

RELIGION WATCH

A Newsletter Monitoring Trends In Contemporary Religion

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*1996 RELIGION--
A LOT OF
SPLASHES,
A FEW WAVES*

Despite a national election and several publicized denominational conventions, 1996 did not yield many momentous religious events, at least at first glance. But interwoven with less sensational headlines were religious developments of more importance. The trends below are not cited in order of importance, and issues of RELIGION WATCH and other publications that have reported on these developments are noted in parentheses.

1) The burning of black churches throughout much of the American South first appeared to concern civil rights and racial prejudice more than religion. But the issue quickly showed the conflict on social still lurking among American churches. The National Council of Churches and the Christian Coalition rallied churches to support the rebuilding of the black congregations. The NCC also sought to focus attention on far right racism as the cause of the problem. At the same time, critics asserted that half of all the churches burned since 1995 were white churches, and only about half the cases involving burned black churches could be traced to racist motivations. Such conservative watchdog groups as the Institute for Religion and Democracy charged that the NCC and other groups were using the burning to revive their declining social justice programs. (Christian Century magazine, December 18-25)

2) While there is some debate about the impact of the religious right on the presidential election, it is clear to most observers that religious conservatives suffered losses on the national and state levels. The religious right now seems divided between the Christian Coalition, which has a broad social agenda, and such religious right leaders as Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, who focuses more on such moral issues as abortion and gay rights. There is a small segment of conservative Christians, such as Randall Terry and those leaning toward Christian Reconstructionism, who are opting out of the two party system to embrace the ultra-conservative U.S. Taxpayer's Party. There is also a growing concern among religious conservatives over the courts promoting secularism, with some even entertaining the possibility of committing civil disobedience over court decisions. (November, December, January '97 RW)

3) The official enactment of welfare reform by President Bill Clinton brought condemnations in varying degrees from mainline Protestant, Jewish and Catholic groups and mild applause from conservative religionists (since it was a Democratic president legislating such reforms). Opponents argue that churches and non-profit organizations can't fill the gap left by the cuts in welfare, often citing surveys to back up their case.

Conservatives more often rely on American history to show that churches and other religious organizations have fulfilled such a social role in the past. But all congregations, denominations, and religious charitable organizations may have to rethink their ministries to respond to these new government policies. (March RW)

4) The impact of the Internet on American religion last year was newsworthy enough for Time magazine to devote a cover story to the subject. While religion on the Internet has already become an old story, the popularization of the Worldwide Web during last year intensified the religious presence on the Internet. This trend is especially evident in congregations now creating their own homepages on the web. While the Internet will not be a substitute for religious communities, it will serve as an important introduction to religious life and a vital part of religious education. (Time, December 13, January '96, June RW)

5) 1996 also was the last year of full-time evangelism for Billy Graham and the appointment of his son, Franklin Graham, as heir apparent. The younger Graham's concern to reach baby busters is likely to reshape the mass-crusade style his father helped develop.

6) Eastern Orthodoxy became seriously divided last spring when the Estonian Orthodox Church sought to become independent of the Patriarchate of Moscow and align itself with the other seat of church authority, the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Although the dispute was eventually resolved, the conflict highlighted the growing divisions between Orthodox "mother churches" and those in the Orthodox diaspora, including North American Orthodox, who want greater independence. (April RW)--RW contributing editor Erling Jorstad helped in compiling this review

**CHARISMATIC,
PENTECOSTAL
TRENDS FOR
1997**

While on the subject of trends for 1997, Charisma magazine (January) provides its own brief list of "spiritual trends" among American charismatics for the upcoming year and beyond. Editor Stephen Strang finds such trends as 1) Increasing African American leadership among Pentecostals. Whites are "responding in increasing measure to the anointed leadership of African American men such as T. D. Jakes and Phillip Porter." 2) There is also a new generation of women coming to the forefront in charismatic and Pentecostal churches. [Strang's observation is borne out in the magazine's 2-page directory of charismatic churches around the country. Of the 27 congregations listed in the directory, nine churches are pastored or co-pastored by a woman.] 3) An increasing assimilation of Pentecostals into mainstream evangelicalism. "Today, you could attend many Assembly of God congregations and never know you were in a Pentecostal church," Strang writes. 4) There is a spread of occurrences which are said to be part of a spiritual revival, such as in Pensacola, Florida. Strang writes that "...it looks a lot like the early Pentecostalism--strong preaching against sin, intense worship and services that continue for hours."

