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Religion Watch is a newsletter monitoring trends in contemporary religion. For more than two decades we have covered the whole range of religions around the world, particularly looking at the unofficial dimensions of religious belief and behavior.

RELIGIOSCOPE

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New models of guru-disciple relationships

In the American context, the traditional model of guru has frequently given way to a new type of spiritual masters having a non-exclusive relationship with their disciples, Lola L. Williamson (Millsapas College) explained at the Montreal conference of the American Academy of Religion (Nov. 7–10), which **RW** attended. During what Williamson described as “phase one,” one could see charismatic gurus with a well-defined lineage and community; these still exist, but more and more we are experiencing “phase two”, i.e. American gurus, disciples of Indian gurus, who can share the same stage with other gurus on a non-exclusive basis. Two, three or more gurus teaming up together to offer a retreat is a new phenomenon in America. This is related to wider trends: the idea of devoting oneself for a life-

time to one guru is waning in North America.

In phase one, everybody had read Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, which shaped the image of the guru. In the meantime, in addition to developments in secular society, guru scandals may have changed the image of the guru. Having serial gurus is expected in phase two, and such a phenomenon fits the North American context well. Retreat sites have come to replace pilgrimage sites in the phase two environment. Some ashrams today look like health spas, with a small nucleus of permanent residents and American teachers drawing from a variety of both spiritual and secular sources (Hindu and Zen masters, modern scientists, etc.).

New Sanctuary movement—less sanctuary and more identity problems

While the New Sanctuary movement has revived activist hopes of a revived national church movement for immigrant rights, the current move to protect undocumented immigrants is more locally based, less mobile, and has found recruitment and building a common identity more difficult than the pioneering movement of the 1980s, according to a recent study. The study, presented by Grace Yukich of New York University at the October meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) in Denver, laid out the most basic difference between the two sanctuary movements: there is no physical “sanctuary” today. The movement does not seek to

shelter immigrants, but rather forms partnerships between immigrant families and congregations, which seek to assist them in various ways.

Yukich, who interviewed 70 New Sanctuary movement activists and their allies in New York and Los Angeles, said that the more-stringent immigrant laws today have meant that immigrants arrive more for economic than for political reasons. Among activists, she found some ambiguity and confusion about the sanctuary concept itself and weak identification with the national movement. This has led to difficulty in recruiting people, especially as activists are divided between

the goals of political advocacy and directly helping families. Yukich also found that some quarters of

the movement are more overtly religious than others, making it difficult for it to build a collective

identity, which has also hindered ongoing recruitment of volunteers and activists, she concluded.

Western followers bring changes to the Ni'matullahi Sufi Order

Based only in Iran until the 1970s, one branch of the Ni'matullahi Sufi Order came to the West after its head, Dr Javad Nurbakhsh (d. 2008), emigrated following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The past 30 years have brought radical changes to the group, reported Eliza Tasbihi (Concordia University, Montreal) at the November conference of the American Academy of Religion. Many of the Order's members are now Westerners, but Iranian followers remain a significant minority, especially conspicuous in the organization of social events. Along with the expansion of the Order to other parts of the world, including the creation of centers in the West and in Africa, the order has undergone other changes. While Nurbakhsh had stated in his earlier writings that being a Muslim was a re-

quirement for practicing Sufism, this has ceased to be emphasized. He brought about a major shift in his teachings through using a universal language and actually detaching Sufism from an exclusive association with Islam. Conversion to Islam is no longer a requirement today for those who want to join the Order.

In addition, the Order does not want to equate Sufism with an orientation toward seclusion and has put an emphasis on charity work and engagement with scholarly work, including international conferences. Another development is gender equality, manifested by the fact that men and women sit together while practicing silent meditation and that women are not required to cover their heads. Some changes may have also

partly been motivated by the small size of the groups; for instance, originally, initiates and non-initiates were supposed to sit in separate rooms, but this did not seem to make sense with only a small number of participants. The change has not affected the groups in Iran, however. Moreover, not only do the other branches of the Ni'matullahi Sufi Order not follow such adaptations, but a number of members within the branch under the leadership of the late Dr Nurbakhsh have not accepted them, and have seceded to create separate centers. Among Iranians in the West, some people with no involvement in traditional Muslim religious life feel attracted to the new, inclusive approach. It is too early to say how the Order will now evolve under its new leader following the death of Nurbakhsh.

Fringe groups find fertile ground in Quebec Catholicism

While classical Catholic traditionalism in the line of the late Archbishop Lefebvre has not developed very strongly in Quebec, a variety of very specific Catholic groups originating in Quebec itself have found fertile ground there. Some of them have been undergoing changes and realignment in recent years, either attempting to remain within the

sphere of the Roman Catholic Church or going their own ways. The role played by female leaders or figures has been prominent in several of them. These were some of the main observations derived from a session of the New Religious Movements Group devoted to religious groups inside, outside or parallel to the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec at the American

Academy of Religion in Montreal.

