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RELIGION WATCH
A NEWSLETTER MONITORING TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY RELIGION

INSIDE

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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Rapid expansion drives Amish diversity

The unprecedented rapid growth and dispersal of Amish communities throughout the U.S. is leading observers to ask whether this American religious tradition can hold together and retain its identity. A report on the growth of new Amish communities in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (April) notes that while there has always been growth of new settlements, the pace of such establishments has sharply accelerated in the period 1990–2009. Over half of all surviving Amish communities today are less than two decades old. Authors Joseph Donnermeyer and Elizabeth Cooksey add that even after one accounts for the 14 settlements that were already extinct by the end of the 1990s, this "remarkable rate" means that one new settlement was founded approximately every three weeks during this period. Although the pace slowed in 2009 (probably due to the poor state of the economy), another nine settlements will be founded in 2010, including as many as five new communities in New York alone. The spread of settlements to New York and other new areas such as Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois marks the new settlements, although there is also sharp growth in new settlements in already established areas of Ohio.

Donnermeyer and Cooksey find that some difficulty has been experienced in expanding beyond the Midwest, New York and Pennsylvania. Generally, it is the proximity of other Amish communities that seems to be associated with the survival of the newly founded settlements. This pattern highlights the importance of assistance from and solidarity with other Amish communities and the network of extended family in ensuring these settlements' survival. The researchers find a combination of "push and pull" factors behind the creation of new settlements, such as crowding (due to the high fertility rate of Amish) and the lure of less expensive farmland. But they note that the dispersal of Amish communities beyond their heartland inevitably weakens the ties that bind Amish communities together. "The growing number of settlements means that each community must meet the challenges of living in places with differing physical climates, regional variations … and a bewildering array of regulations and laws." The resulting differences can lead communities to conclude that they are no longer in fellowship with one another and "will inevitably lead to increased differentiation in all aspects of Amish society and culture."

In their new book, *An Amish Paradox* (Johns Hopkins University Press, $30), Charles E. Hurst and David McConnell focus on the country's largest Amish settlement in Holmes County, Ohio, but they deliver a more positive prognosis of the religion's cohesiveness and survival in North America as a whole. The authors challenge the view that the growing diversity and modernization found in many Amish communities are weakening their religious commitment. They note that in Holmes County, Amish have adopted a wide range of innovations—from working in non-agricultural areas (including manufacturing and business) to using computers and modern means of travel.

Schisms have long formed over the varying Amish adaptations to the modern world, but Hurst and McConnell argue that such involvement and the resulting organizational divisions have not greatly

weakened cohesion among these believers. They have developed the structures and events/activities—mutual work projects, mission activities, weddings—that bring the wider community together. Even the new interaction with the non-Amish brought about by greater modernization is a two-way street. While such ties may encourage more individualism among the Amish, it is also the case that these believers may influence these fields, for instance, health centers adding "birthing centers" to accommodate Amish midwivery, public schools adding annexes for Amish students, and the Amish values of thrift and minimizing waste being carried into business settings.

(*Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526)

Megachurches, American missions and the loss of altruism

As in other areas of American church life, the rise of megachurches is challenging older patterns of world missions and, in the process, raising questions about which party—the megachurch or the mission field—is benefitting from these new changes. In the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (April), Robert Priest, Douglas Wilson and Adelle Johnson present findings from a survey they conducted among 405 U.S. megachurches on missions and missionary involvement, the first study of its kind. The authors note that about 10 percent of these churches' annual expenditures goes to ministries outside of the U.S., with financial support for career—or full-time—missionaries now competing against newer priorities. In fact, world missions was one of the few areas of congregational life that has not received increase support in these megachurches. "Such a congregational softening of support for full-time missionaries is possibly one factor in the recent decline in the total number of Protestant full-time missionaries from the United States," they add.

The support for short-term missions, usually comprising youth groups that visit foreign countries for more than two days, is seen as the cutting edge in missions among megachurches, as for other congregations. Fully 94 percent of megachurch high school youth programs organize short-term mission trips abroad for their youth, with 78 percent doing so one or more times a year. The authors estimate that 32 percent of the annual expenditures directed abroad to short-term missions—a figure that is close to non-megachurch missions spending. The article finds that megachurch short-term mission trips are largely (82 percent) going to countries that are considered "new centers of global Christianity" (for instance, Guatemala, Uganda and Kenya) rather than areas where there are few Christians (six percent). The researchers write that "megachurch [short-term mission activity] is largely a paradigm of partnership, connecting Christians in resource-rich regions of the world with Christians in regions of poverty in joint projects of witness and service." This approach may conflict with the mission priorities of megachurches themselves, since they list "missions to the unreached" and "evangelizing the Muslim world" as key goals.

