



Being Interfaith Now: New Directions in American Religious Pluralism

Kate McCarthy
California State University, Chico



(Mom's bumper stickers)





3 overlapping settings for thinking about American religious pluralism

- The **theological/philosophical** context
 - exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism
- The **diversity** context
- The **civic** context

Building a Mosque
at Ground Zero is like
building a memorial to
Hitler at Auschwitz



STOP
ISLAM




Mosque at Ground Zero
the MONUMENT to TERRORISM!



ALL I NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT ISLAM,
I LEARNED ON
9/11

A photograph of a man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is standing in a grassy area next to a white utility trailer. The trailer has red text printed on its side. In the background, there is a large building with a stone facade and a large white cross on its wall. The sky is blue with some clouds.

**INTERNATIONAL
BURN A KORAN DAY
9/11/2010 6PM-9PM**



...in one national survey 57 percent of churchgoing Christians said it was true not only that “Christianity is the best way to understand God” *but also* that “All religions are equally good ways of knowing God.”

Robert Wuthnow,
America and the Challenges of religious Diversity

INTERFAITH
ENCOUNTERS
IN AMERICA



Kate McCarthy



Sites of Interfaith Encounter

- National interfaith political coalitions
 - Strategic alliance for a single purpose
- Community-based interfaith organizations
 - Service and presence
- Interfaith families
 - Negotiation, creativity, intentionality
- Online interfaith dialogues
 - Democratized and personalized

Table 1.**Religious Self-Identification of the U.S. Adult Population 1990, 2001, 2008**

	1990		2001		2008	
	Estimated Number of People	%	Estimated Number of People	%	Estimated Number of People	%
<i>Catholic</i>	46,004,000	26.2	50,873,000	24.5	57,199,000	25.1
<i>Other Christian</i>	105,221,000	60.0	108,641,000	52.2	116,203,000	50.9
Total Christians	151,225,000	86.2	159,514,000	76.7	173,402,000	76.0
Other Religions	5,853,000	3.3	7,740,000	3.7	8,796,000	3.9
Nones	14,331,000	8.2	29,481,000	14.2	34,169,000	15.0
DK/Refused	4,031,000	2.3	11,246,000	5.4	11,815,000	5.2
Total	175,440,000	100.0	207,983,000	100.0	228,182,000	100.0

American Religious Identity Survey 2008

You *KNOW* it's a Myth
This Season, Celebrate REASON!



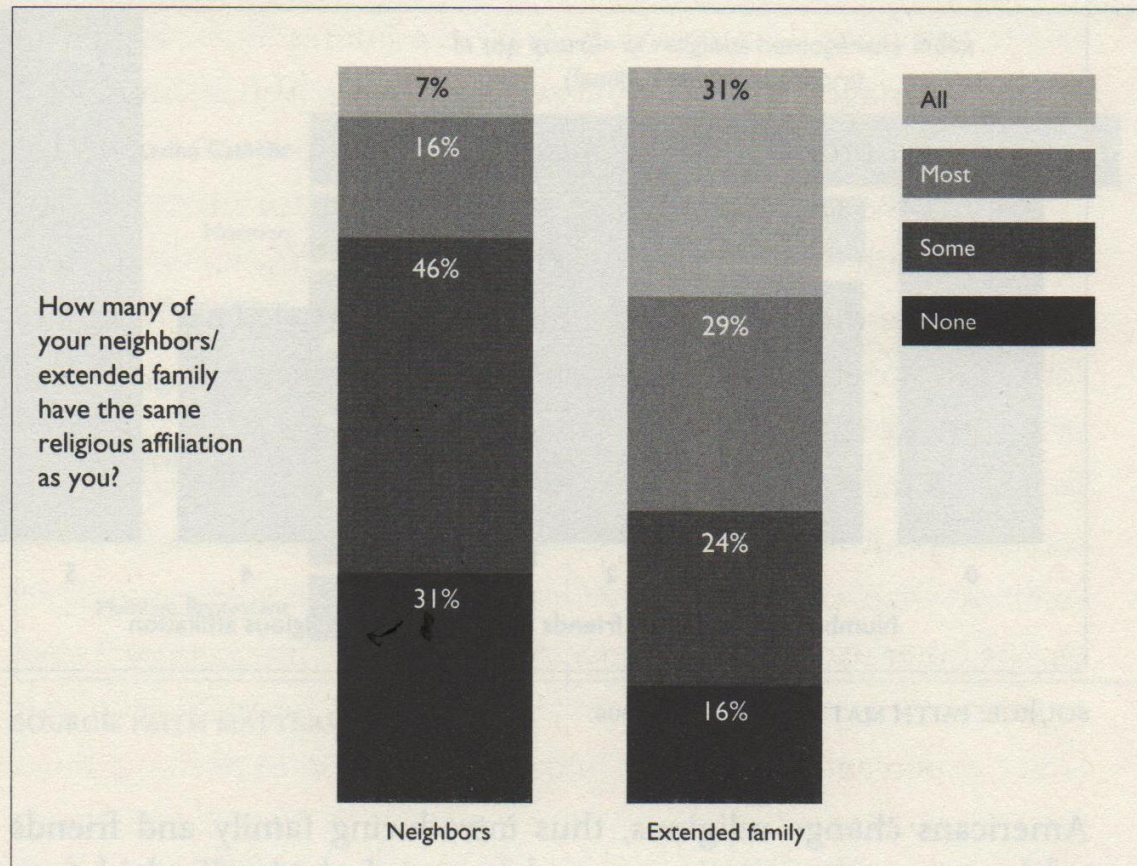
American Atheists • Reasonable since 1963 • atheists.org



