

corroborate the theory that the Maya calendar marked something beyond the end of a calendar cycle.

Cross References

- ▶ [Age of Aquarius](#)
- ▶ [Maya](#)
- ▶ [Maya Religion and Spirituality](#)
- ▶ [Neo-Shamanism](#)
- ▶ [New Age and Native American Spirituality](#)
- ▶ [Spiritualism and New Age](#)

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Maya Religion and Spirituality

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Definition

Maya religion is practiced by many members of Maya ethnic groups who live in Southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and parts of El Salvador and Honduras. Aspects of the tradition can be traced back several millennia. Although practices vary, adherents tend to stress the importance of managing relationships between human and nonhuman subjects through divination, sacrifice, and the use of sacred calendars. While aspects of Christianity have long been assimilated (often on local terms) to Maya religion, many contemporary practitioners, influenced by broader ethnic and cultural politics, are involved in projects aimed at purifying and standardizing their beliefs and practices.

Introduction

Maya religion is a dynamic tradition whose origins can be traced back at least three millennia. Knowledge of this religion and its development is derived from extensive and continuing archaeological and epigraphic research in the Maya area of Mesoamerica, as well as ethnohistorical

investigations that draw on a wealth of colonial-era documents (many in Mayan languages) and many decades of ethnographic work in Maya communities. While these varied data do not offer an absolutely unified vision of Maya religion through time, scholars (including contemporary Maya themselves) have identified certain continuities and themes that continue to animate the tradition.

Archaeological research and translations of a variety of Maya hieroglyphic texts by epigraphers (who themselves often draw upon ethnographic and ethnohistorical data in their analyses) have highlighted the importance of calendrics and the sacralization of time as orienting Maya society, including the importance of tracing ancestral genealogies and connecting royal lineages to primordial deities and their own cosmic struggles and victories. Sacrifice – in a range of forms – is a common ritual activity that aims to establish order and acknowledges the importance of reciprocal exchange in a hierarchically organized cosmos.

Both ancient and contemporary Maya religion is defined by an animistic and shamanic worldview, which at its base seeks to recognize and influence relationships between a range of human and nonhuman subjects with an aim to stabilize a given order, or transform it where possible. Catholic deities and saints joined this shifting pantheon of divine subjects during colonial times, though at present many Maya religious specialists – promoting a cultural and potentially political ethnic identity that extends beyond particular communities – are working to remove and replace Christian figures with deities which are thought to have a more authentic and ancient Maya pedigree.

Pre-Hispanic Antecedents

Scholars tracing the origins of Maya religion commonly highlight its shamanic roots, evident in a pragmatic focus on ensuring wellbeing and success in subsistence, from hunting to sedentary agriculture (Freidel et al. 1993). Over the course of several millennia, the Maya

developed an increasingly elaborate animistic cosmology, which mirrored sociopolitical transformations such as the rise of lineage-based social organization and status hierarchies, culminating in Maya city-states ruled by hereditary divine kings (McAnany 2014). Abundant ceremonial architecture preserves key symbols and practices of ancient Maya religion. The cosmic tree (famously represented as a foliated cross in the Classic-period city of Palenque, Chiapas) is a common symbol, expressing a primordial link between earth and sky and associated divinities, including ancestors. Ubiquitous ball courts, strongly associated with the Maya underworld – *Xibalba*, a place of death but also fertility and transformation – provided venues for the ritualization, through sport, of the process of creation itself. Mythic struggles between deities of earth and sky were replayed on these courts, which, to varying degrees, could involve human sacrifice. Indeed, sacrifice, in its multiple forms, was viewed as key in renewing – and transforming – the world and its various hierarchies and distinctions. The natural landscape likewise provided an important conceptual universe for religious symbols, including flowers, trees, a broad range of fauna, as well as astronomical bodies and phenomena, not to mention caves and mountains – the latter further sacralized as pyramids (Taube 2004).

Ancient Maya religion was also strongly preoccupied with tracking sacred cycles of cosmic time, and with determining how these cycles intersected with and shaped the lives of humans, especially the political order of divine rulers. According to Munro Edmonson (1993: 70),

The central idea of the Mayan faith is time (*kin*), a term that also means day, sun, and fate. Externally this is expressed in the symbolism of the most elaborate sun cult known, for all of Mayan religious symbolism and ideology has a precise and calculable place on the road of time, on the road of light. Internally it is reflected in a state of mind that makes possible active acquiescence in and obedience to the dictates of time—of birth, of fate. By bearing the burden (*cuch*) of time people return to god the favor (*matan*) of creation. The whole history of creation shows what happens when this favor is not returned: the world ends.