> **"Church-to-church partnerships bypass mission agencies."**

A related area of megachurch mission involvement is more formal church-to-church partnerships, which effectively bypass mission agencies. These partnerships are supervised or monitored by highly mobile megachurch leaders, often linked through short-term mission trips, and "carried out as an extension of the U.S. megachurch and its mission for ministry," thus moving the locus of decision-making and power "away from the field to the North American congregation." The authors conclude that the altruistic goals of mission giving are being diminished under the megachurch's dual goals of meeting the needs of the givers and the sending church, and serving needs abroad. Any needs that the congregation is unable to fulfill (such as Bible translation), are "unlikely now to receive strong support."

(*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 490 Prospect St., New Haven, CT 06511)

Charismatic leaders forecast secular, challenging decade ahead

When *Charisma* magazine (May) recently asked 20 charismatic Christian leaders about their "vision" of life for the church for the next 10 years, there was a marked lack of optimism about the position of evangelical Christianity in America, although there was less negativity about the future of non-Western societies. No one ruled out revival breaking out, but about half of the leaders surveyed foresee secularization and a shrinking public role for evangelicals and charismatics in the U.S. by 2020. For instance, Larry Stockstill of the Bethany World Prayer Center said that the "darkened minds of people will see the church as their enemy and focus on eliminating us as their primary threat to their new morality and Christ-less religion," at least until a new season of "spiritual healing" is restored to the country. Jack Hayford of the Foursquare Church said that the "next 10 years will bring increasing persecution upon believers in the Western world …. The spirit of the anti-Christ is increasing its intensity. The heat will not only increase against institutional Christianity, but any believer who lives 'out of the closet'…." George McKinney of the Church of God in Christ predicts that by 2020, "persecution and the secularization of society will have separated the true believers from shallow lukewarm church members."

C. Peter Wagner was alone in predicting "significant progress" in the reformation of society. But those from ethnic churches and organizations and from non-Western countries also had a more self-confident take on the near future. Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference forecast that Latino Christians both in the U.S. and abroad "stand both prophetically and culturally poised to lead a righteousness and justice movement while simultaneously serving as a firewall against spiritual apathy, moral relativism and cultural decay." Joseph D'Souza of the Dalit Freedom Network predicted that the "Christian mission will be more proactive rather than reactive as the church flourishes in the nations of the south." The church in India in particular "will throw off its minority complex and be a key part of the population working for the nation's good." Even as Pat Robertson saw Christians as struggling against secularism, multiculturalism and militant Islam in Europe and America, he envisioned revival as more likely appearing in the Middle East.

(*Charisma*, 600 Rhinehart Rd., Lake Mary, FL 32746)

Evangelical innovations drive churches' hi-tech ministries

As with broadcasting and print media, evangelical Christians have been among the religious groups most strongly investing in the new media. *Charisma* magazine (May) highlights some of these innovations, noting how evangelical technological entrepreneurship parallels and in some cases influences new media developments. These include evangelism efforts, such as LifeChurch.tv (the largest Internet-based church with 13 physical campuses in the U.S. and 60,000 online participants) and the France-based Jesus.net, which provides a map on its website showing where the latest conversions have occurred. Another leading area of development is digital Bibles, such as YouVersion.com, which can be downloaded on mobile devices, and Glo Bible—interactive scriptures that could "fill church pews with iPads instead of Bibles," writes Troy Anderson.

With the growing trend of churches using text messaging, services such as Jarbyco.com allow worshippers to interact with their leaders through church websites. Similar to Twitter, Jarbyco.com allows congregants to ask questions of the pastor, and church leaders to send text messages to their members. Anderson reports that new digital sound technology, known only as "No. 17," transforms music and voice recordings into "real-life acoustical events." Inventor Barry Goldfarb claims that God gave him a special vision to create a sound

system that will transform churches and ministries. "When a pastor speaks, it will sound to everyone like he's talking right in front of them, but quietly," said Goldfarb. Another innovation, VAV Media, was started by a Christian leader and inventor, Helen Hwang, and helps churches and ministries create their own mini-Internet TV stations that incorporate the interactivity of Twitter and Facebook.

