

Sociology with Christianity: The last attempt of Charles A. Ellwood to right the wrong

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Abstract

Charles A. Ellwood, one of the first doctorates in Sociology in the United States, and the father of Sociological Social Psychology published several articles and books on the purpose of the discipline. In addition to extending John Dewey's Functional Psychology, he focused on the idea of qualitative methods as a scientific method. The integration of Christianity with sociology has largely been ignored in his work. The following addresses his ideas on this integration. He addressed five key areas that occurred in the United States as people became more secular: (1) the reliance on theology; (2) the development and institutionalization of a sensate culture; (3) the ignorance of science toward the metaphysical; (4) the Christian position on war; and (5) business as selfishness. He advocated turning to the words of Christ and thereby (1) creating an absolute from which right and wrong were discernible; (2) that the words of Christ connect with natural law and collectivity; and (3) that Jesus stipulated the interconnectedness of everything, therefore resulting in the responsibility for all. His hope was that by abiding by the words of Christ that people would work collectively to help each other.

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The discipline of sociology has never been static. Since the late 1800s, Sociology has faced different and opposing forces in attempts to shape and direct the discipline. Whether it be the Social Darwinism of Giddings and Sumner, the psychological interactionism of Ellwood, the structural functionalism of Parsons, the poststructuralist theory of Foucault, or the intersectional theory of Hill-Collins, sociologists have tried to understand the world around them, and in so doing, influence other sociologists to follow a similar pattern. The influence and incorporation of Christianity into sociology, as well as the sociologists involved in this relationship has long been overlooked within the discipline. What follows is a brief overview of Christian sociology, specifically as it relates to American sociology, as well as an examination of the views of Charles A. Ellwood aimed at recognizing the necessity of an integration of the ideas of Jesus with the standards of sociological thought to create an advanced, civilized society.

American Christian Sociology

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, American Christian sociology was primarily connected with Christian social reform (Hofstadter, 1955; Lyon, 1975; Oberschall, 1972). Like sociology in general at that time, the term 'Christian sociology' was used rather loosely. Sociology was trying to establish an identity of its own, to differentiate itself from other disciplines within the humanities (Small, 1916). Sociology was also struggling against an encroaching individualism found in American society at that time being advanced by the American Social Science Association (Haskell, 1977; Small, 1916). It was sociology's lack of a stable identity that enabled Christian sociology to forge a major role in the institutionalization of American sociology and to provide an early direction.

The Christian social reform movement witnessed an unstructured grouping of church leaders promoting social reform in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Hofstadter, 1955). Nevertheless, it had its centers of influence, and these were also, by definition, centers for the propagation of Christian sociology. Particularly important was Chautauqua, for many years a meeting place for clergy, social reformers and social scientists, where in 1883, the American Institute for Christian sociology (AICS) was founded (Oberschall, 1972). Their notion of an 'applied Christianity' was extremely popular and led many seminaries to adopt sociological studies as part of the curriculum. The AICS also operated a summer school of Christian sociology at Oberlin, which attracted leading speakers such as Jane Addams and Samuel Gompers (Lyon, 1975).

Christian sociology also had a strong foothold within the universities, especially at Chicago. Anthony Oberschall (1972) states that the reason for this was that the wide resource base and competitive nature of the rapidly expanding higher education system in the United States was exploited by influential, well-organized groups who saw sociology reflecting their interests. The reason Christian sociology emerged as a contender was because many clergy, losing their social place in industrializing America, were seeking new outlets for legitimate intellectual activity. Sociology provided an ideal meeting place for Christianity and Reformism (Oberschall, 1972). Such Christian sociological concerns may best be seen as an "attempt to restore through secular leadership some of the spiritual influence and authority and social prestige that clergymen had lost" (Hofstadter, 1955, p. 152). Indeed, the American Sociological Society had five clergymen, educators, and reformers there to assist in its beginnings (Oberschall, 1972).

