Multiple Religious Belonging **Open Access**

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How Does it Fit? Multiple Religious Belonging, Spiritual but not Religious, and The Dances of Universal Peace

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Abstract: Are people who call themselves "spiritual but not religious" (SBNR) actually practicing multiple religious belonging (MRB)? Or are "multiple religious participation" or "multiple religious involvement" better designations? This article suggests that "multiple religious orientation" fits their practices better. But a subset of the SBNR movement, The Dances of Universal Peace, is used as a case study in straddling the boundaries between MRB and SBNR. It also suggests ways to understand and locate the practices of SBNRs within the MRB discussion.

Keywords: multiple religious belonging; spiritual but not religious; Dances of Universal Peace

Are people who call themselves "spiritual but not religious" (SBNR) actually practicing "multiple religious belonging?" SBNRs are sometimes stereotyped as "poachers," i.e., "wannabes" who are drawn to the exotic, the mystical, or the (to them) foreign, stealing bits and pieces of spiritual traditions and practices for their own use. In other words, SBNRs could easily be known as people who (to borrow a phrase from Alcoholics Anonymous) "take what they like and leave the rest." But that's not usually how they see themselves. In fact, many see their contemporary approach to spirituality as open-minded, tolerant, peace-making and often, in fact, a loftier feat than affiliating with any particular religion.

1 "Spiritual but not Religious" and Multiple Religious Belonging

I've been studying SBNRs for many years. My qualitative research with hundreds across the U.S. and Canada, involves one-on-one interviews, focus groups and participant observation. My book, *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious*,[1] explores their beliefs about certain core themes (transcendence, human nature, community and afterlife) as well as their spiritual journeys, patterns (or lack) of affiliation, and practices. So I've been intrigued by what, if any, connection SBNRs have to "multiple religious belonging" (MRB).

In trying to assess where SBNRs fit within the MRB discourse[2], I suggest that this large and growing population of people[3] are not aberrant outliers but representative of a real – and very popular – trend in society not simply to move away from religion but to find some way to blend, combine, merge, or transcend organized religion. The MRB research needs to take seriously this growing movement. This is

1 Mercadante, *Belief without Borders.*

2 A relevant source for this conversation is Jesudason et al., *Many Yet One?* An important earlier resource is Cornille, *Many Mansions?* On a more popular level, see Miller, *Being Both.*

3 E.g., see "Nones on the Rise," and Kosmin and Keyser, *Religion in a Free Market*.

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necessary no matter where the MRB discourse is rooted: whether in a traditionalist (within boundaries), pluralistic (crossing boundaries), lived religion (blurred boundaries) or post-tradition (beyond boundaries) perspective.[4]

For SBNRs, it is the "belonging" part of MRB that's the real issue. When sociologists try to ascertain who belongs to a religious group, especially in a Western context, they have to count something. Membership rolls, attendance numbers, participation in rituals, are some of the factors that can be used. Religious belonging also implies some recognition and acceptance by accredited leaders or officials. This often includes, ideally, an adherence to a set of beliefs, ethical standards, and some level of participation in rituals, worship and gatherings. Finally, the member is usually expected to self-identify with this religious group.

But the deep structure of the SBNR ethos reveals a decided bias against any kind of long-term commitment, identification or unitary belief system. Constant growth, seeking new realms of knowledge, and a sense that the next bright new insight is just over the horizon, characterizes the people I've interviewed. In fact, SBNRs are typical "detraditioners" who move the "locus of authority" from outside to inside themselves. In many ways, they carry on the "perennialist" tradition that, in the U.S., dates back to American Transcendentalism, the Parliament of the World's Religions (1893), and other such movements.[5] While many kinds of "belonging" are down society-wide,[6] the SBNRs have particular reasons for not belonging to religious groups. They see this practice as not only narrow, restrictive, and doctrinaire but, most important, very limiting of spiritual options. In fact, my interviewees almost unanimously consider organized religion as seriously inhibiting their personal spiritual growth.

Of course, in practice, belonging is not often as strict as the above standards imply. On both the personal and the institutional level, cross-fertilization, religious mixing, borrowing and sharing is common now and, in fact, has always gone on in the world of religion,[7] often without acknowledgement or conscious awareness. Another factor is that "belonging" is not always a relevant concept for religions where official membership is not part of the structure. In some ways, religion could be even considered a made-up category that falsely isolates people's spiritual practices apart from everyday life.[8] But short of completely deconstructing the idea of religion, how do we understand what is going on among many SBNRs?

