nation, a self-positioning of scholars of religion as experts in pluralism, would be an appropriate successor to the American influences that shaped the growth of the field. The case of *ciência(s) da religião* in Brazil provides an example of an academic study of religion largely free from anti-theology and pro-pluralism. As such, it prompts us to reflect on how past circumstances have evoked these normative stances in the Canadian field, and whether they should continue here.

The intellectual history, institutional status, and theoretical allegiances of the study of religion vary dramatically from country to country (Doležalová, Martin, and Papoušek 2001; Antes, Geertz, and Warne 2004, 11-181; Alles forthcoming).² These variations have implications for the conduct of researchers, teachers, and students in the field and also for the relation between religion and its study in distinct national cultures. One key factor is the extent to which scholarly fields are shaped by political and legal developments, given their institutional context and their self-professed need to adequately describe current cultural and social realities. In this essay, I am specifically interested in the ways that metatheory of religion in Canada has been, and perhaps should continue to be, influenced by political developments. The reasons why certain theories are of value in the field include more than just “scientific” issues of adequacy to “data”: politics has played and continues to play a role. Above all, the issue of normative allegiances, the values that motivate the academic study of religion, needs to be clarified. Putting these issues on the table for further discussion can help Canadian scholars of religion as we envision the future of our field.

I will discuss the normative allegiances of religious studies from three distinct approaches. First, I discuss various possible motivations for the study of religion. This serves as a means of characterizing a set of possible distinctions between religious studies and theology and also as a means of highlighting various normative stances that exist within both these academic studies of religion. Second, I argue that the dramatic increase in the institutionalization of religious studies as a

distinct academic field in the U.S. and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s was to a large extent a reflection of political and legal developments in the U.S. That is, external normative allegiances are central to understanding the consolidation of the field as a distinctive academic discipline. Third, I examine the issue of religious pluralism, suggesting that the study of religion has three distinct stances in the face of this phenomenon: a substantive view (i.e., that religious pluralism a good thing in itself and that scholars of religion can help make it work); an instrumental view (that religious pluralism is a fact that we can prepare our students to deal with, given the liberal values that shape the nation); and a descriptive view (that religious studies investigates and seeks to understand religious pluralism).

The values that motivate the study of religion in Canada are not purely scientific. Even a truly scientific study of religion could not escape values. Discussions of whether the natural sciences are value-neutral generally skip over the fact that science is fundamentally oriented by two sorts of values: a *substantive* value orientation (truth is a good, knowledge for knowledge's sake); and an *instrumental* value orientation (advances in scientific knowledge promote other goods, e.g., human prosperity, longevity and health). The same holds for the study of religion: our "research" supposedly has value both by virtue of increasing understanding *per se* and instrumentally because such understanding can help to further other valued goals.

Two political elements form part of the meta-theoretical landscape of religious studies in Canada: relations between religious studies and theology; and the legal status of religious pluralism. I will attempt to clarify these issues by looking at Canadian developments in an international context. The case of the U.S. underlines that meta-theoretical issues in the religious studies vs. theology debate are not limited to "scientific" questions. The case of Brazil illustrates how a different trajectory emerges when institutional tensions with theology reflect a different political context, and where a normative emphasis on pluralism is largely absent.

The academic study of religion is necessarily implicated with politics, because political and legal events impinge at a meta-theoretical level. Whether one accepts, rejects, ignores or capitalizes on this fact, reactions to it are necessarily normative. Using the field to promote social harmony and form an enlightened citizenry would emphasize liberal instrumental values. Positioning the field as a key voice in the discourse over pluralism so as to increase the economic and social capital of scholars would emphasize a different set of instrumental values. Purifying the field of such "extraneous" elements would emphasize the substantive value of scholarship (seeking truth for truth's sake). Any conception of religious studies takes a value stance; normative allegiances are unavoidable; hence, discussing them is important for envisioning the future of the field.

My thesis is that religious studies can be more effective if it is more critical of the values that motivate it. I try to demonstrate this by exploring sources and implications of two value-stances that play a role in the academic study of religion in Canada: anti-theology and pro-pluralism. I do not offer a substantive view, supporting some set of values as that which should shape the future of religious studies in Canada. I argue an instrumental view: the field is shaped by a wide-range

of potentially conflicting values, and honest discussion of this fact is the most likely way to ensure that at least some of them are achieved effectively.

Normative Allegiances as a Key Variable

There are various reasons why one might feel motivated to study religion(s). This is true for both religious studies and theology. The primary substantive goal is the value of truth for truth's sake: e.g., to accept a common, if overly sharp characterization, religious studies seeks the objective knowledge of the outsider and theology seeks the subjective faith of the insider. There also a variety of instrumental goals: the study of religion prepares individuals to contribute to their society (e.g., religious studies trains public intellectuals and tolerant citizens and theology trains public intellectuals and missionaries); it shapes individuals for careers (e.g., religious studies offers reasoning, research and writing skills and prepares students to teach and pursue research in religious studies, whereas theology gives spiritual coping skills and prepares students for the ministry or to teach theology); it aids in individual spiritual development (e.g., religious studies offers people a trans-cultural view of the sacred leading to self-realization and theology offers a tradition-specific view leading to salvation); it is traditional (e.g., part of a core curriculum or institutional identity); it pleases a charismatic authority (e.g., parent or prophet) or manifests obedience to a higher authority (e.g., a calling to investigate cross-cultural manifestations of the sacred the to follow the will of god).

Three important points emerge from considering this list. First, the range of possible value-stances motivating the study of religion is broad and complex. Second, the distinction between religious studies and theology emerges more starkly at the institutional as opposed to personal level (where, for example, metatheory is a manifestation of the institutionalization of these disciplines). Third, the difference between religious studies and theology is more subtle than stark.

Certainly, pursuing religious studies as a career is less likely to be motivated by perceived obedience to higher authority and more likely to be motivated by curiosity about other cultures. Yet this distinction is far from clear to many non-scholars. Is this sort of fine-grained distinction between motivations a truth revealed to those who study religion more carefully, or is it a construct of an academic field invested in generating increasingly specialized criteria by which it can measure its own alleged expertise? Either way, the reflexive art of the subtle distinction is not value- and context-free. Moreover, the very possibility of clarifying and classifying such motivations is a function of increasing integration within the field.

