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ACCOUNTING FOR RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITIES IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION

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A supplement to Donkers' models of change

Much work to bring about positive social change is undertaken by religious persons and involves religious thought and practice. To provide a scientific accounting of such work, we need models that are sensitive to agents' and recipients' own conceptions of what the intervention entails. This means replacing, refining or supplementing existing models that skirt the religious dimension (by reason, perhaps, of its being problematic in its reference to seemingly non-verifiable concepts like God and Spirit). This article provides an example how that might be done. It draws on a case study, the international work of the Christian Brothers, to show how Donkers' (2001) three models of social change might profitably be enhanced by the addition of a fourth 'faith-based' model.

A LACUNA IN THE SYLLABUS

During a recent visit to New York (September 2005), I was hospitably received by the Christian Brothers at Manhattan College. As a guest of the community I joined the Brothers (most of whom work at the College their religious order founded and still oversees) at table and in their social life and prayer. While sharing in the morning prayer and celebration of Mass, I was impressed by the indispensability of prayer to the life these religious lead. Based on my first-

hand exposure to the Brothers' work and daily life, my general familiarity with their international outreach, and reading undertaken while there (Rummery, 2006; Escheverria, 2002), I concluded you could not understand their work of social outreach (conducted primarily through education and currently serving more than 900,000 students in eighty countries) without having some concept of prayer: what it is, how it is done and what it means.

This thought intrigued me because I was in the midst of preparing a course on the theory and practice of social intervention, which I would soon be giving for the second time at a Dutch university. The purpose of the course is to get students thinking about how agents (individuals and/or institutions) can and do bring about positive social change. Being with the Brothers highlighted an ongoing dissatisfaction I had felt with the course syllabus. The problem with the collection of articles I had used the previous year (taken over, largely intact from the professor who had given the course before and who was better versed in the literature than I), was that, while highly useful, it did not adequately acknowledge the role religious (or spiritual) perspectives and practices play in much work directed toward social change. In short, I (as a Catholic educator

with a background in pastoral work and teaching) couldn't recognize my own vision of social change in the articles I had assigned and I didn't see how the Brothers' work, for example, could be adequately accounted for either. Acting upon this reflection, I decided to look more closely at the problem and see if I could identify ways of addressing it for the benefit of my students and others researching and teaching social intervention. This article is a modest attempt to do that.

The article may be fruitfully read against an existing and emergent body of literature focused on faith-based organizations and the role they play in providing social services. See, for example, Wuthnow, Hackett and Hsu, 2004; Bane and Mead, 2003; Schilling, 2003; Vidal, 2001; Bane, Coffin and Thiemann, 2000. See, too, the far-reaching study of faith-based organizations (FBOs) now underway at the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, State University of New York. Currently, a European study of FBOs, sponsored by the Universitair Centrum Sint Ignatius Antwerpen, is just getting underway. It is designed to address the relative lack of research on FBO's in Europe, as compared with the amount of research done in this area in the US. For descriptions of faith-based social outreach efforts in Europe, confer Kieboom, 2005a and 2005b; De Jong, 2004; Van Heijst, 2003; Baart, 2001 and 1995. Greeley (2004) and the European Values Study (ongoing since the 1970's) provide insight into the prevailing religious attitudes and practice in Europe.

In the pages that follow, I will describe the models of social change proposed in one key text included in the aforementioned course syllabus, Gerard Donkers' (2001) *Veranderkundige modellen*. I will then offer a capsule summary of the Christian Brothers' approach to their teaching ministry and consider the ways in which Donkers' models do and do not illuminate the Brothers' work. Having done so, I will make suggestions for how the models might be supplemented with one additional model to give a better account of religiously-motivated programs for social change.

Before going further, I want to state clearly that my purpose is not to advance theological (faith-based) arguments here, but to hold (social-)science to its own standards. As I understand it, science has a duty to ponder reality and describe it as fully and accurately as it can. My intention is to use social-scientific methods and language to help researchers to draw clear, verifiable, credible meanings (Miles & Huberman, 1994) when the data set involves religious experience. I realize that there is an inherent tension and highly problematic discursal relationship (cf. McGuire, 1997; Wilson, 1989) between the skepticism necessary to science and the assent that is essential. This article does not mean to make light of that difficulty.