The origins of Maya calendrics can be traced to at least the fifth century BCE. The most common calendars were the cycle of 260 days (dubbed the *tzolkin* by scholars, also known as *Chol Q'ij* in K'iche' Maya), combined with a vague solar calendar of 365 days, and the "long count" calendar that typically featured five interlocking cycles based on a modified vigesimal counting of days. The *tzolkin* combines twenty name days with thirteen numbers, which were the source for prognostication and prophecy, while modeling human experience and processes: Maya words for twenty (*winaq* in K'iche') also mean "human" or "person" and the 260-day cycle itself approximates the period of human gestation. Edmonson's reference to the cycles of creation recorded in Maya mythology was replayed as well in a range of cyclical rituals, from annual changes in the year-bearer deity following the short month of five "unlucky" days (called *Wayeb*) that was appended to the 18 20-day months to create the 365 day calendar, to commemorations of a range longer cycles, often presided over by particular ritual specialists (Rice 2007). While the specifics of calendrical and ritual practice was varied throughout the Maya area, these attributes, and the more general shamanic substrate, were common and worked to shape the reception of Christianity following the Spanish invasion.

Legacy of Colonialism

The Spanish invasion and subsequent colonization was experienced unevenly across the Maya region, with some areas – parts of the Yucatan peninsula and the Petén region of Guatemala, for example – effectively resisting Spanish control for as long as two centuries following the first incursions of conquistadors in the early 1500s (Restall 2004). Nonetheless, the demographic collapse resulting from factors such as disease, forced labor, and resettlement left its mark throughout the area. Apart from the sheer plunder that characterized much of the early interaction between Maya and Europeans, the Spanish Crown viewed their project as defined in important respects by the labor of religious conversion,

with missionary friars the key agents charged with ensuring the orthodoxy of the "spiritual conquest" of the region.

The consensus is that this project, as conceived, largely failed, with the process of interaction between Christianity and pre-Hispanic Maya religion now seen as a complex and multifaceted negotiation. Colonial friars largely worked in Maya languages, and by necessity drew corollaries between religious terms in these tongues and what they considered the closest equivalent in Spanish. They also invariably sought to first convert the Maya elite, through whom a more general conversion of given communities was to follow. These individuals – well-versed in Maya cosmology and religion – in turn became important figures in church life, and thus retained a leadership role in their villages (Early 2006: 143–145). These practices, not to mention the fact that churches were routinely built on the sites of former Maya temples, inevitably preserved key aspects of pre-Hispanic religion, or as significantly, left much of the work of its transformation in the hands of the Maya themselves (Gossen 2007: 515–519). On the other hand, the missionaries' work in "Christianizing" Maya language effectively created a new way of speaking – what William Hanks (2010) refers to as "*Maya reducido*" in the Yucatan context – which the Maya themselves would subsequently employ in creative and subversive ways. It is increasingly accepted, moreover, that the various forms of Catholicism to which the Maya were exposed were far from united, and more generally that "the establishment of Catholicism in the New World hinged upon the agency of the natives and their desire, not their ability, to convert and stay converted" (Christensen 2016: 43). A clearer understanding of the complexities of colonial and subsequent republican histories makes portrayals of Maya religion as naively "syncretic" (as either a form of indigenous Christianity, or a somewhat Christianized indigenous religion) difficult to sustain (Monaghan 2000: 40).