In his presentation, Paul Gareau (Concordia University) looked at the Army of Mary, a group that defines itself as strongly Catholic, but was nevertheless excommunicated in 2007 for heresy. Its key figure, Marie-Paule Giguère (b. 1921), occupies a very special role in the elaborate doctrine of

the Army—a new understanding of the Trinity as a Quinternity encompassing God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, along with Mary the Immaculate Conception and Giguère herself as the Lady of All Peoples and the daughter of God. In 2007, the Army of Mary initiated the “Church of John” with its new pope, Padre Jean-Pierre, as a transmutation of the Church of Peter. Gareau discussed in his paper how a group that consisted of conservative Catholics could reconcile itself with excommunication from the church. He explained that this was primarily a matter of resilience: the members put the emphasis on their unique position in salvation history and see themselves as a divinely ordained continuation of the Roman Catholic Church, not negating its normative structures, but elaborating on them. More generally, Gareau sees the Army as an assertion of feminine symbols that characterize popular devotion, which a male hierarchy attempts to keep

under control. Thus the members of the Army of Mary manage to avoid a crisis of cognitive dissonance—and might actually illustrate wider trends beyond their own case for understanding the psychology of schism.

However, the evolution of conservative Catholic groups can follow a quite different pattern, as evidenced by a paper presented by Martin Geoffroy (Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities) about the Pilgrims of St. Michael (their official name since 1963), more commonly known as the “White Berets”, because of their distinctive headwear. While critical of modernist trends within Roman Catholicism, the White Berets were originally primarily a political group of devout Catholics, advocating the ideals of “Social Credit” for a total reform of society (an economic theory elaborated in 1917 by a Scottish engineer and economist, Major Clifford Hugh Douglas).

Initially a political movement entering (with limited success) into electoral competitions, it then transformed itself more into a pressure group and, from the 1960s, at the same time that Quebec was undergoing rapid secularization, it became increasingly religious— aspiring to create a Christian world, as opposed to a modern world under Satan’s rule. While the White Berets have failed to convince the Catholic Church to adopt the ideas of Social Credit and have been very critical of modern developments in the Church, they have managed to avoid schism—a fact that might partly be due, Geoffroy suggests, to the fact that they steer away from thorny theological issues and are “doctrinally and pragmatically oriented towards long-established traditional socio-economic ideas and practices rather than towards new religious revelations and messages transmitted by their leaders as coming directly from heaven.”

CURRENT RESEARCH

► **The third Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey, conducted in 2008, finds a “persistent downward drift in congregational vitality,” according to David Roozen of Hartford Seminary.** Roozen, who directed the study in 2000, 2005 and 2008, said that across eight years, congregational health, including financial stability, has declined. Roozen, who presented his findings at the SSSR meeting in Denver,

noted that the 2008 drop in financial stability was registered even before the current economic crisis had hit. Such a decline is “across the board,” experienced by mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic and Muslim congregations. Roozen also found a continuing aging pattern—50 percent of congregations now have a quarter of their members over the age of 65. The study also found that the level of conflict in congregations had remained the same since 2000, while the level of experimentation in worship has increased. Those congregations that have shifted to contemporary worship within the past five years were far more likely to

show growth than those who have long had traditional services (64 percent versus 44 percent).

► **The new wave of the National Study on Religion and Youth (NSYR) finds “emerging adults” less religiously involved, although evangelicals show some resistance to this trend through their parental involvement and participation in church youth groups.** In a session on the NSYR at the SSSR meeting, lead researcher Christian Smith and his associates noted that, five years after the study’s focus on teenagers, the longitudinal research now looks at the 18–23 age group, which is la-

beled “emerging adulthood.” Smith’s earlier finding of what he called “moralistic therapeutic deism” (a non-involved God associated mainly with good feelings and deeds) was less evident among the same young people in this age group, suggesting that it may have been an age effect. The young adults today are more likely to refer to “karma”—that one is paid back for good or bad deeds by a cosmic force. Only about 20 percent attend religious services at least once a week, a 22 percent decline from Smith’s survey five years ago of the same group of young people. Catholics showed the steepest declines from adolescence to adulthood, with weak effects from religious education. Evangelical Protestants showed less decline, mainly because of greater parental religious involvement and the effect of youth group participation.

▶ **Evangelical clergy involvement in politics increased between 2000 and 2008, most likely due to intensified mobilization by the Republican Party (GOP), according to a new study.** The study, conducted by Laura Olson and Sue Crawford and presented at the SSSR meeting, found that in 2008, clergy, particularly evangelical clergy, were more engaged in many ways than in 2000. Compared to other clergy, evangelicals overall showed the biggest gains in political activity from 2000 and were particularly more likely to engage in public kinds of political activities. The absence of a clear “evangelical” candidate in 2008 did not weaken evangelical clergy involvement in electoral activities compared to 2000. Olson argued that it is not possible to know from the data how much of the 2008 increase in activity came from the 2004 mobilization work of the GOP that paved the way for more activity in 2008. But she added that this may

well be an explanation for why the involvement of evangelical clergy increased in 2008 from 2000.

