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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.

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A dominant role for religion still likely in Egypt

"There is a need to secularize society [in Egypt]!" said Bishop Yohanna Qolta, Deputy Patriarch of the Catholic Copts, to a group of surprised Swiss and Egyptian journalists recently. The bishop made the unexpected statement to journalists who had been invited by the Religioscope Institute to attend a week-long seminar on Media & Religion in Cairo (March 20–25). The comment came a few days after the Egyptian referendum on the modification of the Constitution that was meant to open the way to elections next autumn and prepare a passage to full civilian power. Accepted by 77 percent of the voters, the Constitution continues, however, to include article 2, stating that "Islam is the religion of the state and ... Islamic jurisprudence is the principal source of legislation." Both the Muslim Brothers and Salafis did not want to see a change to this article and thus supported the "yes" vote, in order to prevent attempts to introduce more fundamental changes that might have endangered it. But the young leaders of the recent revolutionary movement in Egypt voted "no," since they would have liked an entirely new constitution, marking a complete break with the Mubarak era, noted Swiss journalist Pascal Fleury—a seminar participant—in a report pub-

lished by the Swiss daily *La Liberté* (March 26). Similarly, the Coptic Orthodox Church (Copts form around 10 percent of the Egyptian population) recommended a "no" vote.

Interestingly, a number of young members of the Muslim Brotherhood, in contrast with the orientation of the movement leadership, share views similar to those of more secular youth activists: "We want a secular state, not an Islamic state. On Tahrir Square, we could feel that aspiration toward a new life," stated one of their leaders to seminar participants. The gap between the militant rhetoric sometimes cultivated by the Brotherhood and the views of some of its younger members has also been noticed in a *BBC News* report on competing Brotherhood visions for Egypt (March 3). Fighting for the revolution on the streets side by side with secular protesters has encouraged changes among young Brotherhood activists, who are now looking to Turkey as a role model. Bishop Qolta also nurtures hopes that youth activists might prevail over time: "Youth are different, less fanatical," he stated, according to Fleury's report.

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Advocacy and defensiveness still mark Islamic studies after 9/11

The academic study of Islam has grown rapidly in American universities, particularly since the events surrounding September 11, but scholarly study has turned more toward defense of the field and sometimes Islam itself rather than engaging in new lines of research, writes Richard C. Martin in the *Journal of the*

American Academy of Religion (December). Martin notes that the field of Islamic studies really came into its own after the Iranian revolution of 1979 as it differentiated itself from the discipline known as "Orientalism," which studied

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Islam from a Western perspective. By 2009, the estimated number of American Academy of Religion (AAR) members associated with Islamic studies was over 400; in 2004, it was only 130. Islamic scholars still account for only 3.5 percent of the AAR's total membership, and barely more than 10 percent of the departments of religion and theology in colleges and universities in North America have faculty trained in Islamic studies.

Martin writes that since 9/11 Islamic scholars have worn the two hats of teachers and researchers of Islam, and defenders of the Islamic tradition against what he calls "Islamophobia." These scholars have become "public intellectuals" as they are called upon by the media and public officials to delineate the complexities of Islam against stereotypes, simplifications and even slander. This defensive posture has turned some scholars toward an "evangelical" support of the religion, according to Martin and other observers. This is evident in the "new enthu-

siasm" for the "Progressive Islam movement" he finds among some members of the Study of Islam section of the AAR. He adds that Islamic scholars may be affected by a "saviors of Islam" syndrome where they remain hesitant to acknowledge that Islam and Muslims, like all religions and their adherents, do things that are both horrible and humane. Martin concludes by calling for greater and more inclusive debate in the field.

(Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 825 Houston Mill Rd., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30329-4025)

Legionaries' rehabilitation hampered by abusive past and complicit leadership

The Legionaries of Christ, an influential conservative Catholic religious and lay order, may have difficulty rehabilitating itself after its recently deceased founder was revealed to have left a long trail of sexual abuse and corruption behind him. The dilemmas of replacing a charismatic leader is compounded for the Legionaries, since the misdeeds of founder Father Marciel Maciel are widely alleged to have been tolerated and even covered up by some in the leadership, reports the Rome-based magazine *Inside the Vatican* (March). The Mexican-based Legionaries was treated as a front-line renewal movement by Pope John Paul II and other church officials, even while Maciel was being investigated by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, former doctrinal watchdog of the Vatican and now Pope Benedict XIV. The Vatican has appointed a commission to rehabilitate the order, but the

situation remains complicated and divided. Fr. Richard Gill, a longtime former member of the order, writes that approximately 70 priests of over 800 have left the Legionaries and vocations have plummeted in the U.S., Spain and the rest of Europe. There is the possibility it will return to being a largely Mexican movement.

