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TOWARD AN ENTHEOGEN RESEARCH AGENDA



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chapter entitled "Unitive Consciousness and Pahnke's Good Friday Experiment" to the book *Psychoactive Sacramentals*.

Summary

The word *entheogen* was coined to denote psychedelic chemicals and botanicals that engender the experience of god within. Drawing on William James, Charles Tart, and Ken Wilber, the authors claim that a complete study of religion must include entheogens, and they propose topics leading toward an entheogen research agenda: (a) the

spiritual nature of the human mind, (b) the dispute over the authenticity of entheogen-assisted religious experiences, (c) pastoral counseling, (d) experimental mysticism, (e) entheogenic origins of religion, and (f) policy issues in freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. The authors conclude with seven recommendations to churches, religious orders, seminaries, and scholarly and scientific professional groups for actions they can take to promote entheogenic research.

From archaic times (Devereux, 1997; Rudgely, 1993) to contemporary shamanism (Furst, 1972; Schultes & Hofmann, 1971/1992) entheogens—psychoactive plants and chemicals used in a religious context (Ott, 1993)—have influenced religious practices and beliefs. We (Roberts & Hruby, 1998a) have shown in our still-growing chrestomathy of entheogen-related publications that scholarly books, doctoral dissertations, and popular new publications are being produced regularly, while previously out-of-print psychedelic classics are being reprinted (e.g., Grinspoon & Bakalar, 1979/1997; Grof, 1975/1993; Riedlinger, 1990/1997). Although it is certain that not all this interest is spiritual, entheogen-related professional publications and organizations are growing (*Bulletin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies*; Council on Spiritual Practices, 1998; *Eleusis: Journal of Psychedelic Plants and Compounds*; *Entheogen Law Reporter*; *Entheogen Review*; Forte, 1997; *Heffter Review of Psychedelic Research*; Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, 1998).

For some publications and organizations, entheogens are their major focus; others include entheogens within broader religious, mind-body, and psychedelic perspectives. Most recently, Huston Smith's *Cleansing the Doors of Perception* (2000) adds credibility to the topic of entheogens, and the theme of the fall 1996 issue of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, "Psychedelics: Help or Hindrance?", which considered the complex relationships between Buddhism and psychedelics, may point the way to more serious discussions within the religious community. As surprising as it seems at first, a few evangelical (Cotton, 1996) and popular religious authors (Burnham, 1997) are recognizing that God may reach people in many ways, even through entheogens. These publications and organizations indicate a neglected agenda for research on religion.

As a beginning, this article explores some theoretical and philosophical roots of using entheogens to shift mind-body states and the safety issues surrounding such use. The majority of the article is devoted to presenting six topics toward a future entheogen

research agenda: (a) the spiritual nature of the human mind, (b) the authenticity of entheogen-occasioned primary religious experiences, (c) pastoral counseling, (d) experimental mysticism, (e) entheogenic origins of religion, and (f) policy issues in freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Finally, we conclude with the hope that religious, scholarly, and scientific organizations will inform their members about entheogenic issues and encourage their study and open discussion.

THEORETICAL ROOTS

Philosophical Foundation

Before discussing the six topics of our proposed entheogenic research agenda, we'd like to embed the need for entheogenic research in James' psychology and Wilber's philosophy. Echoing James's (1902/1982) earlier challenge, "No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite discarded" (p. 298). Tart (1969) challenged psychology to extend its range to include observations of mind-body states beyond our usual, ordinary state.

The most important obligation of any science is that its descriptive and theoretical language embrace *all* the phenomena of its subject matter; the data from [altered states of consciousness] cannot be ignored if we are to develop a comprehensive psychology. (p. 5)

Re-echoing both James and Tart, we believe that no account of religion and consciousness can be final that leaves entheogenic states discarded.

Contemporary philosopher of consciousness Wilber saw psychedelics as contributing to our understanding of consciousness. In "An Integral Theory of Consciousness" (1997), he identified "a dozen major but conflicting schools of consciousness theory and research" (p. 72). Rather than choosing among them, he integrates them "on the assumption that each of these schools has something irreplaceably important to offer" (p. 71). Number 9 on his list is:

Nonordinary states of consciousness, from dreams to psychedelics, constitute a field of study that, its advocates believe, is crucial to a grasp of consciousness in general. Although some of the effects of psychedelics—to take a controversial example—are undoubtedly

due to 'toxic side-effects', the consensus of opinion in this area of research is that they also act as a 'nonspecific amplifier of experience', and thus they can be instrumental in disclosing and amplifying aspects of consciousness that might otherwise go unstudied. (p. 72)

Substitute "religion" for "consciousness" and the point is equally apt. The specific questions and topics we propose below are important not only for their specific applications to the scientific study of religion but also for their wider insights into the study of the human mind and to consciousness studies.