5) "Ministries based on glitz, with a mixture of the spiritual and the world, are finding it difficult to survive. At the same time, people are flocking to ministries with deep spirituality..." 6) Christian media organizations are becoming increasingly secular. "Consider, for example, [Christian Broadcasting Network's] decision to spin off the Family Channel as a publicly held company. What began as a 100 percent Christian

satellite-network now has almost no religious programming besides the daily 700 Club." Strang writes that other organizations, such as Thomas Nelson Publishers and Integrity Music, that have chosen to be publicly traded companies find that "Wall Street doesn't care about their Christian mission...stock prices in both companies have taken a beating." At the same time, there is a "new crop of Christian media leaders" making an impact on society. 8) There is a new emphasis on family and marriage among Pentecostal pastors, especially among baby boomers. More of these churches are emphasizing children's ministry. Strang adds that "It has finally dawned on Christians that the divorce rate among believers should be significantly lower than among non-believers." (Charisma, 600 Rinehart Rd., Lake Mary, FL 32746)

**SABBATH
OBSERVANCE
RE-EMERGING
AS MAINLINE
CONCERN?**

There is a growing movement toward more devoted and stricter Sabbath observance among mainline Protestants, according to Baptists Today newspaper (November 28). Around the 1920s, Sabbath observance ceased to be a key issue for Presbyterians and other mainline churches. John Mulder, president of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, says that today such observance is returning to the attention of mainline churches [conservative Presbyterian and Reformed bodies have long maintained Sabbath observance], citing current research on the topic and his own conversations with seminary students. As Americans are "working more and enjoying it less," Mulder says there is a window of opportunity for churches to talk about the spiritual, emotional and physical benefits of observing a day of rest. He adds that such groups as the Lord's Day Alliance, a national interfaith coalition which promotes Sabbath-day observance, "may have a new lease on life in the 21st century." This trend complements the recent calls for the church to refocus on the importance of worship. Mulder stressed that such a promotion of the Sabbath would not seek to enforce its observance into law. (Baptists Today, 403 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite 119, Decatur, GA 30030)

**ACADEMIC
CONFLICTS
IN SBC
SCHOOLS
SUBSIDING**

In the past few months, conflict between several colleges and seminaries affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and their respective boards of governance have come to an end. The Chronicle of Higher Education (December 13) reports that for all practical purposes, the struggles over maintaining local autonomy for freedom of expression, appointment of new faculty and promotion of incumbent teachers, and financial independence have led to the formal departure of several such schools from any formal affiliation with the SBC. Such schools as Ouachita Baptist University and Samford University rewrote their constitutions giving them local autonomy.

The staff at Louisiana College and Baylor and Mercer Universities have agreed to maintain their own governance, at the expense of long-standing ties with the convention. The president of the conservative Criswell College resigned over theological differences with his board. Observers quoted in the article suggest that these actions and decisions effectively put an end to the long-standing, often bitter disputes between the more theologically conservative boards and the more liberally minded faculties. Participants seemed more relieved than happy over the outcomes, looking forward to becoming more involved in the day-to-day teaching missions of their schools.--By Erling Jorstad.

**CATHOLIC
DISSENTING
MOVEMENT
GROWING,
LOCALIZING**

The dissenting movement within the Catholic Church appears to have grown in the U.S., taking on a more local-based expression, according to the National Catholic Reporter (December 6). The liberal Catholic movement, pressing for the ordination of women, a married priesthood, and inclusive language has been spearheaded in the U.S. by the Call to Action, a group which has shown a degree of growth recently. The group has grown by 5,000 members in the last year--totaling 18,000--and attendance at this year's convention in Detroit was up 25 percent over last year. More significantly, is the growth in local chapters of Call To Action. Two years ago there were three regional chapters; last fall there were 15; by November of 1996, the number climbed to 33, with some beginning to hold their own regional conferences. After years of decline and near death, the group was revived in 1990 when it published a call for church reform in the New York Times. More recently, Call to Action attracted national attention and support by Catholic liberals when members were targeted with an excommunication edict last Spring by Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Neb. (National Catholic Reporter, 419281, Kansas City, MO 64141)

**NEOCONSERVATIVES
BATTLING OVER
RELIGION AND
THE LAW**

Neoconservatives are becoming increasingly divided over religious issues and how they relate to politics, according to the New Republic magazine (December 30). The magazine reports that the mostly Jewish neoconservatives have recently become embroiled in a feud with more Catholic-oriented conservatives (who have often also marched under the neoconservative banner) over such issues as the moral law and its relation to the American legal system. The conflict came into the open last November, when First Things, the neoconservative magazine on religious affairs, published a symposium which raised the issue of whether the present government, especially the judiciary could be considered illegitimate in the light of recent decisions on euthanasia, abortion and homosexuality that are said to be in defiance of the moral and natural law [see November RW].