Since early American sociology was so deeply infused with Christian sociology, it followed that early sociology journals carried large numbers of Christian sociological articles. Their editors were sympathetic to the movement as may be seen not only in the better known case of Albion Small and the *American Journal of Sociology*—which serialized Shailer Matthews' articles on Christian sociology between 1895-6—but also later in *Sociology and Social Research*, and *Social*

Forces. Thus, American Christian sociologists did not need to launch separate journals, but found social science periodicals ready at hand. All in all, it was convenient for Christian social reformers and for social scientists that wished to promote social reform (Lyon, 1975).

Wilbur Crafts (1895) described the task of this Christian sociology as “the study of society from a Christian viewpoint with a view to its Christianization” (p. 239). Theologically, American Christian sociologists were also reacting against what they saw as an increase in individualism found in American culture, as well as the problems with Christianity with its concomitant sacred/secular dualist and other-worldly mentality. Consistent with sociology, they argued for a more structural understanding of modern society and were impatient with others who still appeared to see individuals as fully responsible for their social and economic condition. A Christian-inspired social science was the answer, and this, it was argued, would also put the church back on the map. The church could become a constructive force by engaging in social investigation linked to social reform.

The reform centered on the analysis of the economic system, which, from a Christian point of view carried elements of fear of oligarchy. Albion Small focused much of his work on economics to this end. Since his career began in theology it was a relatively small step for him to blend ideas from Christianity with sociology in an analysis of economic swings through the process of industrialization and how this impacted social relations in the United States and Europe (Oberschall, 1972). His role as editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* allowed for the incorporation of Christianity as a natural and consistent critical line of thought within the discipline in the United States. In the sociology that Small envisioned, religion and science meshed together very well. Charles Ellwood, a former student of Small’s at Chicago, carried forward these ideas.

Ellwood

Charles A. Ellwood was one of the first to earn a doctorate in sociology in the United States, earning his doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1899. He took with him influences of Comte’s positive philosophy and secular religion. He also incorporated Ward and Ross’s psychological influences within the construction of society and the need to use sociology to help people. He also was influenced by Darwin’s focus on process and evolution. It was the theoretical grounding found in the Functional Psychology of John Dewey that appeared to have the strongest influence on Ellwood conceptually (Ellwood, 1899; 1899a; 1899b; 1899c). Taking Dewey’s ideas of adaptation and coordination, and the development not only of meaning, but also the evolution of culture, Ellwood created a sociological social psychology. This approach, instead of focusing on the individual, recognized how as social groups became more organized, they act and function like individuals (Ellwood, 1899; 1919; 1925). In doing so, they also have a tremendous impact on their host society. This impact on society served Ellwood well in his goal of making the world a

better place. The functioning of humans in groups and their subsequent actions facilitated a potential positive end in outcomes of human behavior as more individuals could be influenced. Therefore, sociology could be a discipline that could help make the world a better place.

This fit Ellwood's ideas regarding sociology and Christianity, as well as how he saw his place within the discipline (Ellwood, 1922). As one of the first Ph.D.'s in sociology in the United States, he saw himself as a founder of American sociology and bore responsibility for its past, present, and future (LoConto, 2011). Furthermore, Ellwood saw sociology as unique because it could use induction and qualitative methods as 'science' (Ellwood, 1910; 1913; 1919; 1922; 1925). However, as early American sociological leaders like Sumner, Ward, Small, Giddings, and Cooley passed away, the second generation of American sociologists began to take the discipline in a different direction (LoConto, 2011). Increasingly at Columbia and Yale, sociologists and their students insisted on sociology being *laissez faire* (Bannister, 1987). They emphasized a sociology that focused on statistics and data collection (Ellwood, 1933; Ogburn, 1929). As their position in the discipline became stronger, they changed sociology into what became known as scientism. This turned the discipline upside down in the late 1920s and through much of the 1930s.

In response to the changes occurring within the discipline, Ellwood fought long and hard, publishing several articles against the impending doom facing sociology (1927; 1929; 1930; 1931; 1932; 1933; 1933a; 1933b; 1934). He had little help in this endeavor. Pitirim Sorokin was a friend and wrote several articles in support of Ellwood. Edward A. Ross, in the twilight of his career, showed moral support. However, the other founders of the discipline had either retired or died. Ellwood found himself almost alone in this fight (LoConto, 2011).

