Theological Identities in International Relations Theory

Abstract

Religion as a motivating factor in international affairs has been under-theorized in International Relations.

Like many concepts crossing disciplinary lines, theology has not been considered seriously on its own terms. Particularly in the United States, the presumption of the separation of church and state has encouraged analysts to bracket questions of religion in international relations. Where religion has been addressed, it has not been meaningfully differentiated from more general notions of culture.

Yet religion in one way or another constructs non-state actors, shapes domestic foreign policy pressures, and suggests particular responses to ongoing events.

Various world religions share categories of theologies although they are expressed in different ways. For example, most religions have theologies of hospitality (who is defined as ‘other’ and what is appropriate behavior toward the other); of eschatology (God’s plan for history and the goal toward which human action is directed); and of sin and appropriate responses.

One way to incorporate religion into IR theory is to formulate religious identities bounded by these theological categories.

This paper reflects on the attempts to incorporate the notion of religion into IR theory and begins to develop a conceptual framework within which religious identities can be explicated using theologies of hospitality, eschatology and sin. American pre-millennial Christianity will be used as an example of how this model can be applied.

Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* was one of the first attempts to re-conceptualize the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It remains one of the most provocative examples of post-Cold War thinking. The term ‘clash of civilizations’ has

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entered the popular vocabulary as if we all understand what it means. Huntington’s ideas immediately attracted and continue to attract vigorous criticism and rebuttal. But his work cannot be dismissed as entirely irrelevant. After more than a decade and half the community of IR scholars are still talking about it. This paper takes Huntington’s ideas seriously as a useful way to re-incorporate religion back into international relations. This paper explores how that might be done.

As a first step, I suggest that much what Huntington describes as civilization can be captured in the category of religion or properly understood, theology. This paper develops the theoretical concept of a theological boundary. Theological boundaries are not necessarily contiguous with cultural or certainly geographical boundaries. Where theological edges contact other identity boundaries, conflict can occur as such boundaries are erected and defended. Religious communities define for themselves a conception of the good and project those preferences through multiple channels into the international system. Particular features of a specific theological boundary can be consonant with or in conflict with other theological boundaries.

This paper will be divided in two parts. The first will develop and explicate the idea of theological boundaries and examines how such boundaries function in the international system. The second will explore how one such boundary came into being and is defended. The example used is that of American pre-millennial Christianity.

The question I address is how best to refine Huntington’s model to conceptualize a way to bring religion back into IR theory. His critics have identified among other defects that his conception of civilization is too state centric, too grounded in geography, and too static.² All of these I accept. I argue further that the idea of a civilization is too

² Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International*
coarse grained or cumbersome to capture the dynamics of intra-civilizational relationships. These might include those between Islamic groups as Shiites and Sunni that are nominally within the Islamic civilization. On a more specific level one might wish to examine even intra-community conflicts those between various Shiite groups or those between American Episcopalians. As constituted Huntington’s model cannot explore tensions between Christian denominations and those inherent in interfaith dialogue.

More fundamentally, I do not assume that the effect of religion on international relations will necessary be expressed in a clash. Religious interactions across boundaries can be violent but are not necessarily so. The features of some boundaries may be compatible with features of other boundaries. For example, fundamentalist Christians share political positions on Israel with Zionist Jews. Catholics share political positions on pro-life questions with fundamentalist Christians. The theology of the mainline Protestantism is compatible in many ways with liberal secularism. For example, the theologian Karl Barth’s focus on progress and change in this life as a sign of grace, is compatible with the ideas that formed the basis of American capitalism. I hope that an approach that considers both consonances and dissonances will prove fruitful.

Scott Thomas argues in his book, The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations, that secularism has profoundly shaped how we see religion in international relations theory. He suggests that most scholars of

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3 Some entertain the possibility that liberal secularism can be defined as a theology. Goldstein and Keohane suggest that liberal modernity and scientific rationality provide worldviews as well. See Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework in Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 8.
international relations have viewed the effects of religion through the lens of traditional
categories of political actors such as domestic interest groups or as religious institutional
actors either NGO s or INGO s, usually focused on a religiously motivated issue areas
are such as human rights or global poverty. The specifics of the religious identity of such
a group is not usually seen as especially salient. Religious commitments may motivate
groups in particular issue areas. But the difference between a religious NGO and a non-
religious NGO has been difficult to capture theoretically.

Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane characterize religious ideas or beliefs as
worldviews, principled beliefs, and as causal beliefs. In their view, these beliefs are of
separate kinds. Worldviews are, entwined with people’s conceptions of their identities,
evoking deep emotions and loyalties. Principled beliefs supply normative criteria for
making judgments about right and wrong. Causal beliefs are, as one might expect,
beliefs about cause and effects. Ideas effect outcomes in a number of ways; by
supplying roadmaps, by serving as focal points and by providing default decision-making
when ideas are embedded in institutions. They do not need to inquire as to the
underlying source of ideas because they are only concerned with how they are expressed.

As an alternative I propose that when our concern is to theoretically re-
incorporate religious ideas into IR theory, these three types of ideas can be collapsed.
Worldviews, principled beliefs and causal beliefs all spring from the same source, the
religious identity bounded by a particular theology. The theological boundary defines the
identity of those who belong to the community; the worldview, principled beliefs and
causal beliefs are generated by the underlying theology. I suggest that by exploring the

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4 Goldstein and Keohane, 8.
5 Ibid. 10.
6 Ibid. 13.
contours of the theological boundary, that is, the specific characteristics of theological commitments of a religious group might be a promising way to expand on Huntington s idea of civilizational borders. As Thomas suggests, scholars interested in understanding how religion works in international relations must view the social world from inside rather than from the outside.  

The strategy of this paper borrows the conception of community from the communitarian debate with liberals, such as Rawls, over the nature of the self. In this view the identity of the group intersubjectively shapes the identity of the individuals who are members of the group. Will Kymlika, arguing against the liberal conceptions of self, suggests that the freedom to choose one s way of life is heavily conditioned. Lives are full of commitments and these by definition are not infinitely changeable. In Sandel s view the self is not prior to, but rather constituted by, its ends. The self is intersubjectively constituted. Against Rawls he argues that commitments can be so gripping that one could not understand one s self apart from it. Kymlika calls this the embedded self. Shared social context creates attachments that constitute members of the group. Sandel imagines a strong view of community where members conception of who they are, their very identity is defined by their participation in the community. They do not choose their relationship with the community, in a voluntary association but rather discover what membership means. People do not choose who they are but they discover who they are as they act in the world.

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7 Thomas, 63.
9 Sandel, 62.
10 Kimlyka, 52.
11 Sandel, 150.
12 Kimlyka, 53.
Kymlika notes that, in a communitarian society, the common good is conceived of as a substantive conception of the good which defines the community’s way of life. For religious communities, the worldview behind theological boundaries constructs the identity of its members and the conception of the good for the group. Theology defines among other things: the conception of the good, the truth, the sacred, how members of the community can be identified, and how the outsider is to be regarded among others ideas.

The nature of the theological commitments defines how completely members are separated from non-members. The theological boundary may draw distinct and separate identities or more porous ones. A religious community may live within a civilization but separate from it as for example the Quakers do. Or individuals may participate in multiple worldview generating groups and therefore face the task of reconciling competing identities. A member of a mainline Protestant church might feel comfortable in a number of theological or ideological settings.

Groups have historically ensured their legitimacy by including some and excluding others. Kymlika offers the example of an eighteenth century New England town government that maintained its legitimacy at the expense of women, atheists, Indians and the propertyless. Although he does not want to endorse this as a valid way to gain legitimacy, this is sometimes how theological boundaries are designed to function.

The communitarian theory of self is compatible with the narrative theory espoused by Alasdair MacIntyre. He argues that we cannot understand the meaning of an

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13 Kymlika, 77.
14 Ibid. 85.
action shorn of its history or narrative. He presents all human action as one participates in daily life as enacted narrative, incomprehensible or meaningless separated from the narratives that create meaning. Man is a story-teller. These narratives constitute the life of the group.\textsuperscript{15} Universally, one of the functions of religion is to tell the existential stories about humanity s origins and the ways life is meaningfully lived.

The stories a community tells, its narratives, render history and the events around them intelligible. For religious communities, the narratives are based in sacred texts and depend on how that sacred text is interpreted to the community. Social reality is interpreted reality. Experience comes structured and narrated by fundamental stories. These selves situated by their theological commitments live within a worldview that mediates experience. What a particular community takes from its sacred texts or understands it s meaning to be can and does vary over time and across denominations. Individuals constituted by different theological commitments may experience the world differently, and may interpret the same experience in different ways.\textsuperscript{16}

So what does a theological boundary look like? The theological elements explored in this paper include hospitality, sin, and eschatology although undoubtedly one could choose other theological features. Since the example used in this paper is Christian the theological categories are Christian although many religions have comparable theological features.