The following definitions apply in the analysis that follows. I use the term *social intervention* broadly, drawing on the etymology of 'intervention' (Latin, *inter-venire*) to suggest that social intervention involves a personal or institutional agent's entrance into (or *coming between*) social dynamics (circumstances, relationships, structures) on behalf of a client's interest and, in wider perspective, the common good. Secondly, following Otto (1925) and Wach (1944), I employ the classic definition of *religion* as 'the experience of the Holy'. Thirdly, I understand prayer to be 'conversation with God' (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1986). The second and third definitions should make clear that, as a Christian believer, I am not inclined to treat God as a postulate or projection (by speaking, for example, of a *perceived* experience of the Holy or *perceived* conversation with God), though I understand that those who doubt or deny God's existence may prefer to do so and may opt for an alternate definition. To some extent, this is the point of my article: that religious believers and 'non-believers' alike are to be found carrying out works of social intervention (and science!), and good social science will account as comprehensively as possible for the full range of thought and practice. I am also convinced that believers and non-believers live unavoidably in mutual dependence and have a responsibility to learn from each other – a possibility that will best be realized, I think, through direct, challenging and yet respectful dialogue. Hence this contribution.

While my use of the term 'religion' here refers most immediately to the Christian religion, which is well known to me, I presume, based on my limited knowledge of Judaism and Islam, that many observations advanced here are applicable to those religions as well. (I will leave it to scholars of those religions to verify or discount this statement.) Keeping these clarifications in mind, let us now turn to Donkers' models of social change.

DONKERS' THREE MODELS OF CHANGE

My reason for including Donkers' *Veranderkundige modellen* in the course syllabus is that I find it to be in many respects a strong text. It offers an extensive, useful description of what social intervention involves in practice and shows, to a significant degree, the complexity that applies when one party attempts to 'help' another, acknowledging that the interchange is complicated on multiple levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, local, societal). Moreover, Donkers gives due emphasis to the crucial role strategy and planning play in generating effective help – that is, help that meets a real need, is proportionate and non-coercive. At the same time, I would argue that in one respect, Donkers' vision of pursuing positive change is *not complex enough*, given that it fails to consider the scope of religious motivations and sensibilities. Before saying more about that, however, let me more adequately sum up the theoretical resources Donkers provides.

The core of *Veranderkundige modellen* is its description of three approaches to bringing about social change. The author introduces (1) the *social-techno-*

logical model; (2) the *person-centered model*; and (3) the *society-critical model*. (The translations from the Dutch original, here and elsewhere, are my own.) These models overlap somewhat and show affinity with certain other models (or 'strategies') of social change presented in two other texts I assign in the course, Rothman (1997) and Checkoway (1995). See also Caluwe and Vermaak, 2005. Though I take Donkers as my primary example here, the commentary I offer on that text can also be applied to a great extent to the other texts I have just named as well, indicating to me a wider relevance to the question of sensitivity to religious sensibilities.

It is necessary to acknowledge that Donkers' models, being models, are meant to lend perspective on the ways people pursue social change. They do not pretend to provide a definitive, exhaustive account of empirical phenomena. The models are theoretical tools in the service of practice. Donkers proposes that the usefulness of the models will be enhanced when we confront them one with another and each with actual practice. Taking him at his word, I would like to consider how the models shed light on the work of the Christian Brothers, which I have mentioned and will shortly describe in more detail. Can one or more of the models sufficiently account for the ways the members of the order try to bring about social change? To answer that question, we need first to look more closely at Donkers' models. What follows is a sketch of each, focusing on those aspects of the models most directly relevant to the problem I address in this article. Since Donkers' work is not readily accessible to those who do not speak Dutch, I have taken the liberty of reproducing his findings here in some detail to make them available to a wider audience.

MODEL 1: SOCIAL-TECHNOLOGICAL MODEL

A Presuppositions and points of departure

View of science	Statements must be empirically verifiable to be scientific. Facts must be distinguished from normative statements.
View of human person	The human person is a rational being.
View of society	Politically neutral, with a fundamental preference in favor of democracy. We must be directed toward the promotion of harmony between various interest groups in society.

B Exploration of person-and-situation

Background and causes of problems	Problematic behavior is learned behavior. An important cause of problems is that the client has not adopted a stance that is adjusted to the changing environment. Problems arise when the self-regulating mechanism of the system no longer functions and the system becomes unbalanced.
Possibilities for change	Change is always possible.

