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Much has been written in the anthropology and sociology of religion about charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity, both globally and amongst Euro-American elites. However with the exception of work by anthropologist Tanya Lurhmann (*When God Talks Back*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2012) and sociologist Donald Miller (*Reinventing American Protestantism,* University of California Press, 1997), there has been little specific focus on the Vineyard Movement - a neocharismatic network standing currently at over 1500 churches worldwide, fostered by the pastor John Wimber. Anthropologist Jon Bialecki's *A Diagram For Fire* is an ethnographic account of a Southern Californian Vineyard church and the wider national and global network it was part of, and addresses the question of what is distinctive about the Vineyard. In doing so, Bialecki identifies and describes the distinctive timescales and timescapes of the Vineyard, its spirit of entrepreneurialism, the ways in which Vineyard members learn to hear from and experience God, their heterogeneous political orientations, and the ways in which the miraculous appears – and sometimes fails to appear – in their experience as they move between naturalistic and supernatural frames in everyday life. Bialecki draws out each of these features through vivid ethnography that is especially finely tuned to areas of ambiguity or tension in believers' experiences. A discussion of the significance of the Vineyard movement's preference for sans-serif fonts, for example, draws out tensions between a seemingly entrepreneurial desire for planning and quality control (so as to be as 'seeker friendly' as possible) and the ways in which 'God intervenes in what is often referred to as a "messy" way – acting at cross purposes with, indifferent to, or actively opposed to human will and intention' (59).

However *A Diagram For Fire* offers much more than compelling ethnographic insight into contemporary American charismatic Christianity: it demonstrates a novel way of approaching charismatic Christianity, and indeed religion more widely, as a social scientific object. Bialecki argues that Gilles Deleuze's concept of 'the diagram' can help us think about forms of both identity and diversity within a distributed movement such as the Vineyard in a way that allows us to see its plasticity and propensity for change. The idea of the diagram here is some distance from anthropology's long-standing practice of presenting ethnographic material in schematized pictorial diagrams. Rather, diagrams here refer to sets of relations; as Bialecki puts it, they are 'abstract maps of how forces play out that point as much toward the different potentials in outcome as they do toward a similarity in relations or constitution' (69). As an abstract set of pure relations, the diagram can be expressed, or 'actualized' in numerous different milieu. For example, a diagram of the regime of visibilities and

invisibilities that Foucault describes as characteristic of the early modern period in *Discipline and Punish* is expressed in the Panopticon, but was also actualized in the school, the prison, the workshop, and the hospital (70). The diagram, as an abstract set of relations, is not however like a Platonic idea or essence, but is rather a field of generative potential that is changeable and multiple, and is always actualized in ways that are intertwined with wider social and cultural forces and relations. Sometimes some elements of the diagram may not be actualized, and this may lead to a mutation to another diagram altogether, or when actualized in different contexts, particular elements may be repurposed. An example of this, as Bialecki has suggested elsewhere, might be secularism, which could be seen as a reterritorialized form of particular self-erasing features of Christianity ('Virtual Christianity in an age of nominalist anthropology', *Anthropological Theory* 12, 2012, 314)

In *A Diagram For Fire,* Bialecki develops a charismatic diagram for understanding the shifting intensities and modes of becoming in play in the Vineyard movement, a diagram that includes miracles and the willful and unwilling aspects (of a single actor or distributed across several actors or objects) that counter against the will (72). Through this diagram, Bialecki shows how particular events become associated with a sense of unnaturalness and surprise for Vineyard members, so that these events work as signs or acts of God. But the mutability and multiplicity of the diagram also includes the possibility of its breaking down. Bialecki discusses, for example, how the fact that Vineyard believers live in a secular world infused with other religious and nonreligious possibilities means that they at times let the diagram collapse as they are shaped by 'a sense of how one can maneuver in the consensual world created by this cohabited plurality', and can come to express a sense of uncertainty about whether a particular event was 'from God' that allows them to live with a lack of certainty about divine action in the world (169).

A particular strength of the portrait Bialecki develops using this diagrammatic approach is the insight it allows us into the modes of relationality, dynamic becoming, and forms of difference and repetition within the charismatic movement. These are elements that are often missed by approaches in the sociology and anthropology of religion that focus primarily on the influence of socioeconomic forces, such as the privileged focus given in many studies of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity to the influence of the global spread of neoliberalism. Bialecki does not ignore these factors. He discusses, for example, how moments of generosity, such as a gift to an injured dancer that cut across the prevailing

economic order of ‘a self-interested eudemonic consumer capitalism’ is constituted as an instance of the miraculous. But it is a sense of becoming and openness to change that Bialecki argues is particularly distinctive within the Vineyard. Indeed, he suggests that ultimately the charismatic diagram can be seen as ‘a divinization of change, an openness to the event that people rely on not just to change their political circumstances, or to reorder their quotidian lives, but to make themselves and others anew as well’ (197). In the conclusion to the book, Bialecki argues that this diagrammatic approach is of relevance beyond the study of charismatic Christianity to the wider study of religion. Specifically, he argues that it allows us to create a contingent definition of religion as ‘some kind of *relation with* or *orientation toward* beings that are in some ways strikingly more than human’ (204), and as such, religious modes of being share the characteristic of addressing, masking, or marking an absence. Bialecki argues that this orientation to an absence, or ‘problem of presence’, means that religiosity is fundamentally more mutable that other forms of aesthetic production, such as art, in which conventions of genre or utilitarian aspects of an object place limits on modes of artistic production.

While Bialecki does not explicitly draw out this point, the approach he takes in *A Diagram For Fire* encourages reflection on the nature of what it is to understand a form of religion. In *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough* (Byrnwill Press, 1979), Wittgenstein argues that Frazer’s explanation of magical and religious notions is unsatisfactory because it makes these notions appear as ‘mistakes’. Wittgenstein argues that instead of trying to set a distance between us and the thing being explained as Frazer does, ‘We can only *describe* and say, “Human life is like that’. Instead of Frazer’s distancing move, Wittgenstein states that understanding consists in ‘the fact that we “see the connections” in the thing under observation, so the task in seeking to understand consists in ‘arrang[ing] the factual material so that we can easily pass from one part to another and have a clear view of it’. This idea of understanding in terms of describing something in such a way that we see the connections and relations within it is what *A Diagram For Fire* does for the Vineyard. By showing us these connections and relations, and revealing how they shift, tilt, bend, stretch and break, the book advances on work in the study of religion that has portrayed religion as a network of relationships between heaven and earth through opening up ways of thinking through how change happens within a religious movement. The diagrammatic approach to religion can be compared with Jonathan Z. Smith’s polythetic definition of religion (in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, University of Chicago Press, 1982), but opens up new analytical possibilities through its

attention to the dynamism of religiosity. By delineating both the abstract diagram and the ways it may be actualized in myriad ways as well as the ways it may break down, Bialecki's approach opens up a new way of theorizing religious change (and its interrelations with other forms of social and cultural change). As such, the book is of wider significance not just in social scientific approaches to religion, but to the study of religion more broadly.