Ellwood's efforts at integrating Christianity and sociology have often been overlooked (Ellwood, 1913; 1920; 1922; 1940). As the son of a preacher, Ellwood accepted and adopted the teachings of Christ as part of his life. He saw no conflict between science and religion, specifically Christianity. Furthermore, he viewed his career as a professional sociologist as something nearly sacred—a calling. For Ellwood, to be a sociologist meant to help others. If one did not help others, there was no need to even bother being a sociologist (Jensen, 1947; Thompson, 1946).

Though Ellwood had mentioned religion in the early part of his career, it was in the latter half that he began to integrate Christianity with sociology. Post World War I, Ellwood was markedly influenced by *The New State* by Mary Parker Follett (1918). A student of William James at Harvard, Follett ushered in pragmatism as a philosophy for the organization and a new world order. Her ideas were consistent with Dewey's functional psychology and therefore also demonstrated a strong connection to the sociology of Ellwood. Follett presented a valid argument against individualism that Ellwood could incorporate into his sociology.

Follett stated that people find liberty through joining others. This was part of natural law. We are what we are by being connected with everything else. Follett explained that when we become particularistic, we separate ourselves out, and in doing so we break off from these natural laws. We become free through fellowship. This especially resonated with Ellwood (Ellwood, 1922).

Follett went further however. She observed that everything we are is found within the process of the whole. If we acknowledge the laws of nature, we connect ourselves with everything around us and thereby perceive our role in that process. We do not think of ourselves as separate from the whole. Instead, we are responsible for everyone as we are the whole.

Particularistic ways of life shortchange the root of life, by separateness, or the illusion of separateness. By focusing on the individual and making that the supreme value of a culture, we weaken the culture as a collectivity. Responsibility for each other weakens or vanishes. She writes that 'the self and others theory' of society is wrong. The perfect society is the complete interrelating of an infinite number of selves knowing themselves as one self. We see that we are dependent on the whole, yet recognize that we created the whole. For the survival of the group, the stronger members must not crush the weaker but cherish them because the spiritual and social strength that emanate from the weaker members produces a stronger group than the mere brute strength of a number of strong individuals (Follett, 1918). That is, the strength of the group does not depend on the greatest number of strong members, but on the strength of the bond between all members. If we accept life as endless battle, then we shall always have the strong overcoming the weak, whether this be strong individuals conquering weak ones, strong groups overcoming weak groups, or strong nations devouring weak nations. Synthesis is the principle of life, the method of social progress; people have developed not through struggle but through learning how to live together (Ellwood, 1922; Follett, 1918).

These ideas were beneficial for Ellwood. Not only did they fit perfectly with Ellwood's sociology, but were consistent with his Christian faith. For Ellwood, religion projects the mind, spirit, and life into all things (Ellwood, 1913). Religion reflects a valuing attitude and provides a context where people can come into the same types of relations with the powers of the universe. Therefore, religion provided a context for understanding natural laws that were provided by a divine being. And like Galileo, Ellwood saw learning these laws as getting to know God's Will (Ellwood, 1922).

This was important for Ellwood, as he was a cultural evolutionist. He thought that if civilizations were evolving properly, they would be building upon knowledge. He saw this as consistent with Comte, who late in life believed that the more evolved people became, the closer their religion would come to science (Comte, 1973; Ellwood, 1913; 1922). This was consistent with Ellwood's training at Chicago with Dewey and Mead (Dewey, 1896; 1929; 1958; Mead, 1897; 1917; 1923). To understand natural laws, regardless of the spiritual connotation was paramount in addressing the place of humans in nature. The social needed to be addressed in natural law. Ellwood argued that religion followed the same processes found in nature, and should be addressed accordingly.

