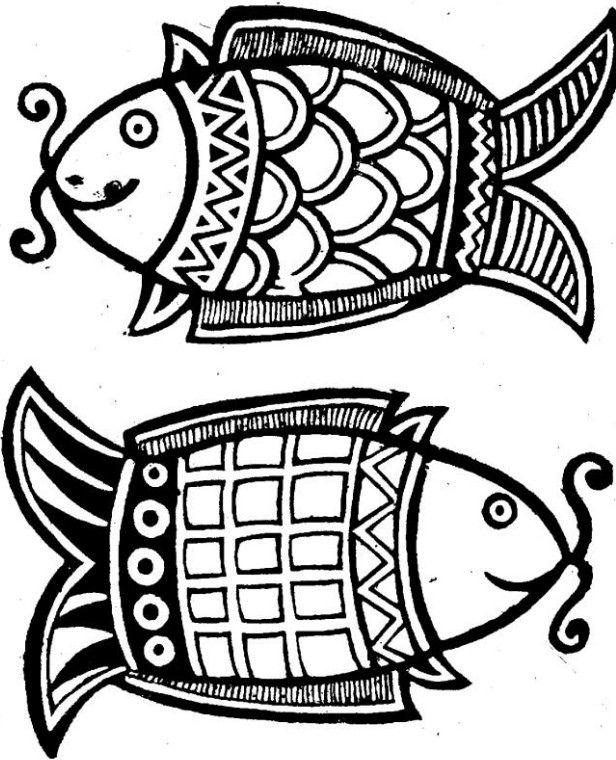


**BRITISH ASSOCIATION**  
for the  
**STUDY OF RELIGIONS**



**BULLETIN**

No 100 November 2003

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The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR), formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), whose object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through international interdisciplinary collaboration. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions and who are normally resident in the United Kingdom. Those interested in membership may apply directly by writing to the **Hon Secretary** to whom all general correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent: **Dr Graham Harvey, Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.**

Correspondence concerning the **Bulletin**, including information and contributions, should be addressed to **Dr George D. Chryssides** at [G.D.Chryssides@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:G.D.Chryssides@wlv.ac.uk) or at **School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, University of Wolverhampton, Millennium City Building, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 3SB**. Deadlines for submissions are: 15 October for November issue; 15 February for March issue; 15 May for June issue.

Orders for the **Occasional Papers** should be addressed to: **Professor Kim Knott, Dept of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.**

**Editorial: ‘This editorial is the same in every copy.’**

At the University of Wolverhampton, two juxtaposed posters are frequently displayed, bearing the title, ‘This poster is exactly the same as the other.’ The identical pair of posters warns of the unacceptability of plagiarism, and the possible penalties for those found guilty. Alas, at the entrance to the new Millennium City Building, someone has seen fit to remove one of the pair, presumably without having read the content, and believing that this was unnecessary duplication.

I was interested to attend the slot at the recent BASR conference, at which PRS-LTSN had organised a demonstration of ‘Copycatch’, an impressive piece of computer software designed to combat plagiarism — partly by encouraging students to develop their skills at independently summarising their source material, and by detecting and amassing evidence of academic misconduct. Of course, several major religious figures have not been above plagiarism: I tried feeding Matthew, Mark and Luke’s versions of the ‘Transfiguration’ story into Copycatch, and comparing the results with my own personal summary of the narrative. Assuming the primacy of Mark, Matthew and Luke would undoubtedly have been subjected to the university’s disciplinary proceedings, respectively scoring 49 per cent and 45 per cent on content similarity. My own version was much preferred, gaining a mere 20 per cent.

In the November Bulletin it is customary to publish reports of the BASR Annual Conference. It is interesting to note that contributors focused principally on the strictly academic content, leaving it to the editor to comment on the more mundane topic of plagiarism detection. It is only right, however, that the BASR should cover a wide area of activities relating to research, learning and teaching in Religious Studies; after all, if we could only spend less time on tedious matters like plagiarism, more time could be freed up for enhancing teaching and research.

The editor has endeavoured to make the BASR Bulletin cover a range of activities associated with RS. In this edition, we have the usual reports of conferences, notices of forthcoming events, Peggy Morgan’s ‘looking back’ over the past 50 years of RS academic life, and the regular ‘Turning Point’ feature where in this edition Owen Cole writes about his personal contacts within the Sikh religion. Additionally, we have included a post-graduate research report: researchers are invited to send more of these, since it is important to look at the future of the subject as well as its past. In this edition too there is also room for some (albeit limited) academic debate: Frank Whaling’s recent ‘Turning Point’, about Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, elicited a rejoinder from Robert Segal of Lancaster University, and I have given Frank Whaling the right of reply. I hope this is of interest, and that, even within the Bulletin’s limited space, we can still find room for lively academic debate.

As for this for this editorial, Copycatch only detects a 3 per cent content similarity to the last Bulletin's — and anyone who wants more information about the software (including a free sample download) can visit its website at [www.copycatchgold.com](http://www.copycatchgold.com).

**George Chryssides**

### **A Message from the Treasurer—Subscription Reminder**

If you have not yet paid your subscription for 2003/2004 it is *already* overdue. No individual reminders will be sent and it is therefore up to you to ensure that payment has been made. If we do not receive your subscription we will assume that you no longer wish to be a member of the Association and, in that case, this will be the last copy of the Bulletin you will be sent. We don't want to lose you, so please send in your cheque without delay. I am very happy to supply forms for you to send to your bank to set up an annual standing order payment.

**Helen Waterhouse**

The annual subscription for the BASR and Bulletin is £15.00 (£8 for postgraduate students and researchers without full employment). Scholars residing abroad may subscribe to the Bulletin for £10.00 a year. Subscriptions are due in October. The BASR is a registered charity (No 801567), and members are encouraged to pay their subscriptions by Gift Aid (if in taxed employment), by direct debit or annual cheque. Cheques should be made out to the 'British Association for the Study of Religions' and sent to the Treasurer: **Dr Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.**

—Visit our website at <<http://basr.org.uk>>—

## **BASR OCCASIONAL PAPERS (order from Kim Knott)**

- 1 Miranda Green, *Women and Goddesses in the Celtic World*, 1991
- 2 Christine Trevett, *The Quaker Margaret Fell: Religion and Gender in a 17th Dissenting Group*, 1991
- 3 Ann Bancroft, *Hildegard of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead*, 1991
- 4 Julia Leslie, *Religion, Gender and Dharma: The Case of the Widow Ascetic*, 1991
- 5 Peter Antes, *How to study religious experience in the traditions*, 1992
- 6 Marion Bowman, *Phenomenology, fieldwork and folk religion*, 1992
- 7 George Chrystides, *Unificationism: A study in religious syncretism*, 1993
- 8 Michael Pye, *Syncretism versus synthesis*, 1993
- 9 Ria Kloppenber, *A Buddhist-Christian encounter in Sri Lanka: Pandura Vada*, 1994
- 10 Peter Donovan, *Maori rituals add magic to contemporary civic life*, 1995
- 11 Ninian Smart, *Sacred nationalism*, 1995
- 12 W.S.F. Pickering, *Locating the sacred: Durkheim and Otto*, 1995
- 13 Terence Thomas, *'The sacred' as a viable concept in the contemporary study of religions*, 1995 (bound together with 12)
- 14 Margaret Chatterjee, *Do we need authority in religious life?*, 1996
- 15 Chris Arthur, *Media, meaning, and method in the study of religion*, 1996
- 16 Gerrie ter Haar, *Chosen people: The concept of diaspora in the modern world*, 1996
- 17 Richard Gombrich, *Religious experience in early Buddhism*, 1997
- 18 James Cox, *Alterity as identity: Innovation in the Academic Study of Religions*, 1998
- 19 Elizabeth Amoah, *African spirituality and religious innovation*, 1998
- 20 Ian Reader, *Religion, conflict and the sacred mission: On understanding the violence of Aum Shinrikyo*, 1999
- 21 Brian Bocking, *Religious Studies: The New Queen of the Sciences*, 2000
- 22 Kim Knott, *The Sense and Nonsense of 'Community': A Consideration of Contemporary Debates about Community and Culture by a Scholar of Religion*, 2002
- 23 Armin Geertz, *Religion and Community in Indigenous Contexts*, 2002
- 24 Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, *Religion and Community in the Ancient World*, 2002
- 25 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State*, 2002