The complexity of the colonial relationship between Maya and Christian religions and institutions is highlighted in Maya writings from the period. The Maya area is exceptionally rich in

colonial-era texts written in indigenous languages which treat religious (among other) themes. Their authors were generally members of pre-Hispanic noble lineages who were trained in the use of the Roman alphabet by missionary friars. One of the most famous of these texts is the *Popol Vuh*, a mid-sixteenth C. K'iche' Maya text that provides a detailed account of the multiple creations and destructions of the world and its preparation for the arrival of the first two human couples, formed from corn. While there is clearly much "Maya" content in this document, recent work by Gary Sparks (2017) has traced the complex relationship between this text and the contemporaneous Catholic treatise, *Theologia Indorum*, written in K'iche' by the Dominican friar Domingo de Vico. Other scholars – archaeologists and cultural anthropologists most generally – tend to privilege native-authored documents as important sources to understand both ancient and contemporary Maya religion. For example, in his translation of the *Popol Vuh*, Dennis Tedlock (1996: 206–209) connects specific aspects in the myth cycle that treats the adventures of the hero twins, Xbalanque and Hunahpu, to ancient Maya astronomical observations of Venus in particular, and also to current divinatory and ritual techniques of the K'iche' in Highland Guatemala. Later documents, especially the seventeenth–eighteenth C. books of *Chilam Balam* from Yucatan, also provide insight into how the Maya drew upon their existing religious beliefs to interpret Christianity (Knowlton 2010).

Perhaps the most noticeable influence of Christianity upon Maya religion is the successful introduction of Catholic saint cults and the associated confraternities, though the proliferation and function of the latter organizations varied in time and space. John Early (2006: 201–210) notes that the Maya themselves clamored for more saint images for their towns, against the wishes of early friars, and often reinterpreted in Maya terms any animal symbolism present in Catholic iconography. In general, a community's patron saint was simultaneously seen as a protector, invested in the fate of the town, its people and its landscape, and a foreigner or ethnic other who may need to be tamed and "civilized" before assuming their local

role, generally through some kind of covenant with the population. Saints did not replace extant Maya deities so much as join existing pantheons, in some cases taking over certain functions of older tutelary gods and ancestors, which often remained in place (Cook and Offit 2013; Carlsen 2011).

The cult of the saints also provided a vehicle for Maya ceremonialism. Given the local control of confraternities dedicated to the care of these images, the clergy had little power to influence this aspect of ritual life. Alan Christenson (2016) notes how for the Tzutujil Maya town of Santiago Atitlán in Guatemala, pre-Hispanic Maya ceremonies of world renewal were reformulated through appropriation of Catholic Holy Week celebrations. In this context, rituals formerly practiced during the final month of the Maya solar calendar (*Wayeb'*) were recast and performed on Monday to Friday of Holy Week. Through detailed historical and ethnographic analysis, Christenson describes ceremonies that culminate in an encounter between a local deity known as Maximón – a complex figure with many Maya and Spanish identities, who embodies the forces of antiquity and symbolizes the dying world – and Christ – whose identities include the sun, and who is reborn as a tree on Good Friday. Maya in general express more interest in Good Friday than Easter Sunday, despite the prominence of the latter in Christian terms (Early 2006: 207).

In short, while colonialism introduced a great many transformations to their religion and society, Maya in local contexts were in many cases able to direct or strongly influence these changes. The greatest transformation at the outset of this period involved the dismantling of former state-level religions, which meant that subsequent development of Maya religion was centered at the community level where, over time, the power of Maya nobility and hereditary lineages waned. These leaders were replaced by gerontocracies comprised of respected male elders whose status was not inherited but based on their recognized service to their communities, and who monopolized communal religious expression. This intense localism also resulted in considerable pluralism in regional

terms, evident when it comes to assessing the particulars of Maya religion and culture.

Worldview

Despite this variation, there is some consensus on the essentials of the worldview that animates Maya religion. The cosmos is commonly conceived as comprised by a tripartite vertical plane, separating the sky, earth and underworld, combined with a quadripartite division of the horizontal plane with reference to cardinal directions. Mediating the vertical domains through ritual and sacrifice is a key activity, often mandated by covenant-like arrangements with powerful deities who rely at least partially upon sacrifices by humans for their own sustenance (Gossen 2007: 529).