Consistent with Dewey's Functional Psychology, Ellwood stated that religious values were learned through socialization and perpetuated through the process of adapting and adjusting to the world (Ellwood, 1913). Ellwood explained that social groups could not exist without personal freedom and responsibility. He saw religion being consistent with the social, as it advocated social

consciousness, and its main objective was social; that is, it is an ideal value of social consciousness. Ellwood said that religion helped establish and maintain stability. He agreed with Ward that religion served to protect people. He believed the strongest words in religion are: "Thou Shalt Not" (Ellwood, 1922). He believed that Ward's views were typical or applied to the lower religions, or lower, less evolved societies. Ellwood believed that religion should always be connected to social progress. Religion in highly evolved societies should be focusing on the movement toward the most evolved social values.

By the end of World War I, Ellwood was struggling over the direction of the world, as well as the direction of sociology. The discipline of sociology was supposed to make the world a better place, but the world in the 20th century appeared to be spiraling out of control. By 1922, there were as many as 47 wars or revolutions that had happened in the 20th century resulting in approximately 19 million dead (http://www.war-memorial.net/wars_all.asp accessed October 8, 2012). He advocated religion as a connecting force to bridge people, and to develop and strengthen the social (Ellwood, 1922). At the same time, he was critical that religion and specifically Christianity had not adapted to both democracy and science. He said that society could not be reconstructed unless religion did so as well. Ellwood said that a religion that is not in harmony with science would lose the support of the thinking class (1913; 1922; 1940). Religion must rely on reason that is, rational thought grounded in scientific fact. It cannot be a negative intellectual belief. If it is rational, it will be far stronger in the future. This is evident when looking at many high profile fundamentalist religious leaders. Though their motives may be genuine in helping people, there has been this tendency within religion, specifically American Christianity to be pessimistic of anything that is different and to become nostalgic for a time that never existed. Ellwood placed Christianity in a place where intellectualism should be part of something handed down by God (Ellwood, 1913; 1922; 1940). People should not be ignorant of the existence around them.

Throughout his writings, Ellwood operated under the assumption that a civilization must have religion in order to grow and maintain itself (Ellwood, 1922; 1940). There is something here that is relevant for sociologists. According to Ellwood, there needs to be recognition of absolutes. For his mentors, people like Dewey and Mead, this was recognized through identifying natural law. For Ellwood, the words of Christ were absolutes. Therefore to say that something is right or wrong becomes consistent with divine revelation. He stated that without this recognition, whether through God, natural law or both, right or wrong is nothing more than subjective analysis. This, for Ellwood, was the distinction of the world of secularism, versus a world that blends the words of Christ with sociology. This was evident as the 1940s approached.

The Secular World

By 1940, with the world on the eve of the second world war, Ellwood, a pacifist, was distraught. He wrote many letters to congressmen protesting the conscription and saw it as only

making war more likely. By mid-1940, Germany had invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. In addition to this, there was already widespread documentation of atrocities committed by Germany and its allies. Ellwood believed that this was only the tip of the iceberg and that expansion of the conflict was inevitable (Ellwood, 1940).

As mentioned above, this movement toward another world war was also occurring at a time when Ellwood had become frustrated with sociology and its movement toward scientism. By not being involved in the running of societies, Ellwood saw sociology as contributing to the movement toward another world war. And in the process, the foundation of sociology was crumbling.

Ellwood was also critical of American society. He agreed with Sorokin's conclusions regarding the direction of civilization: that American civilization was unstable and destined to disintegrate, and that only a spiritual or ideational culture was capable of realizing stability (Sorokin, 1938). Ellwood believed that to achieve what Sorokin was suggesting, civilization and American civilization specifically, must learn to imitate Christ. Continuing with the traditional view in sociology that he kept, he believed that must be done at group, and not individual levels. He said that this would be difficult because from 1914 to 1940 the world had drifted so far away from Christ's ideas (1940).