The symposium drew protests and criticisms in the conservative movement and even from the First Thing's editorial board, with such neoconservative leaders as Gertrude Himmelfarb and sociologist Peter Berger resigning. Jacob Heilbrunn writes that the conflict is really over the different understandings of America's origins. Neoconservatives have generally taken a secular approach, saying that the rights of Americans are embodied in the Declaration of Independence rather than on any religious belief or idea, while the "theocons" hold that the U.S. is governed by natural law and that if man's law clashes with God's universal law, the former should be resisted. Driving the theocons is a revival of Thomism, the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas which teaches natural law, as well as a growing alliance between conservative Catholic thinkers and many evangelicals. While both the neoconservatives and the theocons are small in number, their think tanks and writers have had wide influence. Heilbrunn writes that "As the neocons provided the intellectual muscle for Reagan conservatism, so now the Catholic Thomists are providing the brain power for the Christian Coalition."

FINDINGS & FOOTNOTES

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PRESSNOTES

* The December issue of the American Muslim magazine The Minaret presents a critical view of restrictions against Christians in the Islamic world. An editorial states that "In most Muslim societies, neither majorities nor minorities are allowed to express their free will. Most of these countries are autocratic, undemocratic and devoid of any freedom." The articles include an interview with Muslim scholar Fathi Osman, where he states that even Christian groups seeking Muslim converts should not be outlawed--a minority position in a religion that has often interpreted the Koran's rules against apostasy as meaning that changing one's faith (and thus evangelism) is to be prohibited. Another section of the magazine profiles Islamic countries and even cites Christian (usually missionary) sources on religious rights violations. To obtain this issue, write: The Minaret, 434 South Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90020

* With the recent power shifts inside American evangelicalism, the retirement of Billy Graham, and the waning of the Christian Coalition's influence on national politics, the Rev. Jerry Falwell is seeking to recapture his once impressive leadership. An in-depth, critical article based on extensive interviews is featured on Falwell in the December 9 Christianity Today magazine. The article, by news editor John W. Kennedy, reports that Falwell has attempted to strengthen his personal influence over his radio program, "The Old Time Gospel Hour," Liberty University, and Thomas Road Baptist Church, all located in Lynchburg, Va. Falwell has also sought closer relations with the Southern Baptists and says that God has called him as a "voice crying in the wilderness" to "mobilize, inform, and inspire the evangelical church in America." He also recently started a patriotic "God Save America" crusade. Critics and former associates maintain that Falwell lacks outside accountability in finances and leadership. For more information on this article, write: Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188 --By Erling Jorstad

* Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft (State University of New York Press, \$19.95), edited by James R. Lewis, is a collection of essays on modern-day Wicca and Neo-paganism, especially focusing on the history and ethics of these movements. Most of the essays are written by practitioners of the occult, with several scholarly chapters on Asatru, a conservative and racially oriented form of Neo-paganism, syncretism between the Goddess movement and Christianity; ethnographic research among Neo-pagans; and the sociology of Neo-pagan festivals. While it would have been helpful to have biographies of the book's contributors in order to better understand the authors' relationship to their material, this book is definitely useful for scholars and other researchers studying Neo-paganism and Wicca.--By Lin Collette, a free-lance writer and researcher based in Pawtucket, R.I.

* The new book American Militias: Rebellion, Racism and Religion (Intervarsity Press, \$19.95) by Richard Abanes, is one of many works taking advantage of increased public interest in the far right. This volume attempts to unravel the complex connections between Christianity and the far right, and the militia movement in particular. Abanes

explains the religious roots of many of the various conspiracy and end-time theories that abound in these movements, especially focusing on Christian identity (white supremacist theology) as a key influence on many militia members who readily adopt some of its more unusual teachings to suit their needs. Abanes, often cited as an expert on new religious movements (previously authoring a book on Waco), has provided an intelligent yet occasionally alarmist look at a burgeoning movement. It would be helpful if reporters covering these movements would take the time to read it.--By Lin Collette

* The new book by the editor of Religion Watch, Against The Stream, will be delayed in reaching those who ordered a copy. Due to a delay in printing at our co-publisher, University Press of America, the book will be sent out in February. We thank readers for their patience. Those interested in obtaining the book can still receive a copy for the pre-publication price of \$24.03 (postage and handling included). Payments should be made out to Religion Watch.