I define hospitality as the identification of the other and the specification of the

\textsuperscript{15} See Alasdair MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, second edition, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) 205-221.

\textsuperscript{16} It has been noted that President Bush uses words carefully in ways that speak different messages to groups differently constituted. See Bruce Lincoln s analysis of President Bush s address of October 7, 2001 in \textit{Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11}, second edition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006).
obligations due him or her. This feature of the theological boundary defines who is a not
a member of the community and therefore conversely who is. For Christians, sacred
scripture includes both the Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament, each of which
contain descriptions of the other and how they are to be treated. Christian communities
vary widely in their understanding of the meaning of hospitality. Some communities do
not make strong distinctions between themselves and others whereas others make very
sharp distinctions. Scripture also offers a variety of sometimes conflicting ways to
interact with non-members.

Eschatology is most often thought of as a set of beliefs about what will happen at
the end of time or more personally, at the end our individual lifetimes. But eschatology
also specifies how God acts in history. In some traditions God sets the scene and initiates
the action and then watches the action play out. In other traditions God is imminent,
involved in the details of each individual’s life. Christians also differ on where humanity
is located on God’s plan for the world. Some believe as the early church did that
eschaton has almost arrived. Others focus on what scripture teaches about how to live in
the here and now and place less emphasis on the end of time.

Eschatologies also vary in how God’s plan is to be completed. For some, God’s
plan is to be carried out by God alone. For others God acts through God’s believers and
therefore followers have a responsibility to act to further God’s plan. Christianity is
inherently an apocalyptic religion and is therefore focused on the fulfillment of God’s
work. However, the relevance of the apocalyptic eschatology has varied through time
and denominational emphasis. Some Hebrew Bible scholars say that the community at
Nag Hammadi saw Jesus as wisdom teacher and focused less on his role as Messiah.
Extra-canonical gospels such as the Gospel of Thomas portray Jesus in that light.¹⁷ For these scholars the apocalyptic worldview is a creation of early church. The Gospel of Mark written in the late 60 s c.e. includes chapter 13 where allusion to the Son of Man coming on clouds echoes the apocalyptic Daniel 7.

Some early Christian believers focused on the eschatological implications of the Jesus story but not necessarily on the apocalyptic (cosmic catastrophe). The letters of Paul for example tell followers to be alert and watchful. The coming of heaven had already begun but was not yet complete. God’s plan had been made know through the church. It was these elements of realized eschatology that were the important guides for the recipients of the Pauline letters.¹⁸

Similarly, the idea of the nature of sin and its consequences have varied across time and communities. A particular understanding of sin can emphasize the need for self-control, the need to maintain purity, or the need for correct belief and practice or other failure to follow divine command. Sins can be categorized as venial or mortal and the remedy for sin changes accordingly. What is shared is the idea of finite temporal humanity on earth bounded by heaven and eschatological judgment. This framework can be given expression through different theological traditions.¹⁹

Variation in how sacred scripture is transformed into theological identity is possible because the relationship between religious communities and scripture has varied widely through history. The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament have been translated in various languages and the canon has been contested over the centuries but the text

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¹⁹ Collins, 280.
itself has remained substantially stable. What has varied greatly is the relationship of the community of believers to scripture.

From the earliest days there was debate of the proper hermeneutic for understanding the words of scripture. Early Church fathers wavered between literal, allegorical and typological interpretive lenses.\textsuperscript{20} From the time of Augustine onward the Catholic Church has emphasized a spiritual rather than a hermeneutic literal. However, various post-Reformation denominations have chosen different relationships with the texts. The role of scripture in religious practice also varies. Scripture can be read daily as part of devotional practice or it can be received heavily mediated by clergy.