Fundraising operations have also been impaired and the order has been forced to sell schools and other assets (including, most recently, the National Catholic Register). The commission and Cardinal Velasio de Paolis, whom the pope has appointed as the authority of the rehabilitation effort, has insisted that every member of the Legionaries should participate in changing the organization's constitution, an "enormous paradigm shift" from earlier, when Maciel was seen as interpreting the constitution according to the will of

God. But Gill sees the order still operating from the premise that it is the "work of God" and that its strict hierarchical order should not be challenged. The Legionaries still seeks control of its members, recently installing a surveillance system to monitor e-mail correspondence, according to Gill. He concludes that while most Catholic movements renew themselves by going back to their "charism" or founding mission, this is impossible with the Legionaries, since it is based on Maciel's teachings and leadership style. It is also difficult to cultivate leaders from within the group, since there is distrust of the current leadership, with many members holding that it was ineffectual and in some cases complicit with Maciel's transgressions.

(Inside the Vatican, P.O. Box 57, New Hope, KY 40052-0057)

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The "spirit of the revolution" has also brought to the surface a new assertiveness by young female members of the Brotherhood and challenges to its traditional patterns, reports Noha El-Hennawy in the English edition of *Al Masry Al Youm* (March 15). The revolu-

tion represented to them the first experience of breaking from family rules and control, as they slept on the streets among crowds of other protesters. The young female members of the Muslim Brotherhood organized protests, spoke to media, and now have the feeling they should have a greater say in the organization. Females are reported to make up 25 per-

cent of the Muslim Brotherhood, but have no representation at the highest echelons. However, the movement has fielded female candidates for parliament since 2000. But Husam Tammam, a leading Egyptian expert on Islamic movements, says it served more to enhance the group's image than to empower women.

Orthodox Church in America challenged by fundamentalism and Russian church?

The largest non-ethnic Orthodox church body in the U.S., the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), is facing a growing traditionalist-fundamentalist element as well as an attempt to steer the communion in the direction of Russian Orthodoxy. In his blog *Religion and Other Curiosities* (March 2 entry), sociologist Peter Berger reports on what he calls "the growth of a fundamentalist understanding of Orthodoxy—dogmatic, intolerant, uninterested in engaging with anybody or anything outside a

confined community of faith." He adds that much of the influence for this new traditionalism or fundamentalism comes from the converts who have entered the church.

Berger writes that the second challenge is the "campaign by the Moscow Patriarchate to return all originally Russian churches abroad to its own jurisdiction. The campaign reportedly has the support of the Russian state, which sees these churches as potential

sources of its own influence abroad. I understand that there are voices within the OCA in favor of surrendering its autocephaly and returning to the welcoming embrace of the mother church. Fundamentalists in the OCA also find this prospect appealing. While that are different voices in the Russian church, the messages coming out of the patriarchate seem more fundamentalist all the time."

(<http://www.the-american-interest.com/berger/2011>)

Liberal Jewish denominations strategizing to address decline

Conservative Judaism has been in sharp decline since 2001 and other liberal Jewish bodies are organizing and strategizing to address their own declining memberships, reports the Jewish newspaper *Forward* (February 18). A draft of a strategic plan by the denomination reveals that there has been a 14 percent decline in Conservative membership in the last decade, a trend particularly affecting the north-east, where family memberships dropped by 30 percent. Conservative Judaism recently introduced its strategic plan to try to

reverse these membership losses.

Josh Nathan-Kazis reports that within Reform Judaism, "a group of dissident rabbis is seeking to shake up a movement long seen by outsiders as untroubled by internal dissent." While the specific agenda of the group is unclear, the group consists of 17 senior rabbis from large Reform synagogues that foot a significant portion of the movement's budget. Nathan-Kazis adds that the synagogue body of the smaller Reconstructionist movement is "weathering

its own transition. Following a November vote, Reconstructionist leadership is finalizing a plan to merge its synagogue arm with its rabbinical school. The parallel developments within all three of North America's liberal Jewish denominations paint a picture of a growing crisis in liberal Judaism. Their long-standing central bodies are struggling to convince the synagogues that pay their bills of their relevance and usefulness."

(<http://www.forward.com/articles/135323/#ixzz1HyB1oHDw>)

CURRENT RESEARCH

► **An analysis by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that supporters of the Tea Party tend to have a conservative take on social and religious matters, as well as on economics.** They are also more likely than registered voters as a whole to say that religion is the most important factor in shaping their views on social issues. The analysis, based on surveys from September 2010 to February 2011, finds that the Tea Party draws disproportionate support from white evangelical Protestants. It was also found that most people who agree with the religious right also support the Tea Party, although a survey last summer found that almost half of Tea Party supporters had not heard or did not have an opinion about the conservative Christian political movement known as the Christian right. Tea Party supporters tend to take socially conservative positions, with 64 percent opposing gay marriage (compared to 49 percent opposed among voters as a whole), and 59 percent agreeing that abortion should be illegal in most cases (compared to 42 percent of voters as a whole). About half of Tea Party supporters say their views on these social issues are influenced by their religious beliefs.