For centuries, a variety of psychoactive substances has been used by the revered men and women of indigenous cultures, often known as shamans or healers. Such substances as peyote, ayahuasca, hashish, marijuana, *yage*, and the psychoactive mushroom *Amanita muscaria* have been used to facilitate altered states of consciousness or mind-body states for religious, spiritual, and healing purposes (Walsh, 1990). Psychoactive substances, specifically psychedelic drugs such as LSD, peyote, psilocybin, marijuana, and mescaline have been consistently associated with the potential for facilitating mystical or transcendent experiences, particularly within the proper set and setting (Clark, 1969; Grof, 1975/1993; Maslow, 1964; Pahnke, 1969; Roberts & Hruby, 1998a, 1998b). Although entheogenic experiences are not the only kind engendered by psychedelic drug use, they have been used both in religious/ spiritual contexts (Schultes & Hofmann, 1979/1992) and in therapeutic contexts (Grof, 1975/1993; Richards, 1975; Richards, Grof, Goodman, & Kurland, 1972) for their ability to trigger mystical or peak experiences as an aid in psychological and spiritual healing.

Safety issues. "All this may be true," one may ask, "but what about the dangers? Don't psychedelics cause people to go insane? Don't they damage chromosomes? We can't let just anyone drop acid and wander around, can we?" The chromosome issue has been thoroughly dealt with. Three reviews of this topic (Dishotsky, Loughman, Mogar, & Lipscomb, 1971; Grinspoon & Bakalar, 1979/1997; Grof, 1980/1994) all concluded that pure, licit substances in the appropriate doses for humans do not cause abnormalities. But many warnings have been written regarding the use of illicit drugs because their purity is unknown. "Uncertainties about the dosage, and the contamination of black-market samples of psychedelic drugs by various impurities and additives contribute a very important

dimension to the already serious psychological hazards associated with unsupervised self-experimentation” (Grof, 1980/1994, p. 341).

In the early 1990’s, before Strassman restarted legal psychedelic research (with DMT, a short-acting hallucinogen), he faced these issues too, and his summary (1984) is widely considered the most complete review and thorough discussion of the literature on adverse effects. Updating this review in 1997, he reported:

In the case of psychedelics, it has been important to once more establish a solid safety record in humans. This was generally accepted early in the history of psychiatric research with the psychedelics, starting in the 1940s. However, implicit in the lack of ongoing studies for so long was the necessity to again show regulatory boards that under careful supervision, psychedelics could be given to people safely. Results from current research have reaffirmed this view (Strassman and Qualls 1994a, 1994b). Much has been written about psychiatric adverse effects of psychedelics (Strassman 1984). The most comprehensive reviews suggest that in well-screened, prepared, supervised, and followed-up psychiatric patients taking pure psychedelic drugs, the incidence of serious adverse reactions is less than 1%. It is even lower in “normal volunteers.” Those most likely to suffer from prolonged depression, anxiety, or psychotic reactions to psychedelics are usually those with pre-existing psychiatric disorders, taking drugs of uncertain dose, nature, and quality, usually in combination with other drugs and alcohol, in an uncontrolled setting. (pp. 154-155)

The dangers Strassman identified could be greatly reduced by proper screening, preparation, known doses of assured purity, supervised sessions, and proper follow-up. Looking at current problematic psychedelic use, one or several of these precautions were not followed. Ironically and tragically, due to current drug policy’s failure to distinguish use from abuse, most of the risks mentioned above are part of illicit psychedelic use today.

If psychedelics are to be used as legally sanctioned entheogens, we recommend that these safety issues be fully addressed and a set of controls be instituted for all entheogenic use (Roberts, 2001). It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many possible models for legal entheogen use, but thorough professional preparation should certainly be part of it. Speaking of “training issues,” Strassman (1997) recommended several qualifications for those administering psychedelics; these include personal experience with entheogens, being clear about their motivations, a knowledge of their own mind, and “understanding religious sensibilities in as deep a manner as possible” (pp. 159-160). Addressing issues of pro-

fessional ethics for entheogens, the Council on Spiritual Practices has proposed a “Code of Ethics for Spiritual Guides” (Forte, 1997, pp. 174-175).