C Determination of goal

How are goals determined?	Change projects whose goals are closely aligned with the needs and values of the client system have the best chance of success. Goals should be, to the greatest extent possible, be formulated on the basis of an objective description and analysis of the situation. The goals of the client system may not conflict with the goals of the service-providing system.
What are important goals of social work?	An efficient and effective contribution to the solution of social problematic. Strengthening of the rational life stance and improvement of the problem-solving ability of the client. Promotion of democratic norm and value consciousness.

D Methods of work

Tasks of the change agent	Neutral intermediation between parties. Provision of instrumental expertise. Interventions are ideally short and effective.
Worker-client relation	Worker-client relationship is primarily a means to change. It is a functional, reciprocal relationship in which the worker provides social-technical expertise.
Programmatic aspects	Work systematically, according to a plan in which ends and means are determined in advance.

MODEL 2: PERSON-CENTERED MODEL**A Presuppositions and points of departure**

View of science	Science is not value-free, it is normative. Science has a responsibility to practice and should promote human development. Scientific discourse does violence to the human person when it reduces him/her to an object. To understand the human person as a meaningful whole, we must employ subjective sources of knowledge whenever possible. A preference should be given to phenomenological methods of scientific research, such as symbolic interactionism.
View of human person	The human person is a meaning-giving and culture-creating being. It is inhuman to preclude this intersubjectivity. The human being is not by nature evil. He has a nature inclination to grow and develop. We should be in search of the healthy human being. Human behavior gets its meaning from the inner intentions that direct it. The human must be seen holistically: as of body and spirit; reason and feeling; past, present and future; individual and social.
View of society	Society is a world of shared meaning and culture. The human person is ultimately responsible for himself and has the freedom to say no to those who oppress him. Western culture leaves too little room for feelings as a result of its (over)concern with rationality, efficiency and materialism. A new societal culture is needed in which people accept each other as they actually are.

B Exploration of person-and-situation

Background and causes of problems	Poor communication is often the cause of problems. An alienating societal culture is often the source of individual problems. The key problem is that people cannot be themselves.
Possibilities for change	The possibilities for self-development-in-relationships are boundless.

C Determination of goal

How are goals determined?	Goals should be determined as much as possible within a shared search process. The client is the measure of the ascertainment of goals, even when the service provider disagrees. The determination of goals needs to take into account the right to self-determination of others in the client's environment. Goals should be directed not toward standards of 'normality', but toward the development of a unique and authentic personality.
What are important goals of social work?	Stimulating personal accountability. Promoting identity and balance in the person. Achievement of a new societal culture.

D Methods of work

Tasks of the change agent	Engage in growth-promoting dialogue with the client. The worker seeks connections between his/her own story and that of the client. The worker should listen well and help the client to (re)construct his/her story.
Worker-client relation	The relationship has value in and of itself and is not just a means to a solution. The social-technical expertise of the worker is less important than his/her personal, human qualities.
Programmatic aspects	Flexible, not rigidly according to a foreordained plan. Dialogic collaboration.

MODEL 3: SOCIETY-CRITICAL MODEL**A Presuppositions and points of departure**

View of science	Behind the so-called objective facts lie political interests and choices. The 'facts' reflect relations of power. This subjectivity in scientific research should be exposed and controlled, not banned or ignored. Science is not neutral and detached, but a segment of the political and economic force field of society.
View of human person	A person is by nature not autonomous, but rather a societal being. Material factors (historical situations, positions, interests) stand alongside ideal factors (conscious actions and intentions) in determining human behavior. Human behavior is comprehensible only in historical-societal context. Societal barriers may stand in the way of human development. The individual has the right to resist these structures in pursuit of his/her freedom.
View of society	Economic relations and interests largely determine societal structures. Existing economic arrangements stand in the way of societal progress. National and international governments should determine what responsible societal initiative entails and how it should be pursued.

B Exploration of person-and-situation

Background and causes of problems	People's existential and material needs are not satisfied in society. Social inequality. Individualization.
Possibilities for change	Social work is limited in the contribution it can make to the emancipation of the human person and society because it is dependent on economic and political interests of the system. The individualizing approach of many social workers also limit the possibilities for change.

C Determination of goal

How are goals determined?	Presume a possible field of tension between subjective needs and objective interests. Promote situations in which client can (choose to) pursue own interests and ambitions without undue deterrence from power structures.
What are important the goals of social work?	Raise consciousness of the interdependence of personal and societal life. Promote client's ability to affect his/her situation. Promote structural change to prevent problems. Promote solidarity structure that balance concern for self and concern for others.