(<http://www.pewforum.org>)

► **Although considered a conservative force in American society, Latinos are increasingly divided even on such an issue as same-sex marriage, according to a recent analysis.** In the *Social Science Quarterly* (March), Christopher Ellison, Gabriel Acevedo and Aida Ramos-

Wada analyze a recent survey from the Pew Hispanic Forum that asked respondents about same-sex marriage (SSM) and find that the religious divisions on this issue "are at least as large in magnitude as those in the overall U.S. population." With Protestants now making up about one-fourth of the U.S. Hispanic population, members of the conservative churches (including non-Protestants such as Mormons), were uniformly against the practice. Unlike non-Hispanic evangelicals, sporadic attendance does not drive down opposition to SSM among Latino conservative Protestants. Despite assumptions that Latino Catholics represent a bulwark of conservative social and family values, Catholics (Hispanic and otherwise) tend to hold more moderate views on SSM than conservative Protestants. This was true of even devout Hispanic Catholics (although regularly attending Hispanic Catholics do oppose SSM by a margin of two to one). Latinos attending mainline churches tended to take more diverse views, although those who attended services more regularly were opposed to the practice.

(*Social Science Quarterly*, <http://www.wiley.com>)

► **Presbyterians today are equally likely as Presbyterians were a decade ago to be interested in increasing the amount of time they set aside for Sabbath-keeping practices, even though their concepts of the observance have changed, according to the *Presbyterian Panel* (February report), an ongoing survey of members and leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).** In spite of this continuity, the pastors' perspectives on Sabbath-keeping have changed in that more pastors in 2010 than in 1999 are very likely or likely to associate the word "Sabbath" with rest and restoration, a Christian practice and something that

needs to be revived. Smaller fractions of pastors today associate the Sabbath with a particular day of the week or with a Jewish custom. More members and specialized clergy today than in 1999 associate the word "Sabbath" with a Christian practice, and more elders today associate the observance with social and economic justice. Fewer elders today associate the Sabbath with a particular day of the week than they did in 1999.

(<http://www.pcusa.org/research/panel>)

► **Classic cult stereotypes remain fairly widespread on television, even though they have declined since their peak in the 1990s, according to a new study in the journal *Nova Religio* (February).** Lynn Neal of Wake Forest University writes that elements of the popular stereotypes of cults or new religious movements involving fraudulent leaders coercing (sometimes brainwashing) individuals to leave their families and surrender their wills to join such groups stretch back to television shows as early as 1958. Interestingly enough, TV portrayal of cults remained relatively sparse until the 1980s—when media coverage of cult controversies had actually begun to subside. The increased attention to cults in this decade, portrayed in about 25 episodes of fictional shows, may be partly due to the growth of new cable outlets and such networks as Fox.

By the 1990s, cult themes on shows had increased to about 80 episodes, probably due to events surrounding new religious movements, such as the Branch Davidians and Heavens Gate during this decade, as well as to the approach of the new millennium. In the 2000s (up to 2008), the number of TV episodes with plots involving cults has decreased to about 60, which may stem from the sharp

growth of reality shows, more favorable portrayals of alternative religions (such as witches) and new attention to terrorist plots, writes Neal. CBS, which has retained more fictional programming than the other networks, leads the way in including more programming with cultic themes. Neal examines five recent episodes in-depth (from *The Simpsons*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Law and Order*) and finds that these fictional portrayals of new religious movements tends to treat them as marked off from mainstream society by the special clothes members wear, their remote locations, the delusional beliefs of participants, and the unwritten assumption that they conflict with a vague, often invisible, yet normative Christian society.

(*Nova Religio*, 2000 Center St., Suite 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223)

► **A recent sharp decline in annulments of marriages in the Catholic Church in the U.S. may on first impression be viewed as good news, as the American church has long led the world in this practice.** But the decline may actually mean that Catholic marriages are losing their value among the faithful, reports the *Catholic World Report* (March). The magazine reports that the number of annulments soared from 338 in 1968 to a peak of 63,933 in 1991. But by 2004 the number had fallen to 46,330 and then down to 35,009—"a remarkable decline of 24 percent in three years." Yet with only 5.9 percent of the world's Catholics, the U.S. still accounts for 60 percent of the church's declarations of nullity.

It has been debated for years why America leads the world in annulments. Church officials blame the shaky state of marriage in the U.S., although they also agree that the American church has had the re-

sources to create an extensive tribunal system where many annulment cases are tried. As for the recent decline, most observers point to a loss of institutional loyalty among American Catholics, partly due to the sex abuse crisis, where they do not feel the need to subject themselves to the church's authority when it comes to the decision to have a second marriage.

(*Catholic World Report*, <http://www.catholicworldreport.com>)

► **Protestants in Canada show an increase in church attendance, although at the same time Catholics, especially in Quebec, are attending less, along with a steady growth of non-affiliates.** The declining rate of affiliation and, in some regions, attendance in Canada is not disputed, but the debate continues whether the decline means that Canada as a whole is undergoing rapid secularization. Sociologist Reginald Bibby has especially challenged some surveys which suggest that church attendance is declining throughout the country. In the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (March) David Eagle of Duke University writes that the regional variation of Canada in terms of attendance makes it difficult to speak of nationwide trends of decline or renaissance. By examining the General Social Survey, the Canadian Survey of Giving and the Project Canada surveys, Eagle notes that on aggregate, church attendance has declined by about 20 percent from 1986 to 2008.

