

Dr. Dwayne Tunstall

Royce, Christianity, and the Metaphysics of Community



Photo by Bo Anderson

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Abstract: Many scholars and readers of Josiah Royce's magnum opus, *The Problem of Christianity*, have wondered how its two volumes constitute a unified book, especially given the apparent differences between Royce's empirico-historical investigation of Christianity in the first volume and his metaphysics of community in the second volume.

In this presentation I contend that what unified the first and second volumes of *The Problem of Christianity* is Royce's sociology of religion. Reading *The Problem of Christianity* in this manner leads one to view Royce's empirico-historical investigation of Christianity as not only a particular application of Royce's ethics of loyalty, but also as an application of his sociological approach to studying social phenomena. It also leads one to view Royce's metaphysics of community as not only the result of using Peircean theory of interpretation to conceptualize Christian communities, but also the ontological foundation for his sociology of religion.

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