Yoga upstarts cutting costs and consumerism

While "yoga and the spiritual ideals for which it stands, have become the ultimate commodity," costing practitioners increasing sums of money, there is a backlash against the big business aspect of the practice, reports the *New York Times* (April 25). While the numbers practicing yoga may actually be decreasing, according to a survey commissioned by Yoga Journal (from 16.5 million practitioners in 2004 to 15.8 million in 2008), the "actual spending on yoga classes and products had almost doubled in the same period (from $2.95 billion to 5.7 billion)," reports Mary Billard.

The high cost of cultivating a yoga practice as well as the celebrity status of certain yoga teachers has led to a "brewing resistance to the expense, the cult of personality, the membership fees." At the forefront of this movement is Yoga to the People, a New York-based center that started in 2006. The center runs on a contribution-only, pay-what-you-can basis, with its manifesto eschewing correct clothes, "proper payments … [and offering] no right answers." Without any "glorified yogis" or star teachers, the students at the center do not know before signing up for a class who will be instructing them. There is no overarching spiritual message or chanting at the center. The center is considering expanding to other parts of the U.S., and other yoga groups are now taking a similar approach, reports Billard.

Movement to elevate Virgin Mary brings new challenge to Catholicism

A popular movement is growing within Catholicism that is pressing for a new papal doctrine that further elevates the role of the Virgin Mary in the church and it is beginning to find a measure of official acceptance, reports *Ecumenical Trends* newsletter (May). The movement to introduce a new Catholic teaching that would designate Mary as "co-mediatrix" and "co-redemptrix" with Christ has been active for several years. But a petition that has drawn over seven million names and more than 800 cardinals and bishops have joined their voices to convince the pope to declare an "infallible definition of Mary's special maternal role in the salvation of humanity."

> **"The movement wants to introduce a new Catholic teaching that would designate Mary as "co-mediatrix" and "co-redemptrix" with Christ."**

In late March an international group of bishops and theologians gathered at the Vatican to discuss "whether now is the appropriate time for a fifth solemn definition or 'dogma' to be pronounced regarding the Virgin Mary," according to a release on the Zenit news agency website, which has prominently featured this movement. Theologian Adam A.J. DeVille writes that if this movement succeeds in its cause, it could effectively halt the progress that has been made in church unity talks with the Eastern Orthodox churches.

(*Ecumenical Trends*, P.O. Box 333, Garrison, NY 10524-0333)

Canadian secularization—not necessarily so

Although Canadian church membership and attendance have rebounded in the last two decades, the media continue to portray Canada's religious situation as one of steady decline and secularization, writes sociologist Reginald Bibby in the journal *Implicit Religion* (#3, 2009). Bibby notes that an earlier period of steep declines in religious involvement (with the average church attendance declining from 60 percent in 1945 to 32 percent in 1995) ended around the turn of the century, with either a leveling off or increases among some groups. Regular attendance among Canadian teenagers had dropped to 18 percent in 1992, but rebounded to 22 percent by the new millennium. Protestant attendance, led by evangelicals, is up, and Catholic attendance outside Quebec has stabilized. There has been a jump among people saying they have no religion, but this trend is mainly among the young, and Bibby finds that many (about two in three) tend to "re-identify" with their parents' religion within 10 years.

Bibby also finds that belief in God has remained at about 80 percent since the 1950s, yet the major Canadian and international media report that secularism and even atheism are growing across Canada and give a good deal of coverage to the "new atheist" books. For example, in 2008, the *Canadian Press* released a poll saying that fewer than three-quarters of Canadians believe in God. Yet by allowing more choices in designating terms for God (such as "Supreme Power") and allowing for some ambivalence in answers (more than a definite "yes" or "no"), Bibby found that the figure for those believing in God increases by as much as 15 percentage points. Bibby argues that Canadian elite leaders were educated into a European perspective that views religion as being inevitably eclipsed by secularization. He adds that the secularization outlook may have a self-fulfilling effect, contributing to "the creation of environments that made ministry more difficult."

(*Implicit Religion*, Equinox Publishing Ltd., 1 Chelsea Manor Studios, Flood St., London SW3 5SR, UK)

Christian Science allows conventional medicine, enhances alternative healing self-image

Christian Science is showing a "new tolerance" for mainstream medicine, even as it continues on a path of adapting its practices and teachings to the alternative health milieu. The independent Christian Science newsletter *The Banner* (Spring) notes that the New York Times recently reported that for more than a year, Christian Science leaders have been encouraging members to seek a physician if they deem it necessary—an option traditionally discouraged. The church has also started a campaign to redefine their practices as a form of health care that the public might consider as a supplement, such as homeopathy and biofeedback, rather than a substitute for conventional treatment. The Times article added that in recent years the church has been lobbying to convince lawmakers that its approach is an alternative treatment that should be covered by insurance companies and included in healthcare legislation. The newsletter comments that the changes in the church have been enforced by the leadership to the extent that dissenters are disciplined and even excommunicated for publicly criticizing these policies.