This raises the possibility that religious studies and theology can be distinguished in terms of the institutional frames that orient at least some of their various goals and value-stances. Tom Faulkner proposes a useful distinction here:

theologians may be considered to do what members of departments of religious studies do, but theologians are also subject to a magisterium over and above what the university demands. ... [T]heologians do not operate

under different rules than scholars of religious studies do; rather, theologians operate under additional rules. (2001, 183)

Faulkner notes that Protestant theologians are also responsible before additional constraints: “as one Protestant theologian observed to me, ‘Our problem is not that we lack a *magisterium* but that we have too many’” (*Ibid.*; original emphasis). “Magisterium” here seems to refer to an institutionalized set of constraints: intellectual as well as, potentially, normative and material.

Faulkner’s contrast between “the university and the magisterium” is valuable but overly stark (*Ibid.*). The distinction is valuable because it highlights allegiances external to these fields (“external” to narrowly-defined academic disciplines). But it needs to be clarified. “Magisterium” turns our attention too much toward narrowly conceived institutional constraints; a broader focus on normative allegiances is required. Theology is not alone in having magisteria. The academic study of religion is subject to additional constraints from which theology is largely exempt (though the two fields overlap sufficiently to permit exceptions). In broad strokes, both fields pay allegiance to more than the University: theology obeys also the Church; religious studies obeys also Science and the Nation. The fact that science is a very different sort of thing from and Church and Nation underlines the fact that what is at issue here is “magisterium” not as institution but as normative intellectual framework. Specifically, religious studies—according to certain self-definitions—is responsible to additional methodological criteria (e.g., verification or falsification of publicly, reproducibly, and empirically testable claims) and to additional normative criteria (e.g., a mandate to assist in the formation of a tolerant citizenry prepared for political activity in a democratic and pluralistic society). In sum, the question “Why study religion?” has a variety of answers, and one way to characterize the often-argued distinction between religious studies and theology is in terms of these answers, especially where these refer to motivations and values outside the narrowly-defined scope of the fields themselves.

Once we shift our attention to the normative allegiances of religious studies and theology, three levels of discussion emerge. First, the two can be distinguished according to internal substantive norms (the truth or good each aims for). Second, they can be distinguished according to internal instrumental norms (the best means of achieving that goal). Third, they can be distinguished according to external instrumental norms (how they contribute to ends considered outside their focus, e.g., political or social values). Most of the “religious studies vs. theology” debates have repeatedly explored issues at the first two levels. I argue here that the third level of discussion allows us to make better sense of national variations in relations between religious studies and theology. Hence, it seems more fruitful ground for discussing the past, present, and future of these disciplines in Canada. Characterizing the status of the academic studies of religion requires paying attention to the normative magisteria that motivate and constrain them in different national contexts.

Following the American Model: Church is to State as Theology is to Religious Studies

The history of the academic study of religion reflects both internal and external motivations. In this section of the paper, I argue that the dramatic growth of the field in North America in the 1960s and 1970s reflected American constitutional norms, i.e., respect for an axiomatic—and very open to interpretation—separation between church and state. The relation between theology and religious studies in Canada reflected, in part, this *externally motivated* separation that occurred in the U.S. To the extent that tensions between these fields in Canada reflect these normative allegiances (external, instrumental, and specifically American), they are misplaced.

Religious studies in Canada has been shaped in part by the consolidation of the field in the U.S. Non-denominational, humanistic, and social scientific approaches to the study of religion began to emerge in the nineteenth century, with far older roots, but the organization of an academic field began in earnest only in the late nineteenth century, primarily in Western Europe (Sharpe 1986, 119-143). Doctoral education in the philosophy and history of religion emerged in the 1920s and 1930s in the U.S. (Remus *et al.* 1988, 1660-61). However, the emergence of a distinct field of religious studies, with a broad presence in undergraduate education and research, came much later: “Until well into the twentieth century, the study of religion in American schools and colleges meant instruction *in* religion not the study *of or about* religion...” (Remus *et al.* 1988, 1654; original emphasis). In broad strokes, the situation in Canada was similar (Remus 1992, 5-6).

The dramatic growth of the field in both the U.S. and Canada occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A number of related political, social, and intellectual factors, prominent in both countries, no doubt contributed to the flowering of religious studies at just this historical juncture: increasing cultural pluralism due to liberalized immigration policies; the growth of area studies, due in part to both Cold War ideology and the increasing prominence of developing nations; a perception that processes of secularization were inevitable and desirable (especially as the field developed in Québec); growing interest in eastern religions and NRMs (Sharpe 1986, 296; Martin 2001). Arguably, the growth of the academic study of religion has further intensified these same developments (Porterfield 2001, 202-226).

The key factor prompting this emergence of a distinct academic field was a series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings (Remus *et al.* 1988, 1657; Smith 1995, 411; Martin 2001, 213; McCutcheon 2003, 67). Two key cases institutionalized the distinction between theology and religious studies, effectively pushing the former aside in publicly funded education institutions in the U.S., creating a vacuum within which the study of religion crystallized and grew: *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963).³

The ruling in *Engel v. Vitale* prohibited prayer and other religious services in publicly funded schools. It did so in terms that aligned the Establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”) with an implicit respect for religious pluralism. Mr. Justice Black, delivering the opinion of the Court, stated that,

It has been argued that to apply the Constitution in such a way as to prohibit state laws respecting an establishment of religious services in public schools

is to indicate a hostility toward religion or toward prayer. Nothing, of course, could be more wrong. The history of man is inseparable from the history of religion. ... [T]he First Amendment, which tried to put an end to governmental control of religion and of prayer, was not written to destroy either. ... It is neither sacrilegious nor antireligious to say that each separate government in this country should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance. It is true that New York's establishment of its Regents' prayer as an officially approved religious doctrine of that State does not amount to a total establishment of one particular religious sect to the exclusion of all others ... however, it may be appropriate to say in the words of James Madison, the author of the First Amendment: '[I]t is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties.... Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other Religions...?'⁴