ON/FILE: A Continuing Survey of People, Groups, Events, and Movements Influencing Today's Religious Scene.

1) The recent formation of the Association for Church Renewal (ACR) is part of the ongoing attempt to create unity between the conservative caucuses and renewal groups within mainline Protestant denominations. The association plans to defend orthodox Christianity on issues such as heterosexual marriage, prolife concerns, the free exercise of religion, and feminist theology. ACR, made up of conservative groups in the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the American Baptist Churches, the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), will issue position papers and develop resource strategies. The group is viewed as part of an emerging conservative ecumenical alternative movement that includes evangelical, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communities. (Source: Christianity Today, December 9)

2) Jars of Clay is among the first Christian rock bands to find wide mainstream acceptance in the recording industry. While secular rock critics and radio program directors still often ignore or deride Christian bands, this alternative Christian group has received good play on college radio stations and has climbed into the top 20. Last fall, they opened for "no less a rock icon than Sting," to standing ovations. The Nashville-based band's lyrics are only obliquely religious and some in the recording industry did not know they were Christian. (Source: New Republic, November 18).

3) The founding of the School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia, is the first American school of higher learning to train the next generation of Muslim leaders in the U.S. While Islam traditionally has no trained clergy, the rapid growth of the faith in the U.S. has created the need for leaders at new mosques, as well as for chaplains in prisons and the military. The dream is to eventually build an Islamic university--modeled on such schools as Brigham Young or Bob Jones University--but for now the school is attended by a small group of students desiring adult education or an M.A. in "imamate studies" (a term taken from the Islamic leader title "imam"). Founders of the school want a training ground for Islam that is free of the politicized versions in some parts of the world. (Source: Washington Post, November 9)

**BAHA'I MOVEMENT
TARGETS
DISSENTERS**

The Baha'i movement is experiencing growing conflicts and dissent over its members involvement in computer forums, reports Gnosis, (Winter), a magazine on esoteric spirituality. While regarded as a liberal and non-dogmatic religion, the worldwide Baha'i community has enforced "rigid controls for discourse on internal matters, with all publications controlled or censored by the administration; even mild dissent is regarded as treasonous," writes K. Paul Johnson. The Baha'is gained most of their members in the U.S. in the early 1970s (increasing nearly to 100,000), although membership levels have been stagnant since. Some of the young converts of the 1970s became scholars of Persian, Middle Eastern history and related fields. In 1994, a discussion group on the Internet was started by these scholars which often questioned or addressed controversial teachings.

Dissent was voiced over women's exclusion from the Baha'is governing body, the Universal House of Justice, and the teaching that Baha'is are destined to take over all functions of local and national government and create an international government. The position that any Baha'i writing about the movement has to submit such writings for review to Baha'i leaders also drew a good deal of criticism from the discussion group (which numbered about 100 members), which is called Talisman. After almost two years of existence, Talisman became the focus of a series of investigations by authorities at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa, Israel and also by leaders in the U.S. Baha'i leaders have called the scholars and their sympathizers "dissidents," with more conservative members charging that they are "covenant breakers," which means advocating an alternative source of authority in the religion. Baha'is are ordered to avoid all contact with covenant breakers. Although Talisman was disbanded last May, an ex-Baha'i has recently opened a new Talisman group. (Gnosis, P.O. Box 14217, San Francisco, CA 94114-0217)

CURRENT RESEARCH: *Recent Findings On Religious Attitudes And Behavior*

**TRUST, STRICTNESS
IMPORTANT IN
CONGREGATIONAL
GIVING**

* The most important factors in fostering high giving rates among congregations is trust in leadership and a certain amount of strictness in theology and mission, according to a major study. The study, conducted by Dean Hoge, Charles Zech, Patrick McNamara and Michael Donahue, compared giving rates in five denominations: The Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (USA). The researchers, whose findings are found in the new book Money Matters (Westminster-John Knox) and cited in the Christian Century (December 4) dispel a number of false hypotheses. They found that the lower rate of giving in Catholic churches as compared to Protestant congregations is not due to the larger size of Catholic parishes. The fact that Catholic parishes are less democratic than most Protestant churches is only a secondary factor. What was crucial in congregations with high giving rates was whether the leadership can be trusted. The theory that the lower Catholic giving rate than Protestants is due to Catholic protest over Vatican policies on birth control and other contested issues was also found to be false. These matters are international and national and do not affect local giving rates.