About half of this decline can be traced to the increase in the number of Canadians who report no religion. When the remaining decline is broken down by such demographics as age and affiliation, it appears that older Catholics have shown the greatest drop in attendance, particularly those outside of Quebec. In fact,

older and younger Catholics increasingly resemble each other; in the past the older Catholics were far more likely to attend Mass than younger ones. The Protestant situation, in contrast, is one of stability and even growth. Protestants across age groups are more likely to attend church. It is not clear if this stability is being felt across Protestant bodies or if evangelical growth is compensating for the decline evident in mainline churches, Eagle concludes.

(*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 111 River St., Hoboken, NJ 07030)

► **The connections found between religion and spirituality and positive health outcomes in many societies influenced by the Christian tradition take on more complex and even negative directions in a Shinto and Buddhist country such as Japan, according to a recent study in the journal *Social Forces* (December).** In a survey conducted in the Japanese city of Kyoto, researcher Michael Roemer of Ball State University found that rites, beliefs and even ownership of sacred objects connected with gods, deities and spirits are positively associated with the reporting of distress symptoms and negative mental health.

For most Japanese, these Shinto deities, called "*kami*," can be either punishing or helpful, although few consider these beings as intimately or compassionately involved in everyday life. The presence of *kami* altars serve as a reminder that although the deities are there for them, any sign of disrespect might cause harm. Yet those beliefs and practices that are tied to ancestors or buddhas are more likely to have positive mental effects. Ancestors are seen as more helpful and caring than *kami*, as supplicants ask for guidance and protection from loved ones who have died. The re-

searchers notes that a somewhat more puzzling finding is the relationship between the belief that it is important to respect one's ancestors and psychological distress.

(*Social Forces*, Room 168, Hamilton Hall CB 3210, Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514)

► **A new study of mosques in Sweden suggests that they are less isolated from society than many have presumed and that external opposition may actually trigger these Islamic organizations' community involvement.** The study, conducted by the Swedish Muslim Congregation project at Mid-Sweden

University and reported in the American Sociological Association's *Sociology of Religion Section Newsletter* (Spring), surveyed 105 congregations. A dominant characteristic among these mosques was openness and a desire for cooperation, even though a minority stressed religious purity to the exclusion of social involvement. The researchers found that openness to different ethnic and religious traditions in Islam correlated with these congregations' openness to society.

More unexpected was the finding that the level of opposition that congregations felt was correlated with the inclination to cooperate. Klas Borell, who leads the project, writes that opposition, such as in the form of vandalism or letters written to the press,

tended have a mobilizing effect on "potentially sympathetic organizations and individuals in the community who rise up to defend the right of Muslim congregations to practice their faith. When these opposite forces become visible, it then also becomes possible for Muslim congregations to identify allies and to develop cooperation with new partners." The study also found that the majority of representatives of surveyed Muslim congregations were of the opinion that they encountered respect in society, even though one-fourth of congregations reported experiencing criminal forms of harassment.

(For more information on this study, write: klas.borell@miun.se)

Anti-Semitism pushing European Jews to migrate?

Inside Israel (March), an evangelical newsletter on Israeli affairs, reports that there is increasing sympathy among European Jews with the prospect of leaving the continent with the rise of anti-Semitism. The newsletter quotes prominent Dutch politician and former EU commissioner Wits Bolkestein as expressing his concern for the future of Orthodox Jews in the Netherlands, citing "the anti-Semitism among Dutchmen of Moroccan descent, whose numbers keep growing." Bolkestein also urged Jews to encourage their children to emigrate to the U.S. or to Israel due to a lack of confidence in the Dutch government's ability to fight anti-Semitism. Some prominent Dutch citizens share Bolkestein's views, including Benjamin Jacobs, the

country's chief rabbi. Last year, Jacobs told the news source Arutz Sheva that "the future for Dutch Jewry is moving to Israel."

Fears of harassment and violence continue to grow in countries such as Norway, according to the newsletter. Muslims make up a significant portion of the population in some cities. In the southern city of Malmö, for example, 60,000 Muslims comprise the population. The remaining 700 Jews report experiencing hate crimes, prompting the synagogue to hire security and install rocket-proof glass in the windows. "Elsewhere, Jews have been assaulted with stones, and in Austria, 38 percent of Muslim youth believe that Hitler 'did a lot of good for the people.' Given this increasingly hostile environment, it is not surprising that growing numbers of Jews have been moving to Israel from France and the UK in recent years."

(*Inside Israel*, P.O. Box 22029, San Diego, CA 92192-20290)

Will Iran's next revolution be secular?

Iran is not likely to follow other Muslim nations in undergoing revolutions that allow Islam to retain a role in national affairs. It is more likely that any movement to revolt against the Iranian regime will be more secular than religious, writes sociologist Ahmad Sadri. In the e-newsletter *Sightings* (March 3), Sadri writes that because Iran's "religious autocracy" has the means and will to crack down on any protest, the "critique of religious government is slowly turning into the kind of anti-religious sentiment one could only find among eighteenth-century enlightenment philosophers, nineteenth-century Latin American positivists and twentieth-century Marxist Leninist countries like Cambodia and Albania." An example of this atti-

tude could be seen in a recent debate among Islamic reformers, where younger dissidents, such as Mahmoud Morad-khani, himself the son of an Islamic reformer, argued that reform is only possible by rejecting “Islam, root and branch” and its “delusional” beliefs.