The Schempp case effectively undermined the place of theology, i.e., of the *religious* study of religion, in American schools. The case further echoed *Engel v. Vitale* in prohibiting Bible readings and prayer in publicly funded school, but went further by contrasting such practices with a *non-religious* study of religion. Mr. Justice Clark, delivering the opinion of the Court, in the Schempp case, stated,

It is true that religion has been closely identified with our history and government. ... This is not to say, however, ... that religious freedom is not likewise as strongly imbedded in our public and private life. ... We agree of course that the State may not establish a "religion of secularism" in the sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus "preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe." We do not agree, however, that this decision in any sense has that effect. In addition, it might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment. ... In the relationship between man and religion, the State is firmly committed to a position of neutrality.⁵

The emergence and place of Religious Studies in publicly funded American universities was placed on a firm foundation by this shift, effectively pushing aside theology and ushering in the "study of comparative religion or the history of religion ... presented objectively" as part of "a secular program of education." Not surprisingly, the number of Religious Studies programs and departments in the U.S. grew rapidly over the following decade.

Given the dramatic increase of American programs in this emerging field, Canadian administrators and faculty followed suit: e.g., Canada's first doctoral

program in the study of religion (McGill, 1948) was followed in 1966 by programs at McMaster and the University of Ottawa.⁶ Other factors were, of course, relevant: increasing interest in other cultures, the growth of area studies in Cold War America, the legacy of the Quiet Revolution in Québec, and the impacts of secularization more broadly. But the basic fact remains, American legal and political developments created a sudden growth in a specific academic market; Canadian institutions followed their American counterparts in catering to, and fostering the continued growth of, this market. The consolidation of the field in Canada lagged somewhat behind the American institutionalization: writing in the early 1970s, Charles Anderson, for example, summed up the state of affairs in Canada by saying that “a distinctive ‘discipline’ of religious studies has not emerged” (1972, 18). To some extent this reflects the fact that the field is necessarily interdisciplinary and methodologically pluralistic as well as the fact that it was still relatively small. The point is that these two factors were not unrelated: American political norms played an important role in spurring growth in the field in Canada as well as in the U.S.; as the next section of this paper argues, this had implication for theory and method as well.

Normative vs. Descriptive Phenomenology

This rapid emergence of a “neutral,” “objective,” and “secular” study of religions in the late 1960s in the U.S. and Canada required a theoretical frame distinct from that of theology. The “neutral” and “objective” character of academic study *about* religions is premised on measuring different religions with a common scale. (The ongoing exposure of Christian and western biases in the field’s definitions, theories, and methods is itself an artefact of these conceptions of neutrality and objectivity: cf. Asad 1993; McCutcheon 1997; Smith 1998; Fitzgerald 2000; Dubuisson 2003). During this same period, immigration laws were being relaxed in both the U.S. and Canada, accelerating the ongoing trend to increasing pluralism and multi-culturalism. Both these factors underlined the value of a pluralist theoretical framework for religious studies. Clearly elements of the former motivation existed prior to the 1960s and the latter motivation became much stronger later. Issues of timing are important, but the central claim remains: two developments external to the academic sphere—the Schempp case and increasing cultural pluralism—added value to a pluralistic frame in the study of religion.

Phenomenological approaches, broadly speaking, served the strategic purpose of framing this pluralistic non-theological treatment of religious phenomena (cf. Fitzgerald 2000, 3-32; McCutcheon 2003, 67-69). The comparison of such categories as ‘sacred space’ and ‘sacred practices’ across religions and cultures provides an ideal (and ideally vague) framework for the sort of the endeavour mandated by the Schempp decision. Factors external to the field gave this particular theory of religion a valuable function, whether it happens to be true or not. The status of theory of religion during this formative period in the discipline involved distinct agendas: (a) the “scientific” issue of adequacy to the data; and (b) the strategic or political issues of providing a framework distinct from that of theology and providing information on important demographic developments.

There is an important distinction here between *descriptive* and *interpretive* phenomenologies. The former, exemplified by Ninian Smart, involves the use of 'sacred categories' or 'religious dimensions' as a means of describing culturally disparate phenomena using a common framework (cf. Smart 1995). The latter, exemplified by Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade, involves the assertion that some common core or essence, e.g., the sacred, underlies and reifies such cross-cultural categories. The former *can be* purely instrumental, using these concepts for the goal of promoting a comparative discussion of religion, taking for granted a cultural background of religious pluralism and the goal(s) of understanding, tolerating, or promoting it in democratic societies. No ontological claim that the categories actually refer to some underlying commonality is required here: the "truth" of such categories on this view is, at most, pragmatic not referential. Interpretive phenomenology takes the additional step of claiming that these categories are rooted in the existence of the sacred, or of its functional equivalent. Using cross-cultural categories can help us achieve instrumental goals such as facilitating dialogue or fostering toleration, even if we deny that there is any essential truth behind such comparisons. Much ink has been spilt in arguing, for example, that 'the sacred' does not *refer* to anything real; however, depending on one's view of religious studies' normative allegiances, it really doesn't matter whether it does or not.

My claim here is not that this distinction is always explicit or consistently followed in introductory texts, scholarly monographs, the classroom, or conference papers. But the distinction is clear, defensible and valuable, both heuristically and strategically. It is implicit in much of the teaching and research work done in the field. And it has practical implications for three reasons.

First, interpretive phenomenology is subject to a variety of critiques to which descriptive phenomenology is immune. The former is a *sui generis*, phenomenologically oriented, vaguely generic approach to the category of 'religion' that has abundant philosophical, meta-theoretical, and ideological problems (McCutcheon 1997; 2001; 2003; Fitzgerald 2000; Penner 2002; Frankenberry 2002; Engler 2004). The approach is rightly critiqued for various epistemological and semantic weaknesses, as well as for the fact that it appears to perform a number of conservative ideological functions in a pluralistic, consumerist, capitalist society. It is hard to know what talk of "phenomena" means: at the very least, as Thomas Ryba says of the closely related concept of "manifestation," "the term means so many things that it is hard to recommend its serviceability for any course of research" (2000, 184). Interpretive phenomenology may seem the lesser of two evils when faced with many of the popular assumptions about religion that students of introductory courses bring to their first encounter with the academic study of religion, but descriptive phenomenology offers this same advantage with fewer of the weaknesses. It is immune to many critiques of *sui generis* views of religion, because it does not commit to the existence of the sacred, only to the contingent value of talking about religion using cross-cultural categories. As a result, it tends to be more explicit in its ideological allegiances.