It's critical to realize that the "NR" of SBNR is only part of the story. For the hundreds of SBNRs I've encountered also partake in a variety of spiritual and religious practices. So even if the "B" in MRB is not appropriate, the "MR" often is. SBNRs very often claim to be benefitting from what they see as perennial truths that religions have discovered. They especially assert what I call a "mystical perennialism," assuming that the deep spiritual experience of mystics from many, if not all, religions is a similar or identical experience of the Ultimate.[9] They routinely display a great interest in an "ancient wisdom" which they insist predates organized religion.

The "ancient wisdom" referred to – as I've heard it used by my interviewees – is rarely a product of their intentional research or a traceable wisdom tradition. Instead, it is often a claim heard from the various spiritual instructors and authors to which they gravitate. Because it accords with the desire to eliminate religious authority yet ground their beliefs in some kind of eternal or universal authenticity, this assertion is usually accepted at face value. In addition, they believe it is warranted today to appropriate practices from various spiritual sources, often assuming they are making accurate renditions and/or necessary adaptations of these aspects.

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4 These discourses have been helpfully laid out by Oostveen, "Multiple Religious Belonging and Hybrid Religiosity."

5 See, e.g., Albanese, *A Republic of Mind & Spirit,* and Schmidt, *Restless Souls*.

6 E.g., Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; see also the American Sociological Association press release, "Active Participation in Voluntary Organizations Declining Faster Than Checkbooks Can Keep Up."

7 See, e.g., its heritage in Unitarian Universalism, in Ritchie, *Children of the Same God*.

8 For a focus on "lived religion" see, e.g., Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*; and McGuire, "Rethinking Religious Identity, Commitment and Hybridity."

9 Catherine Cornille helpfully explains that "The theoretical discussion on the unity or multiplicity of religious experiences has reached an impasse, with constructivists insisting on the dependency of religious experiences on the traditions from which they emerged, and the essentialists arguing for the possibility of a pure and universal religious experience." Cornille, *Many Mansions,* 5.

2 Multiple Religious Participation, Involvement or Orientation?

Perhaps, then, we simply need to adjust our terminology. Many terms have been suggested in order to more fully flesh out what is actually happening in our increasingly multi-religious world. Academic research is struggling to put a handle on this burgeoning field. John Thatamanil explains that terms "include multiple religious identity, multireligious identity, multiple religious participation, multiple/double religious belonging, dual citizenship, hyphenated religious identity...hybridity, and syncretism, just to name a few."[10]

In my opinion, there are distinctions among these possible orientations. I would consider multiple religious identity to include persons who might say, as one of my interviewees did, "I am a Druid-Celtic-Native American-Judeo-Christian." The only group this woman actually attended, and in fact was a member of, was a United Methodist church. The other labels she used for herself were spiritual orientations that she found resonant, but in which she did not actually participate. The designation of "multiple religious participation" would, in my opinion, require active presence in the named groups. One of my interviewees considered himself to partake in the benefits of Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, in that he had a Buddhist spiritual teacher, went to a Hindu-style meditation group, and attended church from time to time.

On the other hand, if someone actually attained membership, or self-identified as an ongoing member in two or more organized religious or spiritual groups, then the term "belonging" could be added to the "multiple religious." While some might lump all these various forms of multiplicity as "hybridity" (usually designating a combination of two religious groups) or "syncretism," (often implying a "mix and match" approach), it is more descriptive to understand the differences in self-identity, levels of participation, and actual community-recognized belonging.

So, can we affirm that SBNRs, if not actually belonging, are at least practicing some form of multiple religious "participation" or "involvement?" I'm not so sure. These terms, in my opinion, imply some level of presence and interaction with real people in existing religious traditions, as well as some mutual recognition, short of full identification or affiliation. Since I see more adaptation and borrowing, rather than "material contact," I suggest that neither do these terms come close enough to the actual attitudes and practices of SBNRs. However, some clarity has been shed by Jeanine Diller. Diller, although not specifically addressing herself to the SBNR issue, has offered a "continuum" to describe the various ways people are multiply religious. She explains that "the many options for living out religious multiplicity run...from light to more intense forms of participation." The first four ways of participating she identifies are "relatively low-stakes" including, in order of growing seriousness: conceptual openness, material contact, collaboration and dialogue. The next phases require even more intentionality, as persons go in deeper and engage religions from the inside. These include: comparative theology, adopting belief(s), adopting practices, identity, and actual belonging.[11] Therefore, one can be "oriented" to multiple religions without actually involving oneself with practitioners or participating in their official activities.

