

Losing (and Finding) My Religion: Approaching Diverse Traditions in a Global Age
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- I. Part One: Foundational Approaches to Comparative Religions
 - a. World Religions and the Enlightenment: Edward Tylor and James Fraser.
 - b. Religion and Psychology: Sigmund Freud
 - c. Religion and Sociology: Emile Durkheim
 - d. Religion and Class Struggle: Karl Marx
 - e. Religion and Economics: Max Weber
 - f. Religion and the Sacred: Mircea Eliade
 - g. Religion as Ultimate Concern: Paul Tillich
- II. Part Two: Religion, Power and Transformation
 - a. Rites of Passage: Victor Turner and Arnold Van Gennep
 - b. Power to Renew: Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - c. Ritual and Transformation: Tom Driver
 - d. Transforming Ritual: Penina Adelman
 - e. Post-Colonial Ritual and Power: Charles Long

Questions for Reflection

Part One:

Consider the Big Questions raised by each of these first scholars. Now reflect upon a myth or ritual that you have experienced. How do each of these questions help you to think about it in a different way?

- ❖ *Freud: What suppressed desires, fears, or anxieties are being expressed?*
- ❖ *Durkheim: What social function does this serve? What kind of moral community does this create?*
- ❖ *Marx: How does this reinforce existing inequalities?*
- ❖ *Weber: How are religious ideas shaping political and economic systems?*
- ❖ *Eliade: What aspect of the Sacred is being revealed to us here?*
- ❖ *Tillich: What is the relationship to the Ultimate being revealed through this symbol?*

Part Two:

- ❖ Have you experienced a transformative ritual or sacred story in your life? What was it about the experience that helped it be so?
 - *Did you experience of separation, transformation, reintegration?*
 - *New ways of thinking? A bringing together of traditions?*

- ❖ What transformation do you want to see? In your life, in your community? Can you envision a ritual that help might make that change possible? Would it include:
 - *Preliminal, liminal, postliminal rites?*
 - *Key symbols or symbolic actions that embody the change?*
 - *Symbolic inversion? What do you want to turn on its head?*
 - *What symbols can you re-appropriate, re-envision, see in a new way?*
 - *What different traditions might you bring together?*