## Looking Forward to Looking Back

### From Past Bulletins of BAHHR / BASR (compiled by Peggy Morgan)

Lengthy presidential addresses have been rather spasmodic over the years and shorter reports rather than addresses find their way into the minutes of the AGM. The following piece was given by Cyril Williams in his first year as Honorary President (he served from 1985-1988), and in it he reflects on thirty years of the subject in the context of his attendances at the conferences of IAHR from 1955-1985 'From Rome to Sydney'. After the discussion of and protest against cuts in the last Bulletin extracts, this piece has an air of confidence about the place of the subject, though Cyril Williams is also realistic about the dangers. Reminiscences of his meetings with scholars that many of us know only from the spines of books make it a rich reflection.

Professor D. P. Davies says of Cyril Williams in his introduction to *The Coming Deliverer* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1997), a volume dedicated to Williams by his Lampeter colleagues, that 'Cyril Williams, beyond all others and sometimes almost singlehanded, introduced Religious Studies as a serious academic discipline into the curriculum of the University of Wales. This made him uniquely qualified to write, in 1990, an essay called *Religious Studies in The Universities — Wales* for the volume *Turning Points in Religious Studies* edited by Ursula King. During his career he had been involved in developments in Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth before merging the small Aberystwyth department with Theology at St David's College, Lampeter in 1983. But he was never parochial. He was a Professor in Canada for five years and has always supported both BASR and IAHR. His offer of 'A Travelling Paper' (with Irene) on *Local Pioneers of Peace* for the 1998 BASR conference in Lampeter showed how some of his distinguished Welsh compatriots had also travelled, for example from Ffald y Brenin to found Shansi University and to translate *The Lotus Sutra* and Ashvaghosha's *Awakening of Faith* (Timothy Richard 1845-1919), and where there were local links with T. W. Rhys Davids.

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**  
**British Association for the History of Religions, 19 October 1985**

*FROM ROME TO SYDNEY:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS*

The first Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions which I attended was in Rome in 1955. Thirty years have passed and they have been the most momentous in our field. There were illustrious scholars there, but who would have predicted the great burgeoning of the study of religions, especially in North America, during the sixties and early seventies? To a great extent we have to thank the perceptive, if sometimes confusedly expressed, trends of student choice in that period. I wish to reflect on these in a moment; but before that let me express a certain *pietas* towards the giants of that era.

There was Pettazzoni, the very figure of an Italian liberal of the older school, with his noble white hair and gentle visage; and the more hawk-eyed H. J. Rose, doyen of Classical studies on religion; and Brandon, still rather Anglo-Catholic in mien, but also with the precision of a lawyer, perhaps and the young-seeming Zaehner, gleaming behind his glasses, and self-deprecating in his slightly lopsided smile; and Geo Widengren, as if straight off a horse and wistful about the last campaign in Finland; and E. O. James, standard-bearer of comparative religion in the inter-war period, and most Anglican in appearance; and dear old A. C. Bouquet, whom I caught up with on a visit to Ostia, sitting on a ruined wall, far behind the main party, and whom I had observed as a child, for he lived near us on Madingley Road, Cambridge; and Giuseppe Tucci, great Italian Tibetologist . . . Mostly these have left us for a higher level of existence. We now live in a very different world, where the study of religions as an integral part of religious studies is taken for granted in many places, and where it is no surprise to find the young learning Sanskrit or Chinese, out of a desire to master ancient texts from the great spiritual traditions.

It has above all been student interest which has led to changes, though the relatively rigid British system sees less of this than the American or Canadian. But at least in Western countries there is much more concern for world religions now than in those days of Rome; and even if the field is not as well developed in the university sector as we might have wished, and has suffered severe losses in the colleges and polytechnics, it is alive and well in the schools. For the period in question has seen a revolution in religious education, as evidenced by the establishment of such groups as the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education. There are some analogous developments in Scandinavia and Germany and also the beginning of comparative religion in South Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

Apart from the arousal of student choice there have been other factors: the realization in America that a State university could teach religion in a plural



way, pioneering academic initiatives (for instance, I think some possible founding professors of religious studies at Lancaster would have been more conservative); the parallel expansion under Government pressures of non-European studies; the fact that in secular institutions pluralism is the price that the pious have to pay in pushing for religion in the curriculum. There has been the growth of migrant plurality in so many Western cities; the need in certain African states to have a balance in the studies of religion; the realization that knowledge of other cultures and in particular the religious aspect thereof might be useful in politics and business. But some of these latter concerns have been later in our chosen thirty years. It was the Ayatollah who proved to be God's gift to religious studies, but only in 1979 and after.

There have been negative factors: boredom with traditional Biblical studies; the neo-colonialist ethos of some sociology and anthropology; and the failure of many philosophy departments to offer teaching about meaningful metaphysical worldviews and their concentration on narrowly scientific and rationalistic assumptions.

There was especially in the United States a new spirit of questioning in the '60s. Kennedy, a wonderful symbol of liberal self-satisfaction, was dead. The generation gap, fostered by commercial interests and new images, brought a turning away from the square values of parents who remembered World War II. Protestantism was too well integrated into the business successes of the Eisenhower years and after. McCarthyism had gone, and with it repression of freer thinking. There was heard the music of the Beat Generation who had led the way. There were the new rhythms of Liverpool, and a sudden realization that contraception implied the sexual revolution. Youth burned, and the Vietnam War brought challenges to older ways of doing things. A new pluralism and a new liberalism were born, beyond the older clichés, and spawning a new set. Finding one's true self came to be the rage, and the Eastern religions beckoned, together with the psychedelic drugs. Easterners came West and gurus made money. And meanwhile students flocked to yoga classes, and Buddhism courses, and traipsed East in their minds, sometimes with great seriousness, sometimes too fashionably and superficially. The new wave of Religious Studies was granted the cannon-fodder of the modern campus, the numbers that impress Deans.

The young grasped the logic of life in a way that still our greyer leaders fail to feel. They soon realized that revelations and gurus and books are many. They didn't mind too much if some of the holy books are phony or that Jesus did not really invent the kind of bread called after him. Messages are multiple. How should establishmentarians properly deny that revelations abound, that authorities have softened, that there is no need to obey the Pope if you seriously disagree, that the holy books tell us many things that scholars cannot believe? Christianities became a subset of religious traditions and subtractions. The logic of life dictated pluaralism.

Yet of course by a sleepy, tenacious and ultimately dishonest conservatism the revolution foreshadowed by the students has not quite occurred. Theology, that is to say Christian theology, remains master. It still, though weakened, dominates our profession. In Harvard the Center for the Study of World Religions is part of the Divinity School, not vice versa. In most places other religions live on sufferance on the edge of studies which assume, falsely, that Christianity is not a minority religion, and which assume that it somehow self-evidently has a better claim to serious consideration than other faiths. We live in a new world civilization but much of our education is still terribly parochial. It is as if Vivekananda and Max Muller and E. O. James and Filmer Northrop had not lived. Well, almost. For something has happened, and the study of religions has indeed proliferated, despite the conservative hankerings of so many influential people in our field.