(*The Banner*, 2040 Hazel Ave., Zanesville, OH 43701-2222)

CURRENT RESEARCH

▸ **American denominations are experiencing a "clergy glut" after a decade-long shortage of clergy in U.S. pulpits.** The economic decline is causing a situation in many churches where there are two ministers for every vacant pulpit. In the Presbyterian Church (USA) there are 532 vacancies for 2,271 ministers seeking positions. The United Methodist Church, Assemblies of God, Church of the Nazarene and other Protestant denominations also report significant surpluses. In the 1950s, there was roughly the same amount of clergy as there were

congregations; now there are almost two ministers for every church, according to the latest *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* (607,944 clergy and 338,713 congregations). Meanwhile, cash-strapped members of congregations, many of which are aging and in decline, are giving less to their churches, resulting in staff cuts. Older clergy, who may have seen their retirement savings dwindle, are delaying retirement, which provides fewer openings for young clergy. Large churches are cutting vacant positions or laying off associate pastors, while smaller churches are moving some of their full-time clergy to part-time hours.

▸ **Hispanic Americans are becoming more secularized than expected, according to a new analysis.** The study, by the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture, found that Latinos who have left the Catholic Church since the 1990s have not gravitated toward Protestantism, as many had expected, but rather shifted toward non-affiliation. As with the general U.S. population, Hispanics became less identified with Christianity between 1990 and 2008, dropping from 91 percent to 82 percent, according to a report in *America* magazine (April 5). Those saying they identified with no faith increased from six percent in 1990 to 12 percent in 2008. Latinos comprised 32 percent of all U.S. Catholics in 2008, compared with 20 percent in 1990. Yet 60 percent of Latinos said they were Catholic in 2008, compared with 66 percent in 1990.

(*America*, 106 56th St., New York, NY 10019)

▸ **A study of American Jewish teenagers shows significantly more support for syncretism, or the mixing of religious teachings and practices, than teens of other faiths.** The study, published in the *Review of Religious Research* (March) and conducted by Phillip Schwadel, analyzed the survey data from the National Study of Youth and Religion. Schwadel found that living in an interfaith family most highly correlated with holding syncretistic views. All of the Jewish teens living in interfaith households said it was okay to practice other faiths, while less than 70 percent of those living in Jewish households held such views. Personal religiosity also affected the rate of syncretism.

> **“Living in an interfaith family most highly correlated with holding syncretistic views.”**

Eighty percent of Jewish teens who said that religious faith is not important, not very important or only somewhat important to daily life supported syncretistic views, compared to 55 percent of Jewish teens who said their religion was very or extremely important to daily life. Interaction with fellow Jews also tended to decrease the level of support for syncretism. Nevertheless, even controlling for the above factors, American Jewish youth are more syncretistic than other teens, suggesting that it may be the effect of pluralism on Jews as a minority group among a Christian majority that may play a part in this tendency.

(*Review of Religious Research*, 618 SW 2nd Ave., Galva, IL 61434-1912)

▸ **Ireland’s young adults show considerable religious individualism and distance from the institutional Catholic Church, yet most demonstrate little interest in spiritual alternatives and even some attachment to some forms of Catholic culture, according to a study in the journal *Social Compass* (March).** Karen Andersen analyzes the Irish data of the 2006 survey “Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe” and finds a growing gap between young and older Catholics on beliefs and practice, confirming previous studies on this trend. Young Irish Catholics are less likely than older Catholics to follow church teachings and only half consider themselves to be spiritual. Yet these young adults have not replaced Catholicism with alternative spiritual beliefs or practices, such as New Age or the occult. They were more likely to believe in the power of Catholic objects (crucifixes, icons) than in non-Catholic rituals and practices. The young adults strongly supported the importance of Catholic education for children (94.2 percent). Andersen concludes that Irish young adults have retained a cultural attachment to Catholicism, although that may not be enough to prevent further secularization.