AN ENTHEOGEN RESEARCH AGENDA

Six research topics stand out as deserving a place in an entheogenic research agenda: (a) the spiritual nature of the human mind, (b) the dispute over the authenticity of drug-assisted primary religious experiences, (c) pastoral counseling, (d) experimental mysticism, (e) entheogenic origins of religion, and (f) policy issues in freedom of conscience and religious freedom. Together, these call for opening a new research agenda that combines religion and consciousness—entheogenic research. On examination, each of these topics blooms into many more, and additional topics should be added. Most entheogenic research done to date revolves around two thematic questions. More often than not, they are implicit rather than explicit questions: (a) *What are the relationships among entheogens, mystical experiences, and religion?* and (b) *Does the human mind include a spiritual proclivity?*

The Spiritual Nature of the Human Mind

Considering entheogens as magnifiers of psychological processes, what do we learn about our minds, specifically about our minds’ spiritual aspects? Is there a natural motivation for self-transcendence? Assagioli (1965), Jung (1958), and Maslow (1968) are among the psychologists who answer yes to an inherent spiritual aspect of humanity along with the world’s major religious traditions (H. Smith, 1958/1992, 1976/1992). Perhaps Grof (1985) expressed the innate spirituality of our minds most strongly:

The observations from psychedelic therapy and other forms of deep experiential work fully confirm the views of [Assagioli, Jung, and Maslow] and suggest an even more radical reformulation of the relationship between the human personality and spirituality. According to the new data, spirituality is an intrinsic property of the psyche that emerges quite spontaneously when the process of self-exploration reaches sufficient depth. Direct experiential confrontation with the perinatal and transpersonal levels of the unconsciousness is

always associated with a spontaneous awakening of spirituality that is quite independent of the individual's childhood experiences, religious programming, church affiliation, and even cultural and racial background. The individual who connects with these levels of his or her psyche automatically develops a new worldview, within which spirituality represents a natural, essential, and absolutely vital element of existence. In my experience, a transformation of this kind has occurred without exception in a wide range of individuals, including stubborn atheists, skeptics, cynics, Marxist philosophers, and positivistically oriented scientists. (p. 368)

Working from the assumption that we have a spiritual aspect, however it may be conceived, transpersonal psychologists provide a psychology that supports research on religion and religious consciousness (Tart, 1975; see also, *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*). Entheogens are especially important to transpersonal psychologists, not only because they sometimes stimulate self-transcendent experiences, but also because they can provide a research variable or treatment. Viable means are now available to explore transcendence experimentally with entheogens.

Our view of the human mind is at stake here, more exactly, our view of our minds' spiritual aspects. For if we have a natural motivation to transcend ego-centered consciousness (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993), then exploring and developing other mind-body states may be one manifestation of a more specific spiritual quest to explore ego-transcendent states. Because humans use diverse mind-body psychotechnologies to produce many states, the goals and practices of religion, consciousness, and education should recognize our multistate capacities (Roberts, 1989).

Research proposal. We propose that researchers in religion, consciousness, and transpersonal psychology become more informed of each other's work, cooperate on research projects, examine each others' models, and use them in research. If our minds do contain a spiritual element, then the fullest education should include this potential, and entheogens are one way to venture into this terrain. We are *not* recommending entheogens for children, but if and when entheogens become legal, many graduate students who are entering these disciplines and who have been carefully screened and prepared would no doubt learn from guided entheogenic sessions. Their own experiences would inform their research and other professional activities.

Authenticity

Are chemically and botanically derived mystical experiences genuine? Are they religiously legitimate experiences? Reacting to Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954), religious scholar R. C. Zaehner (1961) claimed that whereas drugs can produce a sense of the holy and a form of nature mysticism, they cannot result in the exclusive love of a personal god. However, other scholars and theologians do not fully share Zaehner's position (Clark, 1969; Cox, 1977; Eliade, 1978; Ellwood, 1994; Fox, 1976; Greeley, 1974; Smart, 1984; H. Smith, 1958/1992; Toolan, 1987; Wulff, 1991). From their own experiences and based on the reports of others, hundreds of investigators (Roberts & Hruby, 1998b) claim that under the right set and setting, entheogens can produce genuine religious experiences or ones that closely resemble them.