Second, these two approaches offer very different normative alternatives and, as a result, different views of the nature and function of religious studies as a

discipline. Descriptive phenomenology offers the substantive value of offering a tentatively accurate description of social and cultural phenomena (i.e., of human and historical, not transcendent, institutions) and the instrumental value of serving a certain function in public discourses about religion, *given* certain substantive values (e.g., tolerance of pluralism by an informed citizenry). On this view, the academic scholar of religion is a public intellectual whose place is contingent on a certain vision of the university as an institution within a specific historical and political context. Whether or not the sacred exists, the concept performs a certain qualified role. Interpretive phenomenology offers a substantive value of its own: it claims to provide a *true* account of (trans-cultural) reality. On this view, the academic scholar of religion is more a preacher of a “liberal ecumenical theology” (Fitzgerald 2000, 5). And its instrumental value tends to be either that of an occluded theology (converting people to a path of self-realization) or an occluded politics (clarifying the trans-cultural essence of humanity that underlies, for example, liberal values).

Third, the perennial “religious studies vs. theology” debate rages thick around interpretive phenomenology but has little relevance from the perspective of descriptive phenomenology. Interpretive phenomenology is ‘unscientific’ because it postulates the sacred—something “wholly Other” or fundamentally experiential and, hence, subjective—as the core of all religious phenomena. Thus, the ultimate referent of all claims in religious studies is beyond public, empirical study and, hence, that all hypotheses and theories in the field are non-verifiable. (We can have faith that scholarly experience replicates religious experience, but this would be private, not public and so not scientific, knowledge.) For Donald Wiebe, the relation between a “scientific” study of religion and theology (or the crypto-theology of much of the study of religion) is stark: intellectual and institutional allegiance is “an either-or choice, for it is not scientifically acceptable to mix our science with modes of thought that contradict its fundamental intentionality” (1999, 135). This conflict arises clearly with interpretive phenomenology, because it shares the “fundamental intentionality” of a scientific study of religion. It too seeks to tell the “truth” about religious phenomena, but it uses a contrasting, and ultimately less defensible, method. Descriptive phenomenology does not share this intention: it seeks to contribute to a public debate: it shares more with the instrumental than the substantive values of science and politics (e.g., the key issue is how each of these is used).

Insofar as the consolidation of religious studies in the 1960s and 1970s required a theoretical frame, interpretive phenomenology goes too far. That is, with respect to both political goals—obeying the Schempp decision and making sense of increasing pluralism—descriptive phenomenology does the job, and with less exposure to critique. The first issue does not apply to Canada, so the external motivation for a phenomenological frame is less here. Yet, though the situation in Canada is more nuanced, religious studies departments in Canada have emphasized this same allegedly neutral, and meta-theoretically ambivalent, comparative framework. And, as in the U.S., scholars of religion have tended to appeal to interpretive phenomenology, talking about the sacred as if it were an empirically useful and proven concept, as if scholars of religion *know* that all religions are really the same at heart because they are different windows on the same sacred reality.

This is in part because American introductory textbooks dominate the field, but also due to lack of clear thinking about the normative allegiances of the field. Is the goal of study of religion to tell the truth about the essence of religion, or is it to describe social phenomena and perform a useful function in the societies where it is institutionalized? The answer to this question has theoretical implications. But discussions of theory remain confused because these motivations are rarely put on the table for discussion.

Descriptive and Normative Pluralism

Increasing religious pluralism is a social fact in English- and French-speaking North America, as in much of the world. The discipline of religious studies takes a range of stances toward this fact, and these can be considered under two main headings. *Descriptive pluralism* sees the role of religious studies as that of characterizing and understanding this social phenomenon. *Normative pluralism* goes further in holding that the goals of the study of religion include, for example, fostering pluralism (a substantive view) or helping democratic societies function more effectively in the face of pluralism, by providing students with skills for living and working in a multi-cultural society (an instrumental view). (Of course, any given scholar might hold any one or more of these views: descriptive, substantive normative, or instrumental normative.) In this section of the paper, I argue that the Canadian legal landscape, since the institution of the *Charter* in 1982, creates a pressure toward normative pluralism of which scholars of religion should be wary, above all because it is inconsistent with the purported goals of the field.

The key issue here is the extent to which the social fact of pluralism gains a normative purchase on the study of religion. In Canada, the primary factor here is that religious pluralism is enshrined in the Constitution, given its prominent place in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In legal terms, Canada is a religious country but not a Christian one, and the legal stance on what constitutes 'religion' is broadening. A measure of the positive valuation of pluralism in Canada is that the apparently Christian preamble of the *Charter* is interpreted as applying equally to non-Christian faiths. The preamble states, "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law." This preamble resulted from lobbying by Evangelical Christians in political consideration of their importance in Western Canadian politics (Ogilvie 2003, 105). This constitutional invocation of religion has been interpreted extremely broadly in legal judgments. Justice Muldoon of the Federal Court, Trial Division, stated in a 1991 case⁷ that

[T]his preamble ... is meant to accord security to all believers in God, no matter what their particular faith In assuring that security to believers, this recognition of the supremacy of God means that ... Canada cannot become an officially atheistic state. It does not make Canada a theocracy because of the enormous variety of beliefs of how God (apparently the very same deity for Jews, Christians and Moslems) wants people to behave generally and to worship in particular. (Cited in Ogilvie 1999, 73).

Despite the privileging (and naïve equation) of monotheisms, legal judgments in Canada have not privileged Christianity over non-Christian faiths, at least not in such an obvious way.

Although religious pluralism had long been recognized in practice in common law, the introduction of the *Charter* in 1982 gave the rights of minority religions a firm basis in law. The *Charter* lists “freedom of conscience and religion” as one of four fundamental freedoms, and it prohibits “discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.”⁸ In the wake of the *Charter*, the *legal* context of religious pluralism in Canada has moved closer to that of the U.S., though the *empirical* context remains quite distinct. This is due primarily to the fact that many of the major cases regarding religious freedom since the *Charter* have explicitly referred to American jurisprudence: “the Charter, in its pluralistic undergirding, draws the Canadian constitutional situation much closer to that of the American in relation to religious freedom” (Wan 1990, 30).