And in some way the new mood of the late 70s and 80s is very serious and professional. Many students want to know about religions because they want to know about the world. They are interested more in human facts than spiritual quests. They are, many of them, especially in California, professionally oriented: they wish to travel, before nuclear doom, first class on the Titanic. You hear of girls with majors in religion being recruited for the CIA.

Australia itself was a good venue for the new mood. It is the latest important area for the development of Religious Studies, in the last decade, with the foundation of departments first in Queensland and then in Sydney, and programmes in Latrobe and Deakin, and before these university places in some of the more important colleges of advanced education. So Australia now has a modest but flourishing investment in our field, and the Sydney conference symbolised that.

So we have come far, in the world, in 1985. But in Britain we face a crisis because of the effects of Government contraction. What is the way forward? I believe there are two models of degrees in our field in this country. One model is the theology model, the other the religious studies model. Both models can exist in the same department, so what I say should not be simplistically read against the titles which may be used in departments. A University may even call its program theology but actually practise something like religious studies, though this is not normal. Of the two models one has no justification in a state-supported institution. We should make it clear that it is the religious studies model which is both more logical and more ethical.

We should also resist the model of the 'our faith' approach, that Jewish Studies should be for Jews, Christian Studies for Christians and so on. It is not the place of the University to lay down faith criteria or appointing or for inclusion in the curricula.

There was nothing much said about these matters at Sydney, save somewhat in the methodology section. But these issues of where we are going are crucial to our subject, and in order to achieve progress over the next thirty years we shall

need cunning as well as the inexorable weight of the logic of One World. We sail as ever between the Scylla of rationalism and the Charybdis of establishmentarianism, from Kuala Lumpur to Canterbury, and from Wogga Wogga to Colombo.

**Professor Cyril Williams**  
*BAHR Bulletin 47: November 1985*

### **A request**

The BASR is compiling an archive of its records and publications. Peggy Morgan, the Association's Past President, would be grateful if any member has a copy of *Occasional Paper No. 3* by Anne Bancroft (1991), on *Hildegarde of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead*. Neither the archivist nor the author possesses a copy. If you can help, please contact Peggy Morgan, Mansfield College, OX1 3TF.

### **Equinox Publishing**

Equinox Publishing Ltd., a new company based in London, was launched at the BASR conference in Chester by Managing Director Janet Joyce (formerly Director at Continuum). The company has been set up to publish both books and journals and is actively seeking new projects. The religious studies list is handled by Janet Joyce and will represent a major part of the company's profile and they also plan to publish biblical studies and theology under the editorship of Professor Philip Davies, (Sheffield University). Further information is available on their website [www.equinoxpub.com](http://www.equinoxpub.com) and they will be attending the AAR/SBL in Atlanta.

## **II. RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS (U.K., Europe, International)**

### **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

#### **BASR ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CHESTER, SEPTEMBER 2003**

With one annual lecture, twelve panels, thirty-two papers and three ‘work in progress reports’ on the programme this year in Chester, there was plenty of opportunity to consider a wide range of interesting issues, to be inspired, informed and provoked. The programme and papers were admirably coherent and focussed on the given topic: ‘Religions in Transition: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives’. My overall sense is of having been at an event that debated a defining issue not only *about* religions but also *for* the Study of Religions: change is integral rather than alien to religions as they are lived (whether or not religious elites and/or participants like it) and our discipline is becoming increasingly adept in studying these changing and changeable religions and offering critical perspectives on them.

This report is based on reports provided by chairs of sessions (to whom I am grateful). I apologise for missing ideas that others found brilliant, and look forward to reading published versions of at least some papers.

The annual lecture (to be published as a BASR Occasional paper) was given by Rosalind Hackett of the University of Tennessee. Entitled ‘Carping or Carpe Diem: The Response of Scholars of Religion to Global (Religious) Violence’, it surveyed and contributed to the literature on the contested relationships between religion and violence. Perhaps its greatest value was as an invitation to further consider and debate relationships between scholars and policy makers, politicians, journalists and others. Or maybe it offered a challenge to go beyond reflection and to participate and engage more fully with our community and culture(s).

The first twin-tracked session offered a choice between papers on ‘indigenous religions in transition’ and ‘religion and health’. The first of these brought three different perspectives and contexts into dialogue. Graham Harvey talked about Maori diaspora communities in London and Alice Springs to exemplify an argument that change is not necessarily alien to indigeneity but may be inherent even to ‘traditional’ processes. Tina Welch then spoke about uses of representations of Native Americans in British, European and North American pow-wows, among other things addressing questions of appropriation, authenticity, context and decontextualisation. Theodore Gabriel’s paper considered the various ways in which ‘Dravidian and Tribal Religions in Kerala’ are in dialogue and/or confrontation with those religions more commonly recognised as Hinduism. Simultaneously in the ‘religion and health’ session, Judith Webster discussed therapeutic uses of Medusa in considering death and dying, Anne Rowbottom considered negotiations between alternative

spiritualities, Christianity and ME, and Judit Blair reflected on the (comparable?) roles of demons and germs in particular notions and practices of health.

On the Tuesday morning I chose to hear papers on 'religion and violence' which included papers on padres in the British armed forces, symbolic communities of women survivors of 'domestic' violence, and the 'apocalyptic terror' of the verbal violence in the rhetoric of religious groups in Israel and Palestine. While clearly separate, all these papers addressed the tense challenge of the desire and distaste for violence in those involved in various particular ways. Not having received chair's summaries of the papers on 'Religion, India and Contested Histories' I can only say that the richness of the session is suggested by reference in titles to the Indo-European Sky God, Sufis, Sadhus, Sovereigns, and Congress.

The two papers on 'Buddhism in transition' both focused on the ways in which Buddhists are dealing with tensions arising as modernity and tradition come into conflict. Fang-long Shih considered Buddhist solutions to problems arising in Taiwan with reference to ancestors and maiden deaths. Phil Henry debated the reasons for adding 'Engaged' as a descriptor or self-designation for some or all kinds of Buddhism. The first speaker in the parallel session, the first of two panels on 'Islam in transition', offered what must be the longest title in recent years. Myfanwy Frank discussed an ethnography of diaspora Muslims, including reflection on methodological issues. She was followed by Andreas Christmann's debate about whether a Syrian work of Qur'anic exegesis was 'innovative change or sheer provocation'. The importance of the timing of publication was highlighted as major factor in giving the book prominence.

The second panel on 'Islam in transition' added 'in Britain' to its title. It included Ian Williams on the role of relics among Nottingham's Sufis as a source of blessing but ambiguous innovation (is it illicit or useful?), Elaine Housby on Islamic alternatives to mortgages, and Ron Geaves on contemporary changes as British and European Sufis confront Wahabi presence and dominance. The chair's notes include two interesting questions: Elaine would be grateful if anyone could tell her if there is an Islamic Housing Association anywhere, and Ron does not know 'where the mainstream-isation of Sufism will leave the hair from the prophet's beard'. Anyone?

Elsewhere, a panel on new religions in transition included Eileen Barker's 'NRMs ain't wot they used to be', raising issues about the 'new' and the 'traditional' in these movements that were further discussed in papers delivered by Elisabeth Arweck and George Chryssides. The first spoke of children's education among Sathya Sai Baba and Brahma Kumaris communities, and the latter of the use of spiritualist discourse and practice by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.