W. T. Stace's composite characteristics of mystical experiences (1961) formed the conceptual foundation for Hood's (1975) Mysticism Scale and the instrument Pahnke (1963) used in the Good Friday Experiment. When Stace was asked whether the drug experience is similar to the mystical experience, reported Huston Smith (1964), Stace answered, "It's not a matter of its being *similar* to mystical experience; it *is* mystical experience" (pp. 523-524).

Research proposal. Adequately describing the similarities and differences between entheogenic and nonentheogenic mystical experiences would be another benefit from replicating the Good Friday Experiment. Clearly, our knowledge of the legitimacy issue will benefit from additional research, not from stifling it. An article that compares one of its coauthors' spontaneous experience of cosmic consciousness with his psychedelically induced experience, points to one way of addressing similarities and differences (A. Smith & Tart, 1998). Although A. Smith and Tart (1998) reported similarities in "alterations in time sense, subject/object boundary, cognition, mood and perception" (p. 97), they also reported that his experiences were "qualitatively and quantitatively different."

From a religious education outlook, the authenticity question takes on a different perspective, especially when it comes to adult religious education, the preparation of clergy, and their in-service education. Even if one takes the position that entheogens are not

genuine triggers or that they differ from natural experiences in some ways, they may still provide a worthwhile experiential model. One can learn a great deal from a good approximation, from a simulation. Just as kindergartners learn where to walk safely and to cross at crosswalks by following tape on a classroom floor, students of religion may learn a great deal from simulated primary religious experience. With more research, their teachers can instruct them in how entheogenic experiences resemble authentic ones and how they differ.

However, if one agrees with Stace that entheogen-based experiences can be genuine mystical experiences, clergy and consciousness educators have a marvelous opportunity to teach informed adults about primary religious experience not just with words but by experiencing this state of consciousness firsthand. A religious education that does not provide this opportunity to capable adults may be impeding the spiritual quest. To paraphrase James, no religious education can be final, which leaves entheogenic states quite discarded.

From a counseling perspective, the authentic versus inauthentic dispute may be irrelevant. It is possible to recognize entheogenically derived peak experiences as therapeutic without being concerned about whether they are authentic or inauthentic. We should not let the possibly interminable authentic/fake problem keep us from using substances that may induce experiences that have therapeutic effects.

Pastoral Counseling

Can entheogenic experiences and an entheogenic model of our minds help in pastoral counseling? The Grof quotation above indicates that entheogens can be useful in resolving existential crises in therapy and helping people find meaning in their lives. If our culture and our churches were able to provide healthy ways of facing these crises and exploring transcendent mind-body states, we might not rely so heavily on unhealthy ways. Some alcohol and drug abuse may be seen in this light, certainly not all. Christina and Stanislav Grof (Grof, 1987; Grof & Grof, 1989/1993), among others (Small, 1987; Steindl-Rast, 1987), have written on the transpersonal aspects of addiction, explaining that addictions can be viewed as an attempt, by some individuals, to fill their spiritual needs.

For example, Bill Wilson, founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, thought that we are all “thirsting for spiritual knowledge,” and he found that substituting a spiritual viewpoint often worked for alcoholics. It is less well-known that Bill took LSD under the guidance of philosopher Gerald Heard and spoke very positively about his session and LSD’s potential for alcoholics (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1984). In the following quotation, note the sequence of entheogen use, ego transcendent state of consciousness, religious experience, and improved life (Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, 1984):

Bill was enthusiastic about his experience; he felt it helped him eliminate many barriers erected by the self, or ego, that stand in the way of one’s direct experience of the cosmos and of God. He thought he might have found something that could make a big difference to the lives of many people who still suffered. (p. 371)

A second promising use of entheogens in pastoral counseling is with dying patients. A major part of the difficulty of facing death is the fear of letting go of the ego. Entheogens can provide a practice session; clients learn this fear is unfounded and that ego transcendence can be spiritually enlightening and emotionally positive. Several studies of entheogens point to their possible use as adjuncts in psychotherapy with the dying (Grof & Halifax, 1977; Pahnke, 1969; Richards, 1975; Richards et al., 1972). In similar studies, these researchers found four common benefits of entheogenic counseling with dying patients: decreased general anxiety, decreased specific anxiety about death, decreased desire for pain killers, and increased communication with family and friends. The last seems especially important because mutual denial of imminent death builds a barrier to communicating at a time when a person most needs the honest support of loved ones.