The broad valuation of religious pluralism is indicated by cases involving, for example, Wiccans, Muslim use of the *hijab*, and Sikh use of the *kirpan*, among others (Ogilvie, 2003). Legal protection has also been extended to include non-religious beliefs more generally. The Supreme Court, in two important cases, has effectively elided any distinction between freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, thus extending the same protection to secular beliefs as to religious ones (Ogilvie 1999, 74-75; 2003, 144-145). Section 2(a) of the *Charter* grants a fundamental right of “freedom of conscience and religion,” where the 1960 *Bill of Rights* had protected only freedom of religion. Interpreting section 2(a) the Supreme Court held that “The purpose of 2(a) is to ensure that society does not interfere with profoundly personal beliefs that govern one’s perception of oneself, humankind, nature, and in some cases, a higher or different being.”⁹ As Christian scholar William Wan puts it, “non-belief is coopted into the field of the religious so that it constitutes a form of belief that must not be discriminated against” (Wan 1990, 32). Nor does the reference to “God” in the preamble of the Constitution imply a special place for religious beliefs in Canada: In the words of Justice Muldoon (F.C.T.D.), “The preamble’s recognition of the supremacy of God ... does not prevent Canada from being a secular State” (cited in Ogilvie 1999, 74). In the wake of the *Charter*, the privileged place of Christianity has been ceded to a broader recognition of religious pluralism. At the same time, the status of religion as opposed to non-religion has been eroded.

The normative allegiances of religious studies are implicated in these developments. On the one hand, as Amanda Porterfield argues in the American case, the study of religion has played a causal role itself in leading to this broadly inclusive religious pluralism:

By promoting a better understanding of the nature of religion and its various manifestations and effects, religious studies encouraged respect for religious difference along with increased self-consciousness about how religious symbols work and a general tendency to understand religion in humanistic terms. ... Like the religious neutrality of the state, the presumption of

neutrality in religious studies works against favoring one religious tradition over the other by prejudgment.” (2001, 203, 208)

On the other hand, scholars of religion—especially in introductory texts and classes—often adopt a normative pluralism, either portraying pluralism as a good in itself or describing the value of religious studies in terms of its contribution to tolerance and dialogue in a pluralistic culture. This is arguably exactly what religious studies *should* do. Of course, the fact that this is arguable means both that it warrants an argument and that there are counter-arguments.

The most telling argument against normative pluralism as a stance within the study of religion is that it is hypocritical and inconsistent. Normative pluralism embodies western liberal norms such as tolerance and equality. Personally, I would argue for the universality of these norms. Professionally, however, I am forced to admit that not all the religious groups I study accept these values. Many fundamentalists, for example, would argue that tolerance of pluralism is simply wrong: it is false to hold that all religions deserve equal respect, because one (the interlocutor’s, of course) is simply right and the others wrong; moreover, it is wrong to teach tolerance and respect in the religious studies classroom, as this withholds the true light of salvation from students, shrouding it among falsehoods as if it were comparable.

The irony here is that the very act of *attaching a value* to the equal, neutral, fair, objective, unbiased, or secular study of religions is arguably non-neutral, unfair, perspectival, biased, and based on faith. It accepts one set of values, held by some religious and many secular groups, and, in so doing, it implicitly rejects others. It is the act of evaluation that leads to this self-contradictory and paradoxical stance at the heart of religious studies. Moving from normative to descriptive pluralism reduces the hypocrisy and inconsistency. A substantive pluralism—holding that plurality is a good thing in and of itself—is clearly in tension with the views of many of the religions it purports to respect. An instrumental pluralism—holding that religious studies should teach tolerance and respect as a contribution toward the functioning of democratic and pluralistic societies—is only slightly less so. A descriptive pluralism—valuing the accurate description of social phenomena, given a certain intellectual allegiance, but that takes no stance on whether pluralism and tolerance are valuable—is much more respectful. Ironically, it achieves this respect for others by not placing explicit value on respect for others. It is more able to embody the values of the “neutral,” “objective,” and “secular” study of religions that the Schempp case mandated and that religious studies claims to see in its disciplinary mirror.

There is an ironic tension here. Granted that the separation of religious studies and theology in Canada has, to some extent, reflected American politics, it is possible to shift the motivation for this institutional development to more Canadian ground by emphasizing a response to religious pluralism. This keeps the discussion at the level of external normative allegiances (instrumental value to the nation) as opposed to rehashing the “religious studies vs. theology” debate on internal grounds (ends and means of “scientific” research). That is, we gain something by shifting to a discussion of what religious studies is good for rather than simply claiming that it is

properly scientific. Yet, going too far down this road—to normative pluralism—is self-defeating. It would seem that descriptive pluralism is a happy compromise, offering a role for religious studies that distinguishes it from theology, yet without compromising its “neutral” character. However, on this view, descriptive pluralism would *appear* to simply propose and test (publicly and empirically falsifiable) hypotheses about the social fact of pluralism, free from competing normative allegiances. That is, once again we end up simply claiming that it is properly scientific.

This appearance is deceiving for two reasons, however. First, characterizing the value of the study of religion in terms of its expertise in the public manifestations of religion, e.g., religious pluralism, is more concrete than talk of being scientific. It provides a specific link to issues of national policy and the public good. Second, the fact that descriptive pluralism is more scientific than interpretive pluralism does not deny it of normative import. Science is not value-free: its goals are truth and utility. Discussion of the latter is too often deflected into the related issues of technology and science policy, giving the impression that science is a pure intellectual activity, largely free from the taint of instrumental reasoning. Religious studies shares the same two goals. Discussions of the field’s relation to theology have often served to wave the flag of science, invoking an aura of intellectual purity without noting the need to discuss the usefulness of religious studies. In other words,

In sum, the Canadian study of religion tends to manifest two normative stances: anti-theology and pro-pluralism. The former reflects American church-state relations, as well as internal debates of the means and ends of “scientific” research. I have argued that a more reflexive awareness of the potential contributions of the field to the nation, a self-positioning of scholars of religion as experts in pluralism, would be an appropriate successor to the former. The shadow of the Schempp case, imposing American constitutional norms, played a historical role as one factor distinguishing religious studies from theology in Canada. In the light of the *Charter*, a concern with religious pluralism is a more appropriately Canadian external norm to motivate this same institutional distinction. Yet, scholars of religion should be wary of going too far down this road, to forms of normative pluralism that are inconsistent with the goal of respecting the variety of religions that we study. The contingency of these two normative stances in the Canadian field, anti-theology and pro-pluralism, can be further illustrated by the case of an academic study of religion that does not embody them.

