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priorities for this project would provide a meaningful context for the wealth of information that threatens to inundate the reader.

Another concern is that, however noteworthy it is to identify every Inuit person who contributed information, we know little about how these people were chosen or their place in these communities that would help us evaluate their contribution. Thankfully, the book is well indexed, including a separate index of place and person names, which will make it especially useful to Nunavut residents looking up information about relatives or sites. Including personal profiles as part of the index would address this somewhat, though it may have lengthened the book so as to make it cost prohibitive. However useful the mining of interviews for bits of ethnographic memory culture, the folklorist in me wants very much to get some sense of the longer narratives in order to understand how these bits and pieces were elicited and to appreciate them in their original context in order to understand better how these ideas were linked in the vision of the storyteller.

Finally, in terms of history, the book seems to begin with a postulated “then,” representing, the introduction says, “life as the Inuit lived it from the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century” (xxvii). Taking Nunavut “now” as the assumed background into this inquiry, the book represents a mine of recovered traditions from memory culture that can serve the Inuit and specialists well. But the book provides little insight regarding how these communities and individuals participated in the change processes that transformed them and their life “then” to what it is and what they are “now.” One would have liked to see more personal narratives of adaptation and resilience, reconfigured relationships, and redirected energies of the history of personal and social transformation.

In fairness, addressing these concerns would have produced a different book, maybe several. As it stands, *Uqalurait* is a remarkable achievement, an archive of memory culture created by a strong and resourceful people who understood from the beginning that building the future begins with honoring the past.

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**We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom.** By Tisa Wenger. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 336 pages. \$59.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

Tisa Wenger has produced an impressively researched, well-written analysis of the many uses of religious freedom discourse by various parties in a dispute about Pueblo ceremonial dance. Wenger resets the clock by fifty years with which historians and others tell the narrative of American Indian religious freedom, today typically focused on the activism leading up to the Taos Blue Lake controversy and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in the 1970s, and calls attention to the important respects in which Native

peoples of various persuasions creatively and strategically drew on the legal and social discourse of “religion” to assert their interests. Wenger also tells of how broader transformations in American cultural history and the history of American Indian policy were worked out significantly in the context of this particular controversy, and does so artfully through the biographies of the complex characters that square off along multiple axes in the controversies.

In 1921, federal Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles Burke issued a formal condemnation of Indian dancing and directed agents in the field to stop any “degrading” dances by “educational processes” or “punitive measures” as they saw fit. In a supplemental directive two years later, Burke authorized further measures: enabling the agents in the field to forbid certain ceremonies outright, regulating other ceremonies to daylight hours, and barring the participation of Indians younger than fifty.

Such directives were not entirely new. Since the 1870s, federal assimilation policy had assumed the “civilization” process required Christianity and vice versa, and since the late 1860s assimilation policies had formally conjoined church bodies and their missionary field force with the apparatus of the federal Indian Bureau. Burke’s Dance Circular was driven by the complaints of missionaries decrying what they saw as the lurid and degrading sexuality of Hopi and other Pueblo dances.

But in contrast to earlier administrative and regulatory attacks on Native religious practices, we learn that Burke’s directives of the 1920s met formidable opposition by Pueblo tribal leaders who became increasingly organized to challenge federal policies and emboldened by an influential group of anthropologists, artists, and activists—Wenger aptly calls them “cultural modernists”—who not only challenged the assumption that civilization and Christianity must go hand in hand, but also whose broader critique of modernity was nourished by, if not obsessed with, what they took to be the primitive, unchanging, purity of Pueblo ceremonial traditions (4). An alliance between traditional Pueblo leaders and the cultural modernists with the connections and the legal defense resources was thus not without complexities.

Wenger shows how the later rethinking of federal Indian policy in the 1930s under the new leadership of Indian Bureau Director John Collier (the most important cultural modernist in Wenger’s story) is worked out, in part, in the context of these dance controversies and, crucially, through debates about whether “religion” is a category to conceptualize, protect, or, by turns, regulate Pueblo dance traditions.

The alliances and characters of this story are far too complex and shifting to play out simply in terms of Indians and whites or American liberals and conservatives. The principal polarization—or continuum—of non-Native interests here plays out in terms of “assimilationists” and “cultural modernists.” The assimilationists were a fragile coalition of the Protestant missionary establishment and certain voices within Catholicism; the Indian Bureau leadership at the time; the Indian Rights Association, a powerful membership organization long associated with lobbying for assimilation policy as a reform-minded alternative to government policies of war; and a variety of women’s groups condemning what they viewed as the mistreatment of women

in traditional Native cultures. The cultural modernists include the storied circle of writers and artists drawn at the time to Northern New Mexico under the influence of Mabel Dodge Luhan, who were enamored of the Pueblo ceremonial dances for their art value, and an emerging circle of anthropologists like Frank Cushing and Elsie Clews Parsons, who were trained in the cultural relativist mode of Franz Boas. Interestingly, Wenger points out that the primitivist investment of the artists and the anthropologists in Pueblo ceremony were not entirely shared by the policy activist wing of the modernist alliance, led by John Collier, the Federation of Women's Clubs that paid his salary, the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs, and the American Indian Defense Association.