Ellwood proclaimed: "The two great sicknesses of the modern world, hostile conflict and intellectual and moral confusion, might find remedy if there was a general return to Christ" (1940, p. 18). He saw that Americans had fallen from the ideals of Christ. In a secular world where Americans were now entrenched, Ellwood identified five areas that demonstrate how Americans had deviated from the words of Christ: (1) their reliance on theology; (2) the development and institutionalization of a sensate culture; (3) the ignorance of science toward the metaphysical; (4) the Christian position on war; and (5) business as selfishness. According to Ellwood, while religion itself had not lost control or hold upon people, the teachings of Christ had lost their hold on people. He found fault with organized religion for spending too much time focusing on theology rather than practicality. He felt that religion was spending too much time 'saving souls' instead of teaching people how to live life. The pragmatism of John Dewey was evident in Ellwood's ideas— behavior as a means to an end. Ellwood's criticism was that people allegedly professed a faith in Christ, but seemed to have no comprehension of what that entailed, and that many Christians did not correspond or reflect their professed faith. To be Christian should mean behavior as a means to an end.

Ellwood recognized the problem of trying to implement a national religion is that most of the time it pushed people away from Christ. He said: "... no fair-minded student of the teaching of Christ and history would claim that the Christian church in its various branches has been loyal to its Master" (1940, p. 21). What happened is that the people had become more secular, more brutal, more cynical, and more depraved. According to Ellwood, this was evident by looking at the last three centuries. The last three centuries the world had been torn apart by class and nation conflicts. He said that civilizations needed to live under eternal values, not temporary, subjective

values that lead to dissent. Ellwood said that people once separated from Christ were left to their biology and were selfish by nature. But what was troubling for Ellwood was that when left to their devices, humans had no limitations as to the harm they can do. Ellwood was well aware of the many acts of genocide that had already occurred in the 20th century.

Ellwood also criticized American culture by saying it had become overly sensate that Americans were only interested in things that triggered strong feelings, emotions, and that provided pleasure. Ellwood saw Americans as 'body minded' and 'things minded'; failing to appreciate the spiritual world, or take things more seriously. He believed selfishness and profit seeking were simply the result of a sensate culture. That is why we had such an exaggerated civilization (Ellwood, 1922; 1940).

This sensate culture also included issues of nationalism and patriotism. As Ellwood was writing in 1940, his sentiments echo what was already happening in Europe and Asia, and would soon take place in the United States. However, he connects secularism with patriotism, echoing Tolstoy's belief that one should never war or require people to war. Ellwood said: "Patriotism has been transformed from a normal love of one's country to a nationalism which makes the state, its power and interest, the chief end of life even for individuals. The whole process has involved ignoring the eternal values of truth, justice, and good will among men; or if these values have not been totally ignored, they have been subordinated to the values of power and pleasure-power for the state and pleasure for the individual" (1940, p. 44).

The emotion reflected in patriotism generates the type of conformity Hitler discussed in *Mein Kampf* (1971). Keeping issues at an emotional, instead of an intellectual level reduced people to blindly following leaders. Ellwood said that when this happens that individuals become puppets of those in power. He said the 'Christ-spirit' must rule over the behavior of groups. Otherwise, Christians would eventually succumb to a secular mentality. Of course, he saw this as part of the problem in the United States.

Ellwood then criticized science, noting that science is a reflection of the culture in which it resides. Accordingly, if we have a sensate culture, we also have a sensate science. This type of science has little ability or willingness to address intangibles and imponderables, therefore, it has a difficult time addressing and understanding faith, hope, love, and sympathy. It cannot see the process but only the results of the process. At the same time, Ellwood criticized science for focusing solely on fact finding, because that does not take into account that science is evaluative and interpretive. He explained that, "the essential work of science is not fact-finding, but the testing of hypotheses produced by imaginative insight; and these hypotheses may come from religion, art, literature, as well as from the imagination of the investigator" (1940, p. 63). Therefore, Christian sociology is not merely something that approaches life from a particular perspective, but instead takes an approach that verifies Christian principles through independent investigation (Ellwood, 1920; 1922; 1940). Christian principles then become study hypotheses.