Whatever the preferred interpretive method, it remains the case that Christian scripture is indeterminate. God s will is impossible to definitively discern. For example the Book of Revelation, the only true apocalyptic book in the New Testament has been read as a guide to the end times. It was written towards the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century c.e. and at the time was heard as the solution to the problem of the sovereignty of Rome. The author rejects Rome s claim to authority.\textsuperscript{21} It was likely written to console those waiting for the final consummation during a period of comparatively low-level persecution. While Revelation lacks specific instructions to human readers on steps to take to bring about the New Heaven and New Earth, many through the centuries have read it as an exhortation to action of one kind or another. Like the Jewish apocalypses, the book of Revelation was part of, & a genre that could be utilized by different groups in various situations. \textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Collins, 273.
\textsuperscript{22} Collins, 280. Ironically Collins notes that when it is understood that human affairs are controlled by higher powers the scope of human initiative is usually limited. Collins, 283.
What theological commitments define the boundary of the community of American pre-millennial Christianity? This fundamentalist understanding of Christianity emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. It runs directly though the understanding of prophecy developed from the studies of John Darby, the embedding of those ideas in the Scofield Bible, the Prophecy Conferences of the late 19th and early 20th century and the formalization of those ideas in *the Fundamentals* published between 1910 and 1915. The fundamentalist movement saw itself as a new Reformation, moving the faith back to a Bible and Christ centered one. This return to the Bible and the belief in prophecy took on a literal hermeneutic. The literal view of scripture in turn marked this group as the true believers, the true church opposed to all other Christians who had an alternative understanding of faith. Those who would not accept this literal hermeneutic became the apostate church and were lumped in with unbelievers of all sorts. This us versus them mentality led to a worldview in which all forms of cooperation with outsiders fell under suspicion. Their understanding of prophecy also led them to reject post-millennialism and all man made attempts to bring world peace. This belief in the literal end-times was reinforced by what in their view were, signs of the times; the Zionist movement of the late 19th century followed by the establishment of the State of Israel, the development of nuclear weapons and technologies for communication. The fundamentalist worldview created a theological identity bounded by a particular interpretation of scripture, leading to a particular theological understanding of hospitality, which in this case is a theology of the other, eschatology and sin. The remainder of this paper will examine how this boundary emerged and how it is reinforced through the words of those who profess these beliefs.
Pre-millennialist thought emerged in part as a response to the Enlightenment understanding that reason can be a source of authority. Darwinism, democracy, and rationalism combined to create a worldview that fundamentalists came to call modernism. The Enlightenment promised that reason alone could be a source of truth and that history was a story of human progress.\(^23\) This view conflicted with the belief of many Christians that revelation was the only source of truth.

Nineteenth century developments in theological and biblical studies further challenged traditional biblical understandings. Higher criticism of the Bible attempted to discern historical truth from mythological cross-cultural infusions brought into question the Bible as the ultimate authority.\(^24\) In the early part of the nineteenth century theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher began exploring the meaning of faith within the experience of individual believers.\(^25\) In Falwell’s recalling of history said that, following Schleiermacher’s lead, they, (Walter Rauschenbusch and Horace Bushnell) placed Christian nurture above confrontational evangelism and promoted an experience of Christianity that was not dependent upon biblical verification. \(^26\) In the view of fundamentalists, liberal theologians rejected the authority of the Bible as a story of literal truth in favor of a post-apocalyptic understanding scripture as spiritual and ethical teaching.\(^27\) The gulf between modernism and liberalism on one hand and fundamentalism grew wider.\(^28\)}


\(^{26}\) Ibid.

\(^{27}\) Moorhead, 87.

\(^{28}\) Stuart Sim, *Fundamentalist World: The New Dark Age of Dogma* (Cambridge: Icon Books 2004) 35. Stuart Sim argues that the more reason and religion diverged the greater the likelihood of the emergence of
It was in this post-Enlightenment climate that John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren movement emerged in the 1830s. Darby was the curate of a large parish in rural England. He became interested in the apostolic church and was frustrated by the gap between what he saw as the ideal church and the church of his day. His close study of scripture through a literal approach led him to a radical understanding of prophecy and eschatology. Rather than understanding God’s promises to Israel made in the Old Testament as being fulfilled in the Church, he made the distinction between promises made to Israel as separate from those made to the Church. These newly found unfulfilled promises led him to describe his system of dispensations. In his understanding, the period of the Church, the current dispensation, the prophecy clock was stopped. The unfulfilled prophecies were yet to come and would follow the restoration of Israel to her homeland. During this so-called parenthesis one could only discern signs of the times. These signs would signal the coming close of the Church age and the fulfillment of God’s plan. These signs included the ingathering of Israel as foretold in Ezekiel 37 and the rise of the antichrist.

Darby’s radically literal understanding of prophecy found fertile ground in the United States. One of those influenced by Darby’s ideas was C. I. Scofield who produced the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. This version of the Bible included a complete King James translation with Scofield’s commentary at the bottom of each page. His commentary encapsulated and encoded Darby’s pre-millennial views. The introduction to the 1967 edition makes clear that the commentary accepts the system of

a back to basics movement.