The study showed that various interest groups such as the Family Research Council and Bread for the World appeared to mobilize clergy engagement in a range of political activities. Clergy who indicate their support for these types of groups report more political activity. Overall, this interest group advantage appears to increase from 2000 to 2008. Conservative groups appear most able to mobilize public electoral and advocacy activities by clergy, while more liberal interest groups tend to mobilize more individual-oriented electoral and advocacy activities.

▶ **A new project called the “Christian Activism Data Base,” charting the growth of religious activist groups since the early 1960s until the new millennium, finds that these groups are very durable, although the most growth has been in non-membership organizations and coalitional groups.** The project’s findings, presented at the SSSR meeting by Chris Pieper of the University of Texas at Austin, are based on a study of the Encyclopedia of Associations from 1960 to 2000. Pieper found that there has been a sharp growth of Christian activist organizations (from 51 in 1961 to almost 300 by the mid-1990s) and that they have an average lifespan of about 25 years. Most were founded in the 1970s (often focusing on anti-Vietnam war protests), while most organizational deaths were in the 1990s, due to “the crowding of pro-life groups.” These organizations are disproportionately represented by non-denominational groups, but also by peace churches and Unitarians, according to Pieper. Lutherans, the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Church of Christ were the

most underrepresented. Pieper concluded that there has been a shift away from official denominational social action groups and a move toward non-membership and coalition-type organizations.

▶ **A Baylor University study finds that in any given congregation in the U.S. with 400 members, an average of seven women have been victims of clergy sexual misconduct since they turned 18.** The study, conducted by Diana Garland, found that more than three percent of adult women who have attended a church in the past month reported that a religious leader had made a sexual advance to them. Garland said that such cases of abuse are prevalent in all denominations and religions across the country. The *Christian Century* (October 30) reports that the findings were drawn from questions included in the 2008 General Social Survey.

▶ **A survey of Christians in Britain suggests they are facing pressure and in some cases discrimination, especially Pentecostals.** The survey, conducted by the *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper of 512 Christians about reactions to their faith, found that 44 percent reported being mocked for their faith and 10 percent experienced rejection by their families. However, 47 percent reported no such negative reactions. The differences in reaction may be related to the Christian group to which they belong. Pentecostals felt that their faith had cost them promotion five times more than Anglicans or Catholics. Three-quarters of the respondents said there was less religious freedom now than 20 years ago, reports the newsletter *FutureFirst* (October).

(*FutureFirst*, Old Post Office, 1 Thorpe Ave., Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4PW UK)

Evangelicals inspire hands-off respect among Central American gangs

Gangs in Central America are showing a new respect for evangelical churches and those ex-members who convert to them, but those “backsliding” from the church may face a good deal of danger, according to researcher Robert Brenneman of Notre Dame University, who presented a paper on the topic at the SSSR meeting. In conducting research among gangs and former gang members in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, Brenneman found this practice of “evangelical exemption” fairly common. As long as departing members of a gang claimed a conversion and went to an evangelical (usually Pentecostal) church, they were considered exempt from the punishment that a usual gang deserter would face, which could mean death. Part of the reason for the lenient attitude toward evangelical converts is that gang members believe that these converts have special divine protection and if they harm them they might incur a curse against the gang.

Another reason for the hands-off approach is that former members who adopt an evangelical lifestyle are unlikely to move to another gang and thus share secrets and compete against their former gang. The fact that evangelicals are seen as adopting non-violence and an attitude of “turn the other cheek” insures against vengeance of former gang members. But the problems start when former gang members who have converted backslide and stop attending church. In this case, the exemption is lifted and such backsliders can

be targeted, since they are now a source of competition for the former gang. Murders of such evangelical defectors are not infrequent. To ensure that former members stay on the evangelical straight and narrow, gangs will actually monitor these converts, according to Brenneman.

Home-grown Unitarians put twist on the faith and grow in Africa

Unitarianism is growing relatively rapidly in Africa, surprising even American Unitarians who discourage missionaries and even support of overseas congregations. The official magazine of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, *UU World* (Summer), reports that whereas a decade ago, Africa counted only a handful of UU congregations—mainly in South Africa—today the continent boasts of churches in Uganda, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Uganda and, most notably, Kenya. Local Kenyan leaders report that over 100 congregations have sprouted in the Kisii Province, and in Nairobi and central Kenya. “Unitarian-Universalists do not have [the] tradition of proselytizing mission work, but UU principles have made their way into Africa nonetheless. On a continent where Internet access is growing quickly, people in remote areas are discovering Unitarianism in Google-powered spiritual journeys,” writes Scott Kraft.