In fact, the view held widely by Protestant and Catholic leaders and critics that policies and actions (such as the controversial Re-Imagining Conference) taken by a denomination affect giving

is also without substance. "The study found no evidence that the extensive social action of denominations at the end of the 1960s was causing Protestant church members to cut down on their contributions," the researchers write. A firm theological orientation was found to be more important than institutional policies in affecting church giving. Church people with a clear sense of identity and a belief that God will reciprocate for their monetary gifts tend to give more to their church. The writers add that congregations need not adopt the same strict theology of the high giving Assemblies of God or other conservative groups to increase their offerings. But they add that "Presbyterian, Catholic and other mainline churches have enhanced donations by emphasizing 'stricter' elements of theology and practice already present in their traditions and by weaving them into a program that makes demands on church members." (Christian Century, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60605)

**RELIGIOUS
SEXUAL
PROHIBITIONS
NOT NECESSARILY
HARMFUL FOR
MARITAL
RELATIONS**

* The strict standards against premarital sex in Mormon and conservative Protestant churches does not have an effect on the frequency of sex or conflicts about sex among married members of these religious groups, according to a recent study. In a national survey of 13,000 people, Brigham Young University researchers Thomas B. Holman and John R. Harding found patterns one might expect among the different religious groups. Three-quarters of Mormon respondents believed premarital sex is unacceptable, compared with about half of respondents from mainline Christian denominations, reports the Mormon Sunstone magazine (December). More unexpectedly, the study, which was originally in the Review of Religious Research found that married Mormons say they have sex an average of 7.43 times a month, compared to 7.72 times a month for conservative Protestants and 6.64 times for Catholics. Those claiming no religious affiliation had the most sex, but also the most conflicts about sex. Jewish and liberal Protestant respondents reported the lowest frequency of married sex and the highest percentage of married persons having no sex at all in the past year. (Sunstone, 331 S. Rio Grande St., Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101)

**AUSTRALIAN
ANGLICANISM
TOO ENGLISH,
NOT
FAMILY-FRIENDLY?**

* The Anglican Church in Australia is too English-oriented and is having little impact on family life, according to a report by the nation's Bureau of Immigration. Christian Challenge, (December), an independent Anglican magazine, cites the report as stating that the Anglican Church has yet to achieve a solid Australian identity for its adherents. The report found inadequate influence on families because the 1991 census revealed that the church embraced more cohabiting, separated, and divorced couples than were reflected in wider society. (Christian Challenge, 1215 Independence Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003)

**CANADIAN
EVANGELICALS
FAVOR POLITICAL
OUTSPOKENNESS**

* Conservative Protestants in Canada increasingly favor politically active churches while more liberal Christians are less likely to favor congregations speaking out on political issues, according to a recent survey by sociologist Reginald Bibby. Bibby, of the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, found in 1975 that one-third of conservative Protestants thought churches should stay out of politics-- the national average. Since then, however, the number of Canadians saying churches should stick to religious subjects has risen to 47 percent, while the number of conservative Protestants who believe that has declined to 26 percent. The Canadian evangelical magazine Faith Today (November/December) reports that the survey shows three-quarters of evangelicals approve of the church speaking out on social and political

issues. In comparison, people of other denominations are almost evenly split for and against such activity, although there is stronger support for church action in the public square among those regularly attending mainline churches. This trend of Canadian evangelicals' growing sympathy for political action has also been found among American evangelicals in a survey last year by the Pew Research Center [see July-August RW] (Faith Today, M.I.P. Box 3745, Markham, ON, Canada L3R 0E7)

**INDIANS
RELIGIOUS
AND MATERIALISTIC**

* Both materialism and a devotion to religion and spirituality are foremost among the concerns of Indians, while there is little support for Hindu nationalism, according to a recent Gallup Poll. Emerging Trends (December), the Gallup newsletter on religion, found that nearly all Indians describe themselves as being religious, with 59 percent saying they are very religious. At the same time, nearly half the population chose working hard and getting rich as the credo that best describes them. Only 10 percent take a more "Ghandian" spiritual attitude on the importance of "resisting all forms of evil in the world and living a pure and just life." When asked their views on political leaders who advocate giving preference to the Hindu religion over other faiths, just one Indian in four (26 percent) approves of such politicians, while nearly half (46 percent) disapprove. (Emerging Trends, 47 Hulfish St., Suite 215, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542)