D Methods of work

Tasks of the change agent	The social worker is partisan in principle. This is a societal partisanship on the basis of the political analysis of the interests of the client. There is a dialectical relationship between content the social worker brings and his/her method. Content determines method.
Worker-client relation	The social worker should be critical of his/her own power over and against the client and strive for a power-free dialogue.
Programmatic aspects	A careful analysis of the life situation of the client is important. Flexibility is necessary. Plans should be reformulated in light of changing circumstances.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF DONKERS' THREE MODELS

To sum up: All three models describe approaches for improving the lot of the human person in society. In the *social-technological model* the emphasis is on rationality. Change agents need to make objective analyses of problem situations. Instrumental expertise is put in the service of problem solving. The goal is to enable clients to live satisfactory, largely self-determined lives within their social environment. In the *person-centered model* the focus is on promoting the well-being of the human person, holistically understood. Personal relationship and dialogue (as opposed to

expert guidance and problem-solving) are the key methods of this approach. Relationship has value in and of itself and is not just a means to a solution. In the *society-critical model* social relations of power are seen to be the key to social change. Material factors and ideal factors determine human behavior. The role of the change agent is to help disenfranchised and excluded parties have a greater say in determining their own life situation. The change agent does this by revealing and counteracting structures that inhibit positive social change. Having glimpsed Donkers' three models, let us now consider the Christian Brothers' approach to social change in light of the models.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' SOCIAL INTERVENTION

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christians Schools (Latin abbreviation: FSC) is a Roman Catholic religious order founded by Jean Baptiste de La Salle in France in 1680. The Institute's mission, according to its own mission statement, is 'to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.' (NB: Information about the Christian Brothers is available at the order's international home page:

www.lasalle2.org. Robert Berger, FSC, Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious

32 Studies at Manhattan College, verified the accuracy of the present description of the Brothers' mission and practice.)

The order, whose members are commonly known as the Christian Brothers originated in De La Salle's personal commitment to establish and oversee free schools for boys. De La Salle, a priest, committed his personal resources (notably his leadership and organizational talents and his financial resources) to starting the schools, providing for and training teachers, and developing educational methods to optimally serve students. Among De La Salle's innovations were his provision of free education to the economic underclass; his insistence on the French vernacular, instead of Latin, as the language of instruction; and methodological developments such as teacher training centers and the practice of instructing many students simultaneously in one classroom.

The first 'Christian Brothers' were laymen teachers De La Salle recruited to work in his free schools. They lived together in community, sharing a common schedule of prayer, meals, study and work. The distinctive identity of the Christian Brothers as a religious order can be traced to a general assembly of the principal Brothers in 1686. There the Brothers chose the order's name and habit (attire) and determined that each Brother would make a vow of obedience to a commonly elected superior. De La Salle served as the first superior of the Institute. By the time of De La Salle's death in 1719, more than one hundred Brothers belonged to the

Institute. Since then the reach of the order's educational service has grown immensely, to the point that the Lasallian educational mission now serves nearly a million male and female students around the world. Until the 1960's this work was carried out primarily by professed members of the order – i.e., the Brothers themselves – but today collaboration with (73,000) lay associates (and priests and religious of other orders) is the norm. Today the Brothers make up approximately 7% of the staff of the schools they oversee.

It is not possible in this limited context to describe in detail the actual practice of the Brothers and their associates in their educational outreach. Instead I will focus my attention on what we might call the 'official mindset' that informs the Brothers' work. The aforementioned mission statement is an example of this mindset. I will expand upon the picture it provides by citing two other written statements composed by members of the order, both of which are available on the Institute's international website (www.lasalle2.org).

The first citation comes from a pastoral letter to the Brothers, written by the Superior General of the order (Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, 'Associated with the God of life: Our life of prayer', December 25, 2002).

Our vocation as Brothers associates us with the God of life, made manifest in Jesus Christ, to continue his saving work. Our prayer should be rooted in this idea. As the Founder tells us: 'You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts, but this you cannot do except by the Spirit of God. Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles; and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicate himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others.'