*Religious Studies without Pro-pluralism and Anti-theology: The Case of Brazil*¹⁰

The case of religious studies in Brazil provides an example of an academic study of religion largely free from anti-theology and pro-pluralism, even if not for the best of reasons. As such, it offers the possibility of reflection on how past circumstances evoked these normative stances in the Canadian field and to what extent, and for what reasons, they should continue here.

The Brazilian field, *ciência(s) da religião*, is newer and has been strongly influenced by European developments. (Frequent use of the term “*ciência(s) da*

religião” reflects the fact that non-theological scholars of religion in Brazil are engaged in an ongoing discussion of whether their emerging field is a single “ciência” or a composite of several.) The university system in Brazil developed only in the early twentieth century, due to restrictive government policies. The academic study of religion got off to a slow start with the establishment of the field of sociology in the 1930s. Roger Bastide, who arrived to help found the sociology program at the University of São Paulo in 1937 (staying until 1954), made important early contributions. European theory of religion continues to play a key role in framing debates within the field (e.g., Pierucci 1997; Rivera 2001; cf. Mendonça 2001, 180).

Several factors resulted in the study of religion being marginalized in Brazil for most of the twentieth century. The strong links between the Brazilian oligarchy and the Catholic Church led to a rejection of religion and sacrality in academic and cultural as well as political life when political changes occurred:

The fight against archaism necessarily assumed the form of a fight against the sacred vision of the world that served to prop up conservatism. The political, economic, and cultural objective was a secular, scientific, educated, and modern society: in opposition to the magico-sacral, empirical investigation and science; over against the “stagnant orientations and religious hallmarks” of clerical education, the lay schools of the State. ... It is obvious that, within this ideological frame, religion could not emerge as a phenomenon worthy of study. (Alves 1978, 114)¹¹

The Brazilian flag, with its motto “Order and Progress,” reflects the legacy of positivism that shaped late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Brazil. A contrasting intellectual current, Marxism, also disparaged religion as an object of study. Throughout the twentieth century, Brazil’s most important social scientists have often ignored religion as a subject, due in part to the influences of these two streams of thought. The slow emergence of the field in the 1970s was also shaped by the military dictatorship, in power since 1964. Many social science departments were shut down or their activities severely curtailed; religion was often associated with anti-government stances and repressed, especially given the then-prominent role of liberation theology as a counter-ideology.

Duglas Teixeira Monteiro, sociologist of religion at the University of São Paulo (USP) in the mid-1970s, was the key figure in establishing the social scientific study of religion on a more adequate footing. He helped to found the Centro de Estudos da Religião at USP and was part of a group that established, in 1977, the first Brazilian journal focused specifically on the academic study of religion, *Religião e Sociedade*.¹²

The social scientific study of religion, in departments dedicated to that task, is small but growing in Brazil. Almost all of Brazil’s graduate programs are in religiously affiliated universities (though departments in federal universities tend to have prominent catholic roots). The State schools, above all USP, continue to reject any academic role for theology and consider the study of religion to be, at most, a sub-area of the traditional social sciences, i.e., sociology, anthropology, and

psychology. There is anti-theology in the social sciences, but little within Brazil's few religious studies departments.

The lack of pro-pluralism in Brazilian religious studies is a result of two main factors. On the one hand, immigration has not been important historically as a challenge to Catholic hegemony. Recent declines in Catholicism are due to conversions (Mendonça 1997; Campos 1997; cf. Prandi 1997). Brazilian immigrants tend to quickly adapt to, and to themselves influence, the very diverse and fluid mainstream culture of the country. On the other hand, the post-secondary system in Brazil has traditionally been seen as forming an elite not a democratically engaged citizenry (Santos 2004). Brazilian society is seen as syncretistic not pluralistic, and the formation of a tolerant citizenry capable of functioning in a pluralistic nation is not emphasized as a function of the education system.

Not surprisingly, descriptive phenomenology plays almost no role in framing introductory courses in comparative religion, and interpretive phenomenology is seen as merely one approach among many. Moreover, introductory survey courses on "World Religions" are almost unknown: the Canadian and American view that this is the natural or normal way to introduce students to the study of religion is another presupposition called into question by comparative studies of the field. The current consolidation of *ciência(s) da religião* in Brazil is premised on a *de facto* prototype approach in determining its object (cf. Saler 2000), and it distinguishes religious studies and theology (if at all) by substantive and methodological, not normative, pluralism. That is, religious studies in Brazil spends no time at all arguing about what "religion" is, and the field coexists, for the most part, comfortably alongside theology, with the view that the two just draw on different methods for studying the same phenomena.