Sadri adds that theocratic rule in Iran has led its critics to use a discourse of a “rationalist binary that relegates religious intellectuality to dogmatic subservience and claims that only by liberating oneself from religion can one join the dynamic flow of secular thought.” He concludes that revolutionary thought need not take a secularist turn. The grandfather of the Iranian uprising known as the Green Movement, Ayatollah Muntazeri (1922–2009), used Islamic legal thought to first support the revolution of Khomeini and then become its critic, eventually issuing a “subversive legal opinion ... spelling out the conditions for the dissolution of not only the Islamic Republic but indeed any polity.”

Deprogramming still an issue in Japan

While the practice of kidnapping members of controversial religious movements for the purpose of “deprogramming” them has virtually disappeared from Europe and North America, cases continue to be reported in Japan, said Dan Fefferman, president of the International Coalition for Religious Freedom (a Unification Church-funded organization), at a session of the European Leadership Conference (a Unification Church-sponsored initiative as well) that took place at the United Nations

in Geneva on March 25 attended by **RW**. The issue had been mentioned last November in the yearly US International Religious Freedom Report as one of the few issues of abuse based on religious affiliation in Japan, although these cases “could not be independently confirmed.” According to Fefferman, more than 4,300 people have been abducted and kept in solitary confinement in Japan over the past 40 years due to their conversion to a religious group. Most of them were members of the Unification Church. There have also been around 100 cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1990s, although this has not taken place recently, Fefferman told **RW** in an interview.

Isolated cases of members of other, small groups have been recorded too. About one third of those abducted escaped and returned to their religious group. There was a peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with up to 300 abductions over a year. In recent years, however, possibly because of a lesser growth of the Unification Church, as well as an increased tendency among escapees to appeal to the law, there have been only about 10 to 12 suspected cases per year. There are some significant differences between earlier deprogramming cases in the West and ongoing cases in Japan, according to Fefferman. In contrast with the West, most deprogrammers in Japan have been Christian religious ministers. The families calling them for assistance are mostly non-Christian, but expect Christian deprogrammers to be able to convince the abducted believers based on their knowledge of the Bible. Another difference is the reluc-

tance of the authorities and police to intervene, since they tend to treat these cases as internal family matters and often refuse to prosecute due to an alleged lack of evidence.

Government control of North Caucasus religious groups backfires

In Russian-controlled North Caucasus, the policy of the federal government to promote religious leaders who would support its policies, regardless of qualifications and reputation, is increasingly seen as backfiring, writes Valery Dzutsev in the March 25 issue of *North Caucasus Weekly*, a newsletter published by the U.S.-based, conservative Jamestown Foundation. The muftis of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and North Ossetia were elected around mid-March, apparently under close government control. Official clergy seems to be estranged from believers in the North Caucasus more than in any other place in the Russian Federation. They lack authority and are perceived as government tools. While promoting docile figures was expected to help stabilize the area, this policy seems to have exactly the opposite effect and makes believers resent government attempts to control religious life.

(The Jamestown Foundation, <http://www.jamestown.org/>)

Orthodox in China faces clergy shortages, government suspicion

There is a pressing need for priests to provide services to Orthodox Chinese faithful, said Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the External Church Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate (*Interfax*, March 16). There are up to 15,000 Chinese Orthodox, but the only two Chinese priests are more than 80 years old. In some cases, the Chinese authorities have allowed a Russian priest to serve

at special occasions such as Easter in the Russian church in Harbin: the Metropolitan would like this practice to be extended to other cities. The Russian Church would like to help restore a Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church.

In order to put the information into context, it should be made clear that an issue in China is the refusal of Chinese authorities to see groups of believers submitted to any foreign hierarchy, something that is especially sensitive regarding Roman Catholics. Obviously, allowing the Orthodox Church in China to function under a foreign religious authority would create a precedent and thus cannot be acceptable to China.

But without local clergy, it is impossible to find suitable candidates for the office of bishops and to start the process of establishing an autonomous church. Orthodox priests sometimes travel to China and visit faithful in an unofficial way, for instance, to celebrate baptisms. There have also been growing efforts in recent years to make Orthodox material available in Chinese (including both republications of older texts and new translations), with the help of the Internet.

(The best resource on Orthodoxy in China is the website <http://www.orthodox.cn>. It has sections in Chinese, Russian and English. It includes an extensive news archive for the past few years.)

FINDINGS/FOOTNOTES

■ The new password to the RW archives at: <http://www.religionwatch.com>, is: **Katallagete**.

■ **RadicalisationResearch.org** seeks to provide policymakers and anyone else whose work uses concepts such as radicalization, fundamentalism or extremism with easy access to high-quality academic research on these controversial issues. By taking a non-partisan approach and providing access to the best and latest research, the website hopes to “challenge ungrounded assumption that may obscure a clear understanding of violent extremism especially where that is associated with Islamicism.” The website pays particular attention to religious violence and to the post-9/11 concern with Muslim extremism. Some of the research presented also seeks to undermine the idea that there is something unique about Islam in relation to violent extremism. There are

many comparable forms of both religious and secular violence, and historical and geographical comparisons are explored in several of the articles and books discussed on this site.