Her insights accord well with my own observation that the SBNRs I've studied fit into five types. I named these: "dissenter" (rejecting a particular religion for theological or personal reasons), "casual" (trying on aspects of alternative and traditional spiritualties on an "as-needed" basis); "spiritual explorer" (curious and interested, a sort of "spiritual tourism," but with no goal of settling down anywhere); "seeker" (actually looking for the right fit in a spiritual home, ready to settle down if found); and "immigrant" (choosing a particular religion, joining, and learning to adapt). By far, the largest percentage of the SBNRs I interviewed fell into the "casual" and "spiritual explorer" categories. And yet many of them would be comfortable with the idea of being "multiply religious."

So, are SBNRs "multiply religious" or something else? In fact, when their actual practices are analyzed, one can see that in large part, they are creating something new, rather than aligning themselves with particular or multiple religious traditions. It is not a value-free stance, for often this new practice or mode is seen as superior to the traditions from which they are gathering. The majority of my interviewees spoke as though they stood on a sort-of higher vantage point from which to identify both similarities and peripheral

10 Thatamanil, "Eucharist Upstairs, Yoga Downstairs: On Multiple Religious Participation," 9.
11 Diller, "Multiple Religious Orientation."

elements in religions. Cornille has noticed something similar in her research, saying "While the recognition of belonging to more than one tradition may arise from a position of humility, it may also result from a posture of superiority.... [such as when they] claim to be the fulfillment of some or all previously existing religions."[12]

We need methods of evaluating these new ways of being "oriented" to multiple religions. Even if we, for now, bracket questions of orthodoxy, faithfulness, unitary commitment, and other normative issues – although these are legitimate questions that are of primary concern to many religious traditions[13] – ultimately there will need to be some standards by which to determine which ways of being "multiply religious" are efficacious for persons.[14] Since this is also of concern within the MRB discourse, the SBNR movement is highly relevant. What is happening on the popular level opens a practical window to both the difficulties and the promise of being multiply religious.

3 The Dances of Universal Peace

To make this whole discussion more concrete, let's focus on a group I encountered during my research, The Dances of Universal Peace (DUP). DUP is an "interspiritual" movement founded in the late 1960s in California by a secular-Jewish American man, Samuel Lewis (1896-1971). Lewis was both a Rinzai Zen master and also a follower of the Sufi master, Hazrat Inayat Khan. He emphasized direct experience, using a "combination of Indian, Japanese and Sufi practices to develop the sensory awareness of sound and music, as a more authentic way to participate in the sources of religious experience."[15]

The DUP provides a window into what I consider mostly a subset of SBNRs. That is, these are people who want to find some way to partake of, combine, and also transcend, traditional forms of religion. Practitioners of DUP see themselves as forging a unifying, peace-making way to accept, enjoy and even practice, on a limited scale, multiple religions. By bridging the gap between SBNR and MRB, they are creating something novel. This path offers a mode of being "multiply religious" which is potentially more attractive to many SBNRs but also, I suggest, less challenging than any variation of MRB.

After many years of existence, an organizational structure has grown up around the DUP movement, with membership, leadership trainings, retreats, certified teachers, approved dances, and locations in many parts of the world. The Dance repertoire has also grown, from Lewis's original 50 or so dances "to more than 500 dances which celebrate the sacred heart of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, as well as the Aramaic, Native American, Native Middle Eastern, Celtic, Native African and Goddess traditions." There is no audience or spectatorship in the Dances, which can comprise from 5 to 500 dancers.[16]

The Dances website explains that "The Dances of Universal Peace are simple, meditative, joyous, multi-cultural circle dances that use sacred phrases, chants, music and movements from the many spiritual traditions of the earth to touch the spiritual essence within ourselves and recognize it in others." It claims that these dances are increasingly being used in medical centers, therapy groups, churches, retirement communities, and ecumenical gatherings.[17] Elizabeth Reed, director of the Abwoon Network and Resource Center which helps organize the movement, explains that the dances are considered inspired, heart-felt, and free of ego-attachment. They include "mantric" chanting of sacred phrases believed to have "power

12 Cornille, *Many Mansions*, 2

13 Cornille, professor of comparative religion, is very clear about this, saying "a total commitment and unitary belonging are ideals for most religions of the world." Cornille, *Many Mansions*, 2.