The second citation is from the text 'Lasallian Spirituality' by Brother Gerard Rummery:

The Lasallian community today consists of people who bind themselves in solidarity with others to ensure that the Christian school or Lasallian work

in which they work will be a place of 'salvation' for all the young people who attend it. For no one is to be excluded. This 'school' is to be gratuitous, open to all, and is to prepare young people to be whole, complete persons who will acquire the learning and the human skills which will enable them to live with dignity so as, in the famous words of the Conduct of Schools, 'to be able to do anything'.

Drawing on these two citations, we can highlight the following aspects of the mindset the Brothers bring to their teaching ministry. First and foremost, their work is in the most literal sense a 'ministry'. It is understood to be initiated and sustained by God and undertaken in the service of God and neighbor. Secondly, it is oriented toward not just the betterment of their students as understood in social-economic or personal-intellectual terms, but toward their 'salvation'.

CONFRONTATION OF THE MODELS WITH PRACTICE

In what ways do Donkers' three models account for and fail to account for the Christian Brothers' approach to education? Some general observations. First, the *person-centered model* (to a greater extent than the other models) accords in many ways with the Brothers' approach, especially in its view of the human person and society, its emphasis on dialogue, reciprocity and collaboration, and its orientation toward promotion of the human person (holistically understood). Note, for example, Br. Rummery's statement, quoted above, that the schools of the Institute are to "prepare young people to be whole, complete persons who will acquire the learning and the human skills which will enable them to live with dignity so as... 'to be able to do anything.'" The emphasis on "solidarity" (see again Br. Rummery) is also in conjunction with the "person-centered" approach.

To a lesser extent, but still approvingly, the society-critical model can be used to shed light on the Christian Brothers' ministry, since the order, from the time of its foundation, has sought to redress structures of social inequality – namely, the limited access to education

that has often hindered the poorest segment of society. By emphasizing education for the poor, the Brothers have shown an active desire to reconfigure (or put fluidity into) the social order by broadening social opportunity.

We can also make the case that the *social-technological model* sheds light on certain aspects of the Brothers' outreach, since De La Salle stressed a highly rational, systematic approach to education (witness the establishment of a 'rule' of life for the Brothers, the organization of students into classroom and the use of teacher training centers). This rational, systematic approach has surely been instrumental in the order's growth over the past three centuries.

The question remains, does any one model or any combination of models sufficiently clarify the Christian Brothers' ministry, or are we left with important aspects of the ministry that are wholly unaddressed? Again, a model by definition does not account for the fullness of the phenomenon it describes (just as a map does not fully reveal territory), so the fact that Donkers' models are not perfectly revealing is not an interesting indictment of his work. But models (and maps) can be more or less successful in representing their subject matter. A model's usefulness is proportionate to its explanatory power. We are right to want compact descriptions that are highly versatile. Using this as our standard, can we get by happily with Donkers' models, or should we look to improve upon them?

I want to argue the latter position. There is a significant deficiency in the set of models (taken) together, and supplementation of the models would be welcome. I will now describe the deficiency and, thereafter, propose a fourth model that could stand alongside Donkers' three.

The main deficiency I see in Donkers' models, when confronting them with the Christian Brothers' practice, is their failure to account for the religious believer's own perspective on his or her work of social intervention. Most critical is the fact that no model makes room for a (conceived) horizon beyond person-and-

society. This limitation on the models may work fine for one who believes that there is no relevant horizon beyond person-and-society, but for the Christian believer, the horizon of 'eternity' or 'God' is not just a matter of hope or speculation, but a conceptualization that informs his or her motivation, goal determination, choice of action and understanding of what is being undertaken (cf. Van Heijst, 2003). Christian belief, in this case, brings with it not just a view of who God is, but also a view of who the human person is, which is directly related to the God belief. (The person is believed to be created by God and in the image of God.)

Belief also bears directly on the concept of a 'good society' and how it can be attained (i.e., which sorts of social intervention are needed).

My point is not that we need a model that says God exists, but rather that we need a model that acknowledges that many agents of social intervention do operate on the basis of God belief and this makes their thought and practice different in important ways. Having said this, allow me to suggest a fourth model, what I will call the *faith-based model*, that might supplement Donkers' three.

MODEL 4: FAITH-BASED MODEL

A Presuppositions and points of departure

View of science	Science is a project of human reason serving the search for truth. Faith and reason are not contradictory but ultimately harmonious modalities of the search for truth. Since God is the source and sustainer of all being, there can be no discovery of truth that is not dependent on God.
View of human person	The human person is created, body and soul, by God. A person realizes his or her own proper self-development (becomes more fully human) by living in attunement with God's will. Faith is the mode of attunement to God's will. It is practiced and nurtured by means of prayer, worship and good works. The goal of human life is unity with God.
View of society	Sacred Scripture and other forms of religious authority provide prescriptions for the management of human relations and the establishment of a good society.