There is some debate concerning how to characterize Maya religion in terms of Western theological categories when it comes to categorizing the kinds of divinities which occupy this cosmos, and their relation with humans. While scholars recognize a broad range and variety of supernatural subjects that the Maya identify, there is some hesitation to speak of this diversity in terms of polytheism in light of evidence that seems to suggest a more fundamental monism (Edmonson 1993: 66–67). Many, thus, characterize Maya religion as pantheistic, leaving room for an underlying – if somewhat vaguely defined – single divine principle which is nonetheless perceived through a myriad of distinct expressions. Still, as John Monaghan (2000: 29) notes in the context of a discussion of Mesoamerican theology more generally, to the extent that “the essential oneness of nature and experience [is stressed], an obvious problem is how to explain particularities. . . [Likewise] if the sacred is infinite and formless, how can it be objectified and worshipped? The danger is that the ‘all’ shades into ‘nothing’ . . .” He suggests a number of solutions to these theological problems, noting that perhaps a strict monistic orientation does not hold in this tradition. Others have characterized Maya religion as dualistic rather than monistic, though in this context Maya dualism is seen as

complementary, unlike the oppositional dualism of Christianity for example (Gossen 2007: 519).

Monaghan (2000: 29) makes an important point concerning the attention Maya and other Mesoamericans place upon surfaces, skin, appearances, faces as *constituting* divinity, rather than masking more sacred, hidden, invisible and ineffable divine essences. This observation supports a current set of analyses of Maya religion which place it in the context of broader theories associated with a renewed attention to, and reformulation of, anthropological theories of animism. Following the literature associated with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998) and his ideas concerning “multinatural perspectivism,” C. James MacKenzie (2016) suggests that Maya concern with the outward appearances of certain objects, people, and animals reflects an effort to establish the subject position of the latter, a potential which is generally referenced using the term *nawal*. While this word is more commonly used in the literature to describe the ideas and practices related to “co-essential” animal companions (which are recognized as sharing the fate of human individuals in many communities), the breadth of objects and phenomena (including Maya and other calendar dates) that are considered *nawales* points to an animist and perspectivist orientation recognizing a shared “humanity” in a wide range of manifestations. This basic humanity (or more precisely, the ability to have a subject position with reference to other subjects) may reflect something of the monistic tendencies in Maya religion that scholars have identified, but it is not in itself the object of much religious concern, being “merely ontological” in Monaghan’s (2000: 27) terms. Rather, it is in managing and mediating the relationship and inevitable conflicts and tensions between one’s own subjectivity and that of a broad range of others (however perceived and identified) that is the focus of individual and collective Maya religious attention.

Pedro Pitarch (2010) offers a comparable interpretation of the Tzeltal Maya concept of “souls,” noting the remarkable number and variety of souls which individuals may possess or be influenced by, and the fundamentally relational character

of this aspect of divinity. He also offers a useful gloss of the Tzeltal term *ch'ul*, which elsewhere in the literature is associated with a kind of general life force which is shared by all living things (Monaghan 2000: 28). Pitarch (2010: 2) notes that this is better understood as a primordial existential state where “beings and things are permanently unstable. . .where boundaries and categories are not clearly distinguished, and where anything is liable to change into something else. It is not so much that the categories that bestow order on the ordinary world become muddled here as that identities fluctuate and beings can either be themselves or their opposites.” That the primordial cosmic state is one of chronic instability, rather than a more harmonious “oneness,” helps explain the concern Maya place upon ritual as a means to create order, but also the need to constantly renew that order rather than count on a more permanent and transcendent state of perfection. This work of renewal is also a transformation, which Robert Carlsen (2011: 50–51) describes in terms of the Tzutujil Maya concept of Jaloj-K'exoj:

The term itself is derived from two words, *jal* and *k'ex*, both of which denote types of change. *Jal* is the change manifested by a thing as it evolves through its individual life cycle. . .Symbolically, *jal* is change on the outside, at the “husk.” By contrast, *k'ex* occurs at the “seed” and refers to generational change. . . *K'ex* is a process of making the new out of the old. . . Together *jal* and *k'ex* form a concentric system of change within change, a single system of transformation and renewal.

Maya often refer to the particularly powerful sacred aspects of their world as “*delicado*” – delicate, sensitive, and dangerous – requiring an degree of attention that promises good fortune or wellbeing, but which may provoke problems as well given the ease with which powerful deities can take offence (Cook and Offit 2013). The key to managing this situation is thorough attention to patterns and procedures accumulated from the past, often glossed as *costumbre*, which have been deemed successful in establishing order. Attention to the patterns and auguries of the 260-day ritual calendar is often central to these procedures, together with an evolving body of knowledge acquired through personal and

collective experiences and encounters with non-human subjects.