Exploring transpersonal consciousness includes ego transcendence and expands psychology to include all human behavior and experience, not just that of our ordinary state (Tart, 1969, 1975). Personal and social benefits of getting in touch with spiritual experiences within can be considerable (e.g., Hruby, 1996; Lukoff & Lu, 1988; Noble, 1987; Pahnke, 1963; Richards, 1975).

Research proposal. The possible uses for entheogens in the mental health professions are multifold. They can be helpful with specific problems such as alcoholism and facing death. They give a fuller map of the human mind, including birth memories and

transpersonal experiences, which are often helpful in understanding spiritual crises. In addition to being useful for alcoholism, death counseling, and existential issues, entheogens provide a wider theory of human nature, which includes spirituality. For example, Grof's map of the human mind describes levels where religious imagery, archetypes, mythology, symbols, and experiences occur (Grof, 1975/1993, 1980/1994). These models should help pastoral and secular counselors understand clients and aid in working with all their human aspects: emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual.

Transpersonal views would be a valuable asset in psychology of religion classes. What are the best ways to include these in professional curricula? What are the outcomes of doing so? These questions need research, too.

Experimental Mysticism

Using entheogens, is it possible to trigger mystical experiences in people? What are the results? If you are familiar with entheogenology, you may have noticed that we've appropriated the title "Experimental Mysticism" from the best instance of experimental entheogenic research done to date (Pahnke, 1963; Pahnke & Richards, 1966). Using a double-blind experimental protocol in the Good Friday Experiment, Pahnke examined psilocybin-induced religious experiences with 20 graduate seminary students (10 treatment, 10 active placebo control) during a Good Friday service in 1962. Using a postdrug questionnaire, a 6-month follow-up, and content-analysis of written accounts, Pahnke evaluated the experiences using nine criteria of mystical experiences (Pahnke & Richards, 1966): (a) unity—ego transcendence, (b) objectivity and reality—noetic quality, (c) transcendence of time and space, (d) sense of sacredness, (e) deeply felt positive mood, (f) paradoxicality—anomalous to Western paradigm, (g) alleged ineffability, (h) transience—short duration, and (i) positive changes in attitude and/or behavior. Pahnke found that the seminarians who had the psilocybin scored statistically higher on all nine criteria except sense of sacredness, which moved in the expected direction but not large enough to be statistically significant.

Over the years comments on this experiment have grown. A search of *Religion and Psychoactive Sacraments: An Entheogen Chrestomathy* (Roberts & Hruby, 1998b) locates 27 books, disserta-

tions, theses, or topical issues of journals that discuss the Good Friday Experiment, and the chrestomathy does not include single articles such as those that appear in journals.

A standard argument against entheogen-derived primary religious experiences is that they may provide temporary feelings and thoughts, but have no staying power; however, in his 25-year follow-up of Pahnke's Good Friday Experiment, Doblin (1991) found the opposite to be true. In fact, the original differences between the psilocybin group and the placebo group increased over time, suggesting that the experience had a long-term effect on the behavior and/or cognitions of the treatment group, possibly restructuring their beliefs, feelings, and worldviews. While not statistically significant, Doblin found that more of the psilocybin group than the control group remained in religious professions.

Research proposal. The Good Friday Experiment needs to be replicated with diverse botanical and chemical entheogens; various sets and settings; and subjects with a multiplicity of personality types, religious affiliations, beliefs, and demographic factors. Among other things, researchers should compare the phenomenology of entheogen-stimulated primary religious experience with nonentheogenic primary religious experiences. More precise descriptions of these experiences will inform further scientific and theological discussions of the authenticity question, too (see above).

Because this type of religious exploration is under the control of the federal government, we hope it is clear we are anticipating ending censorship on this mode of the religious quest. Of course, if the research cannot be performed in America, perhaps it can be done elsewhere.

Entheogenic Origins of Religion

What influence, if any, did psychoactive substances have on the origins and development of religion? Eliade (1978); Wasson (1968); Wasson, Ruck, and Hofmann (1978); and others speculated that encounters with psychoactive plants contributed to the origins of religions throughout the world. Matossian (1989) proposed that ergot (a naturally occurring near-relative of LSD) poisoning contributed to the Protestant Reformation, the Salem witchcraft

hysteria, and periodic great awakenings in American religious history. From this perspective it is worthwhile to consider the sudden flowering of spiritual sentiments and the interest in mystical religions among the 1960s flower children as another awakening, greater or lesser. In *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, Ellwood (1994) included entheogens as part of the movement from modern to postmodern thought, and in *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*, McLoughlin (1978) said that LSD opened a new realm of religious experience for millions of people.