For this Christian transformation to happen, science needed to be humanized (Bogardus, 1950; Ellwood, 1922; 1940). That is, with science becoming so fact finding in nature, scientists

distanced themselves from humans, losing contact with the very people they were studying. Ellwood said that proof of this is found in trying to get money for research. “. . . it is easier to get money even from professing Christians for research regarding the stratosphere than for mundane conditions such as poverty, crime, exploitation, injustices, or failures in human relations” (Ellwood, 1940, p. 67).

Ellwood explained that the science, philosophy, and religion were searching for the same basic things, but all were doing so through negations. Therefore, we see science and philosophy refusing to approach the concept of Christ in a manner of openness and therefore there is a lack of knowledge of that thing. Even to this day, there is a lack of willingness in the secular disciplines to delve into the ideas of Jesus. According to Ellwood, Christianity also never completely adopted the ideas of Jesus. He said, “the church has failed because it failed to keep Christ at its head and to demand the imitation of Christ in every department of life, whether of individuals or of communities” (1940, p. 100). Therefore, both Christianity and science needed to redirect their emphases toward service to others and in-so-doing, move toward an imitation of Christ (Ellwood, 1922; 1940).

Likewise, according to Ellwood, idealistic religious groups fail because they do not understand the teaching of Christ accurately; they do not understand the pragmatic nature of the teachings of Jesus. That is, the focus is more on faith instead of the outcomes of our deeds. Ellwood said that Christians have to take responsibility for the condition of the world and repent their sins and return to the teaching of Christ. As Ellwood stated “. . . the church should fear that it will lose its own Christ-like character if it tolerates indifference among its members to human problems” (1940, p. 114). A Christ-like life revolves around love, but Ellwood warned against ignorant love. An ignorant love would lead to behaviors and rationalizations that would obfuscate Christ’s message. We would harm others and define it as Christian. He used slavery or oppression in general as examples of what occurs when people become ignorant of the words of Christ and all of God’s creation. As scientists and Christians, people should analyze and evaluate what is happening around them. “The laws of love, human brotherhood, social responsibility, simply drop out of consciousness. We have seen how this limited Christianity also functions in political life to create unscrupulous patriotism or to make the success of the party or the country the only end of political action” (1940, p. 127).

Ellwood criticized Christianity and its shifting ideas regarding war (Ellwood, 1940). Initially, war and aggression were viewed as against the will of God. As the power of the church became associated with the state, the church would approve of wars if it were allegedly necessary. Over time, the church would instigate wars. Ellwood said the history of the church regarding war and violence is the antithesis of the teachings of Christ. He used this as an example of the problems associated with not being practical. Once this was ritualized or put into place as part of the natural part of any civilization, people would, in the name of Christ commit atrocities of all kinds including economic, religious, and social oppression.

The sociological influence for Ellwood is evident. He understood how people impact each other and how meaning is created through social interaction. Ellwood believed that humans

should take responsibility for what occurs in the world. We influence each other and therefore are creating meaning. He believed that the changes that occurred in Germany and Japan were begun as a small movement, with a few people. Therefore if a few people could influence civilizations to go to war, such as what happened in Japan and Germany, then it would be logical for a small group of people to lead the world into a Christian civilization (Ellwood, 1899; 1922; 1925; 1940).

Ellwood also was critical of business and industry in the Western world. He did not like its influence on American society. He wrote, "... business enterprises have been to produce profits and still more profits, with little regard for the human relations involved. . . Labor has been too frequently looked upon as a commodity, and the employee as a hand, or even a cog in a large industrial machine" (1940, p. 120). Ellwood viewed the focus of business toward greater profits as directly related to self-interest and selfishness. He said that people in business look out for the best situation for themselves, that is, maximizing profits, while minimizing costs without any regard for the populous. Ultimately according to Ellwood "mutual sacrifice and even public spirit came to be discounted" (1940, p. 121). Business now reflects the sensate culture. These business practices Ellwood believes are antithesis of the teachings of Christ. It is selfishness. Ellwood felt that in every profession, people should always be working to help others. As Ellwood observed:

Those who are economically fortunate often live luxuriously, without serious labor of their own, upon the proceeds of the labor others. Hence, they frequently develop selfish, arrogant, unsympathetic attitudes, very far from the spirit of Christ, and, in accord with our sensate civilization, devote themselves to lives of sense satisfactions and self-indulgence. The economically unfortunate, on the other hand, become degraded, not only because of exploitation, but because of dependence upon aid by others and because they have little opportunity to rise into another economic class. (Ellwood, 1940, pp. 127- 128).