29 Burnham, 33.
30 Ibid. 37.
dispensations that had become part of the fundamentalist understanding of scripture.\textsuperscript{31}

The Bible in his view is a single book that tells one continuous story. God tells a single consistent story through the Old and New Testaments. Bits and pieces of prophecy fell in different books by different authors within the Bible, but if read properly the pieces fit together perfectly. For Scofield, the fulfillment of prophecy was proof of its divine inspiration.\textsuperscript{32}

In his commentary on Daniel 2:44 he says, This passage fixes, in relation to other predicted events, the time when the millennial kingdom will be established. It will be in the days of these kings,: i.e. the days of the ten kingdoms symbolized by the toes of the image.\textsuperscript{33} The ten kingdoms correspond to the ten horns of Daniel 7:8. Scofield tells us that the little horn is to be the head of the restored fourth world empire. The Federation or restoration of the empire was not possible until the dissolution of the Roman empire and the rise of the present nationalistic system.\textsuperscript{34} Readers are then referred to Rev. 13:1 where we learn that the ten horns of the beast from the sea are the ten horns/kings of Dan. 7:24. The whole vision is the last form of gentile world power, a confederation of ten nations which will be a revival of the Old Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{35} The coming seat of the antichrist will be a ten-nation confederation of unbelieving nations centered in Rome.\textsuperscript{36} This ten-nation confederation as the seat of the anti-christ will become the basis for suspicions of any transnational alliance.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. 900.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. 1364.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 910. Scofield does acknowledge those who would ascribe a late date to Daniel. In his commentary on Daniel says that a late date could explain accuracy of prophecies but This view has been followed by many modern critics but should not keep any believer in prophecy from accepting the traditional date.
Scofield is also concerned about the warning in 1JN 2:18 concerning the appearance of false christs as a sign of the times. Scofield says that, the supreme mark of all antichrists is the denial of the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. Unbelievers organize the current world order based on Satan’s principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure. Until Christ returns it is not possible for the world to be otherwise. He puts any person or institution that fails to acknowledge Christ as the supreme authority on the outside of the theological boundary. Attempts to improve the current world order therefore can be interpreted as a sign of the times and are characterized by the emergence of so-called antichrists and deceivers.

The Scofield Reference Bible became the lens through which many viewed and interpreted the bible. The stakes that define the boundary are clearly visible.

This theological boundary was further defined in part by a work produced in 1910-15 called *The Fundamentals*, edited by A.C. Dixon. The five statements of belief professed in this document were: 1 the inerrancy of scripture, 2. the Virgin birth, 3. the substitutionary atonement of Jesus, 3. Christ’s bodily resurrection, and 5. the authenticity of his miracles. That the Bible is literally true is the central tenant of fundamentalist faith. To disavow the literal truth of any part of the Bible is to reject the divinity of Christ. Acceptance of these premises defines who is in and who is outside the theological boundary. The primary sin is one of incorrect belief.

This theological boundary was reinforced by repetition, recitations of Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the time of Christ and by scanning the news for signs of the times that would prove the truth of prophecy. The prophecy conferences that

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37 Scofield, 1365.
gathered beginning in 1875 were a fertile ground for mutual reinforcement.

Mainstream prophetic thought in the 1930s typified by prophecy publications such as *The Sunday School Times*. Evidence of animosity toward peace-making efforts is already present. In this worldview only God can bring peace. But the emergence of peace-makers could be seen as a sign of the times prefiguring the end time. Charles G. Trumbull commenting on the opening statement of the World Economic Conference in London by King V of England in 1933 in which he expressed hope for international cooperation in dealing with the global depression Trumbull says, Surely this, with many other governmental expressions of hope for world-wide agreement and peace, is pathetic evidence of the ignorance of men and the futility of their efforts. There was no mention of God or of the Lord Jesus Christ in this inaugural from a Christian monarch; nor has God been recognized in recent international declarations whether at Geneva, Locarno, London or Washington. 39 In his view only God will bring peace and security. He writes, Men who are at war with God cannot establish a permanent peace with one another. 40 He quotes 1Thess. 5:1-6, For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and Safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child. 41 (Emp in text)

Trumbull ridicules organizations such as the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, the Peoples Mandate to Governments to End War, the London Navel Arms Conference (January 1930) noting that no such organization has

40 Ibid. 109.
41 Ibid.
slowed the drumbeats for war. He says, Men who do not know God or the Word of God seem to think that they can avoid war by simply deciding not to have war. 42 He says that until the coming of the Prince of Peace, there will be no peace.