One African Unitarian leader, Patrick Magra, researched Unitarianism on the Internet after meeting some American UUs, and subsequently left the Seventh Day Adventists, impressed by the Unitarian message of freedom and toler-

ance. He eventually brought fellow evangelical ministers with him to the UU, and claims that there are now 68 congregations with several thousand members in the Kisii district among poor tribal groups in western Kenya. While Magra’s estimates were impossible to verify, international UU officials verified at least several dozen congregations in this region. In addition, these churches have started pre-schools, schools and an orphanage. Near Nairobi, another cluster of churches have been started that are more ethnically and socio-economically diverse. In such areas, UU teachings are used to stress how congregations should welcome all ethnic groups. While UU’s tolerance of multiple marriages (in contrast to other denominations) appeals to many converts, African Unitarians’ opposition to gay rights and abortion is far from the social liberalism of their counterparts in the West. Yet the Africans want more assistance from American UUs—something that Western Unitarians are ambivalent about, preferring a more egalitarian “partnership model” instead.

(*UU World*, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108-2892)

African Initiated Churches going online

While Internet penetration remains lower on the African continent than in other places around the globe, new religious movements born in Africa have been appropriating new media technologies, reported Afe Adogame (University of Edinburgh) at the conference of the American Academy of Religion in Montreal. Use of media is not a new feature among African religions, but de-

liberate efforts by these groups to make themselves known on the Internet is also related to new social realities, such as their presence in Western countries, leading them to consider new strategies. In the Western world, the use of personal contacts for evangelizing is more difficult: it cannot be done as easily on the street or in marketplaces, as it would be in Africa. Such challenges have encouraged the creation of websites; originally, nearly all websites were developed in the diaspora, although they are now starting in Africa too.

Online strategies serve various purposes, including recruitment strategy (whether they are successful is another question, however) and maintaining links with members transnationally, but also expressing a group's global nature. There are now even African groups offering online transactions for the payment of tithes and offerings. Adogame thinks the Internet should be considered as a complementary vehicle, not as a replacement for other media or church attendance, serving to reinforce commitment in religious groups.

New face of Buddhism more engaged with social and other mainstream concerns in Japan

For a long time, Buddhism was too much associated with “funeral Buddhism” in the minds of most Japanese to pay attention to other, new forms of “engaged Buddhism,” said Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya (University of Delhi) at a session of the Japanese Religions Group at the Montreal con-

ference of the American Academy of Religion. But a number of books have now been devoted to this topic since the 1990s, and an accompanying decline in temple attendance has pushed some Buddhists to find new ways to reach a wider Japanese population, according to other scholars. According to those publications, as summarized by Mukhopadhyaya, one can observe developments such as networking beyond sectarian boundaries (Buddhist federations), involvement in welfare activities (partly as a reaction to Christian charities, but also prompted by new social and economic environments), the formation of Buddhist NGOs, transnational engagement in voluntary and relief activities, and peace movements (assistance to Cambodian refugees has provided a major impetus for relief activities by Japanese Buddhists). However, according to Inaba Keishin (Kobe University), only 35 percent of Japanese are aware of social work conducted by religious groups.

Japanese people are no longer necessarily looking at religious institutions for direction today, according to John Nelson (University of San Francisco). Greater personal agency leads to weaker relationships to temples, leading to a decline in their financial resources. Moreover, people have become more suspicious toward religion, and this is not only a consequence of the Aum Shinrikyo case in 1995. It is not sufficient that Buddhist priests engage new technologies to counter this trend, however—many priests write blogs, but few of them get comments from visitors. As a response, a number of attempts have been launched seeking to promote

“experimental Buddhism.” For instance, Nelson presented the cases of a storefront outreach (with a Buddhist priest available for people who want to speak), which attempts to help people in their daily lives—with Buddhist traditions being seen here as resources for action rather than blueprints for beliefs. One can also mention efforts by Pure Land Buddhism to restore vitality to this organization; some priests are thus developing relationships based on social concerns rather than religious traditions, making temples into community centers.

Radical reform in Islam best done through contextualization, says Islamic scholar

Addressing a large audience at the Montreal conference of the American Academy of Religion—attended by **RW**—Tariq Ramadan (Oxford University) summarized his message of the need for a radical reform within Islam while remaining faithful to the sacred text. According to the influential Swiss Muslim thinker, this will be made possible by contextualization. Indeed, not only the text, but also the context can become a source of religious law, since there are issues on which the text is silent. But over time, more importance has been given to scholars of the text, a situation that today needs to be redressed. At the same time, Ramadan warns that those who deny the text will not be able to change anything.