Ciência(s) da religião is just now distinguishing itself institutionally and theoretically from theology, and its institutional status remains ambivalent. Until very recently, this field was not recognized by CAPES,¹³ the most important federal funding agency. Theology had traditionally been categorized as a sub-area of philosophy, and it was granted status as a separate area only in the last few years. *Ciência(s) da religião* is now officially an emerging sub-area of theology. However, to say this is "official" is slightly optimistic: the most recent CAPES document to categorize Brazilian academic disciplines, a draft document circulated in September 2005, fails to even mention *ciência(s) da religião* (Comissão 2005). It lists four sub-areas of theology: moral theology, systematic theology, pastoral theology, and ecumenism.¹⁴

Yet behind this lack of anti-theology and pro-pluralism lies another sort of normative allegiance, not the shadow of American church-state relations or a celebration of diversity, but ongoing tensions between powerful religious and anti-religious stances. The issue of religious education in Brazilian public schools illustrates some of the tensions here (Dickie and Lui 2005). Lobbying by religious groups, especially the Catholic Church, led to the establishment in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution of provision for religious education in public schools, under state direction and financing. This issue has worked itself out differently in different states. In São Paulo, the state government decided to characterize this subject matter as "History of Religions." This was resisted by the Association of Religious

Education Teachers (ASPER-SP) as insufficiently theological, but the state government refused to allow this and other religiously oriented bodies to act (as the law seems to require) in a capacity as advisor:

From the point of view of the State, the very issue of the existence of Religious Education seems anachronistic. Its choice of "History of Religions" indicates both the lay government's unwillingness to cede public space to the "religious" and its clear view that, while respecting the free choice of citizens, it is the State's right to regulate public space and, thus, to define the limits of "religion" within it. (Dickie and Lui 2005, 8)

The situation in the state of Santa Catarina was quite different, with a Catholic dominated advisory group much more closely involved in the process on integrating religious education into the school system. This had the effect of including a wider variety of non-Catholic groups. In effect, the government of São Paulo saw religion in terms of rivalry and the government of Santa Catarina in terms of complementarity (Dickie and Lui 2005, 12). A key thing to note here is that a theological definition of "religion" (or crypto-theological, cf. Fitzgerald 2000) informs these debates. All parties accepted a definition of "religion" as that which "opens onto the transcendent" (Dickie and Lui 2005, 11). One of the advisory groups in Santa Catarina insisted that "it is a right of citizenship to be informed about the Transcendent and about modes of access to it" (Dickie and Lui 2005, 10).

Religious studies, understood as the non-theological academic study of religion, is in a difficult position in Brazil. The tension between religious and anti-religious stances that manifests itself over the issue of religious education in the public school system also rears its head in the universities. The perception of religious groups, most members of the public, most politicians, and most university administrators seems to be that any discussion or study of religion is a mode of opening onto the transcendent. That is, any study of religion is by definition theological. On the one hand, this results in an optimism that *ciência(s) da religião* cannot conflict with theology, which allowed the field to begin to grow within religiously affiliated universities, generally with strong theology departments. It was non-threatening insofar as it was seen as a relatively innocuous mode of doing theology. On the other hand, this attitude results in resistance to *ciência(s) da religião* where it is seen as going too far down the road of the social sciences. Several of Brazil's graduate programs in the field currently face serious resistance from ecclesiastically conservative administrations: funding and hiring in social scientific streams is diverted to more "safe" theological streams; hiring decisions are made by administrators outside the departments, based, apparently, on criteria of adherence to theological conservative doctrine rather than research and teaching relevant to the field of *ciência(s) da religião*; the workload (and pay) of professors who are more social scientific than theological is reduced without explanation; researchers abandon ideologically sensitive projects upon being hired by conservative institutions in order to increase their odds of continuing to receive teaching contracts; funding is denied for participation in conferences where social scientific approaches predominate; and departmental journals generally publish only work

not inconsistent with a narrow theological perspective. It is true that in most Brazilian departments theological and social scientific approaches coexist in mutually beneficial dialogue, but one conclusion seems obvious: the fact that Brazilian religious studies departments have not developed an explicitly anti-theological perspective seems motivated in part by a need for self-preservation, in addition to meta-theoretical concerns.

A social scientific attitude to the study of religion is far from new in Brazil, but it has yet to be firmly—and securely—institutionalized. An important editorial in *Religião e Sociedade*, commemorating Duglas Teixeira Monteiro after his untimely death in 1978, insisted on the point:

We do science of religion here. There are religious people among us and many who write here are engaged in the ideological disputes currently dividing the religious field in Brazil; but on entering the arena of the sciences, they submit to rules of communication different from those that prevail in ecclesiastical organizations. (Fernandes *et al.* 1979, 7)

However, this perspective has tended to be that of a minority of scholars. Brazil's foremost sociologist of religion, Antônio Flávio Pierucci, argues that the sociology of religion in Brazil is an "impurely academic area" due to the "religious contamination of an intellectual practice that ought to be professionally immune to the 'sacrifice of the intellect' that all religion implies and requires" (1999, 247). Pierucci overstates things slightly, as befits a scholar representing USP's atheistic legacy. Though, of course, religiously motivated scholars are quick to see certain advantages to claiming the authority of "scientific" approaches:

Theology engages in debates in order to show its face and citizenship among the set of knowledges that compose the university. ... Facing the university community, it will disguise itself among the modern sciences, often adopting the label 'ciências da religião,' not neglecting to mischaracterize its object and its method, presenting itself as rationally legitimate. (Passos 2004, 130)

However, even such a prominent social scientist of religion as Otávio Velho insists on the *sui generis* nature of religious phenomena as the only viable alternative to theologically influenced studies: "Two rocks appear to threaten the ship of religious studies: on one side the risk of scholars, motivated by belief, acting as 'natives'; on the other, the lack of recognition, in our secularized environment, of the irreducibility of religion and the relevance of its study" (Velho 1998, 9).

Ciências da religião in Brazil face a double-bind. On the one hand, the religious universities tend to see religious studies as a threat to theology. This leaves the field vulnerable to explicit interference and implicit ideological pressures. On the other hand, the State universities identify religious studies too closely with theology, insisting on the additional distance from religious discourse and institutions that traditional disciplinary boundaries provide. This deprives the field of its most obvious institution home. The combination of these two factors obstructs

the development of the field's theoretical, methodological, and institutional autonomy.

The take-home points for religious studies in Canada are threefold. First, the lack of a focus on pluralism in the Brazilian field, both as a substantive frame for introductory courses and as a normative guide, underlines the fact that these issues deserve discussion and argument. They are not elements of the field to be taken for granted. For example, offering world religions courses and producing tolerant students are not necessarily elements of our field. In addition, two points follow from the lack of an anti-theology perspective in *ciências da religião*. On the one hand, this absence reflects, to some extent, the fact that religious studies in Brazil is, for the most part, dominated by and at the (not-always-merciful) mercy of theological authorities (usually academic rather than explicitly ecclesiastical). This reminds us of the extent to which the separation of theology and religious studies in Canada, the U.S., and Western Europe is an artefact of secularization. On the other hand, the presence of an anti-theology stance, as the legacy of the Schempp case in North America indicates, seems more likely to gain institutional purchase in response to external not internal factors. That is, religious studies in the U.S. and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s because institutionally distinct more as a response to political and legal developments than in recognition of the meta-theoretical imperatives of a certain idealized conception of social science research.