But Trumbull also warned of the deceivers and false signs foretold in Matthew 24:3. There were to be many of false signs, one of which was to be the appearance of false christs; this is taking place before our eyes today and is fulfilling the prophecy that it Shall deceive many. 43 The appearance of such antichrists is therefore for Trumbull a fulfillment of prophecy. For Trumbull proponents of modernism are apostates. He writes, The peculiar doctrine of the apostasy is that man himself is divine, that man himself is God. 44 (italics in the text) He says further, The foundations of the so-called Higher Criticism, the destructive criticism of the Bible, were laid in the seventeenth century. Man s denial of the truthfulness of any part of the Word of God means, of course, that man is setting himself above God and that is apostasy. So the Higher Criticism, begun in the seventeenth century, has led on to the Modernism of today, culminating in the exaltation and deification of man. 45

By the 1930 s then the theological boundary had firmed. Defining elements include; a rejection of ecumenism and religious toleration, rejection of attempts at man-made peace, human efforts to improve humanity s lot, and a view of others as non-believers. The world inside the boundary is ready to see antichrists, those who reject the authority of the Bible as literal truth, everywhere on the outside. Later writers know where this boundary is and serve to reinforce it. The boundary was defended as these

42 Trumbull, 111.
43 Ibid. 63.
44 Ibid. 89.
45 Ibid. 90.
themes reappear with unfailing regularity.

Hal Lindsey echoes the themes of Scofield that had been refined through the prophecy conferences. Writing in 1970 Hal Lindsey brought pre-millennial thought out of previously closed circles of believers to the reading public. The *Late Great Planet Earth* begins by laying out the criteria by which a true prophet may be known. Simply put, a prophet is true if what is foretold is fulfilled. He holds up Micah, and Isaiah as a true prophets because their prophecies came true. From this he extrapolates that since the Bible is true and the Bible predicts that Jesus will return therefore it will be so. War is caused by humanity's sinful nature but it also humanity's sinful nature that leads men and women to insist on trying to take over God's role in peace making. To make the attempt is to elevate oneself to the status of a god. Similarly, broadmindedness and tolerance of difference is evidence of heresy and the hand of Satan.

The existence of mockers, those who mock fundamentalists, serve as biblical confirmation that those who are inside that boundary are correct.

Jerry Falwell's understanding of the development of the Fundamentalist movement is revealing. He argues in *The Fundamentalist Phenomena* that the confrontation with liberalism defined the fundamentalist movement and describes this confrontation as a war. Liberalism among other things & discredited authority and tradition Men acquired increasing voluntary control over conditions and areas that religion traditionally assigned to superhuman powers. In his view liberalism is characterized by a misplaced self-confident realism. In the face of this challenge,

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46 Hal Lindsey and C.C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970) 15. He too acknowledges that late dating could also explain the apparent accuracy but dismisses such theories.

47 Falwell, 77-79.

48 Ibid.
Fundamentalists displayed an uncompromising commitment to truth. & the war with Liberalism was in reality a war of truth against error. 49 He argues that it was the doctrine of biblical inerrancy defined the theological boundary. 50 As a scriptural basis for rejecting compromise with those who held different views on the truth of scripture Falwell offers Rom. 16:17-18, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye had learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The contemporary and popular defense of this theological boundary can be found in the pre-millennial Left Behind series. In this novel the new head of the United Nations, Nicolae Carpathia, is revealed to have satanic powers by the end of the first book in the series. His rise from obscure businessman in Romania to international prominence is suspiciously swift. He is described as preternaturally articulate and gifted with a prodigious memory. 51 Although he is from Romania, we are told that he is descended from immigrants from Italy centuries ago. 52 Notably, he is a disarmament crusader. 53 He has come to bring a global village where people can depend on one another, where men and nations can join in brotherhood and leave war behind.

In the novel, outsiders view true believers as religious nuts who believe in theological mumbo jumbo. 54 Rationalism and Ivy-League educations are impediments

49 Ibid. 107.
50 Ibid. 76.
51 Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth s Last Days (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers 1995) 275. Coincidentally, he is 33 years old, the same age Jesus was reported by the Gospels to be at his death. He exercises power only through his wisdom his sincerity and humility. He is literally the opposite of Christ.
52 Ibid. 270.
53 Ibid. 137.
54 Ibid.195.
to understanding. As is the case in Scofield's Bible and in the writings of Hal Linsey, the most egregious sin is the attempt to usurp God's role as the bringer of peace. This defines the anti-christ.

