

# Religion Projections to AD/CE 2025

In the Thinksheet immediately previous to this one, I made some use of my 1970 report "Religion Projections: Early 21st Century" to Herman Kahn, founder of the Hudson Institute, whose REPORT FROM STONE MOUNTAIN was the major influence on JFK's foreign policy. My report was small-book-length, but here I reproduce only the "Abstract of Exhibit C of August '70 Project of Willis E. Elliott to Herman Kahn." NOTES: (1) It's technical, & I use the rest of p2 to explain technical terms. (2) It's vaticinium ex eventu, prophecy in reverse after 55 years (i.e., looking at 1970 from the viewpoint of 2025): you be the judge of how well I did.

1a-f The major religions have come through "the transition period" (HI Standard World, end of 20th c.) weakened in their negations (and so in their polemic) and strengthened both in their tribal and in their global affirmations (and so in their apologetic); and with no significant changes in their demographic distribution.

2a-f Poetic intellectuals and the upper middle classes have moved massively into mysticism and the practice of meditation.

3a-d Religion and statecraft have both profited from growing political sophistication, of which the chief components are ideological fatigue and religious pluralism within as well as between nations.

4ab Religion in both traditional and emergent forms has participated in and fostered the global sensibility, which prefers richness (a, below; predictions for accretion, tolerance of contradiction) to order, and spontaneity (b, below) to prearrangement.

5a-e Beginning two generations ago, technopsychic events (nuclear, space, biochemical, genetic) have shocked the promise/threat structures of the tribes, radically pruning their introversion, xenophobia, and (where present) imperial drive--and equally radically fertilizing their subsoil, reinvigorating their roots with global nutrients so that their fruits have come to add to the tribal a global quality, making them salable in the world trade of spirit.

6ab In ethics and law, religion has helped shape the world's responses to the technopsychic events. Here religion's effect has been ambiguous, though on balance probably pro-global.

7ab The ethical-legal consequences of the appearance of the technopsychic, the global psyche of technetronic man now almost universal man, were not the only consequences. Concomitant, and of equal importance, was the perceptual shift in the human "spirit," the domain and energy of the Ultimate Conversation (I/Thou) in tension with the intimate conversation (I/me) and the intermediate conversation (I/you).

8a-d East-West religion dialog has advanced to the point of major concessions: the Eastern hemisphere, that it had neglected history and the tactile world; the Western hemisphere, that it had neglected meditation and man's agglutinative (accessional) power.

9a-e The order in which the continents are currently productive of new religions is North America, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe. Not surprisingly, this is also the the speed-of-change descending order.

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The above are "Global: In General"; the below, "United States: Supplemental."

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10ab In the past three generations, clergy anxiety in America has crescendoed and is only now beginning to abate.

11a-g Most U.S. congregations--7/10th of the 170, 000--have no salaried resident clergy, though virtually all of them are under the leadership of ordained personnel, 1/12th of whom are women.

12a-d Theological education has radically changed.

13a-d Experience in working together on public issues (human rights, ecology, public education, population control, war control, etc.)

Elliott  
Thinksheets

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Craigville, MA 02632  
Phone/Fax 508.775.8008 \$20 per year  
e-mail: wandelliott@attbi.com

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has developed a muscled communication network of Jewish and Christian (Orthodox, Catholic, Episcopal, Protestant [mainline, "evangelical," pentecostal]) composition, both groups and individuals--roughly, "the biblical peoples" (a phrase common for this action-alliance).

14a-d We have become a values-conscious society, aware of the values options within cultural pluralism on this polyhermeneutic globe.

151a-d What was roughly called "the underground church" in the 1960s because ecclesiarchs sniffed at its activities and even its existence, became before century's end the perfectly respectable R&D department of the ecclesial establishment.

16a-d Late-20th-c. "secular religion" or "religion-less Christianity" did not prove durable (any more than had the liberalism, neobiblicism, and existentialism that had preceded it in that century), but the rhetorical contradiction in the two phrases did achieve its goal, the shocking of the old sacreds into "relevance".

17a-i Judaism has once again become missionary with its distinctive offer of a middle way between tribalism and globalism, and exists in an astonishing variety of manifestations.

18a-c The decline of xenophobic ethnicity in America has become "bad" and "good" for Christina Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

19a-c Nonethnic Catholicism and nonethnic Protestantism (there being virtually no ethnic Protestantism left in the U.S.) are still distinguishable in faith and order, but hardly at all in life, work, action.

20a-c The Protestant conciliar movement (councils of church in all concentric circles: local, area, county, urban, state, national, world) presaged the present coalition movement in the metro and wider circles.

21a-g American civil life has become more secular in the sense that religious institutions have less political weight than ever before, and religion itself has become a boundary phenomenon. This, however, needs qualifying.

22a-d Because "the person" is both individual and collective, religion promotes both "soft" (radical personal change) and "hard" (radical sociopolitical change) revolution. Virtually all the religious theory (i.e., "theology") of any influence today sees the two as a single process (called by Teilhard "hominization" and by ecumenical-movement theology, beginning in the mid-1960s, "humanization").

23a-e Religious tension today, cutting across all former dividing-lines, exists chiefly in the vectors of a dialog among tribal, global, and tribal-global man.

#### NOTES (referenced by the above sections)

1 "transitional period"--Herman Kahn foresaw the 21st century as radically different. "tribal"--anything less than global.

4ab "the global sensibility"--in global man, the planet as a factor in all thinking. "man" (as in "global man")--rightly, inclusive language uses "humanity" or "human beings" instead of generic "man"; but the sciences will continue to speak of "man" & nature, & "man" is still normal for relation to God.

5a-e "technopsychic," technopsyche--defined in 7ab as "the global psyche of technetronic man." Global sensibility inclusive of the industrial-electronic (thus, "technetronic man"). (Written before the era of the personal-computer revolution, & anticipating its consciousness.)

14a-d "polyhermeneutic"--many modes or angles of interpretation.

23a-e "tribal-global man"--balancers (of whom I'm one) of the particular and the universal perspectives & values.