14 Thatamanil suggests the criteria of human flourishing, liberation, and "knowledge of ultimate reality that might otherwise be inaccessible." "Eucharist Upstairs, Yoga Downstairs," 15-20, 26.

15 Douglas-Klotz, "From Breath to Dance," 3.

16 www.dancesofuniversalpeacena.org

17 Ibid.

and potency." They must also be approved by a designated committee.[18]

I have participated in a number of such dances and know members who are very enthusiastic about this practice. The goal seems to be to produce an experience of oneness, joy, and physical harmony through dance among the participants. There is no doubt that the participants consider this a spiritual practice and many told me this is their main (and often only) form. In fact, for many it has become a lifestyle enclave, as people build their schedules around the weekly or monthly "Dances," travel great distances to attend the summer camps organized around "The Dances," and follow the well-known dance leaders who travel the country.

The structure of the Dances is similar no matter where held. Musicians with acoustic instruments sit, often on a colorful rug with a Middle Eastern appearance, in the center. The dance leader stands with them, guiding participants in formulaic dances, identifying each by the religion to which it is associated. Often words and phrases are chanted from the appropriate language, set to tunes that, although perhaps not of religious origin, have been created with a culturally-relevant sound. From my observations, participation and conversations, I have learned that there are unspoken rules, format, and expected behaviors associated with "The Dances." For instance, there are certain ways people are expected to hold hands when circling, certain body movements which experienced dancers perfect, certain types of clothes people tend to wear [skirts, loose peasant-type shirts], soft shoes or no shoes, and a specific routine of greetings, hugging of strangers, quiet conversation and healthy snacks during breaks, etc.

In the Dances I attended, a very large percentage of the participants were white Baby Boomers, often with a preponderance of women. Although often held in a large room rented from a mainline Protestant church or public space, the events are held apart from religious or other activities and often in the evening when the church or location is vacant. For perhaps reasons of nomenclature or ethos [Mennonites being a "peace" church], it is sometimes held at a local Mennonite church. But like AA, there is normally no real intermixing with the church congregation.

How true are these dances to the religions which they claim to represent? Are there religious advisors or practitioners of these traditions involved? Who judges the accuracy of the renditions? While some training and oversight is involved, it appears to be largely within the DUP structure itself. Reed said: "When a person is training to become a leader, they go through certification process and part of it is to spend some time and go and visit worshipping communities of all the faiths of the dances you will be leading." There are no such expectations, however, put upon participants. Even so, she says, the DUP does not claim that these are authentic dances from particular traditions. Instead, they are taking "a mantric phrase from, for example, a Buddhist tradition and putting movement with it. It is a body prayer. This is not to imply that we are doing a Buddhist dance. Only the words really and sometimes the melody come from the tradition....It's more about fitting the energy of the words."[19]

Long-time participants sometimes mention that the "Dances" have a Sufi origin but stress that anyone can participate. Yet there is a Sufi order specific to the Dances, known as the "Ruhaniat" order, for those who desire to participate in a deeper way. Universalistic in orientation, mostly American and relatively small (about 2000 – 3000 members worldwide), membership in this order is not required. However, if one chooses to join, it does require a form of initiation. This includes taking a guide from among experienced members, following this guide's spiritual direction, and making a life-long commitment to him or her.[20] Once the initiate is given a Sufi name by the guide, others tend to use it for the member within the movement.

"Dual religious identity" seems to be the case for some members previously involved with another organized religion. Reed, a retired ordained United Methodist minister and now a Sufi teacher, said that she can affirm both her Sufi and Christian identities. One of my former seminary students – also a retired

18 Set of conversations with Elizabeth Reed, April 25-28, 2016. Reed is the director of the Abwoon Resource Center, Worthington, Ohio and the website Abwoon Network. The purpose of these operations is to share "the work of Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz and his colleagues and students on Native Middle Eastern spirituality, peacemaking and ecology, including work on the Aramaic words of Jesus, Hebrew and Native Middle Eastern creation mysticism and Sufism."

19 Conversation with Elizabeth Reed.

20 Conversation with Elizabeth Reed.

ordained United Methodist minister and now an avid DUP member and Sufi initiate – claimed the same thing. Yet even though Sufism has roots in Islam, no one I met in the DUP – including my student who was quite insistent on this point – identifies as Muslim.