(*Social Compass*, Place Montesquieu 1/Boîte 13, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)

New openness to women's ordination among Eastern Orthodox theologians

Although Eastern Orthodox churches remain opposed to the ordination of women priests, there is a growing openness among theologians to this possibility, even if they are not likely to become activists on this issue, writes Sarah Hinlicky Wilson in the journal *Pro Ecclesia* (Spring). As might be expected, women are in the forefront of the effort to rethink female ordination in Orthodox churches, including a number of American Orthodox connected to the journal *St. Nina's Quarterly*, as well as such scholars as Eva Catafygiotu Topping, Susan Ashbrook Harvey and Kalliope Bourdara. Many see the work of French Orthodox theologian Elisabeth Behr-Siegel (1907–2005) as being the standard reference for the argument affirming women in the priesthood.

What is more unexpected is that "several male Orthodox theologians have gradually moved toward Behr-Siegel's position," Wilson writes. Such prominent Orthodox theologians as Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Kallistos Ware, Olivier Clement and John Zizioulas have gone on record stating that there are no compelling reasons against the ordination of women. Wilson notes that there are still many opponents of women's ordination in Orthodox circles, "likely the majority within the churches and certainly a vocal contingent in publication. The articles range from popular diatribes to serious theological scholarship. What is chiefly striking about them, though, is how much the substance of the opposition has changed." She adds that the older views that women are incompetent or physically unfit (due to "impurity" from menstrual cycles) have been replaced by concerns about the nature of tradition and the priesthood and how it relates to personhood and gender (for instance, the teaching that the priest is the icon or representation of Christ).

(*Pro Ecclesia*, 15200 NBN Way, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214)

Romanian Orthodox Church seeks to forge new links with the Romanian diaspora

As the Romanian Orthodox Church celebrates the 125th anniversary of its autocephaly and the 85th anniversary of its elevation to the rank of a Patriarchate, a February statement from the Church's episcopate has elicited critical comments in Orthodox circles in the West, since it raises the complex issues of the future shape of Orthodox Churches outside their original territories as well as of the link between a "Mother Church" and its national diaspora. Based on a decision of the pan-Orthodox, preconciliar conference that took place in Chambesy (Switzerland) in June 2009, according to which each national Church is entitled to take care of its own diaspora, the Romanian episcopate has called ethnic Romanians around the world to place themselves under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Church, and not to belong to other, non-Romanian Orthodox jurisdictions. Such an arrangement was common during the communist period, since a number of believers abroad wanted to avoid any possible indirect control by an atheist government through church representatives abroad, and then sought ecclesiastical asylum in different jurisdictions.

The Paris-based Orthodox Press Service (*SOP,* April) reports that the appeal targets mainly the Romanian ethnic diocese of some 80 parishes that is part of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), while 40 parishes remain under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Patriarchate. There has been an ongoing discussion and a proposal in recent years to establish a self-governing Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas. The appeal has been criticized by Orthodox theologians who feel it represents a trend to create "universal national Churches," instead of working toward the establishment of Orthodox Churches on a territorial rather than national basis, particularly in countries where an Orthodox presence has been a modern development without a previous presence of national Churches.

In response to the "appeal for Romanian unity and dignity," 28 Orthodox priests and laypeople in Western Europe have published a "call for the dignity and unity of

the Orthodox Church." While understanding the pastoral concern for a dispersed flock, they deplore the ecclesiogical approach according to which any Romanian abroad should prefer direct contact with the Romanian Orthodox Church instead of belonging in some cases to multi-ethnic communities. The issue raised by the Romanian appeal is not confined to that specific church, but illustrates tensions across all Orthodox jurisdictions between the national and universal components of the Orthodox Church. Far from having lessened such problems, the post-communist context in Eastern Europe has tended to give them a new impetus. On the other hand, the reality on the ground is more complex as new generations who descended from Orthodox immigrants have accommodated themselves to their new countries and have developed an aspiration to create self-governing bodies on a non-ethnic basis, such as the OCA.

(*Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, 14 rue Victor Hugo, 92400 Courbevoie, France; http://www.orthodoxpress.com; http://www.roeanews.info)

Cities key site of deprivatizing religion in Europe?

The continuing debate over public religion and what has been called "post-secularity" in Europe and its relation to cities is gaining the attention of urban planners and scholars, according to University of Groningen geographer Justin Beaumont. The growth of Islam and other immigrant religions, the rise of faith-based organizations partnering with welfare systems, and such issues as globalization and multiculturalism have been factors in "deprivatizing" religion for those concerned with urban regeneration. Beaumont, who presented his paper at a seminar at Columbia University in late April, noted that the "shift toward not only deploying but actively resourcing faith-based engagement in civil society, public policy, and public service delivery … is one of the most documented academic and policy areas within the past five years …. A key debate has therefore emerged in Europe and elsewhere with regard to the role of religion in the post-secular city as to whether religion has mutated from being a vanguard of social reform into uncritical provider of cheaper public services to hard to reach social groups within a 'contract' culture."