Among the Pueblo people, there were competing factions. Pueblo tribal leadership were generally "traditionalist" in their approach to negotiating tradition and change and increasingly willing to engage the modernists' counsel in defending their ceremonies as a matter of religious freedom. Led by figures like Pablo Abeita (1871–1946) of Isleta Pueblo and Sotero Ortiz of San Juan Pueblo, they had organized as the Council of All New Mexico Pueblos in 1922 in opposition to a bill that would reduce their land holdings. Pueblo leadership viewed Indian Bureau regulation of ceremonies at the time as similarly offensive to their collective rights of sovereignty. For ages, ceremonial dancing had been regarded not principally as a matter of individual piety or spiritual fulfillment but as a collective duty, an obligation of membership in the Pueblo and subject to the direction of Pueblo leadership, structurally not unlike the maintenance of irrigation ditches in the continuation of Pueblo ways of life. It required time, energy, sacrifice, and work. But assimilation policies targeting such ceremonial labor had made it increasingly difficult to ensure the future and prompted leaders like Martin Vigil of Tesuque Pueblo and Antonio Romero of Taos to press the issue. At Taos Pueblo in 1924, Romero dutifully petitioned the Indian Bureau that a group of boys be excused from compulsory schooling for a season of initiatory training in the cultural knowledge necessary to lead the ceremonials. For these leaders, the discourse of religious freedom was among other strategies of the exercise of political and cultural sovereignty.

In the Pueblos, there was also a vocal and well-connected minority of self-styled "progressives," who were largely trained in boarding schools and desirous of reforming their tribal traditions for a secure modern future. We learn of John Dixon and Edward Hunt, Joseph Montoya of San Juan Pueblo, and Manuel Mondragon of Taos who challenged the obligation of ceremonial dancing as a matter of full Pueblo membership. Wenger shows how the discourse of religious freedom was useful to their criticisms of Pueblo leadership policies, but here the discourse claimed rights of individual conscience and was set in opposition to the sovereignty of their tribal governments.

Still Wenger reminds us that the alliance between Pueblo progressives and non-Native assimilationists was strategic, contingent, and equivocal. Pueblo progressives hardly shared the non-Native assimilationists' dismissal of the dances as lurid or degrading; Pablo Abeita, who was a significant leader in defense of the dances, understood himself broadly as a progressive. "Progress

is that a man can plow his ground better with a riding plow than with a hand plow," Abeita wrote. "Drifting away from Indian customs: I don't call that progress" (103).

This book does a great service by complicating our view of these alliances and the commonplace categories that often accompany them, such as "traditional" and "progressive." More important, Wenger's study refines controlling historical narratives in two important respects. First, it frustrates a "progressive history" of Indian policy at a particularly important moment. As a student of this history for some years, I have always wondered why the legislation of the Indian New Deal, of which Collier was the chief architect, could be so forthright in its embrace of Native American cultural and religious rights and repudiation of assimilation policy on those matters but fail so consistently to deliver on commitments to protect those rights. Wenger's attention to the waning days of the missionary Indian Bureau shows that assimilationists frustrated at the lack of results of their policies increasingly turned their attention to cultural attachments like those of "dance" and "ceremony" as the reason for the failures of their policy, in effect, turning up the regulatory heat on Native ceremonial traditions at the eleventh hour of their reign in Washington, D.C. It stands to reason that the embedded force of the assumptions on which their policies rested would not disappear overnight with the naming of their contested nemesis John Collier as the head of Indian policy and with the emergence of vocal, boarding-school-educated Indian leaders, but it frustrates a progressive narrative of that history.

Second, Wenger corrects the implicitly demeaning notion that it took the resurgence of Native traditionalism in the 1970s for Native communities to draw on a view of their traditions as "religions" for protection. Scholars of Indian policy or federal Indian policy, or scholars of Native American history with less appreciation for the finer complexities, have long anchored that narrative in the 1970s with the return of Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo and with the 1978 passage of the AIRFA. It is not just that Wenger shows us that the Pueblo, among others (she mentions, if only in passing, the legal creation of the Native American Church in 1918 to protect the Peyote Way), engaged the language of religious freedom earlier than we thought. More important, Wenger also shows us that traditionalist leaders did so with an impressively savvy awareness of the pitfalls and possibilities of alliances with influential modernist admirers of their spiritual resources and of the halting possibilities of the language of religious freedom—a language ordinarily concerning an individual's rights to conscience—for claiming group rights and responsibilities to land, language, culture, and peoplehood. If claims articulated in the discourse of religious freedom could ultimately challenge tribal sovereignty in the 1920s, in the hands of peoples asserting intellectual as well as political sovereignty, "religious freedom" remains a discourse whose ultimate definition remains, in no small part, up for grabs. Wenger's careful historical scholarship helps open up such possibilities even as she explores its limitations in the context of the 1920s.