4 Analysis

How do we fit SBNRs and the DUP into the MRB conversation? As we've seen, for SBNRs, the aspect of "belonging" does not usually apply to them. The ones I've met see spiritual practices as a "moveable feast," and freely sample things on an "as-needed" basis. This doesn't mean they are entirely eclectic, however. In my book I've explored the common themes and beliefs both adopted and rejected by this large population. There is a narrative that guides this "bumper car ride through a maze of spiritual trips."[21]

What about multiple religious "participation" or "involvement?" S. Mark Heim suggests that this would involve "some continuing exercise of elements of behavior and belief which themselves are grounded in distinguishably different communities or traditions." He presumes that "the practice in question is not a one-time event" and that "one continues to look to particular religious sources...for guidance." This could include "the instruction of individual teachers, or in textual sources," in other words, an "apprenticeship" rather than an "idiosyncratic" or "serial adherence to different faiths."[22] For a large percentage of the SBNRs I've studied, this does not apply either. Thus I would hesitate to identify SBNR practices as multiple religious "participation" or "involvement."

However, "multiple religious orientation," may come closest to describing SBNRs. Using Diller's categories, the SBNRs I've studied were conceptually open to religious and spiritual traditions, may have tried on various beliefs and practices, but did not identify with any particular tradition, and had no plans of regular involvement, much less affiliation. Material contact (with traditional practitioners and/or services) was often low or non-existent, as was actual face-to-face dialogue or collaboration with affiliated practitioners. Most striking, there was little in-depth comparative theology or analysis. While a critical thinker would quickly observe that this lack allowed people to simultaneously affirm sometimes contradictory beliefs, the SBNRs themselves considered this more a strength than a weakness. To this extent, we can identify SBNRs as holding a "multiple religious orientation."

The DUP, however, presents a somewhat different case. It may offer a route within the SBNR movement for people who search for a way to go deeper. Reed estimates that about 30% of dancers are long-term, committed members, with another 30% fairly regular, and about 30% casual participants.[23] While this is not actually a religious "belonging," there is an option for people to sign up as a member, pay dues, and receive communications. But some choose to go further.

Those who join the Sufi Ruhaniat order have moved into a fuller form of belonging. Comprised in the Ruhaniat belonging are many of the components of religion: ethical standards, instruction, rituals, leadership, community, and beliefs. Some members retain their "native" religious identification, if they have one, but Reed estimates this is probably no more than 10%. My former student explained that the work of Neil Douglas-Klotz on the "Aramaic Jesus"[24] helped her understand the failings of Christianity much better, but also enabled her to attend church occasionally and keep her retired United Methodist credentials. The Ruhaniat order, however, is a very discrete form of Sufism, not identified with forms in other countries nor with Islam. In the end, because it is its "own thing" – and specific to the Dances – it may not really belong within the "MRB" designation, but that is a judgement call.

21 This quote comes from one such "seeker," identified by James R. Lewis and Oscar-Torjus Utaaker, "'Bumper Car Ride Through a Maze of Spiritual Trips'."

22 Heim, "On Doing as Others Do," 31.

23 Conversation with Elizabeth Reed.

24 Douglas-Klotz, *Prayers of the Cosmos*.

5 Peril and Promise

Thatamanil talks about the "peril and promise" inherent in multiple religious participation. On the "promise" side, he suggests the criteria of human flourishing, liberation, and "knowledge of ultimate reality that might otherwise be inaccessible."[25] The meditative, full-body practice of dancing may, in fact, be an aid to participants "human flourishing" and also a way to feel liberated from the standards and expectations of organized religion. As for knowledge of "ultimate reality," although it would be nearly impossible to ascertain this in DUP participants, it was in fact a distinct goal of Samuel Lewis when he created the dances.