B Exploration of person-and-situation

Background and causes of problems	The fundamental problem of human existence is estrangement from God and a lack of attunement with God's will. This estrangement can be discerned within persons and between persons, for the relationship with God has bearing on one's inner peace and interpersonal relations. Concrete problems must be seen as real and addressed realistically (the hungry need food), but material solutions alone cannot solve human suffering. The human person also knows a deep, inner (existential, spiritual) hunger that must be fed.
Possibilities for change	With God all things are possible. Belief in God and in one's own dignity as a person created and loved by God make conceivable things that were not conceivable without faith. Lasting, worthwhile change is more readily attainable when people work together in a spirit of deep, mutual respect.

C Determination of goal

How are goals determined?	By assessment of the problem-in-context and dialogic consultation with the client about desirable and realistic goals (acceptable to both parties). The discernment of God's will may be foregrounded or backgrounded in the determination of goals, but
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What are important goals of social work?	will remain relevant regardless. Operational goals will be understood to be in line with the good of the client, which reflects a (religiously based) vision of the good of the human person and society. To promote the client's wellbeing, understood in material and spiritual terms. To counteract situations and structures of injustice, locally and globally. Religious conversion is not necessarily a goal of the intervention, but promotion of personal wellbeing (understood in spiritual as well as material terms) necessarily is.
D Methods of work	
Tasks of the change agent	To acknowledge the client's dignity and establish a true rapport with him or her. To discern one's own duty to the client (ultimately in the light of one's conscience). To serve the client as selflessly as possible. To seek long-term as well as short-term solutions, taking practical steps accordingly.
Worker-client relation	Characterized by respect, reciprocity, dialogue. Force and coercion are inadmissible. The worker serves the client but the service is kept in perspective of what the worker owes to his/her own conscience (to God), to others, to society.
Programmatic aspects	The goals determine the type of program (pre-planned vs. highly flexible). Maintaining ethical standards is crucial. Faith-based duty (to God and neighbor) has priority and may trump the concern with measurable, material goals in practice.

Distinctive in this model is its highlighting of religious (or spiritual) perspectives on social intervention as opposed to technocratic, humanistic or political-critical approaches to social change. The model stresses that, for believers, science, humanism and political change must take into account religious perspectives that may well define or take precedence over those other perspectives on social change.

At the beginning of this article I said that I did not imagine one could understand the Brothers' life and work without understanding prayer. Prayer, and all that it implies (cf. Bloom, 1970), signals the difference between faith-based social interventions and those that have no association with religion. Brother Echeverria in the passage above cites the founder of the order approvingly: only the Spirit of God enables the Brother's work to touch hearts. *Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles; and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicate himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others.* In faith-based works of spiritual intervention (at least of the Christian variety), a triadic engagement

will always be conceived by faith-filled practitioners: between worker, client and God. Through prayer, God is acknowledged to be the true agent of meaningful change. The worker- and client-participants are understood to be partaking of a change process that transcends their own efforts and has reference to ultimacy (God's sovereignty and the horizon of eternity).

While it is certainly possible to argue that what the Brothers' experience in prayer is not the living God but a 'projection', my point here is that the Brothers' themselves (and many of their clients, I presume) do not ordinarily see it that way. Member commitments to the order and the work that goes with it, draw on the assumption (or experience) that what is found in prayer is real. The practical experience of prayer (informed by the Gospel) is what inspires their social intervention. The readings from Scripture that the Brothers hear in the course of their daily community prayer teach them their duty to attend to the 'poor' and remind them that the spiritual needs of the poor may surpass their material needs. Accordingly, the Brothers don't just teach their students skills and information: they invite their students (understood to be children of God) to

join with them in prayer and service. The Brothers' own conception of what their work involves and how it influences their practice is something that I think social scientists should take seriously. My point is not that scientists need to be open to engaging in religious belief themselves (though as a believer I cannot necessarily say I think this would be a bad thing), but that they cannot afford to disregard the role faith plays in many efforts to bring about social change.