Happily, most of the papers in this conference were about continuing research. Thus the 'work in progress' session did not have to offer needed refreshment

from a sense that speakers have said it all before too often. Instead, it brought together three short papers of similar quality to those already mentioned. Two research students from Edinburgh, Suzanne Owen and Mary Burgess, introduced their consideration of methodology in studying indigenous religions and of shamanic practice and definitions in Celtic cultures respectively. John Wallis then spoke of his attempts towards a theory of millenarian violence.

Wednesday morning's first panels were 'Rethinking sacred space' and 'Religion across cultures'. The first opened with another work in progress as Kim Knott elaborated left hands as locations in religious, secular and 'post-secular religious' contexts. The two following papers were made difficult by the failure of technology to support what Anastasia Karaflogka and Stephanie Barger had planned. However, both offered versions of their presentations about the use and effect of the internet on and among religious people and 'seekers' through search engines. The parallel panel included Emma Tomalin's consideration of the role (or its lack) of religions and religious studies in development, Brian Walker's theorising of praxis-based inter-faith dialogue processes, and Moojan Momen's reflections on the globalization of the Baha'i faith between 1892 and 1921.

The final panels of the conference were interested in 'Christianity in transition' and 'Alternative spirituality'. The former comprised John Breadon's discussion of the secularisation of the Protestant God and self, and Marion Bowman's engagement with devotion to Saint Gerard Majella in Newfoundland. Some interestingly opposing dynamics are evident even from the titles of these papers. In the alternative panel, Chris Partridge talked about the Messianism and demonology of UFO religions, while Ruth Bradby illustrated what seems destined to become a classic case of routinization as *A Course in Miracles* becomes embroiled in authenticity and hermeneutical confrontations among its readership.

Conferences are not only and all about words, however. They are also occasions for book-buying, publishing-deals, networking, conversations, chatting and socialising over food and drink. Apart from remembering and/or reading notes about papers, a number of people have told me that they will most remember the quality of the food served to us at Chester. The organisers and the institution deserve thanks for that.

**Graham Harvey**

## **BASR Annual Conference 2003: Reports from Researchers**

‘Religion and Health’. *Following the Spirit: Negotiating Alternative Spirituality, Christianity and ME*.

Anne Rowbottom, Manchester Metropolitan University, discussed her case studies of people with ‘chronic fatigue’. She explained that because doctors often do not understand or know how to treat this condition, and organized religions often ignore how healing experiences sparked religious beginnings, patients often seek ‘alternative treatments’ with a spiritual focus on re-connecting with all creation and regaining lost knowledge of universal life energy (e.g. Reiki, acupuncture, yoga). Anne described her discoveries as examples of re-spiritualizing and re-forming religious consciousness.

In *Imaging Death through Medusa’s Eyes: A Temporal Perspective*, Judith Wester from Lancaster University explored the origins of western medicine’s institutional beliefs about death. Highlighting the myth of Medusa, she showed how over the millennia Medusa’s transformation from symbol of life’s interconnectedness to symbol of death’s ugliness has paralleled western medicine’s movement from understanding death as part of the life cycle to seeing it as a feared enemy. Judith described contemporary emergence of the ancient themes of interconnectedness and inclusion.

Explaining that ancient peoples often understood illness as possession by demons, Judit Blair from Edinburgh University described in *From Demons to Germs* how demons were believed to cause suffering and child-killing. Because of that, people used incantations and amulets to protect against demonic possession and/or to expel offending demons and prevent their return. Exorcism was experienced as healing. Referring to the biblical Lillith, Judit showed how Lillith’s re-appearance in various expressions over time exemplifies society’s continued attempts to clarify parameters of magic, medicine, and religion.

**MaryCatherine Burgess**

After a warm welcome, in the first session we were placed in several groups to discuss aspects of ‘religious studies’ — ours was on ‘the perception of’. I was left holding the paper and pen to write down the comments of my group, which included both my supervisors and a lot of people I hadn’t met yet (in other words, a little scary!). The most common perception seems to be that people outside of religious studies assume that we are training for the ministry. Some would like a name change because the word ‘religious’ assumes that we are that.

After coffee (the breaks and lengths of panel sessions were well planned so that we weren’t exhausted), I went to the panel on ‘Indigenous Religions in Transition’. Jim Cox, chairing, mentioned how good it was to have such a panel (recognising the importance of including ‘marginalised’ religions). The first of three papers was by Graham Harvey, lately of King Alfred’s in Winchester, on

the Maori diaspora, specifically those in Alice Springs. The relationship between the Maori and local Australian Aboriginal peoples was revealing. The Maori respect the primacy of the local, while the Aboriginals ‘watch’ what the Maori do.

Christina Welch, a doctoral student in Winchester, gave a paper on the pow-wow in Britain, including her experiences as a researcher. She had become involved in the debate between those who follow the Lakota advice on dress and the wearing of an eagle feather, and those who do not.

The final paper was by Theodore Gabriel of the University of Gloucestershire on the ‘Dravidian’ and ‘tribal’ religions in Kerala, which, he points out, are problematic terms, referring to those who were traditionally deemed ‘untouchable’. The paper described how two such groups have tried to create new identities, either by ‘Hindu-ising’ their tribal gods, or through egalitarianism based on advaita philosophy. I was glad to know the presenters at the start of the conference so that I could have several informal chats with them over the three days!

In the evening, Rosalind Hackett of the University of Tennessee gave a paper about scholars’ responses to ‘Global (Religious) Violence’ saying that we should be more involved these debates, rather than having just the views of political analysts and religious practitioners. The day did not end there for many as further discussions continued in the local!

**Suzanne Owen**

The ‘Rethinking Sacred Space’ panel consisted of three works in progress — *All in the space of a left hand: Religion in transition in the West* by Kim Knott (Leeds), *E-religion: A Voyage of Discovery or a Guided Tour* by Anastasia Karaflogka (SOAS), and *Community in Transition: Virtual Sacred Space* by Stephanie Barger (Edinburgh).

Professor Knott opened the panel with an interesting analysis about how the body in space, in particular, the hands, represent hierarchically organised religious values. She further argued that the values ascribed to the right hand and the left hand change in different times. In the pre-modern period in the West, the right hand was associated with good, order and positive values, while the left hand was associated with evil, chaos and negative values. By contrast, in the secular and democratic modern age, left and right have become equal, whereas in the post-secular religious period, the left hand is valued more highly than the right.

Karaflogka and Barger both talked about virtual religions or religions online. Karaflogka used ‘E-religion’ as an umbrella term to cover religions in cyberspace. She suggested that web portals and search engines order and classify web data, dictating what users can find and how users find it.

Barger was concerned with contemporary Druidism and the popular representation of Druidism on the web. She showed that instructions for Druidic



rituals are available online and rituals are being performed online. Computers are being sacralised to make the web itself a religious space, suggesting an interesting line of enquiry into those processes through which a conventionally ‘profane’ object can be transformed—if only temporarily—into a sacred object.

**Fang-long Shih**

Three interesting Work in Progress papers were presented during the conference. Suzanne Owen, a doctoral student from Edinburgh University, raised the subject of methodological issues in regard to her study of Indigenous Religions. Highlighting the insider/outside debate and the issue of potential Eurocentricism in fieldwork, she foregrounded the need for a reflexive and subject positioned approach to research, stressing the importance of respect and reciprocity as a non-Native fieldworker researching the lifeways of Native peoples.