Ramadan emphasized that there are different types of reform. A reform that just adapts to a new environment would be misguided,

since the call of religion is not to adapt to the status quo, but to aspire to transform the world. Thus a transformational reform is needed that would not transform Islam itself, but rather Muslim minds and interpretations. The experience of Muslims in the West will have a tremendous impact, but Western observers should not ignore vibrant debates currently taking place in non-Western Muslim societies.

Such a transformational reform requires an ability to project into the future. And the complexity of science makes it impossible for just one person to give an answer on all possible topics. Currently, according to Ramadan, the best results have been reached in the field of medical science. In countries such as Kuwait, interaction between religious scholars and medical experts have resulted in *fatwas* (religious edicts) that deal with issues such as cloning or contraception. In contrast, until now, in the field of the economy or ecology, Ramadan finds results to be unconvincing: regarding the economy, Muslims have only been following global trends, he says, being satisfied, for instance, with just creating a small window of religiously permissible financial practices within the wider global economic system

An emerging mullah-secular activist alliance taking shape in Iran?

Religious groups and leaders may represent the strongest challenge to President Ahmadinejad's leadership since the popular uprisings of last summer went underground after government crackdowns, reports *The Tablet* magazine (Oct.

17). Ahmadinejad's increasingly authoritarian rule is helping to "forge an unlikely but powerful alliance between orthodox mullahs and secular democrats," writes Edward Stourton. There is increasing concern among Iran's clerics and theologians about Ahmadinejad's apocalyptic beliefs involving the return of the "hidden imam," a messiah-type figure in Shia Islam who, in the president's view, could return after a period of world turmoil. The president's millennialism has a strong anti-clerical edge: the proportion of clerics in jail today is higher than the proportion from any other social category. While these tensions have been simmering for a while, behind much of the concerns is a more fundamental questioning of the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic itself.

Ever since Ayatollah Khomeini founded the Islamic state, mainstream Shia theologians have questioned whether it is permitted to set up a theocracy without the Hidden Imam doing so himself. It is a similar argument to ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist Jews arguing that only the Messiah can create the Jewish state of Israel. This view's "high-profile adherents include no less a figure than the Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Sistani, generally seen as the leading Shia religious authority." This concern, taken together with the clerics' fear that Ahmadinejad's suppression of the democratic movement last summer is tarnishing the image of Islam, could solidify the new alliance between the clerics and the secular democratic movement. Stourton concludes that there are in fact already signs "that it is beginning to take shape."

(*The Tablet*, 1 King Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0QZ UK)

Sunni-Shia relations a source of new tensions for Muslims worldwide

While Shiite assertiveness gives rise to concerns and nervousness among Sunni regimes, observers should be careful not to explain all developments and attitudes through religion and also be aware of the significance of political dimensions and alliances. This was the implicit message in several papers presented at the international conference on Sunni-Shia relations organized by the Catholic University of Louvain and several academic partners that took place in Brussels from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2, which **RW** attended.

A discourse on the threat of "Shiitization" or "Shiite penetration" can be heard in Palestine, developed both by Salafi groups and members of the Palestinian State Authority, but the reality on the ground gives very little evidence of conversions to Shiism. The discourse on the "Shiite threat" serves mostly opponents of the Islamic movement Hamas, due to some cooperation of the latter with Iran, explained Jean-François Legrain (National Center for Scientific Research, CNRS, France). But such discourse ignores competition between Lebanese and Iranian Shiite channels of influence, as well as the fact that Hamas is an independent actor that makes political alliances in accordance with its interest. There are common interests between Hamas and Iran, but Hamas does not follow Iranian orders, summarized Azzam Tamimi (Institute for Islamic Political Thought, London).

The impact of an anti-Shia discourse has much more severe consequences in areas where there is a significant Shia population, such as Pakistan (which has a 15–20 percent Shiite population). Until the 1970s, religious differences generally played little role in Pakistan, but Shiite assertion (with Iranian support until the mid-1990s) and the development of radical Islamist, anti-Shia groups changed this situation. Currently, Pakistani Taliban attempt to exploit sectarian differences in order to expand their operational space, reported Mariam Abou Zahab (Center for International Studies and Research, CERI, France)—and not only Shia have become targets, but all other minorities too (Christians, Hindus, Sikhs).

On the border with Pakistan, though in Iran itself, Sunni-dominated Baluchistan is less the peripheral region that it used to be, stressed Stéphane Dudoignon (CNRS). Following the suppres-

sion of Baluchi elites during the pre-revolutionary period in this area of Iran, religious leaders have come to play a stronger role. The Iranian Revolution and the emphasis upon the Shia nature of the country has led to an awareness of this region's Sunni religious identity. Especially during the last four years, tensions have been growing, including attacks by Sunni militants, no longer targeting only police posts, but also Shiite institutions. However, explained Dudoignon, Sunni-Shia relations in Iran cannot be reduced to tensions: there is also interaction, which one should keep in mind in order to have the whole picture.