The faith-based model of social intervention can stand alongside the three models offered by Donkers to help complete the picture of how various agents envision and pursue positive social change. As with Donkers' models (and any model), the faith-based model is not sufficient unto itself. Its strengths and weaknesses will be shown by confronting it with further examples of actual practice. (The international work of the Sant Egidio community – see the two texts from Kieboom I have already cited – would make a good case study. Sant Egidio has reached out effectively to those who suffer from poverty, homelessness, HIV/AIDS and other afflictions.)

One unresolved question is whether the faith-based model has any potential application to work by or for those who do not embrace religion or spirituality. Donkers' three models give partial insight into the experience of people of faith. Does my faith-based model show any possibility of shedding light on or improving the work of social outreach among non-believers? I think it does. At a minimum, the faith-based model can be used to illuminate thought and practice in works of social intervention that are latently 'faith-based' (consider, for example the use of 'mission statements' and 'retreats' in secular organizations). More pointedly, the faith-based model can bring a critical-conceptual engagement to the other models. The faith-based model might challenge the 'social-technological model' by applying its own terms to ask what is 'sacred' or 'taboo' among technocrats. It might press the 'person-centered model' with the question, 'What makes a person human?' or 'What makes care good care?' (cf. Baart, 2005; Van Heijst, 2005). And it might refine the 'society-critical model' with a critique of its vision of society. All of these questions are relevant for non-believers as well as

believers. I find this expanded interplay among models to be an attractive possibility. In any case, let's be clear. Whether we are talking about the developing world, the United States or one of the more highly secularized nations of Europe, some form of religious or spiritual belief is the norm in the population, not the exception. (The latest European Values Study sample for the Netherlands (1999), for example, showed that 61.7% of the Dutch people surveyed called themselves 'a religious person', 32.0% called themselves 'not a religious person', and only 6.3 % called themselves 'a convinced atheist'.) For this reason, practitioners of social intervention need to be sensitive to what religious belief entails, even when they themselves are not religious. Social scientists simply cannot afford to avoid engaging matters of religious or spiritual sensibilities directly. (For further exploration of the concept of spirituality, I recommend the following works: Cunningham, 2006; Dreyer and Burrows, 2005; Waaijman, 2000; Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold, 1986.)

The model I have provided above is merely a suggestion, but an earnest one. It offers little more than a glimmer of what is at work in spiritually-motivated social interventions. Ideally, it will be further developed in light of current thought and practice. Beyond that, the more audacious enquirer may be prompted to ask: if faith works (as a source of motivation, sustenance, ethical correction, etcetera), then how and why does it work (and fail)?

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing reflection I have described a lacuna I perceive in Donkers' (2001) otherwise engaging models of social intervention. In this particular work I find a lack of sensitivity (perceivable in other social-scientific works as well) to the perspective religiously-motivated agents bring to their social outreach. Confronting Donkers' theory with the example of the Christian Brothers educational work, I have suggested that his argument could be enhanced by the addition of a faith-based model of social intervention, to supplement his social-technological, person-centered and society-critical models. My hope is that this elabora-

tion on Donkers' work will help to shed light on the work for social change undertaken by religiously or spiritually-motivated agents.

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SUMMARY

In deze bijdrage wordt nagegaan in hoeverre de drie veranderkundige modellen van Donkers adequaat zijn als het gaat om de positionering van sociale interventies die zijn geïnspireerd door het geloof. Aan de hand van het werk van de *Brothers of the Christians Schools* in Manhattan, betoogt de auteur dat het sociaal-technologische model, het persoonsgeoriënteerde model en het maatschappijkritische model ontoereikend zijn om dit soort werk te plaatsen. In geen van deze modellen wordt namelijk plaats ingeruimd voor een ervaringshorizon die verder reikt dan de persoon in relatie tot de maatschappij. Terwijl voor een gelovige een horizon van de eeuwigheid of het concept van God een belangrijke rol vervult in de motivatie, het doel en het begrip van een sociale interventie. Via gebed wordt God betrokken in de relatie tussen werker en cliënt en in het veranderingsproces. De auteur stelt daarom een vierde, op het geloof gebaseerd model voor dat, zo hoopt hij, een goed interpretatiekader kan vormen voor vanuit religieuze achtergrond ingezette sociale interventies. Op die manier kan wellicht meer inzicht worden verkregen in hoe en waarom het geloof werkzaam is in de inzet voor sociale veranderingen, niet alleen het christelijk geloof, waar zijn casus betrekking op heeft, maar mogelijk ook andere religies.