This suggests that the future of an autonomous religious studies in Canada depends more on its developing a distinct normative allegiance (e.g., expertise in cultural pluralism) than on winning meta-theoretical turf wars. The unstable state of *ciências da religião* in Brazil offers further support for this claim: after almost thirty years of clear statement of methodological and theoretical distinctiveness, the field has not achieved the degree of institutional autonomy that we might expect. It lacks the two sorts of normative allegiances, church-state separation and normative pluralism (and perhaps also a strategic Cold War emphasis on area studies), that have motivated the growth of the field in Canada. The Brazilian field needs to think more seriously about its social role in order to further develop. The same can be said of the Canadian field, though it finds itself further along this path at present.

Conclusions

Two normative stances are prominent in the Canadian study of religion: anti-theology and pro-pluralism. The former is most commonly justified with reference to norms seen as internal to the field (conceptions of the ends and means of academic research). I have argued that external norms have played a key historical role in the institutionalization of tensions between religious studies and theology. Specifically, American constitutional issues—the separation of church and state—cast their shadows onto university campuses in the U.S.; and this had a penumbral effect in Canada. In both countries, the institutional separation between the two fields is not as natural (i.e., internally motivated) as is generally portrayed: much of the “religious studies vs. theology” debate is a *post hoc* rationalization of an institutional split motivated by American political and legal developments. Because these developments are non-Canadian, Canadian scholars of religion—if we value

the rationality and autonomy of our field(s)—should be more reflexive and self-aware concerning what has motivated and what continues to motivate the institutional separation of religious studies and theology in this country.

It is possible, of course, to argue that religious studies is and should be distinct from theology because of its allegiance to the magisterium of science (as Don Wiebe so eloquently advocates). I have raised another possibility here: that religious studies is and should be distinct from theology because of its allegiance to the magisterium of the nation. More specifically, the task of making sense of religious pluralism in a democratic and tolerant society supplies a different sort of external normative allegiance, one that reflects Canadian constitutional realities (i.e., the *Charter's* guarantee of freedom of religion) more than the American constitutional separation church and state. The latter played a historical role, and the former can play a future role.

At the same time, Canadian scholars of religion—if we value the neutrality and consistency of our field—should also be more reflexive and self-aware concerning the variety of possible responses to the fact of pluralism. A normative stance toward pluralism (one that values plurality or that tries to shape tolerant citizens) stands in tension with the alleged goal of treating religions more or less equally. A descriptive stance toward pluralism (one that seeks to describe and understand religious pluralism in Canada without advocating any stance beyond this) is more respectful of difference precisely because it *values* it less. Normative pluralism is written into the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the Multiculturalism Act, but religious studies in Canada has no need to go so far. As the example of *ciências da religião* illustrates, the shape of the field varies according to historical circumstances, institutional constraints, and normative allegiances. The Brazilian field also underlines the relative autonomy of scholars of religion in Canada, a fact that makes a degree of control over our future course more realistic. Any discussion of the present state and future prospects of religious studies in Canada needs to take these factors into account.

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² *Religion* and *Religious Studies Review* are also currently preparing to publish articles on the international status of the study of religion.

³ Remus *et al.* (1988, 1657) give the date of Schempp case incorrectly as 1954. Perhaps this points to confusion with the historic 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, a benchmark case in aligning U.S. school systems with non-conservative interpretations of the Constitution. See, e.g., Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Search for Equality* (Oxford University Press 2004).

⁴ <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=370&invol=421> Last viewed Sept. 19, 2005.

⁵ <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=374&invol=203> Last viewed Sept. 19, 2005.

⁶ Thanks to Michel Desjardins for his detailed overview of graduate programs in Religious Studies in Canada, presented at the Ottawa conference.

⁷ *O'Sullivan v. Minister of National Revenue* [1991] 91 D.T.C. 5491 (F.C.T.D.)

⁸ The *Charter* states that "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association." (Section 2); "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." (Section 15 (1)) <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/index.html#libertes>

⁹ *Edward Books v. The Queen* (1986) 35 D.L.R. (4th) (S.C.C.)

¹⁰ I am indebted to Lísias Nogueira Negrão (University of São Paulo) and Antônio Gouvêa Mendoça (Mackenzie University) for sharing their expertise in conversations regarding the history of the study of religion in Brazil.

¹¹ All translations from Portuguese are by the author.

¹² The journal (ISSN 0103-801X) continues alive and well. The latest issue (24/2, 2004) contains a critique of the validity of Brazilian census data, an ethnographic analysis of Pentecostal conversion among prison inmates, a reflexive analysis of fieldwork conditions and constraints in studying afro-brazilian religions, and a review of the national and international literature on religious tourism, among other articles.

¹³ The Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) was founded in 1951, and its regulatory scope over graduate program in Brazil was further consolidated in the 1980s. In 1995, after being dissolved by the Collor government then reconstituted after great academic outcry, CAPES gained even greater responsibility for oversight and evaluation of the over 1000 masters and over 600 doctoral programs in the country, involving more than 60 000 students.

<http://www.capes.gov.br/capes/portal/conteudo/10/historico.htm> Last viewed Sept. 19, 2005.

¹⁴ The "Grand Area" of "Human Sciences" includes twelve "Areas" in the following order: philosophy, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, history, history of knowledge, geography, psychology, education, political science, international relations, and theology. The absence of scriptural studies as a sub-area of theology is clearly problematic, arguably reflecting Catholic dominance in the constitution of the academic area. The complete absence of ciência(s) da religião from the entire document is even more so. Current discussion of responses to the draft CAPES document by scholars of religion includes the redesignation of the area as "Teologia e Ciências da Religião" or an area of "Estudos da religião" with different disciplinary streams of theology and ciência(s) da religião as sub-areas (e.g., for the latter, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, history of religions, etc.).