MaryCatherine Burgess, also a doctoral student from Edinburgh, spoke about her work with shamans in Scotland. Through the application of Hervieu-Leger’s model of religion as a chain of memory, Mary explained how she aims to test the existence of underlying cross-cultural Shamanic principles and a collective Shamanic memory. She too mentioned the insider/outsider issue, noting how her own shamanic training had beneficially affected her fieldwork, allowing relationships to develop with subjects who might otherwise have been reticent about discussing their beliefs and practices.

The third paper was by John Walliss who was questioning established theories in regard to millenarian violence. John suggested that alongside other issues, the role of diminishing leader charisma should be investigated as a cause for the deaths associated with groups such as the Solar Temple. Although hardly a humorous topic, his egg analogy and visions of a teenage Messiah having temper tantrums and crushes on boy bands brought levity to a potentially dark topic.

The papers were followed by a lively round of questioning; questioning which doubtless continued well into the evening.

**Christiana Welch**

**British Association for the Study of Religions: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 6:00 p.m. on 16 September 2003 in the Beswick Building, Chester College**

**1. Welcome.** The President, Peggy Morgan, declared the meeting open by welcoming the members and thanking them for coming. She expressed thanks to Chester College and to the organisers in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies for hosting this year's Annual Conference.

**2. Apologies.** The Secretary, James Cox, noted that apologies had been received from the following members: Ursula King, Frank Whaling, Paul Badham, Dominic Corrywright, Mathew Guest, Xinzhong Yao, Steven Sutcliffe, Miles Lang, Denise Cush, Michael Pye, Clare McCrae, Cyril Williams, and Eleanor Nesbitt.

**3. Minutes.** The Minutes of the AGM held on 10 September 2002 at the University of Surrey, Roehampton and which had been published in the BASR Bulletin 97, were approved and signed by the President.

**4. President's Address.** The Honorary President, Peggy Morgan, addressed the Meeting. (The full text of the address is found at the conclusion of these Minutes.)

**5. Secretary's Report.** The Honorary Secretary, James Cox, reported that the current mailing list contains 235 names, but that at the meeting of the Executive Committee in November, the list of members will be reviewed and up-dated.

The Secretary noted that the Executive Committee had met three times since the last AGM; 27<sup>th</sup> November in Bath; 26<sup>th</sup> February in Wolverhampton; and 21<sup>st</sup> May in Wolverhampton. The overriding themes of the meetings had focused on four main areas: (1) The history of the BASR and the preservation of its archive; (2) planning towards the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in 2004; (3) relations with other organisations concerned with the academic study of religions in the UK and internationally (chiefly in the UK, the Learning and Teaching Support Network and the Association of Departments of Theology and Religious Studies, and internationally, the European Association for the Study of Religions and the International Association for the History of Religions); (4) publications.

On the first point, the BASR archive will be lodged in 2004 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The archive consists of the full Minutes of the BASR from its founding in 1954 to the present, the full collection of BASR Bulletins, the complete set of BASR Occasional Papers, and correspondence with members of the executive of the association.

On the second point, the Executive has been working actively in the planning of the BASR 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference to be held 13-16 September 2004 in Harris-Manchester College, Oxford.

Reports on the various national and international organisations with which the BASR is working closely appear later in the Minutes.

Finally, a special publication to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is being edited by Steven Sutcliffe to be published by Ashgate under the title, 'Ordering Religion: Empirical Approaches in Religious Studies'. This consists of selected Occasional Papers which have been published by the BASR, along with an analytical chapter by the editor, and a foreword and afterword by Peggy Morgan and James Cox respectively. It is hoped that the book will be published in time for the BASR Conference in September 2004.

The Secretary closed his report by reiterating the point made by the President in her address that the BASR should persist in its effort to communicate to the national press that Religious Studies is a field in its own right, separate from Theology.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

The Honorary Treasurer, Helen Waterhouse, presented her annual report, which showed the accumulated balances in the General and Conferences funds at £13,003. She noted that committee expenses were rather high during the 2002-2003 period because of the costs of sending BASR representatives to Bergen, Norway for the EASR/IAHR meetings. The Treasurer also noted that because the balance remains healthy, five full student bursaries were awarded to postgraduates to attend the current conference. She reported that the BASR membership payment had been made to the EASR, but the payment to the IAHR is awaiting communication from the IAHR Treasurer. Finally, the Treasurer drew the attention of the meeting to the benefit obtained from Gift Aid, and urged members to subscribe to Gift Aid as a part of their membership. (The Treasurer's Report appears at the conclusion of these Minutes.)

A question was raised regarding defaulting members. The Treasurer reported that gentle email reminders had been sent, but that many non-paying members were former postgraduate students who had moved away and had not kept contact.

It was also suggested that the Treasurer investigate comparative interest rates, and that she may want to contact the Charities Aid Foundation in this regard.

Elisabeth Arweck proposed that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. It was seconded by Graham Harvey and approved by the members.

## **7. Bulletin Editor's Report**

The BASR Bulletin Editor, George Chryssides, reported that the production of the Bulletin has been occurring since March through the University of Wolverhampton. At this point, the production is going well and he is reluctant to make many changes in the format of the Bulletin. He drew the attention of the meeting to the guidelines for the length of submissions which had been outlined in the previous Bulletin. He suggested that there is scope for postgraduate students to submit short entries regarding their work in progress, so that the membership would be informed of the current research interests of

the postgraduate members. The Bulletin Editor observed that the 'Turning Points' feature is going very well. More book reviews, however, would be welcomed.

### **8. Report of the Editor of the Occasional Papers**

Mathew Guest, Editor of the BASR Occasional Papers series, submitted a written report to the meeting, which was read by the Secretary. In his report, the Editor noted that last year's annual lecture by Professor Tariq Modood is now available as paper number 25 under the title, 'Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State'. In accordance with the policy put in place last year, the paper has been given an ISBN and copies have been deposited in all six legal deposit libraries in the UK. The Occasional Papers Editor also reported that he had developed a style sheet for Occasional Papers to create consistency in the series. He had presented this to a meeting of the Executive Committee, which agreed that a common style would be an advantage for the Occasional Papers.

Rosalind Hackett, the Annual Lecturer for the current year, indicated that she had not received a copy of the guidelines and would prefer to retain the style she had employed in her paper. The President, Peggy Morgan, replied that the style sheet is not prescriptive, but indicative, and that there was no compulsion for Annual Lecturers to follow it. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the Executive Committee communicate at an early date in future with annual lecturers about the preferred BASR style for publication in the Occasional Papers series.

### **9. LTSN Report**

A written report was submitted to the meeting by Dominic Corrywright, one of the BASR representatives to the Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (PRS-LTSN). The report was read to the meeting by the Secretary. Dominic Corrywright noted that he had been to three steering group meetings: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2003. He observed that key foci for 2002-2003 have been: conclusion of mini-projects; ethics project; employability project; state of the discipline reports; and website developments. Each of these has been developed around the central theme of 'promoting the subjects'. He also drew attention to the fact that the PRS-LTSN journal is now in a larger format and has been re-named, *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies*. At the conclusion of his report, Dominic Corrywright raised the following questions on which he urged BASR members to reflect: (1) Is PRS-LTSN in communication with all Theology and Religious Studies Departments in the UK? (2) Do colleagues in TRS know about all the activities of PRS-LTSN? (3) How can BASR better help to communicate these events or the existence of mini-projects? (4) To what extent is the journal of practical use to TRS departments across the country?