What about the "peril," however? The most relevant one that Thatamanil mentions is "misappropriation,"[26] that is, when practices, beliefs and features of religions are borrowed in an "illegitimate" way, a way not true to the tradition itself. This can be applied to both the generalized SBNR ethos but also to DUP practice. As we've seen, DUP leaders do have some exposure to the traditions they will represent, but it does not appear to be in-depth or consistently first-hand. Participants do not typically have exposure and so are dependent upon the leader's expertise. At one dance I attended, the leader made much of the fact that in a previous dance an actual Hindu practitioner had been helping out, leading me to assume this is not a normal occurrence. Also, for both SBNRs and the DUP, selectivity may be an issue. As Cornille says, "Religious belonging implies more than a subjective sense of sympathy or endorsement of a selective number of beliefs and practices."[27]

Perhaps most important, in light of the MRB conversation, is to understand the hoped-for outcomes of these various "multiple religious orientations." According to Douglas-Klotz, long time authority in DUP, founder Lewis believed in an "essence of the human spiritual impulse that was pre- or trans-verbal and conceptual." He hoped that his dances would "help ameliorate warlike psychological and cultural tendencies in the world" as well as increasing "understanding between people of different religious traditions and decrease intolerance."[28]

Reed, too, affirmed that: "It would be hoped that a dancer would be inspired to visit other religions. The goal of the Dances is to inspire more interfaith stuff. Sam Lewis said it was "'a mystic's peace plan'.... if people could 'eat, dance and pray together.'"[29] Because SBNRs often see religion-inspired intolerance as a core societal problem – and one of their stated reasons for being "not religious" –this goal may also be implicitly theirs as well.

I can't speak as an insider when it comes to outcomes of DUP, but I can make some observations. I am not sure Lewis's hoped-for ends are being realized, at least not yet. I noted a decided bias against religious belonging and a specific identification of Western religion as something to be mostly left behind, (or selectively culled from). These are characteristic of the SBNR ethos in general. Reed, in fact, estimated that very few dancers retain any regular involvement with their original religious tradition, if they had one. Although she finds that occasionally ministers from various Protestant denominations attend the dances, she acknowledges that for many participants, their primary identification and allegiance is with DUP itself, so intent were they on leaving traditional organized religion behind.[30]

In the end, how do we categorize participants in the "Dances?" In my opinion, DUP is mostly a subset of SBNR. I say this because most of the participants continue to see themselves as SBNR. Yet, in theory, DUP could be a sort of "new religious movement" for some of the participants. This is because, from time to time, a dancer will be so taken with the DUP ethos that she or he wants more. Such participants are invited

25 Thatamanil, "Eucharist Upstairs, Yoga Downstairs," 15-20, 26.

26 For Thatamanil, the problems include: First, "misappropriation," i.e. practices, beliefs and features of religions are borrowed in an "illegitimate" way, a way not true to the tradition itself. Second, he warns of "contraindication," i.e. when the "therapeutic regimen" of a particular religion is inappropriate for the borrower's own orientation to the world. Third, he speaks of "existential uncertainty," which happens when various religions' understanding of and engaging with ultimate reality are profoundly at odds. He also lists other key issues by which to describe and evaluate ways of being multiply religious. Ibid.

27 Cornille, *Many Mansions*, 4.

28 Douglas-Klotz, "From Breath to Dance," 10-12.

29 Conversation with Elizabeth Reed.

30 Conversation with Elizabeth Reed.

to join the idiosyncratic version of Sufism that this group represents. They will be given a mentor, a new name, and certain protocols to follow. And yet it is not so simple. For often, even these joiners decline to call themselves "religious" or say they are part of a religion. When asked if they are Muslim, they often say no. When it is suggested that Sufism is a part of, or offshoot of, Islam, they tend to say that their unique brand of Sufi spirituality is open to all, whether religious or not, and that everyone can keep her or his "own religions" if they have one.

In the end, nothing is simple or obvious except for the rather routine distancing from the word "religious" that is increasingly part of contemporary culture. Still, religion is constantly undergirded by human (and divine) creativity, even if stereotypes of it say otherwise. Much work still needs to be done on the conceptual level. Yet, as we learn to navigate this complex and rich multiply religious world, it is possible that for many people experience may need to precede intellectual understanding. Perhaps the "performance" of being oriented to multiple religions may change attitudes and behavior. For the repeated activity of uttering sacred phrases and participating in dances representing a variety of religious traditions may perform a gradual, subliminal change on people, not only deepening their own spiritual life, but their acceptance of others' particularities and ways of spiritually growing. While the DUP may not have launched such a revolution, as Douglas-Klotz himself acknowledges,[31] perhaps it offers one path towards this goal for the burgeoning population of SBNRs.

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31 Douglas-Klotz says "In the final analysis, it remains to be seen whether Lewis's work will have the lasting influence on Western culture that he hoped. Certainly, the necessity for some influence is no less than when he wrote…." Neil Douglas-Klotz, "From Breath to Dance," 13.

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