**Chapter Exercises**

**Chapter 13: Religion and Society**

1. Look at a major national newspaper such as the *Washington Post, New York Times,* or *Los Angeles Times* in print or online and at a local paper in print or online. Look carefully and identify stories that relate in some way to religion or the practices or status of a religious group in the United States or elsewhere. What kinds of stories did you find in the national newspaper? What did you find in the local paper? Can you identify similarities or differences in the ways that religion is “in the news” nationally and locally?
2. The chapter noted the decline of religious affiliation among young adults in the United States. What might be the sociological roots of this decline? Consider the discussion in the chapter. Do you have a hypothesis to add to this? How would you test your hypothesis?
3. Review the theorized societal functions of religion from the functionalist perspective and the conflict perspective. What other functions could you add and what evidence would you cite to support them? Are there other conflict functions that you can add? Include evidence to support your points. Think about both local and global examples. Put together a final list and think about strengths and weaknesses of both perspectives and their theorization of religion as a sociological phenomenon.
4. Use an online mapping site such as Google Maps to trace out the religious economy of your community by doing a search for churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues in your area. How many different religious groups are there in your community? Where are they located within your community? How do their locations match up with the racial, ethnic, and class make up of your community? Are some parts of your community better served by the religious economy than others?
5. In recent years, some religious organizations have sought, with mixed success, to have religiously based creationist ideas introduced into public school curriculum. In advocating for creationist beliefs, the primary concern of these religious groups is to challenge the presentation of the science of evolution because they believe this science runs counter to their religious beliefs. How is the social structure of religion within the United States likely to affect the chances of success or failure of these groups to successfully introduce creationist curriculum into schools? Would the failure of these groups to introduce their ideas into school curriculum represent another period of disestablishment? Why or why not?