## **10. AUDTRS Report**

Denise Cush, BASR representative to the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS), sent her apologies and had asked Brian Bocking, the current President of AUDTRS, to report to the meeting. Brian Bocking reported that AUDTRS currently is in a kind of lull in between Research Activity Exercises, which has defined the centre of activity for AUDTRS in recent years. He drew attention to the fact that Theology and Religious Studies are institutionally linked in the UK and that what happens to Theology happens to Religious Studies. In response to the Roberts Report, on behalf of AUDTRS, Brian Bocking indicated that he had written a letter urging against restricting research to just a few institutions. To conclude his report, he expressed appreciation to Simon Smith for producing the AUDTRS handbook at Leeds, and noted that George Chryssides is heading the Ethics Committee for AUDTRS which is writing a report to develop a code covering all aspects of Theology and Religious Studies, including research, teaching and administration.

## **11. Appointments and Elections to the Executive**

The President, Peggy Morgan, drew the meeting's attention to the Constitution of the BASR, which details how elections are to be undertaken. She noted that the current elections had followed the procedures outlined in the Constitution. She referred to the procedure whereby the President is elected one year prior to taking office. At the 2002 AGM, James Cox of Edinburgh University, had been elected President to take office at the AGM in 2003. She noted, however, that she would remain in the chair until the last business of the current meeting, when James Cox would take up his post as the new President of the BASR. She then asked James Cox, in his capacity as Secretary, to report on the current elections.

The Secretary reported that two posts on the Executive Committee were now subject to election: Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. In accordance with the Constitution, calls for nominees had been sent out in the March and June issues of the BASR Bulletin with a deadline for receiving nominations set for 1 September 2003.

*Election of the Honorary Secretary.* James Cox reported that one nominee had been received for the post of Honorary Secretary. Graham Harvey of the Open University had been nominated by James Cox and seconded by George Chryssides. Graham Harvey had given permission for his name to go forward for election as Secretary. No other names had been received. The President asked the meeting if it approved the election. Graham Harvey was elected Honorary Secretary by unanimous vote.

*Election of the Honorary Treasurer.* James Cox reported that one nominee had been received for the post of Honorary Treasurer. Helen Waterhouse of the

Open University, and the current BASR Treasurer, was proposed by Marion Bowman and seconded by George Chryssides. Helen Waterhouse had given permission for her name to go forward for election as Treasurer. No other names had been received. The President asked if it approved the election. Helen Waterhouse was elected Honorary Treasurer by unanimous vote.

*Election of Honorary Life Members.* Peggy Morgan reported that the BASR Executive had agreed to propose three new Honorary Life Members to the 2003 AGM. The proposed individuals are: Cyril Williams, Peter McKenzie and Alan Rogers. Additional names will be proposed at the 2004 fiftieth anniversary conference. The meeting approved making Cyril Williams, Peter McKenzie and Alan Rogers Honorary Life Members of the British Association for the Study of Religions. Peggy Morgan was asked to write a letter informing each new Honorary Life Member of their election and to prepare a notice for the BASR Bulletin announcing this.

## **12. EASR Report**

Peggy Morgan noted that she had represented BASR at the EASR Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003 just in advance of the EASR Conference in Bergen, Norway. She noted that the EASR membership now stands at fifteen national associations, five individual members and four pending applications. At the meeting, Peggy Morgan indicated that the BASR had expressed support for the setting up of a fund to assist those from eastern European countries to attend EASR conferences, but suggested that guidelines be established for the distribution of funds and that a separate fund be instituted for postgraduate students. The Committee recommended that funds be dedicated under three categories: a) general; b) eastern European; c) postgraduates.

Kim Knott of Leeds University, who is the membership secretary of the EASR, drew attention to the EASR Conference scheduled for 8-11 September 2004 in Santander, Spain on the theme 'Religious Tolerance and Intolerance'. She noted that this immediately precedes the BASR 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, and that it is hoped that some European delegates will attend both conferences.

## **13. IAHR Report**

James Cox reported that he and Peggy Morgan had represented the BASR at the meeting of the IAHR Committee which was held during the EASR Conference in Bergen. The main business of the Committee was to discuss the 19<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the IAHR which will be held from 24-30 March 2005 in Tokyo under the theme, 'Religion: Conflict and Peace'. James Cox drew attention to the brochures which he had with him containing full details of the World Congress and urged each member to take a number for their home institutions.

Rosalind Hackett, who is a Vice President of the IAHR, urged members to begin forming panels now. She drew attention to the 31 December 2003 deadline for proposals for individual papers, panels, symposia and roundtable sessions. Gerrie ter Haar, Professor of Human Rights in the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands, is the Programme Co-ordinator for the Congress. Full contact details for proposals are on the brochure announcing the Congress.

#### **14. Conference Review and Planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference**

Peggy Morgan expressed thanks to Marion Bowman, the BASR Conference Organiser, and to Ron Geaves and the staff at Chester College for organising a highly successful annual conference. The President noted that the arrangements had gone very well and that the conference had produced stimulating papers. The members unanimously voiced their thanks to the Conference Organisers.

Marion Bowman noted that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference has been set for September 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 at Harris Manchester College, Oxford on the theme: 'The Study of Religions: Mapping the Field'. She will remain conference organiser, but Peggy Morgan, the outgoing BASR President, will be the local organiser in Oxford. Peggy Morgan announced that the conference aims to consider past, current and future trends and research. Panels and papers may be focused on individual religions, key geographical areas, key themes, key figures and methods which contribute to the theme. The BASR annual lecture will be given by Professor Ursula King, of the Universities of Bristol and London.

#### **15. President's Word of Thanks**

James Cox, the new President of the BASR, assumed his duties as President in order to express thanks to Peggy Morgan for her work over the past years for the BASR as Conference Organiser, Honorary Secretary and as Honorary President. He noted that she had worked tirelessly for the organisation, promoting it with information, application forms and encouragement to potential new members. James Cox suggested that the growth of the BASR over the past few years had resulted in no small measure to Peggy Morgan. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the BASR for the years of leadership she had given to the Association. The meeting presented Peggy Morgan with flowers and book tokens as a way of thanking her for her contributions to the BASR.

#### **16. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

The President closed the meeting at 7:40 p.m. and announced that the next AGM of the BASR will be held during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference from 13-16 September 2004 in Oxford.

Submitted by

James Cox, Honorary Secretary

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### **President's Address to the BASR AGM 2003**

The convention of a presidential address at the AGM seems to be patchy. Each year our secretary, when compiling the agenda has asked me whether to insert the heading 'Presidential Address' but it has in previous years seemed much more appropriate to call what I have had to say a report and to keep it to a minimum, not least because there is pressure on time at the AGM and a need to listen to the many other voices of those who share the responsibility for organising, reporting and commenting on BASR matters. This they do entirely in their 'spare' time, which as all of you know becomes more and more scarce for busy professionals.