Ritual Practices

Ritual, in communal and individual forms, is central to Maya religion. This follows from the stress placed on world renewal and the need to constantly create order out of an inherently unstable cosmos, following the examples of ancestors and creator divinities in previous cycles of time. Carlsen (2011: 18) notes that Tzutujil traditionalists in Santiago Atitlán refer to themselves as “working people,” highlighting the intense ritual labor which defines their role. In many contexts, ceremonies and activities of shamans may simply be referred to as “*chak*” or “work,” comparable to any other form of human labor, just as the care of saint images through service in confraternities is considered a burden or “cargo” which is carried by the office holder (MacKenzie 2016: 98; Monaghan 2000: 32).

Many Maya rituals tend to involve maintaining covenants with powerful deities who exercise considerable influence over communities through their control of agricultural fertility, but who likewise depend upon humans for the sacrifices and offerings the latter provide. Such offerings are literally considered food for these deities, and the overall relationship of ritual exchange they enter into with humans takes the form of a “phagohierarchy” (Monaghan 2000: 38–39), with agriculture itself the initial, essentially unrepayable, gift from creator gods. Planting and harvesting wounds the earth – the surface or “face” of which in particular is considered sacred – and thus requires constant expiation. The offerings Maya make to the various divinities of earth and sky thus feeds these deities, though the gift is not strictly reciprocal given the hierarchical nature of the relationship, as Monaghan (2000: 39) suggests, noting that “humans may eat the gods, but it is the gods who do most of the eating” including, of course, human bodies themselves as they decay in death.

Copal incense, which is often likened to blood, is the most basic and widespread offering made

to deities, though animals such as chickens, turkeys, pigeons, and goats may also be used in particular contexts. Offerings tend to be immolated in ceremonies at altars dedicated to these purposes, occasionally in public spaces, but more often in particular locations in the natural landscape. These ceremonial fires are the occasion for long, poetic prayers by shamans or related religious specialists, who may liken their activities to legal petitions. The Maya consider words and speech to have uniquely persuasive, creative, and divine powers. As Gary Gossen (2007: 531) argues, “beautifully executed speech and song are the only substances, with the possible exception of blood, that the human body can produce that are accessible to, and worthy before, divine beings.” Indeed, as described in the *Popol Vuh*, it was the ability to speak and praise the creators that distinguished humans from the earlier failed experiments that doomed previous cycles of creation.

The most common communal rituals among the Maya are those associated in some way with saints. As noted above in the context of the Holy Week celebrations of Santiago Atitlán, these may also reference cosmic calendrical cycles, something which is seen in other Maya communities (Cook 2000; Gossen 1999; Deuss 2007). In addition to “feeding” saints through specific ceremonies, the festivals that are celebrated in their honor are also experienced by the saints themselves, who are thought to observe and enjoy the proceedings – punishing poorly executed rituals with bad weather, for example. Ritual dances are common throughout the Maya area, and may commemorate historical events or customs from pre-Hispanic times to the present. While these dances are considered entertaining, they are also viewed as a form of sacrifice, as the physical exertion they require and the time devoted to their presentation constitute a sacred offering to the saint or other deities (Cook and Offit 2013; Hinojosa 2015: 151–178).

Maya religion also features a variety of individual rituals, from personal supplications by petitioners to saints, to ceremonies conducted by shamans on behalf of clients, addressing their particular needs. The latter often relate to poor

health and general bad fortune, which tends to be interpreted in social terms as a breakdown in intersubjective relations (with neighbors or divine persons). In regions where the 260-day calendar is still observed, it may form the basis of divination which, in highland Guatemala especially, tends to make use of red seeds from the *tz’ite’* tree (erythrina corallodendron) that together with crystals form the basis of a shaman’s sacred divining bundle. A typical divination will involve a sortilege using these seeds, a handful of which is divided into groups of four (with the number of remaining seeds read as indicating the overall clarity of the reading) that are then counted using the 20 name days of the calendar. While counting, a shaman will pay attention to tremors and twitches in their body, which together with the particular name day of the calendar on which these signals are felt, provide cues to further questions for the client regarding their problem. This process is highly dialogic, with constant communication between the client and shaman, and may take several rounds to achieve clarity and suggestions for further ritual action, including most commonly the “feeding” of a deity at an altar, as described above (Tedlock 1992; MacKenzie 2016: 94).