In Syria, a country that has good relations with Iran, irritations have been felt in recent years following increasingly visible Shiite activities during the past three decades, reported Thomas Pierret (Catholic University of Louvain)—and this despite a very modest Shia statistical presence (less than one percent of the popu-

lation). Since the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Iranian tourists/pilgrims have come to visit Shia holy places in Syria. This created some resentment in Syrian Sunni circles, which has been reinforced by the arrival of Iraqi refugees. The performance of Shiite rituals in public space also contributed to such feelings. Since 2006, there has been an upsurge of anti-Shia rumors and accusations of Shiite proselytism.

In Saudi Arabia, where the Shia minority has often experienced repression, there have been efforts by the state to start a rapprochement with its Shia population following the changes that have taken place in Iraq, explained Laurence Louër (Sciences Po, Paris). What Saudi authorities primarily want is stability: for this reason, they will not tolerate attacks against Shiites, such as those taking place in Pakistan, although anti-Shia feelings remain strong.

FINDINGS/FOOTNOTES

■ The password for access to the archives at the RW website, at: <http://www.religionwatch.com>, remains: **Seventhangel**

■ The November/December issue of **Society** magazine carries a special section on the charismatic and Pentecostal movement. The lead article

by Todd M. Johnson provides an interesting statistical overview of the growth of the various Pentecostal streams in the global South and North, revealing how classical Pentecostals, charismatic renewalists (those within mainstream and Catholic churches) and independent neo-charismatics have been received differently in various societies. Johnson finds that renewalists continue to grow fastest in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and have stalled in Europe and the U.S. The neo-charismatics are the most strongly based in the global South,

especially in India, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another article by Arun Jones on Pentecostalism in India notes that these churches are functioning like mainline Protestants as the latter have slipped in missionary and social ministries and the former have taken up starting schools, orphanages and hospitals. The strong supernatural thrust of Pentecostal and charismatic churches even draws practicing Hindus to their services; at the same time, these churches unofficially draw on the mystical Hindu sensibility.

An article on Russia and Ukraine suggests some conflict between the more moderate and subdued Pentecostals—who have a long history in both countries—and the flamboyant and emotional charismatic newcomers who hold to prosperity teachings and performing miracles. The contested thesis that these new Protestants are fostering a strong work ethic and economic productivity has some substantiation, although the findings are still preliminary, write authors Christopher Marsh and Artyom Tonoyan. The article notes that Russian and Ukrainian Pentecostals are also becoming a missionary force in their own right, especially in China. A concluding article by Brian Grim finds that the relation between charismatic and Pentecostal churches and the restrictions they may face in various countries is also related to the type of movement to which they belong. While the charismatic and Pentecostals seem to grow most in societies with religious freedom, the neo-charismatics can grow in religiously restrictive societies (such as China) as long as there is not a single religion monopolizing the market.

For more information on this issue, write: Society, 233 Spring St. New York 10013

■ The annual review of the **Yugoslav Society for the Scientific Study of Religion** (year XVI) is devoted to the issue of the revitalization of religion, revealing that the complex religious situation of the former Yugoslavia makes it difficult to use terms such as “secularization” or “revival.” The volume, edited by Danijela Gavrilovic, is divided between general theories related to religious revitalization and chapters applying such theory to specific traditions and regions of the Balkans. In an early chapter, Ivan Cvitkovic writes that while there has

been a “return of religion” to the public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is inaccurate to speak of a return of citizens to religious faith, as “there has been no ‘departure’ after all.” In other words, there was a fairly similar rate of affiliation and religious involvement before the ethnic conflict and war in the region. In a chapter on religion in the Balkan region, the authors argue there has been a growth in both “apparent believers” and “apparent atheists,” meaning those who identify with but do not necessarily hold the beliefs or lack of beliefs of either category. There has been a “drop in numbers of those who practice things in which they believe.” In Serbia, for instance, 72.5 percent never attend the Orthodox liturgy, although more identify with home-based rituals and traditions.

The same article finds that Islam has the largest number of adherents who believe that their religion is the only true one, while Protestants have the highest rate of belief that their religion is only one among many valid ones. Another interesting finding is that those with the harshest images of God rarely go to church or mosque, while those with more benign images of God tend to be frequent attenders. Other articles in this issue include an in-depth analysis of Serb religiosity (which the author characterizes as “traditional belonging without believing”); an overview of new religious movements, folk rituals and pilgrimage sites in the region; and a unique study by sociologists who started their own religion (the Church of the Holy Silence) in order to test and monitor the legal constraints put on new religious movements in Slovenia.