According to Ellwood, the end result is that there develops distrust between employer and employee. This distrust bleeds over into the general public and creates a certain malaise. People then begin to doubt the honesty of those around them, specifically those in other classes. When these things become pervasive throughout a civilization or civilizations, it makes it easier for wars to not only happen, but be celebrated. On the other hand, if the words of Jesus were followed, the direction of civilization would change demonstrating stark differences and benefits. People would work toward the benefit of others, recognizing through the consequences of their actions that they are indeed responsible for themselves and those around them.

The Sociological Implication of the Words of Jesus

According to Ellwood, the sociological implication of Jesus are found in three areas: (1) they create an absolute from which right and wrong are discernible; (2) the words of Christ connect with natural law and collectivity; and (3) Jesus stipulates the interconnectedness of everything, therefore resulting in the responsibility for all.

Creating an absolute is an important aspect that often gets overlooked within sociology today. As mentioned, many current social theories reduce things to some type of subjective experience. Reality then is nothing more than a social construction. Any object is what people or a person calls it. Right and wrong then become fluid and therefore sabotaged. This view, nominalism, allows for theorists to account for people looking at the same phenomenon or object and seeing differences. Reality then lacks certainty or consistency, as everything is fluid and subjective. The counter to this view is realism. Current social theories often relegate realism to nothing more than a static world, yet realism allows for change, and the malleability of nature. Realists often point to natural law to distinguish between right and wrong, but for Ellwood the mastermind behind the creation of natural law is a divine being, therefore right and wrong are accountable to God. From Ellwood's perspective then, it is critical for sociologists to take the time to thoroughly study to find what God's will is; in doing so, right and wrong becomes evident. The absolutes become identifiable.

Secondly, Ellwood easily saw the focus on the collective in Jesus' words. He stated that the words of Jesus needed to be followed completely, and furthermore that people needed to be socialized to adopt the mind of Christ. For this to occur according to Ellwood, it would be a gradual process; not something that would simply explode onto the scene. Not for it to be effective. This process would have to start out small and develop more gradual so that lessons are learned. Learning is a process that takes time if it is to take hold and maintain itself. According to Ellwood, we must learn to love each other. In loving each other, people would feel responsible for each other. In being responsible for each other, people's attentions would automatically focus on the collective and not the individual. Ellwood believed this was lacking amongst Christians. Christians had succumbed to individualistic thinking. He said that people had been converted to only a small part of the Christian ideal; they accepted a limited Christianity. Ellwood believed that living things are successful when they work together. Living animals or creatures build something bigger than the sum of their parts.

Ellwood said that the words of Jesus point toward thinking of the collective, the group, the us. Ellwood said that a world without religion and more specifically a Christ-less world would become individualized, full of uncertainties, destitute of enthusiasm and of vision, reduced to the dead level of individual expediency. Such a world is devoid of both harmony and goodwill. Social values could be replicated as what religion provides, but ultimately these social values would fall short of such an end. Without religion, civilizations could only evolve so far. In the future according to Ellwood, the United States and civilizations in general should sanction an altruistic foundation for society. For Ellwood, a religion-less world went against the Functional Psychology of Dewey and therefore the sociology that Ellwood had been advocating for his entire professional career. Groups, adaptation, and responsibility for others are all natural and God given. If people did not connect those things to the ideas of Christ, then eventually they were doomed to failure. The interactions, values, and beliefs of people would be nothing more than subjective banter.