■ In his new book, *The Future of Christianity* (Ashgate, \$26.96), David Martin, a leading sociologist of European religion and Pentecostalism in the Global South, extends his analysis to cover such areas as East German secularism, transnational missions and Christianity, and violence and democracy. Since Martin was one of the first sociologists to question the secularization thesis, he spends considerable space explaining his complex views on this subject. He tends to espouse a “multiple modernities” approach that sees various trajectories of secularization and religious revitalization unfolding within the historical and political contexts of a particular society. Martin puts a special emphasis on “master narratives,” which, for example, he traces in Protestantism to an “inwardness” that leads in

northern Europe to secularity, with an emphasis on ethical behavior and environmentalism, or, under different social circumstances, to a religious pluralism that encourages entrepreneurialism and competition in the U.S., Africa and, more recently, Latin America.

Martin’s writing is complex, often squeezing two or three ideas and observations into a single sentence. But the dense description he presents is part of his method because of his refusal to adopt a single guiding theory of religious change. Noteworthy chapters include an examination and rejection of the idea of “postsecularity”—Martin argues (again, through exhaustive description) that Europe remains on a secular trajectory while the other parts of the world were never secularizing (in the European sense) to begin with; an impressive debunking of the concept that as science advances religion recedes; and an important analysis of how East Germany ended up as one of the most secular nations in the world. He argues that secularization and an east-

west divide on religion existed prior to communism and that the way in which science was linked with progress and religion was treated as irrational. This, together with the internal secularization of Protestantism, all contributed to East Germany's unique identity.

■ The 2008 government raid on Mormon polygamists in Texas not only brought the unusual phenomenon of polygamy before the American public; it also generated a new kind of activism and other changes in practices among these isolated religious communities, according to the new book ***Modern Polygamy in the United States*** (Oxford University Press, \$29.95), edited by Cardell K. Jacobson with Lara Burton. The volume brings together a wide range of scholars who argue that the popular portrait of Mormon polygamy given by the media and law enforcement agencies ignores the diversity of these communities. The contributors to the book find that the distinctive lifestyle of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), the breakaway group that was the target of the 2008 raid, has led it into conflict with outsiders. Unlike mainstream Mormonism and other polygamous groups, the FLDS is based on the power of a prophet who can arrange marriages and dictate other aspects of members' lives. Under prophet Warren Jeff, FLDS members, who number approximately 8,000, dress in 19th century clothes and have increasingly avoided contact with non-members.

But after the raid, the church promised to discontinue its practice of encouraging plural marriages that include under-aged young women. The bad publicity surrounding the raid also compelled members, including women who are traditionally taught to be submissive to men, to go on the defensive, holding media in-

terviews, testifying in state capitals about the benefits of polygamy and even starting websites to explain their practices to outsiders, according to contributors Heber Hammon and William Jankowiak. The contributors emphasize that there are increasingly diverse polygamous communities and movements in the American West far from the stereotype of isolated and authoritarian "cultists." A split has occurred in the FLDS, with a more liberal group, known as "the Work", emerging that practices a more egalitarian form of leadership and allows women to dress in modern clothes and lead more independent lives. The largest polygamous Mormon group is the Apostolic United Brethren, with 10,000 members and led by a council of elders with a more open stance toward American society. One chapter even finds a group of evangelicals who run the Be Free Patriarchal Christian Church in Utah, which has about 1,000 members nationwide and seeks to convert Mormon polygamists while approving of plural marriages.

Most of the contributors agree that it is not the promise of romance and greater sexual opportunities that drives polygamy. Nor does financial security convince women to join polygamous arrangements, since fundamentalist Mormon communities have high rates of members claiming welfare assistance. Contributor Carrie Miles argues that the fundamentalist Mormon teaching of "celestial marriage" (now largely disavowed by mainstream Mormonism), where the husband is seen as providing the means of salvation for wives, makes polygamy much sought after by both men and women in these communities. This is especially the case in fundamentalist communities where certain men are considered prophets and God-appointed leaders; marriage into such elite families

provide the greatest guarantee of salvation for women.

■ ***A Faith of Their Own*** (Oxford University Press, \$24.95), by Lisa Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton, draws on the large National Study of Youth and Religion as well as in-depth interviews with more than 120 youth at two points in time. Pearce and Denton find that religion is an important force in the lives of most of the respondents, even if their involvement with religion changes over the three years they were studied. Pearce and Denton identify five camps of young adult religiosity—Abiders, who represent about 20 (first wave of the study) to 22 percent (second wave) of the surveyed youth, demonstrate strong faith and religious involvement (with usually high parental religious influence); Assenters, representing 30–32 percent, believe in God and are religiously involved, but religion is not a central part of their lives; and Avoiders, representing 28 percent in the first wave and 20 percent in the second, who also tend toward the moderate side of the spectrum, but they view religion and helping others as being more important than the assenters.