Relying on his own entheogenic experience (reported in Leary, 1968) and on his familiarity with subsequent research, philosopher Huston Smith addressed the issue in 1964 with a key article, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?" He answered with a qualified yes. However, in 1967 he cautioned:

For though the experiences may be veridical in ways, the goal, it cannot be stressed too often, is not religious experiences; it is the religious life. With respect to the latter, psychedelic "theophanies" can abort a quest as readily as, perhaps more readily than, they can further it. (H. Smith, 1967, p. 145)

Since then, H. Smith (1988) has maintained his cautious opinion on entheogens' usefulness, writing that used correctly, they can be beneficial adjuncts to spiritual development, but they are not a path by themselves. As an example of learning from an entheogen-based experience, he recently described his experience as a member of Pahnke's research team who received psilocybin (Roberts & Jesse, 1997). An effect of the Good Friday Experiment on him "was to round out my experiences with the holy by enabling me to experience it in a personal mode" (p. 103). His earlier experience with LSD "was neoplatonically monistic."

Hinting at a research agenda, Barnard (1963) challenged researchers, "I am willing to prophesy that fifty theo-botanists working for fifty years would make the current theories concerning the origins of much mythology and theology as out-of-date as pre-Copernican astronomy" (p. 586). She and her opinion are in good company. In addition to the clergy and theologians mentioned above, mythologist Joseph Campbell (1982, 1988) recognized scholarly research on entheogens as making significant contributions to understanding religious symbols and mythology.

Research proposal. Would a class of properly screened, prepared, and guided theology students or seminarians who participated in an entheogenic session find ideas about the entheogenic origins of religions newly credible? To investigate Barnard's challenge and Wasson's claim, perhaps religious researchers will one day be able to use entheogens as research instruments, pending the end of censorship of this research method. Perhaps a day will come when courses in mysticism in seminaries and philosophy departments of universities will have laboratory sections where their students can use entheogens as religious instructional technologies. Of course, the lab should be voluntary, and students should be screened physically and psychologically beforehand, prepared thoroughly, guided through the process, and followed up. Until entheogenic research is re-legalized, professors can familiarize their students with the writings on mysticism, especially those having to do with entheogens. No doubt Wasson's, Barnard's, and similar writings would provoke active classroom discussions.

Why are these experiences profoundly life changing for some people and not for others? Are there ways of increasing the likelihood of desirable outcomes and decreasing undesirable ones? How would one go about studying these questions? These and similar questions await researchers' attention.

The professional education of clergy, theologians, and consciousness researchers should include a familiarity with existing entheogenic research and the skills of designing research, which, it is hoped, someday will use entheogens. Who has the right to make these decisions? Governmental control over research on spiritual states of consciousness and counter claims of religious freedom brings us to a nest of policy issues.

Policy Issues: Religious Freedom and Freedom of Conscience

What role, if any, should entheogens play in contemporary American religious education, practice, and research? What regulation, if any, is appropriate? With immigration from countries in South America and Asia where entheogens are an established part of religious practices, what policies should American law and religions adopt? To what extent would Americans like to include entheogens as part of their religious practices? Does the movement

toward “diversity” include religious diversity, and does freedom of religion include the right to entheogenic sacraments? If a new church wanted to use entheogenic botanicals and chemicals, would governmental policy toward it be different from policy toward an established church? If a seminary wanted to include entheogens in the education of its seminarians or for spiritual renewal of clergy, what church-state issues would arise? Informed answers to these questions require policy research.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

We hope researchers in consciousness studies and religion, churches, religious orders, seminaries, and scholarly and scientific professional groups will

1. promote scholarly discussion and scientific investigations of entheogens;
2. produce empirical evidence about entheogens and scholarly opinions on them;
3. study drug policy and religious activities as they relate to entheogens;
4. recommend to the public and to lawmaking bodies that they support religious freedom;
5. include entheogens as religious instructional technologies for carefully selected, screened, and prepared professionals and laity in spiritual education when legal to do so;
6. consider entheogens as adjuncts in pastoral and secular counseling, notably for alcoholism and in hospice situations; and
7. support religious groups that use entheogens (or wish to do so) with care, in a manner consistent with public safety, and within the law.

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