An individual’s potential shamanic destiny is also often determined through consultation of the auguries of the 260-day calendar. As is often the case in other cultural contexts, this fate (*suerte* or “luck-destiny”) is generally experienced as a kind of sickness vocation, with poor luck and bad health, together with revelatory dreams, signaling the need to create a covenant with the *nawal* that presided over the day of one’s birth. Initiation into a shamanic career varies in intensity and the degree of training involved, though the experience is understood in corporeal terms, as Barbara Tedlock (1992: 53) explains, noting how the appropriate calendar date of potential shamans provides “a kind of soul, called ‘lightning’ (*coyopa*), that enables him or her to receive messages from the external world, both natural and supernatural, within his or her own body.” A shaman is thus a key figure in communicating with, assuaging, and convincing a range of nonhuman subjects in an effort to establish

intersubjective order which manifests in health and general well-being. While shamans in most communities do not occupy official public positions, in some towns, such as Momostenango, their roles may be more formalized with clear communal responsibilities (Cook and Offit 2013; Tedlock 1992).

Relation to Contemporary Religious Pluralism

Maya religion at present exists in a complex religious landscape in local and global terms. Maya communities throughout the region have for many decades experienced waves of Christian evangelization in various forms: Protestant, Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, and Catholic (including a variety of movements, such as the Charismatic Renewal) (Dow and Sandstrom 2001; Kovic 2007; Falla 2001). These movements have adopted varying relationships to Maya religion, with most – especially Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, and Charismatic movements – openly hostile to this tradition, while some mainline Protestant denominations may actively mobilize Maya symbols and identity (Samson 2007). Strategies of “inculturation” (generally Catholic) go somewhat farther in that direction, actively inserting traditional Maya beliefs and practices within the liturgy and seeking to develop a Maya theology (MacKenzie 2016; Early 2013). The way these movements are received in local terms and how they interact varies considerably, though it is clear that Maya religion serves as an important foil for defining and elaborating religious lives in general in these communities.

Perhaps the most significant development in recent decades which has had a direct impact on Maya religion has been its formal expansion and institutionalization beyond the level of the community. In tandem with the most recent rise in Maya cultural activism beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s – especially in Guatemala, though Chiapas has seen a quickening in this form of activism through the Zapatista and related movements (Tavanti 2003; Moksnes 2012) – Maya religion (or “spirituality” as it is commonly

characterized) has been subject to analysis and purification by ethnic leaders and religious specialists. Unlike followers of Maya religion in many local communities, where elements of Catholicism (especially saints, but also prayers and ritual language) have long been a part of their practice, contemporary proponents of Maya spirituality are often explicitly anti-syncretic. Their goal is to establish or revitalize what they consider to be a more authentic tradition, generally drawing upon archeological and ethnohistorical materials – especially the *Popol Vuh* which features a range of divinities deemed more appropriate than Catholic saints for invocation in ritual activities – rather than the lived experience of “syncretic” local religious authorities (Bastos 2012; MacKenzie 2016). In Guatemala, Maya spirituality has been officially recognized in the 1996 Peace Accords, and there are at least four broadly recognized national-level (and many more regional-level) professional associations of “*guías espirituales*” (spiritual guides) or “*sacerdotes mayas*” (Maya priests) – as these religious specialists tend to self-identify (Morales Sic 2004). The efforts of these organizations towards standardizing the practice and theology of Maya religion are increasingly being felt in local communities, as more erstwhile “syncretic” shamans may seek allies in their own more circumscribed religious conflicts (Deuss 2007: 240–242; Chiappari 2002).

More generally, Maya religion has been subject to considerable attention from the global New Age community and associated spiritual tourism, especially in the context of the much-hyped “end” of the Maya Calendar (or Baktun cycle to be precise) in 2012 (Stitler 2012). While much of this attention was focused upon the Maya of antiquity, contemporary Maya were actively involved in the event, either critiquing Western appropriation and misrepresentation, or seeking ways to control or at least influence the celebrations and interpretations (Maxwell 2012; MacKenzie 2015). As Maya religion continues to globalize – whether under the direction of Maya themselves or others who lay claim to the tradition – it will undoubtedly be further transformed, likely influenced by broader Latin

American and global pan-indigenous religious movements (Farahmand 2016; Galinier and Molinié 2013; Johnson and Kraft 2017). It also seems clear that Maya religious expressions in specific communities will continue to develop in response to enduring local concerns and experiences.