For more information on this issue, e-mail the editor at: danig@filfak.ni.ac.rs

■ As its title makes clear, **Deconversion: Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Cross-Cultural Research in Germany and the United States of America** (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht; for more information, visit: <http://www.v-r.de/de/titel/1001004018/>) examines the long-neglected topic of deconversion, or religious disaffiliation. The researchers, led by Hein Streib, Ralph Hood and Barbara Keller, find that the most general and valid characteristics at the level of individual personality and identity with respect to deconverts from both countries were openness to experience (considered the most relevant factor associated with deconversion); lower scores on fundamentalism and authoritarian scales; self-identification as being more spiritual than religious; and, while actively religious, profession of faith of a more critical than conformist nature. This portrait of the deconvert aligns with previous research on the subject and also overlaps with research on secularists. For example, “Profiles of the Godless,” a recent article by Luke W. Galen, which looks at the results of a survey of the non-religious, cites openness to new experience and lower levels of agreeableness as two characteristics that may serve to distinguish believers from non-believers.

Differences between deconverts in the U.S. and Germany emerged most starkly around the issue of crisis. In the German sample, especially among those in oppositional groups, as opposed to those leaving more integrated groups, the researchers found that disaffiliation was quantitatively associated with a loss or crisis in respect to self-identity, social relationships, and a sense of overall meaning and purpose in life. In general, the U.S. deconverts tended to feel less tension between themself-

ves and the larger society after disaffiliation and felt a greater sense of personal development and autonomy when compared to the German sample. The researchers, although warning against giving too much causal weight to the larger religious environment, say that this may be due to the open religious pluralism of the U.S., where deconverts “can be confident that the church next door welcomes religious disaffiliates from other traditions—which may promise to advance their personal growth.” Statistical differences withstanding, after further qualitative investigation, the authors conclude that, overall, gains tend to outweigh losses, stating that most of those experiencing crisis were able to find therapeutic support and not only recover, but experience personal growth. In these cases, the authors suggest that the crisis should be considered more of a “turning point.”

Finally, one of the more novel findings of the study is that many deconverts, far from dropping out of the religious field altogether, seek more personal spiritual experiences outside of formal religions and the confines of organizational structures. In this respect, more research may be needed to firmly determine what other factors send those open to new experience down the similar, but ultimately different paths of spirituality and secularity (in the strong sense). This book contributes a great deal to such discussion. — *Reviewed by Christopher Smith, a New York-based writer and researcher*

■ **Quiverfull** (Beacon Press, \$25.95) is a journalistic investigation of the “biblical womanhood” movement that is seeking to revive “Christian patriarchy.” Author Kathryn Joyce offers a vivid portrait of this radical pro-natalist counterculture of the

evangelical movement—from agrarian homeschoolers with huge families who dub their cause “quiverfull” to the networks of activists decrying the “demographic winter” (the dearth of births in the West) and the Calvinist pastors calling for women’s subservience and male headship. The book, unlike many treatments of the Christian right, does a good job in analyzing the Calvinist and thus strongly theological element to much of this pro-family activism, even if it notes its new diversity, embracing conservative Catholics, Mormons, Lutherans and charismatics, as well as schismatic conservative independent groups sympathetic to Christian reconstructionism.

An especially interesting chapter is the profile of Doug Phillips (son of conservative activist Howard Phillips) and his Vision Forum, which attempts to model Christian masculinity and femininity through church practices (shunning for disobedient members), and traditional courtship traditions (including reviving dowries) and modest dress, as well as marketing gender-specific toys and literature. Another chapter looks at the emergence of natalist activists, combining unorthodox social science and conservative critiques, such as Allan Carlson and the World Congress of Families (and bringing together European Catholic traditionalists and American evangelicals and Mormons). While these groups are fascinating in their own right (demanding more scholarly study), Joyce clearly sees the movement as a threat to women’s freedom. Her accounts of the many women reporting (mainly psychological) abuse from their involvement in this counterculture and of Quiverfull families living near the poverty level are poignant. But the author’s fears of the movement’s dangers and its influence among evangelicals seem exaggerated: she acknowledges that the counterculture embraces a few

thousand. Only those on the evangelical right (such as Albert Mohler of Southern Baptist Seminary and popular preacher and author John Piper) show much sympathy for its more radical measures.

■ **Jewish Inter-marriage Around the World** (Transaction Books, \$44.95), edited by Shulamit Reinharz and Segio DellaPergola, is unique in its collection of studies of “out-marriage” among the smaller communities of Jews outside of Israel and the U.S. A chapter providing an overview of research by well-known Israeli demographer DellaPergola finds that in the 1930s most Jews lived in countries where the rate of out-marriage was below five percent, and in no community did it rise above 35 percent. Today, the majority of world Jewry live in countries where the intermarriage rate is above 35 percent, with the majority above 50 percent. The intermarriage trends among French Jews reflect broader patterns throughout the Diaspora. The growth of Jews cohabiting, often in interfaith relationships, may actually be a “way of solving the issue of intermarriage by circumventing it,” writes contributor Erik Cohen. His finding that Jews who live in Paris or its suburbs have lower rates of intermarriage than those who live in the provinces supports the thesis (confirmed in other chapters) that Jewish demographic density discourages out-marriage. Another common pattern (with the exception of the U.S.) found in the French case is that Jewish men are more likely to marry out than Jewish women.