religious
"bridging"

Figure 15.2

MOST AMERICANS HAVE RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS



SOURCE: FAITH MATTERS SURVEY, 2006.



The “Aunt Susan Principle”

“...it is difficult to damn those you know and love”

Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell



Wilfred Cantwell Smith

*Religious truth lies not in
systems but in persons.*

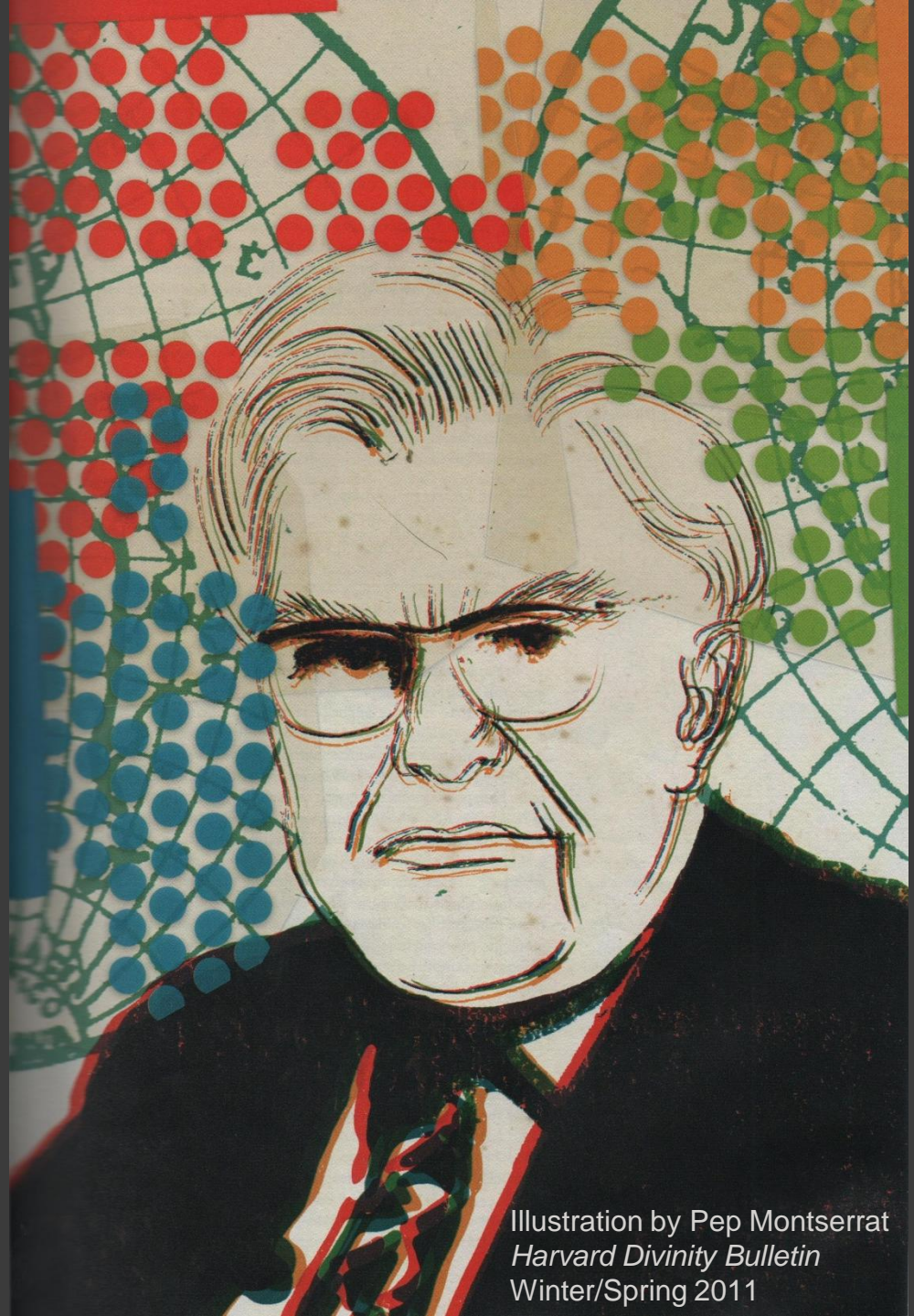
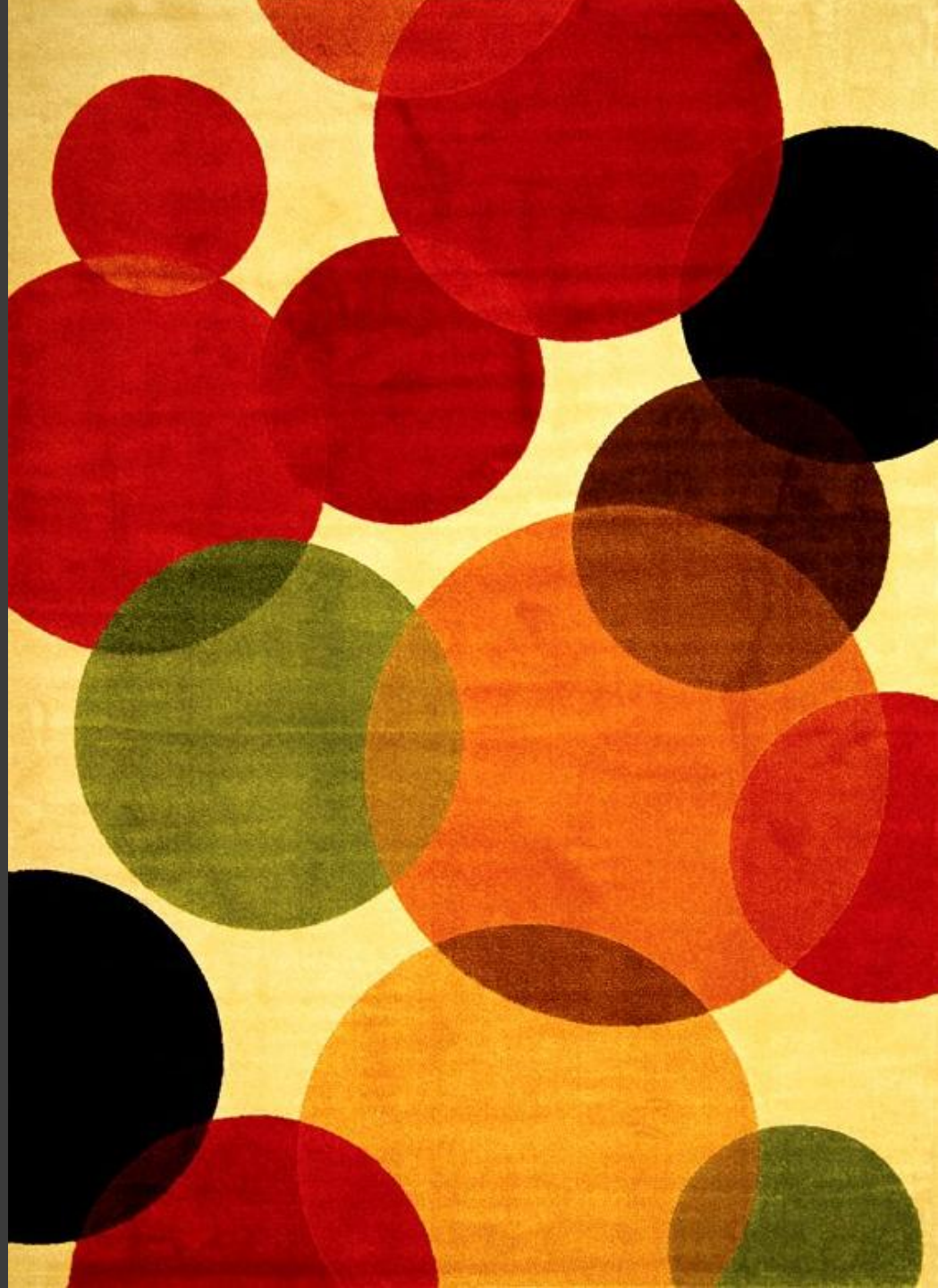


Illustration by Pep Montserrat
Harvard Divinity Bulletin
Winter/Spring 2011

“...at once insiders and outsiders to multiple centers”

--Michelle Voss Roberts





a new option in religious education

Facilitator: Kate McCarthy, PhD

OpenMinds

Big Questions ... Many Answers

Do Muslims believe in Jesus?

What is karma?

Are all religions basically the same?

Can you be spiritual without a religion?

Is there one god or many? Or none?

How can I be happy?

An exploration of the world's religious and philosophical wisdom traditions for high school students

Information Session for students and parents

August 31, 6 pm

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Chico
1289 Filbert Avenue**

*This is a free, non-sectarian educational program. It is not affiliated with any religious denomination or community.