Beaumont adds that the debate over the religious dimensions of multiculturalism, such as the role of Sharia law and the wearing of Islamic scarves; the new attention given to "global cities" as centers of "religio-secular" change; and the revival of language about virtue in public and urban life are behind much of the talk about "post-secularism." Urban planners are now considering the "idea of the sacred as applied to the development of urban space and community development," challenging the "modernist planning tradition, with its reliance on rational, scientific, technocratic … models of planning …." A new theme in urban geography is interested in asking moral questions (such as "what makes a good city?"), shifting the focus from purely economic and location issues. "Once the focus of this debate switches into the ethical domain, then clearly theologians and faith-based practitioners have much to contribute," Beaumont says.

Bhutan struggles to keep Buddhist values alive—an analysis

The Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan, situated in the eastern Himalayas neighboring India and China, has historically shielded its religion by its policy of isolation. But as this nation gradually opened up to the outside world, beginning in the 1970s, it began to lose its traditional Buddhist values. Today, the distortion of its ancient culture has reached alarming proportions. "With rising indicators of youth-related crime, such as violence, drug abuse and prostitution, one question on every Bhutanese mind today is: are our youth getting out of control?" reports the state-run *Kuensel Newspaper* (April 14).

Bhutan allowed the first foreign tourists only in the 1970s, and television was introduced as late as the 1990s. Thus a culture that was foreign to most citizens intruded on the country. But what was initially unfamiliar soon merged with the local culture, as reflected in the emergence of discos and pubs in cities. In 2008, Bhutan was declared a constitutional monarchy and had its first

parliamentary elections. The Constitution, which allows other religions, sees Buddhism as the spiritual heritage of Bhutan. But preserving that heritage in a secular, democratic set-up seems even more difficult. The government has merely succeeded in enforcing codes related to visible aspects of culture—such as the use of national dress and language and uniform architecture—while the values behind the nation's distinct culture continue to be eroded by the day.—*By Vishal Arora, a New Delhi, India-based writer who recently returned from a visit to Bhutan*

FINDINGS/FOOTNOTES

■ The new password for access to the RW archives, at: www.religionwatch.com, is: **Ramparts.**

■ ***Nova Religio***, a journal of new religious movements, devotes its May issue to new religious groups in Israel and how these groups have catered to the needs of personal fulfillment as Zionism has weakened its hold on Israelis. The issue looks at both Jewish movements and those promoting foreign and global religious and spiritual alternatives, although the articles find that those promoting the messages of "foreign deities" do not do as well as more indigenous teachings. Yaakov Ariel categorizes the different movements active in Israel into those seeking to retrieve tradition, such as the new kinds of Hasidic Jewish movements; those stressing Jewish innovation, such as the feminist spirituality groups; those stressing mysticism and the supernatural, as found in Sephardic and Mizrahi (Jews from Asia and Africa) traditions; and those imported from outside, such as Transcendental Meditation and American-based Messianic Judaism. In creating a more open market of religious, spiritual and communal choices, Ariel argues that these groups have "helped Westernize, Americanize and democratize Israeli society."

Joanna Steinhardt's article on the "neo-Hasids" does an interesting job of showing how the young people in this movement embrace a mixture of New Age, countercultural mysticism with Judaism and new versions of nationalism and Zionism. The neo-Hasids even cross over to groups of young settler Israelis living in the West Bank who have adopted a "hippy," communal lifestyle. Other articles include studies of the human potential group Landmark and Buddhism in Israel. Even the more secular Israelis tend to maintain their Jewish identities in their involvement with these groups, for instance, eschewing Buddhist religious elements and labels.

For more information on this issue, write: *Nova Religio*, University of California Press, 2000 Center St., Suite 303. Berkeley, CA 94704-1223.

■ James Davison Hunter's new book, ***To Change the World*** (Oxford University Press, $27.95), can be seen in some ways as a sequel to his 1991 book, *Culture Wars*, which chronicled the divisions and battle between liberals and secularists and orthodox Christians and other believers on such issues as abortion and gay rights. But in his new work, Hunter is not so much the fair referee between these warring parties, as he was in the earlier book, as much as a critical sociologist and concerned Christian who argues that the ideological battle and strategies have done more harm than good to Christianity. The message shouted throughout the book's pages is that the Christian attempt to transform American society through politics has failed; Hunter criticizes new Christian right leaders, such as James Dobson and Charles Colson, as well as religious left figures, such as Jim Wallis, for pursuing an impossible strategy.