**AMERICAN
JUDAISM
NO CURE FOR
SECULAR-RELIGIOUS
TENSIONS IN
ISRAEL?**

A survey, as well as recent events, point to an ever-widening gap between secular and religious Jews in Israel. The Economist (December 7) magazine reports that a survey by the Tel Aviv-based Geocartographic Institute found that no less than 47 percent of Israel's Jews believe, with varying degrees of certainty, that the continuing conflict between religious and secular Jews will end in a violent struggle for the soul of the Jewish state. Two recent issues are likely to further inflame the division between secular and religious (meaning Orthodox) Israelis. Orthodox Jews are increasingly pressing for greater representation on the Supreme Court. By tradition, one seat on the court is earmarked for the Orthodox. But this tradition was established when the Orthodox parties were smaller. Now they want judicial appointments to reflect both public opinion and their newly gained political power. The Orthodox parties "are about to show their clout by pushing through a law recognizing only Orthodox conversions to Judaism, thus disqualifying conversions carried out in Israel (though not outside it) by non-Orthodox--that is, Conservative and Reform-- rabbis. While such exclusion has been practiced since British mandate days, making the practice law will likely further alienate diaspora Jews from Israel, according to the article.

But even if other forms of Judaism other than Orthodoxy are offered and approved in Israel, it is not likely that Israeli Jews will be takers, writes Daniel Elazar in Moment magazine (October). He notes that Reform and Conservative Judaism have been "unable to attract more than the smallest handful of Israelis who do not come from English-speaking countries." In last year's elections, Meretz, the one party that actively supports Reform and Conservative Judaism, lost seats. The party once held third place among the nation's political groupings; now it has dropped to fifth. Elazar challenges the conventional explanation that Israel's religious establishment refusal to recognize Conservative and Reform Judaism is the reason for their slow growth. The American Jewish notions of voluntary, individual choice conflicts with most Israelis' view that

"an individual may choose what he or she will observe, but the religious tradition itself is fixed."

Israelis often tie religious observance to national identity; 90 percent of Israeli Jews participate in a seder. While two-thirds of Israeli Jews believe in the validity of the 10 commandments, nearly three out of four do not believe they will be punished by God for disobeying them. While Americans may see such attitudes as contradictory, Elazar writes that Israel, like other Mediterranean countries, "almost prides itself on that kind of 'hypocrisy.' Most Israelis pay serious attention to maintaining the continuity of Jewish tradition, even if individually they have no intention of living in accordance with all the rules of that tradition." Elazar recounts that a columnist of a liberal Jerusalem newspaper who reviews synagogues gave his most critical review to date about a Reform synagogue. "In essence, he said he felt like he was in a church; he failed to see what was Jewish about the service. This, for better or worse, is the typical Israeli attitude." Elazar adds that aside from the Conservative and Reform movements, Israeli Judaism is more pluralistic than most think; Orthodox divided between different ethnic traditions, as well as between the different groups of hasidic and Zionist Jews, as well as the secular varieties, such as the kibbutzim. (Moment, 4710 41st St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016)

**AFRICAN
INDEPENDENT
CHURCHES
EMERGE IN
BRITAIN**

Africans are bringing their indigenous Christian churches to Europe, ministering both to African immigrants and other blacks, according to the British Catholic magazine, The Tablet (November 23). African Independent Churches (AIC), which often mix tribal and indigenous religious traditions with Pentecostal Christianity, are especially being planted by African missionaries in England, where many African students are located. Included among these churches are "Spiritual" congregations, which practice strict dietary and fasting rules, and have a liturgy, with incense and holy water. The phenomenon should not be confused with the thriving black Pentecostal churches in Britain drawing many Caribbean people. In fact, the AIC's criticize the "health and wealth" teachings in some of the Pentecostal churches, while the Pentecostals accuse the Africans of being "superstitious," such as in their use of herbs for healing. However, the Church of Cherubim and Seraphim, formed in Nigeria in 1925, has nearly 30 congregations in London, and Caribbean members outnumber the Nigerian students with which it began. (The Tablet, 1 King St., Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London, W6 0Q2 England)

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Inside This Issue:

- Review And Preview of Trends--With A Special Look At Charismatics
- Dissenting Baha'is; Materialistic And Spiritual Hindus