Ellwood said that if progress was to continue, it demanded that people sacrifice for the good of humanity. Religion was social, not individual; it was necessary for the life of the society. What it projected was always universal and social. It provided meaning at something much larger than the individual and therefore fell within the realm of sociological thought as sociology had always demonstrated that life was bigger than the sum of its parts.

Ellwood also believed in social evolution and saw that as society evolved it would become more complex. In this complexity, there is more need and pressure placed on the group. Accordingly, religion needed to adapt and adjust to fill that need. Eventually the emphasis from religion would be on devotion to the group, or self-sacrificing for the sake of service to the group. As humans moved away from the clan to the entire world, religion would become more humanitarian, with the focus on all of humanity. This would remove the 'us' and 'them' label. He agreed with Cooley that religion provided meaning in life, that it expands the soul into something greater than oneself. As Ellwood stated:

It is primarily a valuing attitude, universalizing the will and the emotions rather than the ideas of man. It thus harmonizes man, on the side of will and emotion, with his world. It encourages hope, and gives confidence in the battle of life . . . (1922, pp. 40-41).

From Ellwood's perspective, Christianity allowed and provided the context for participation in and the universalization of the ideal values of social life. It creates the parameters for social control with the additional power of having the authority behind such parameters as being a divine entity. This authority also provides a sense of motivation to reach a social end and affirms the spiritual and ethical mores of human life and nature in general.

Ellwood saw Christianity as being non-predatory as well as humanitarian in nature. He proclaimed that the clear teaching of Jesus was: "the only possible way to serve God is through the service of men, no matter what their condition, occupation, or nationality might be" (1922, p. 77). Therefore, to serve God would be to focus one's actions on helping all people, and avoid the trappings of falling prey to any biases. Christianity was not static and if followed correctly, would evolve and move toward a civilization that worked toward helping others. It is a religion of love and service to others.

Ellwood considered Christianity a way of life, not just something one professed, nor simply a scholarly endeavor. 'Positive' Christianity would be based upon objective realities, constructive and affirmative; it was not a religion of negations. Ellwood saw American Christianity as Christian positivism—a religion that had evolved into something practical, ethical, and real. When it asked people to be good, it was really asking them to do good. In other words, "it is an endeavor to establish a world-wide, ideal, human society, in which justice and goodwill shall be realized, upon a religious basis. Its aim is nothing less than the creation of a new world" (Ellwood, 1920, p. 455).

He advocated for sincere charity, fair wages, facilities for self-help, and "security in their work, in their possessions, and in their liberties" (Ellwood, 1940, p. 133). Ellwood said that if we followed the words of Jesus, that we would provide private property for all, have the same

benefits for everyone, and that all people would have the same access to everything. There would be no opportunity benefit for those in the upper classes (1940). As Ellwood stated, “a Christian society will aim at guaranteeing to as large a number of its families as possible the minimum amount of private property necessary to insure reasonable security and a reasonable standard of life” (Ellwood, 1940, p. 134). He said that the more Christian a society, the more it would value and fight to preserve liberty and individual rights. This will also facilitate greater cooperation and communication amongst its citizens.

Ellwood valued justice, but felt that this concept was too divisive. He advocated that people focus their attentions on good-will, thereby assuring justice would be achieved as a latent function of this process. This form of behavior and philosophy would also manifest universal love and cooperation.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Ellwood was not successful in his attempts at integrating Christianity with sociology. Most sociologists are not aware of Ellwood, his accomplishments, or his place within the discipline. Upon retiring in 1945, he felt his work was a failure, both at the secular and spiritual level (Ellwood, 1945). Nevertheless, Ellwood does provide a framework for improving the world. By focusing on outcomes of behavior, he demonstrated that people should be doing good deeds and trying to help others. Like Dewey and Mead, he believed the values of people were synonymous with their behavior. Or, as it says in the book of James in the Bible, “show me your faith by your works.” Ellwood tried to live by his faith and stood up to many others, but ultimately he could not push sociology into the direction he so desired. However, there is hope. People may still see the sociological import of the words of Jesus, and how early sociologists used his ideas to advocate for a better world and a more complete sociology.

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