I should therefore like to begin by thanking all of those who during my presidency have contributed to the life of BASR. It is a *members'* association and every book you request and review, every conference you advertise and report, every one of your own publications and activities you detail, every feature to which you contribute, every member you introduce to the association is a significant contribution to its life. In particular I should like to mention the officers during my presidency and all their hard work. Marion Bowman has overseen our conferences, which have included hosting in Cambridge 2001, on the theme *Religion and Community*, the first gathering of the European Association for the Study of Religions, membership of which is included in your BASR subscription. Marion had no 'inside' help for 2001, which made her achievement particularly splendid, but for 2002 at Roehampton, on the theme of *Religion and the State*, she was greatly assisted by Simonetta Caldarini and this year Ron Geaves has assisted in much of the organisation. For our 2004 conference, I have indicated that I am happy to shoulder the Oxford end of the programme. Of course our treasurer, Helen Waterhouse, also bears a great deal of the responsibility for successful conference planning as well as for the general safety of our funds and producing the accounts for audit. We are very lucky that she is prepared to stand for re-election as treasurer. In 2000 James Cox became honorary secretary and handed over the task of editing the Bulletin, our main voice of communication with you through the year, to Steven Sutcliffe and in 2002 Steven, whose work profile changed, handed over to George



Chryssides, who has made a splendid start with some very full and interesting editions. Steven is still 'on board' in a different capacity and is currently editing a volume drawn from our past occasional papers which will be published by Ashgate and launched at the 2004 50th Anniversary Conference in Oxford. Judith Coney, who edited our occasional papers for many years, is now in USA and Mathew Guest has undertaken and developed that task in a very focused and dynamic way. James Cox, our incoming president, has shouldered since 2000 the task of secretary, convening executive meetings, which have taken place three or four times a year in Milton Keynes, Edinburgh and Wolverhampton and preparing all the documentation for those meetings and the AGMs. He and other members have also been very pro-active on the international front at the various conferences from the 2000 Durban, South African IAHR event to gatherings of the European and other associations. Kim Knott is membership secretary of EASR and James Cox, Helen Waterhouse, Marion Bowman and I have all been involved in their executive meetings, as well as those of IAHR whose conference planning for Tokyo 2005 is already underway. The Bulletin carries further details.

Another reason for not giving an address annually is that I have tried to contribute regularly to the Bulletin with news and comment, examples of which are an obituary for Ninian Smart, which added to the many published elsewhere including a whole edition of the journal *Religion* (2001, 31), book reviews, one of the *Turning Point* Series and the introductions to the features *Looking Forward to Looking Back* which have been included as a 'run up' to the 50th Anniversary Conference. I have also been able to liaise with John Shepherd, who has been overseeing the lodging of the Smart archive in Lancaster, even being able to fill some of the book gaps from my own library.

One of the things I naturally did when preparing this address was to look back at past pieces, which are published in the Bulletin with the AGM minutes. One significant address which will be printed in the November 2003 Bulletin as part of our *Looking Forward to Looking Back* feature was from Professor Cyril Williams in 1985. He reflected on thirty years of international congresses and his meetings with scholars who are just names to most of us. He ranged over world events and ideas, emphasised that the logic of life dictated pluralism, the importance of religion for understanding world affairs (reinforced again in recent years) and the importance of student choice for development in the subject, though he also remarked how Christian theology still dominated the profession. This is an issue still with us, I think, and one of my tasks as President has been to write to the Editor of the Guardian newspaper in May with reference to their University Guide for 2003. I quote 'the members of the executive of the British Association for the Study of Religions, who are drawn from a variety of university departments, wish to lodge a complaint that you have used the term 'theology' alone instead of distinguishing theology and religious studies / study of religions in your tables. The distinction is an

important one in the subject area and acknowledged, for example in the title of the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS), chaired at the moment by Professor Brian Bocking from the religion department at SOAS. Many departments are both theology and religious studies, but some are self-consciously religious studies / study of religions (SOAS is one such, as is Lancaster, Stirling, the Open University and others). That you are able to make professionally important distinctions is obvious from your listing of the different sorts of engineering; art/history of art; architecture/building etc. and we would ask that the same exactness is applied in the fields of theology and religious studies' I received no acknowledgement of this letter, let alone any reassurance of change. Another of my tasks has been to reply to a letter from the British Academy on the need for research into endangered and emerging subjects.

The beginning of Kim Knott's address in 2000 has a very different flavour from Cyril Williams', indicating quite rightly the place of members on QAA (TQA) subject review panels, RAE and HEFCE and in that she touches on the bureaucratisation of academic life. She also indicates an increased public awareness of the relevance of religion but that it is usually not the *scholars* of religion who are involved in these debates and policies. It was pointed out recently that Edward Said is not the person most consulted by USA agencies when trying to understand global religious issues! However, both our 2000 keynote lecturer, Professor Eileen Barker and Professor Tariq Modood in 2002, as well as Professor Rosalind Hackett at this year's conference provide exceptions in that profile.

Vitality in the subject area is regularly demonstrated from the Bulletin's listings of day events and short conferences run by a variety of departments and groups, including the activities of LTSN and some departments e.g. The Open University, seem to be expanding. But retirements (some of them early) are leaving serious gaps in the subject area, for example in London at both LSE and King's. Also whole departments of religious studies (Derby) and the RS sections of departments (Chichester) have closed. Sometimes, as at Sunderland, new developments have emerged, phoenix-like out of the ashes with Peter Harvey's new e-learning MA in Buddhist Studies. There is now a whole religious studies degree at Oxford Brookes University under Dominic Corrywright, whilst in the University of Oxford, where I try to keep the study of religions flag flying, there have been syllabus changes in the last few years which have enabled the study of religions to develop at undergraduate as well as masters levels alongside all the work that also goes on in oriental studies and anthropology etc. Others that I have not had space to mention continue to develop the established good work within their departments. But resourcing is fragile, and the final undergraduate degree a BA in Theology and the faculty overall very traditional in its emphasis on doing theology from within. The Guardian lack of any subtle categorisation, which they do have for other subject

areas, and examples such as the lack of Divinity Faculty staff support for our 2001 Cambridge conference, illustrate further that the established predominance of theology is still a challenge to us ideologically and practically. And to those in theology who claim that there is no difference in what we do, I would quote a remark of Brian Bocking's from some years ago when he said 'If you don't know the difference between theology and religious studies, then you're a theologian'.<sup>1</sup> Religious studies colleagues have a clear sense of what the differences are, and have written about them (e.g. Ninian Smart and Frank Whaling to name only two).

What has also been happening is the further thriving, development and founding of single-religion or single-focus academic subject centres, examples of which in Oxford are the well-established Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies; the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (whose Director from January 2005 is to be Pratap Kumar whom many know from his organisation for the 2000 IAHR Congress); and a hoped for Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies. In Cambridge, as well as the Hinduja Centre located in the Divinity Faculty, there is now a Centre for Jewish-Christian Studies based at Wesley House. In Birmingham there have been new centres and some new appointments adding to the well established Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Dialogue and a re-organisation of these within an enlarged Department of Religious and Theological Studies. These centres all offer academic courses and are often rooted in insiders' concerns and funding. Some of these might, in their turn, be seen as 'theological', as might also be a challenge with some of the single religion associations. In listing these examples of developments I must apologise to colleagues for any omissions or inaccuracies.

Kim Knott risked reference to the future and asked whether BASR would be able to be hospitable to the variety of approaches in the study of religions and the open agenda that have characterised international conferences with innovative perspectives and an exploration of the frontiers between religions and other areas of human activities. The Lancaster LTSN Conference in December will add fuel to these debates and fire us, I hope, for a splendid 2004 event. It is in the end up to us to put our energies into the national scene and through that contribute to the international forum. Not everyone can afford to go to European and International Conference, where members often fund themselves and so we have an obligation to thrive here, especially for the younger scholars who are so well represented at this conference. Michael Pye, a former President of IAHR, has often observed what a model BASR has been in its immaculate constitution (and I think we owe a lot, if I remember rightly, to Terry Thomas's very focused mind in the final version of that), and in the support given to IAHR for its financial aid to delegates from poorer parts of the world to attend IAHR events.