The fourth category, the Avoiders, ranging from 17 to 24 percent of the sample, are not religiously involved on an institutional or personal level, even as they maintain a belief in God; the last category, Atheists, represent 3–5 percent of the sample and tend not to think about questions on the meaning of life. There is a clear movement toward less religious commitment, although the authors argue that between middle and late adolescence there is not much switching between these different categories. This somewhat contradictory stance is explained as the youths' own tendency to see their religiosity as encompassing different dimensions (identified by the researchers as religious content,

conduct and centrality) that assume various levels of importance during different periods of their teenage years.

■ The editors of the new book ***Ireland's New Religious Movements*** (Cambridge Scholars Press) are convinced the time is ripe for an in-depth re-evaluation of the widely accepted portrait of monolithic Catholic (in the south) and Protestant (in the north) institutions and identities crowding out other religious expressions in both countries. With its captivating chapters on (among other subjects) Irish Buddhism and Islam, Neo-paganism, New Age groups and a generic Celtic spirituality infusing other non-institutional religious expressions, the volume, edited by Olivia Cosgrove, Laurence Cox, Carmen Kuhling and Peter Mulholland, succeeds in filling in the tapestry of contemporary Irish religion. The first two chapters ably set the scene for the rest of the book in explaining how the rise of new religious movements—both imported and native—intensified toward the end of the millennium, as the weight of feminist challenges, declining sectarian identification and revelations over abuse diminished “hitherto unquestioning loyalties to the church of one’s birth—and hence ... free[ing] up individuals to make other choices, of the most diverse kind.”

The editors argue that the Irish may be moving toward a situation of multiple religious identities—“to hold weddings and funerals in the Catholic church, to buy angel cards or statuettes, to practice some form of yoga or meditation, to make occasional visits to a faith healer or reiki practitioners, and to hold strong feelings about Newgrange and Tara (neo-Druid spiritual sites).” Such syncretistic preferences and practices are not captured in the census, especially in Northern Ireland,

where there are greater provisions for confidentiality than found in the Republic of Ireland. Other estimates of NRM growth presented are somewhat speculative; the small Buddhist presence of a thousand or so is estimated to have tripled between 1991 and 2002 and then doubled again up to 2006; the New Age movement has “flourished,” evident by the ten to twenty thousand paying customers visiting the annual Mind Body Spirit fair in Dublin.

A chapter on evangelicals in the Republic notes that this movement has “radically” grown (one scholar claims a 1,000 percent growth) beyond the new presence of immigrant evangelical churches. A study of new evangelical churches conducted by contributor Ruth Jackson Noble showed the average percentage of Irish people involved in evangelical churches was 61 percent, 41 percent of whom were from an Irish Catholic background. Equally interesting are the chapters suggesting how Irish new religious movements import foreign spiritual currents, such as the New Age movement, while adapting them to a native Celtic and quasi-Catholic (including Marian apparition groups) identity, and then export them globally. A different global pattern is evident in the growth of the Fellowship of Isis, a 27,000-member esoteric religion that has retained its Celtic and Irish base while taking a more neo-pagan identity worldwide. A 44-page bibliography of literature about new religious movements in Ireland is included at the end of the book.

■ Lorenzo Vidino’s new book, ***The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*** (Columbia University Press, \$29.50), focuses on the experiences of the Brotherhood outside of its Middle Eastern birthplace. The result of combining an in-depth study of written sources with interviews, the book steers clear of both a pes-

simistic approach demonizing the Brotherhood and an optimistic approach that fails to look behind official discourses for public consumption. The author tries to offer a balanced approach on a movement that the recent upheavals in the Arab world will put increasingly on center stage. Vidino makes it clear that a key feature of the Brotherhood was to make religion more than a mere devotional attitude, but rather a platform of political and social commitment meant to answer contemporary challenges. From that starting point, the Muslim Brothers are shown as ambivalent, balancing between non-violent reformism and a more subversive approach. The book describes the strategies of the Brotherhood for establishing branches in the West since the 1950s—in the U.S. as well as in Europe.

Ideological dilemmas presented themselves early. Regarding democracy, there is clearly an evolution, with the Brothers moving from rejection to partial acceptance. There is thus real progress, but at the same time the Brothers seem unable to move beyond a discourse of specificities (i.e. on “Islamic democracy,” in which everything is accepted insofar it does not contradict sharia, Islamic legal principles). Regarding the attitude toward the West, Vidino’s opinion is that the Muslim Brothers remain motivated by the ideal of establishing God’s rule there some day.

In a chapter devoted to dilemmas in the U.S., Vidino writes that intelligence agencies have only a rudimentary knowledge of these movements, since they either lack the means of educating themselves, have to deal with strict legal frameworks or are overly focused on radical Islam. Regarding the political level, without disclosing his own opinion, he raises questions about the “transformative approach” hypothesis whereby the opening of the Brothers toward society and the politi-

cal system, involving constraints and alliances, would more or less naturally lead the movement toward a more pragmatic approach.