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McPherson, Aimee Semple

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Definition

Aimee Semple McPherson's denomination, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, created by scandal, is larger in Latin America than the United States. Missionary minded, it was McPherson's goal to go "around the world with the Foursquare Gospel" (Van Cleave 1992). Presently, the denomination is strongest in Brazil and is known as *Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular*. At least half of the Foursquare's membership is in Latin America.

Introduction

Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy (1890–1944) was born on a Canadian farm and raised as she liked to say with one foot in the Methodist Church and the other one in the Salvation Army. Both traditions

creatively played out in her own ministry. From the Salvation Army, she inherited a love of pageants, parades, and uniforms. The Methodist Church provided the churchly touches in her theater-like Angelus Temple – a pipe organ, robed choirs, and double-decker stained glass windows. Raised as an only child, Aimee had a doting, spoiling father and a strict, domineering mother. At age 14 Mildred, "Minnie" Pearce became a live-in nurse for James Morgan Kennedy's invalid wife. When James' wife died a few months later, he married his live-in nurse and housekeeper. At the time of their marriage, Minnie was 15 and James 52. James, the Methodist father, nurtured and liberated his daughter's dramatic impulses and imagination. Minnie, Aimee's Salvation Army orphaned mother, sought to live vicariously through her daughter. Aimee would become what Minnie had always wanted to be – a religious leader. Aimee aspired at the time to become an actress. It was a dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship and one that would have disastrous consequences for Aimee later in life. There would have been no Aimee Semple McPherson, however, without Minnie, the stage mother and business manager. It was James, the Methodist, who took his beloved "Beth" to a Pentecostal Revival that changed the course of her life.

Robert Semple

Marrying the evangelist who converted her, Aimee Semple's ministry began modestly as a Pentecostal missionary's wife. Both she and her husband, Robert, left Canada and served their spiritual apprenticeships under the guidance of William Durham in Chicago who also served as a father in the faith to many Pentecostal missions and individuals – including the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Pentecostals attributed a "second Azusa outpouring" to Durham who moved to Los Angeles in 1910. Locked out of the original mission by William Seymour, the infant moment fragmented racially and doctrinally. Renting another two-story building, Durham's mission became the major Pentecostal center in Los Angeles until his death 2 years

Additionally, Maya practices various religious rituals and ceremonies to promote the success of these agricultural practices. Ballou (2008) indicates that religion was an important component of the life of the ancient Maya communities and continues to be important to date. Specifically, religion is believed to be their ultimate maker and destroyer. The aim of the current research is to assess the religion and spirituality of the Maya people. In respect to cultural pluralism, this research will provide an understanding of the cultural identities of the Maya. Moreover, it will promote the comprehensive Riviera Maya, Mexico. Meditation Immersion. May 13 - 17, 2022. Spirituality: Spirituality, on the other hand, connotes an experience of connection to something larger than you; living everyday life in a reverent and sacred manner. Or as Christina Puchalski, MD (leader in trying to incorporate spirituality into healthcare), puts it, "Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred." Origins of Religions and Spirituality. Religion: Religions are most often based upon the Maya religion is practiced by many members of Maya ethnic groups who live in Southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and parts of El Salvador and Honduras. Aspects of the tradition can be traced back several millennia. Although practices vary, adherents tend to stress the importance of managing relationships between human and nonhuman subjects through divination, sacrifice, and the use of sacred calendars. In Guatemala, Maya spirituality has been officially recognized in the 1996 Peace Accords, and there are at least four broadly recognized national-level (and many more regional-level) professional associations of "guías espirituales" (spiritual guides) or "sacerdotes mayas" (Maya priests) as these religious specialists tend to self-identify (Morales Sic 2004). The traditional Maya religion of the extant Maya peoples of Guatemala, Belize, western Honduras, and the Tabasco, Chiapas, and Yucatán states of Mexico is part of the wider frame of Mesoamerican religion. As is the case with many other contemporary Mesoamerican religions, it results from centuries of symbiosis with Roman Catholicism. When its pre-Spanish antecedents are taken into account, however, traditional Maya religion has already existed for more than two millennia as a recognizably distinct