Fundamentalists firmly reject a post-millennialist reading of the Bible as non-literal. In his commentary on Daniel, Scofield notes that the smiting stone crushes a world inimical to God. There is no evidence that humanity can perfect itself before Christ's second appearance. In the *Late Great Planet Earth* Lindsey argues that the description of the end time offered in Matt. 24 and the description of the time of Jacob's trouble point to the condition just before the return of Christ. He notes that, Mankind will be on the brink of annihilation when Christ suddenly returns to put an end to the war of wars called Armageddon. The world therefore must be in decline. The horrors of the World Wars for many were evidence both of man's fallen nature and of biblical truth. Those who thought otherwise were deceivers and therefore also proof of biblical truth. For many, peace-making efforts were a sign of apostasy, both as sign that one did not accept the literal truth of the Bible and second that man even though sinful has the capacity to eliminate war. Pre-millennialists argue that to attempt to do so elevates humanity to the level of God. Only God can bring peace and to believe that sinful man could make peace is to believe that man can become a god.

The theology of hospitality is also well developed. For fundamentalists, the world is divided into categories of people. Often the categories are Israel, the Church and the Gentiles. Gentiles are those who are not Jewish but are nevertheless non-believers. Many Gentiles are Christians who disavow a literal interpretation of the Bible. Others

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55 Ibid. 357.  
56 Lindsey, 34.  
divide the world into two, the Church i.e. believers, and natural people. Natural people are as they are born into the world in the natural way. In this taxonomy, Adam was a natural person and was perfect until he sinned. All people born since are sinners and unbelievers. It is not until one is born again and has accepted Christ can one move from a natural person to a member of the church.58

Further, those on the inside of the boundary are conscience of the fact that they look to be religious nuts or fanatics to outsiders. Recall from above that fundamentalists believe that 2 Peter identifies the appearance of mockers as a sign of the times and therefore evidence of the truth of prophesy. They appear to embrace this label. They have confidence in their secret knowledge and believe that, while they may look foolish now, they will be saved in the end. Rather than erode the boundary or introduce questions that might undermine the cohesion of the group this embrace of ridicule strengthens the fundamentalist boundary.

Donald Gray Barnhouse, a Philadelphia prophecy writer and preacher describes the division between the church and the world as a war. He claims that the world is made up of followers of Satan who hate Christ.59 According to Barnhouse the devil has tried two ways to overcome God’s plans. The plan of the Roman Catholic Church was to build a temporal religious kingdom. The true church for Barnhouse is made up of those born again, called out of the world and hated by it. 60 The body of believers was to be a company of witnesses to the truth in the midst of a Christ-rejecting world& 61 The true

60 Ibid. 241.
61 Ibid.
church was to be like the apostolic church, organized on a small scale. What it came to be instead was the great organization of the Roman Catholic Church, a monolithic man-made hierarchy, an institution that he views as apostate.

The Protestants on the other hand attempted to bring peace to the world through human efforts. Barnhouse notes that, “Theologians agreed that the kingdom would come on earth but developed the idea that instead of its coming at the return of Christ, brought by Him full-grown from heaven, it would come slowly by the religious efforts of the Church.” 

All men would eventually develop until their evil was overwhelmed by their good and the brotherhood of man would reign. In his view do-goodism and cooperation to improve humanity’s lot are all signs of apostasy as well. Both groups are therefore outside the boundary.

Individuals constituted by these theological commitment see threats in places that those with a more secular worldview do not. For example, the experience of the United States participation in the United Nations, mediated through the narrative of pre-millennial Christianity has a particular meaning.

There have been previous candidates for the ten-nation alliance of Daniel. The League of Nations seemed to fit until its failure after WWI. Italy under Mussolini, centered in Rome was a favorite in the 1920s. Germany under Hitler looked for a while as if poised to take over the world. Hal Lindsey writing in 1976 feared that the European Common Market was the ten-nation confederation. For the more conspiratorially minded Gary North, fractional reserve banking look suspiciously like a

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62 Ibid. 242.
64 Lindsey, 1976, 50.
global power. In fact, he argued that anyone who wore a robe could be the antichrist if they were a member of the clergy, judiciary or university faculty. Elite groups of any kind such as the Council on Foreign Relations or the Trilateral Commission could be running the world as well. Robert W. Faid, in Gorbachev! Has the Real Antichrist Come? makes the case that the Soviet Union of the 1980s was just as President Reagan said, an evil empire and that Mikhail Gorbachev was the head of the seat of Satan’s power.