A noteworthy chapter finds this gender pattern especially pronounced in the former Soviet Union, where immigration has largely depleted the ranks of Jewish women (for instance, the intermarriage rate for Jewish men in Ukraine is 82 per-

cent). Most children raised in this mixed ethno-religious environment “have a clear preference for a non-Jewish ethnic affiliation.” Other chapters include a look at how the lifting of apartheid in South Africa encouraged a wave of out-marriage among Jews there; a counter-example is found in Mexico and Venezuela (reflecting other Central American contexts) of low frequencies of out-marriage (perhaps related to widespread Jewish schooling). In contrast, the high rate of out-marriage (and adoption of Catholicism among the intermarried Jews) in Argentina constitutes “social entropy and endangers the future of the Jewish communities,” concludes Yacov Rubel.

■ ***The Mind of the Anglican Clergy*** (Edwin Mellen Press, \$109.95), by Andrew Village and Leslie J. Francis, is a comprehensive study of Anglican priests, showing that the level of confidence in their leaders and in the future of the state church is shaky at best. The study is based on a survey of 1,849 clergy (82 percent men and 18 percent women) who were randomly drawn from the readership of the *Church Times* newspaper (the study is therefore tilted slightly toward liberal and Anglo-Catholic orientations). As found among clergy in other studies, there is a gap between clergy holding more liberal theological and social views than the laity, especially

on issues such as gay rights in the church. On this issue, there is likely to be continued drift, especially as women and younger clergy are the voices of change, except when the clergy is evangelical or charismatic. The clergy tended to uphold core Christian doctrines, while engaging with critical views of the Bible to a far greater extent than the laity. Somewhat more unexpected is the finding that 42 percent of clergy do not have strong confidence in the leadership offered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and 33 percent want the Church of England to be disestablished. Pro-disestablishment views were greatest among liberal clergy.

On/File: A continuing survey of people, groups, movements and events impacting religion

1) The publication of the new prayer book for Orthodox Jews, the **Koren-Sachs Siddur**, is a significant attempt to wrest control of the Orthodox movement in the U.S. from the ultra-Orthodox wing of the movement. Until the appearance of the new prayer book, the Artscroll Siddur was the main one in use in Orthodox synagogues, although it represented the traditionalist views and practices of the Haredi, or ultra-Orthodox Jewish movement. In the last two decades, the Haredi movement has become an influential force in Judaism while the “modern Orthodox” movement has been reported to be in decline (de-

mographically at least, since the Haredi have the larger families). The new prayer book upholds the modern Orthodox approach in its proud embracing of Zionism (the Artscroll Siddur plays down the importance of Israel, showing the non-Zionist views of many Haredi) and its acceptance of women’s prayers and greater involvement in devotional life. (Source: ***First Things***, September/October)

2) **Covenant University** in Nigeria is a case study of how private—and often evangelical Christian—institutions are beginning to transform a university system founded on the “belief that government should be the sole provider of higher education, free of charge.” The seven-year-old university was founded and is financed by Living Faith Church in Otta, said to be the largest church structure in the world. The university

is expensive (at \$2,000 per year) and beyond what most Nigerians can pay, yet the school’s facilities stand in contrast to the poor conditions of the country’s other universities, which are currently shut down in the aftermath of a three-month strike. The frequent power outages and shortages of books and laboratory equipment are nowhere to be seen at Covenant, which “ranks as the country’s top private institution,” with a reputation for academic excellence, strict discipline and state-of-the-art facilities. The campus atmosphere is strict, with religion playing a central role and chapel attendance strongly encouraged. Its strict policies, such as mandatory testing for HIV and pregnancy for incoming students, have, however, come under fire from health and human rights groups. (Source: ***Chronicle of Higher Education***, November 6)

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About Religion Watch

Religion Watch looks beyond the walls of churches, synagogues and denominational officialdom to examine how religion really affects, and is affected by, the wider society.

It is through monitoring new books and approximately 1000 U.S. and foreign periodicals (including newspapers from across the country, as well as newsletters, magazines and scholarly journals, as well as the Internet), and by first-hand reporting, that *Religion Watch* has tracked hundreds of trends on the whole spectrum of contemporary religion.

Published every two months, the twelve page newsletter is unique because it focuses on long-range developments that lead to, and result from, world current events.

Religion Watch does much more than just summarize articles. To provide you with solid background information on the trends presented, we also do research, reporting and analysis on many subjects. A special section in each issue keeps an eye on new books, special issues and articles of publications and new periodicals in religion. We also profile new organizations and prominent figures that are making an impact on the religious scene.

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