Even though the Christian right as still alive and reconstituting itself through new organizations such as Legacy and Reclaiming the 7 Mountains of Culture, Hunter writes that the movement peaked in 2004. Even at its peak, the Christian right managed to "generate greater hostility toward the Christian faith than ever before in the nation's history—more anticlericalism among ordinary Americans and more disaffection among a younger generation of theologically conservative believers." The other political options, such as the Christian left, are likewise unlikely to achieve their goals of societal transformation because they misunderstand the nature of cultural change in pluralistic and modern societies. Efforts to change a culture through law, policy and political mobilization get caught up in power struggles that turn negative and resentful when one side wins and the other side loses. The idea that if many Christians can apply a biblical worldview to various institutions and spheres of life or convert enough people they can "conquer the culture" also ignores the fact that cultural change rarely takes place at a popular or grassroots level.

Hunter writes that cultural change

occurs through a "dense network of elites operating in common purpose within institutions at the high-prestige centers of cultural production." Unlike in earlier periods, Christianity in the U.S. and the modern West is a "weak culture" that is institutionally divided and draws most people outside of the elite spheres of influence, such as politics, entertainment and academia. The main way Christians can influence society is through what he calls "faithful presence," where they seek to serve the common good in their various vocations.

■ ***Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think*** (Oxford University Press, $27.95), by Elaine Howard Ecklund, is concerned with the increasingly acrimonious debates between the scientific and religious communities on a host of issues—from biotechnology to evolution. But in reporting how there is a good deal of miscommunication and misunderstanding on both sides of these conflicts, Ecklund also provides valuable accounts of interviews with 275 scientists (and results from a briefer online survey of a wide range of disciplines). She classifies the scientists into three categories: atheist/agnostic scientists (30 percent, half of whom view science and religion in inevitable conflict ; those claiming a religion (50 percent); and those taking an unconventional and individualized spiritual approach (20 percent). Interestingly, Ecklund finds that the younger scientists operate with less of a conflict model between science and religion and are more likely to be religious.

The book is particularly interesting in explaining how scientists may misunderstand religion. Ecklund argues that many scientists were raised in either secular or religiously nominal households and thus have a "restricted code" of speech on religion and limited interaction with believers, resulting in "shorthand stereotypes" that are not conducive to dialogue. The "spiritual entrepreneurs" (who could be agnostic and atheists as well as theists) in Ecklund's third category are viewed as important for bridging the science/religion gap, since they see their spirituality as flowing into their science, yet avoid the usual politicized science–religion conflicts.

■ Eric Kaufmann's new book, ***Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?*** (Profile Books, http://www.profilebooks.com), takes the familiar topic of fundamentalism and, through a demographic lens, finds some novel contours and dimensions to this phenomenon. One may take issue with Kauffman's broad-brush labeling of groups as different as the Amish, Orthodox Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, extremist Muslims and evangelicals as "fundamentalist," but it serves as his catch-all phrase for religious groups that maintain sharp boundaries with secular society while expanding their share of the population in a world where their non-religious counterparts have too few children to replace themselves.

The University of London demographer marshals reams of data to argue that birth rates may have had a minor role in the growth of religions in the past (which expanded more by conversions), but today this factor becomes more central. This is partly because conservative religions are increasingly taking up pronatalism, as they actively encourage their members to have large families. This tendency may have started with the ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel and the Amish, but Kaufmann sees it spreading to all conservative faiths, especially Protestants (for example, the "quiverfull" movement in the U.S.) and Islamist groups. But it is Kaufmann's demographic forecasts of the religious future that will likely be the most controversial and contested part of his book. On the one hand, Kaufmann sees secularization advancing in Europe and in the U.S. in the near future; on the other, he sees the demographic revolution planted by these religious group today (even as their birth rates may fall or stabilize eventually) as reversing the secular trend by 2040.

In the U.S., this means that pro-life sentiment will have significant influence; in Europe, a conservative Christian remnant may eventually link up with increasingly powerful Islam (representing about 5–10 percent of an otherwise declining population) to reinject religious values into the EU; while in Israel and much of the Jewish diaspora (where the secular–religious fertility gap is the widest), Orthodoxy will triumph, reshaping Middle Eastern and Israeli politics. The long-term projections for secularism that Kaufmann provides are provocative: in Austria, for example, the non-religious will decline to 19 percent of the population by 2100. As a self-confessed secularist, Kaufmann often seems to want to alarm his fellow non-believers and moderates into action, but as a demographer he concludes that "without an ideology to inspire social cohesion, fundamentalism cannot be stopped. The religious shall inherit the earth."