All of these institutions or relationships do not have much in common. But they share two characteristics. They represent alliances of powerful entities either militarily or ideologically. But more importantly they are all outside the theological boundary defining the apostate other. North describes the Soviet Union as godless and hostile to Christianity. Mussolini’s Italy was feared to be allied with the Vatican, an institution identified as the seat of the antichrist for centuries. The League of Nations and European Union were alliances of states for the purpose of peace making and man-made attempts to improve humanity’s lot and therefore outside the boundary as well.

This sharp divide between those on the inside of the theological boundary and those unbelievers, apostates and the godless can provoke extreme responses. It can lead to a paranoid search for conspiracy and to violence. Thompson notes that the Davidian community at Waco TX shared with other closed millennial groups, a shared view of an outside world ruled by the forces of Darkness. The militia movement inspired by the events at Ruby Ridge and Waco in another expression of the paranoid sense of fear of the

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66 North, 59.
67 Robert W. Faid, Gorbachev! Has the Real Antichrist Come? (Tulsa OK: Victory House Publishers, 1988) 18. Note Faid was a nuclear engineer not one who might wear a robe.
68 Thompson, 285
other.\textsuperscript{69} In another example Stuart Sim call the militia movement, fundamentalism, the fear that one’s own government may be controlled by evil forces.\textsuperscript{70} In another example, the Indiana transportation department was compelled to remove road signs because of the prevailing belief that numbers painted on the back for administrative purposes were in fact secret signals directing an invasion force presumed to be launched by the United Nations. These numbers were so unsettling that the department was eventually forced to replace them.\textsuperscript{71}

This boundary includes those who accept a literal hermeneutic in biblical interpretation and of biblical prophecy and excludes all others. This boundary has been reinforced through time by repetition, and the identification of proofs either though a creative interpretation of current events or reexamination of prophecy fulfillments embedded in scripture. Individuals constituted by this theological boundary understand current events through a specific lens. Signs of the times include the ingathering of the Jews, the development of nuclear weapons, and bar codes. Proximity to the end times is evidenced by the existence of mockers. This theological boundary is distinct, non-porous and aggressively defended by repetition and fear.

These positions are projected in the international system through a variety of channels. Since sin is interfering with God’s plan, there is a deep well of reservation for human improvement projects such as the advancement of human rights. It would appear that cooperation with non-believers on such as efforts as ecumenical accords would not likely be successful. Further, the fundamentalist support for the State of Israel while

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. 303.
\textsuperscript{70} Sim, 187.
\textsuperscript{71} Damian Thompson, \textit{The End of Time; Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium} (Hanover, NH: University of New England Press 1996) 279.
simultaneously expecting Armageddon potentially ignited by a nuclear Middle East is out of mainstream thinking on United States foreign policy. The prospect for interaction across identity boundaries is not promising.

While no doubt this example is an extreme one I hope it illustrates that Huntington’s clash of civilizations provides a useful way to re-incorporate religion into international relations theory. The communitarian theory of the self allows for the specific theological commitments that construct the identity of members of religious groups to be taken seriously. The stories that these groups tell about their history and their identity mediate experience and establish their preferences and behavior.

State borders are of decreasing importance in today’s world of global communications technology. Ideological and religious boundaries are unmoored from their physical geography. I intend this conception of a theological boundary to be a way to uncover religious influences of all sorts. This model could be applied to understanding a range of religious influences from the impact of Pentecostalism in South America, to how religion works in the confrontation between the Tibetans and China, or in Myanmar. Religion is a component of interactions all over the modern world. By deeply examining the theological commitments that undergird these impulses we have a better chance of understanding the dynamics of these interactions.
References


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realize an exact correspondence between the division of the world in sovereign states and the multiplicity of frequently overlapping nationalist claims. The multiplicity of possible definitions of nations (as political and/or as cultural entities), and the generally extremely difficult territorial delimitation of groups claiming nationhood complicate an issue which is in itself already complex because of the drastic redrawing of boundaries it would require. Manuela Spindler teaches International Relations and International Relations Theory at the German open Business School (GoBS) and the German-Chinese Graduate School of Global Politics (GSGP), Free University of Berlin. This page intentionally left blank. Theories of International Relations. Edited by Siegfried Schieder and Manuela Spindler Translated by Alex Skinner. First published 2014 by Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN. International relations theories can help us understand the way the international systems work, as well as how nations engage with each other and view the world. Varying from liberal, equality-centric strategies to straightforward realist concepts, international relations theories are often used by diplomats and international relations experts to dictate the direction that a