The author pays special attention to three countries: the United Kingdom, Germany and the U.S. In the UK, he describes the rise of Pakistani Islamism with the Jamaat-e-Islami movement and the way in which it orchestrated a radicalization of the Muslim community through the mobilization against Rushdie's Satanic Verses, although such leadership has become increasingly challenged in recent years. In Germany, the Brotherhood had to find its place in a quite diverse Muslim population dominated by people of Turkish origins; the Brothers have

a very bad reputation there with security agencies that consider them as a "foreign extremist organization." In the U.S., explains Vidino, although the Brothers position themselves as the best bulwark against extremism, some level of fascination for Bin Laden can be detected in the more militant publications of the movement.

Although well-informed, the security angle that the author has chosen does not really manage to open a third way between "optimistic" and "pessimistic" approaches, and it very soon reaches its limits. The book fails to pay attention to the sociological realities—the life stories of activists and internal tensions within the movement. The lack of a socio-

logical dimension means that the author has failed to identify one of the major characteristics of the Brothers' experience in the West: the fact that they have often managed to reach a level of respectability that goes along with the phenomenon of demobilization. This takes place in a context where there has been a growing diversity of Islamic offers on the "market," with the Brothers being challenged both by competitors proposing much "softer" forms of religiosity and, on the other side, by the rise of Salafi groups.—*Reviewed by Patrick Haenni, a researcher at the Religioscope Institute.*

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

1) **Confession: A Roman Catholic App** is the first time an iPhone/iPad application has been given an imprimatur, or church approval. The app is designed to be used in the confessional, providing a personalized examination of conscience for each user and a step-by-step guide to the sacrament. Modeled on the printed guides that have been traditionally used to prepare for confession, the text was developed in collaboration with Rev. Thomas G. Weinandy, OFM, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Rev. Dan Scheidt, pastor of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Mishawaka, IN. It is hoped that the app is will be used by individuals who have been away from the sacrament for some time.

(Source: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/confession-a-roman-catholic/id416019676?mt=8#>)

2) While herself Greek Orthodox, mystic and visionary **Vassula Ryden** had already been the object of warnings by the Roman Catholic Church, and on March 16 she was excommunicated by the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Since 1985, Ryden has claimed to receive messages from Christ through an interior voice. Her messages put special emphasis on Church unity and seem to attract especially people with a Roman Catholic background. She has found enthusiastic supporters around the world, and the movement formed around her is active under the name of True Life in God (TLIG). Although the Orthodox Church of Greece had criticized Ryden, since she is a Greek living in the West she falls under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which explains the recent decision.

The fact that a handful of Orthodox priests adhere to the teachings of Ry-

den may have contributed to the action. Last year, in Romania, an Orthodox priest was suspended after concelebrating with a Roman Catholic priest on Pentecost day during a visit of Ryden to his church. All those who support her teachings will no longer be admitted to ecclesiastical communion, the statement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate said.

(Source: True Life in God: <http://www.tlig.org> – Original statement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Greek: <http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=gr&id=1306&tla=gr> – Unofficial English translation: <http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2011/03/announcement-on-vassula-ryden-by.html>)

3) Once considered as an eccentric occultist with little impact, **Ben Kadosh** (the pen name of Carl William Hansen, 1872–1936) has become one of the key references for Satanists active in Denmark and Sweden. Hansen had interacted with a variety of occult groups of his time and described himself as a Luciferian, believing Lucifer was the initiator giving access to mysteries hidden by the

CONTACT

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

Religion Watch,
P.O. Box 652,
North Bellmore,
NY 11710

PHONE:

(516) 225-9503

FAX:

(516) 750-9081

E-MAIL:

relwatch1@msn.com

WEBSITE:

www.religionwatch.com

EDITOR:

Richard P. Cimino

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

Jean-François Mayer

BUSINESS OFFICE:

Religion Watch,
P.O. Box 18,
New York,
NY 10276

E-MAIL:

subs@religionwatch.com

church. In 1906, he published a pamphlet meant to spread the worship of Satan/Lucifer. The text is quite difficult to understand, but some admirers of Hansen's work claim that it was a way of preventing the uninitiated from understanding it. A later work of Hansen no longer contained explicit Satanic references. He possibly attracted a handful of people, but never managed to create a real organization, according to writer Per Faxneld.

Strangely, however, Satanists in Scandinavia have now been rediscovering Hansen and using him as a reference, notably as one of the sources of inspiration for the Neo-Luciferian Church, which was founded in 2005. Considering that the lineage of Satanist organizations is quite novel, despite oc-

casional claims to the contrary, the fact of being able to refer to an esoteric author writing more than 100 years ago provides some additional legitimacy, even if the heritage had in fact remained dormant for several decades. Moreover, even scholarly works such as publications by Per Faxneld himself have led Satanists to discover Hansen and become enthusiastic readers of his work: the influence both of fiction and scholarly works on religious (re)constructions is a phenomenon worth paying attention to (and something already well known by scholars studying contemporary Paganism, one could add).

(Source: *Aries*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2011, c/o: Hilda Nobach, Faculty of Humanities, Dept. Art, Religion and Cultural Studies, Oude Turfmarkt 147, 1012 GC Amsterdam, Netherlands)

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 1,000 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.

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