■ In ***Marketplace of the Gods*** (Oxford University Press, $29.95), Larry Witham introduces readers to the economic approach to the study of religion by reporting on a wealth of historical and contemporary research and sources. What is called the "religious economy" approach

explains religious change through economic theories of competition, monopoly and rational choice in general. Witham does an interesting job of fleshing out these ideas whether in accounting for the rise of Buddhist sects or focusing on how one colonial congregation in Connecticut functioned as a "monopoly firm."

Other chapters cover the role of the family household in the "production" of religion and how this may play out in a person's lifecycle; the secularization debate; and how risks, costs and payoffs relate to faith. Witham's account of the history behind religious economy theories, describing the careers and work of Rodney Stark, Roger Finke and Laurence Iannaccone, is particularly interesting, providing a lesson on the role of intellectual networks in the circulation of new ideas and theories. Witham is obviously an admirer of religious economy theories, but he covers critical views in a fair manner.

■ In several books and articles, economist Robert Nelson has pursued the unconventional idea that religious and theological understandings undergird, if not define, economic and environmental movements and schools of thought. In his new book, ***The New Holy Wars*** (Penn State University Press, $39.95), Nelson brings together his critique of economics and environmentalism to argue that the major societal conflict is taking place between these secular (and sometimes not so secular) religions and their messages of earthly salvation. In examining the writings of a wide range of economists, Nelson finds that they promote a message "which tells us that economic progress is the correct route to the salvation of the world .... It is an ideology—a religion—of tight social control by a new priesthood of experts." The rise of environmentalism has overshadowed economic religion as the latter's shortcomings in delivering progress have become more pronounced (the current economic crisis being one example).

Nelson defines environmental religion as a form of "Calvinism minus God," as it identifies nature with ultimate truth and beauty, adopts a non-hierarchical approach to authority and manifests a distrust of human achievement (seeing humanity as polluters of nature). Nelson argues that the environmentalist cause of preserving and restoring "undisturbed" nature and biodiversity is a religious construction—even if many environmentalists don't acknowledge a creator—since such reverence is not warranted by scientific and Darwinian readings of nature. Nelson concludes by posing intriguing church–state questions: how can the state support environmentalist agendas if equally religious Christian creationist accounts are restricted from public life?

■ As its title hints, the new book ***Preserving Ethnicity Through Religion in America*** (NYU Press, $25) seeks to explain the various ways religious belonging influences immigrant and second generation Korean- and Indian-Americans in maintaining their ethnic identities. The book, based on author Pyong Gap Min's exhaustive study of Korean Protestant and Indian communities in the New York area, shows how these ethnic groups move in two different directions regarding religion and ethnicity: the Koreans tend to separate ethnicity and religion as they integrate into society, increasingly stressing the latter, while the Indians maintain their ethnicity through their Hinduism, although with looser religious attachments in the second generation.

While the Korean Protestants were best able to transmit their faith to the next generation, the Hindus tended to pass on both their ethnic and religious traditions through their home-based rituals and traditions. Min forecasts that younger Korean Protestants will tend toward pan-Asian Christian or white Christian identities. But the "embrace of Hinduism in any form enhances [Indians'] ethnic identity, as the majority of them identify first as Indian," he concludes.

■ ***Secularization and the World Religions*** (Liverpool University Press, $34.95), edited by Hans Joas and Klaus Weigant, offers a broad treatment of the religious situation around the world and how these developments relate to secularization, broadly understood. There is no unifying theory among the contributors, with most seeing secularization as shaped by various national and historical contexts rather than as a monolithic or universal process. In the introduction, Joas notes the difficulty of even defining secularization outside of the Western Christian context, adding that in Asia the term more often means the separation between the world of everyday experience and the divine world accessible through faith. These various understandings of secularization are also evident in the first half of the book, where the contributors focus on specific faith traditions and societal spheres, such as the law and science.

The second half of the book takes a regional perspective and likewise shows the different models of secularization. Jose Casanova argues that by looking at its parts rather than at Europe as a whole, it is not evident that modernization necessarily correlates with secularity. For instance, both Poland and the Czech

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Republic have similar levels of modernization, but show radically different rates of belief and practice. It is in examining and categorizing the various European countries by such factors as religious tradition and church–state processes and histories that better explanations can be given for the varying rates of secularization, he adds. In an overview of Africa and Latin America, David Martin argues that both continents (although especially the latter) are following the pluralist model of the U.S. more than the European secularized model.

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