I shall end with some reference to the sentiments expressed in Edward Said's Introduction to the new edition of his influential study *Orientalism*, which was adapted in a *Guardian* article on 2 August 2003. It links, in the appreciation of both for Goethe, with the study by Lourens P. van den Bosch, which I have reviewed for the next Bulletin, of the work of Friedrich Max Müller (whose grave, portraits, house, etc. you can see when you come to Oxford next year). Goethe's famous phrase used of language 'he who knows one knows none' was adopted with reference to religions by Müller and can still be used as a war cry in the theology/religious studies debate. Said confirms his call for a new humanism and says he uses the term stubbornly despite 'the scornful dismissal of the term by sophisticated postmodern critics'. 'By humanism,' he says, 'I mean first of all attempting to dissolve Blake's "mind-forg'd manacles" so as to be able to use one's mind historically and rationally for the purposes of reflective understanding.' Moreover, humanism is sustained by a sense of community with other interpreters and other societies and periods.'

We still have at our disposal the rational interpretive skills that are the legacy of humanistic education, not as a sentimental piety enjoining us to return to traditional values of the classics, but as the active practice of worldly secular rational discourse. We need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other and live together. But for that kind of wider perception we need time, patient and sceptical enquiry, supported by faith in communities of interpretation that are difficult to sustain in a world demanding instant action and reaction. Humanism is centred upon the agency of human individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and authority.'

May I take the opportunity to thank you for providing the sense of a community of scholars in BASR, incite you further to the debate which words such as these provoke and wish the new president every success as he takes the association into its next phase of its important life.

<sup>1</sup>See 'RAP, RFL and RO: The Teaching of Religion in Higher Education' in Wiebe, D. and P. Masefield (eds.) (1994). *Aspects of Religion: Essays in Honour of Ninian Smart* New York: Peter Lang\

**Peggy Morgan, AGM, 2003**

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

affiliated to

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 801567

INLAND REVENUE REF: XN79047

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 16 AUGUST 2002 TO 15 AUGUST 2003**

**INCOME**

**EXPENDITURE**

General Fund

		Printing and postage Bulletin	930
		Printing and postage Occ Papers	116
Balance at 16 August 2002	6939	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication	500
Inland Revenue (Gift Aid)	809	Committee expenses	1433
Subscriptions for 2002/2003	2418	EASR 2003	217
Sale of publications/insert fees	353	Bank charges	16
Bank interest	<u>119</u>	Balance in hand 15 August 2003	<u>7426</u>
	10638		10638

Conference Fund

Balance at 16 August 2002	6510	2002 Conference expenses	5683
2002 conference fees	4629	2003 Conference expenses	1050
2003 conference fees	<u>1171</u>	Balance in hand 15 August 2003	<u>5577</u>
	12310		12310

**FINANCIAL YEAR 16 AUGUST 2002 TO 15 AUGUST 2003**

Balance at 16 August 2002:	13449
Total Income	9499
Total Expenditure	(9945) <u>          </u>
Balance at 15 August 2003	13003

Accounts prepared by: Dr Helen Waterhouse, Hon. Treasurer, 26 August 2003

## **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of my audit. I have examined the balance sheet and annexed receipts and payments accounts which are in agreement with the Association's records. In my opinion and to the best of my information, and according to the explanations given to me, the balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the Association's affairs at 15 August 2003, and the receipts and payments account shows properly the transactions for the year expired on that date.

Signed:

Date:

David Briggs

Hon. Secretary to the Somerset and West Wiltshire Branch of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

- Committee expenses are comparatively high this year because of the cost of sending BASR representatives to Bergen for the EASR/IAHR committee meetings.
- We are still benefitting from income generated by the 2001 conference in Cambridge and have been able, once again, to award 5 full student bursaries this year. Bursaries were awarded to all students who applied.
- The 2004 conference is to be held in Oxford. This means that costs will be high. The Executive Committee is looking at ways to subsidize the event using the conference fund.
- We have paid our contribution to the EASR based on 2 Euros per full paying member and 1 Euro per student member.
- No payment has been made from this set of accounts for our IAHR subscription. We are awaiting communication from the IAHR treasurer.
- The income from the Inland Revenue was particularly high this year because this represents Gift Aid for both 2002 and 2003.

Signed:

Date:

Helen Waterhouse  
Hon. Treasurer

## **European Association for the Study of Religions**

The Third Congress of the EASR, in Bergen, Norway, attracted participants from as far away as Indonesia (AlefTheria Wasim of the State Institute of Islamic Studies) and Brazil (Maria de Lourdes Beldi de Alcantara of the University of Sao Paolo). As mentioned in the previous Bulletin, the UK was very well represented.

Along with the superb organisation of the conference itself, much was made of the weather arrangements. Each morning we walked up the hill in the cold rain to the Law faculty building, resulting in good attendance throughout the conference. Then, by evening (apart from the first evening), when we had the opportunity to attend receptions (by the City of Bergen and E.J. Brill) and a banquet (atop one of the hills with spectacular views over Bergen's harbour and the nearby islands), we had sunshine and clear skies.

The conference began with a warm welcome from Einar Thomassen and the presidential address by Giulia Sfanneri Gasparro on 'The globalisation and localisation of religion: from Hellenism to Late Antiquity', followed by plenary papers by Juha Pentikainen (Helsinki) and Kim Knott (Leeds), indicating that this promised to be an excellent conference.

The afternoon papers were split into two groups and I attended the one entitled 'Local and global in the contemporary situation.' The localities included that of the Kaiowa-Guarani in Brazil, Montreal in Canada, Berentz in Norway, and the Internet! The next day began with a choice of three sections. I wanted to be in two places at once, but decided on 'General issues of religious globalisation' especially for the last paper given by Hakan Rydving (Bergen) on the concepts of 'Shamanism' and 'Shaman'. While the morning session had four papers with a coffee break in the middle, the afternoon session had five papers on the trot without a break (this is my only criticism about the organisation, and that the papers tended to overrun). I was in the 'New spiritualities' section, which was really about new ways of looking at 'old' spiritualities, such as the subject of Uichol Kim's paper taking a psychological view of Confucianism, Buddhism and Korean 'perfectability', or revivals and reinventions of traditions affected by globalisation, such as Celtic spirituality and modern witchcraft in the Netherlands.

The last morning had two sections, one on 'Christianity and globalisation' and one on 'Issues of migration'. I attended the first part of the former, which had absorbing papers on 'discovery' themes by Ulrich Berner (Bayreuth) on how the Age of Discoveries for the Europeans gave them their first sense of living on a 'globe', and, in a paper given by Michel Bespland, Melville's realisation that cannibalism among South Sea islanders was not a dietary practice but one of war.

Apart from these split sections there were three keynote lectures given at different points by Peter Beyer (Ottawa), challenging the notion that any

religion, including Christianity, has a singular identity; Marion Bowman (Open University), giving us a lively portrayal of the Glastonbury scene; and Roland Robertson (Aberdeen), about the debate on the inclusion of the word 'God' in the European constitution and the concept of civil religion.

As a postgraduate attending my first international conference I was impressed with the quality, number and diversity of presentations. As most of you know, Norway is quite expensive and I am grateful for the funding I received from New College in Edinburgh, which enabled me to attend.

**Suzanne Owen**

**SPECIAL OFFER FROM GREVATT & GREVATT  
FOR BASR MEMBERS**

Normal price £18.50 + 15% p.&p. single copies  
or 10% p.&p multiple orders (U.K.)

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Orders and payments to Grevatt & Grevatt, 9 Rectory Drive, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1XT.

*Beginning Sanskrit: A Practical Course*

*Based on Graded Reading and Exercises, Vol 3*

by Dermot Killingley. Revised by Dermot Killingley and Siew-Yue Killingley. (Volume 1 and Volume 2 published by Lincom Europa, Munich; now second editions in preparation to be published by Grevatt & Grevatt in 2004. ISBN 0947722 21 1. £18.50 (UK); £20.50 (overseas).

Beginning Sanskrit is designed for university students taking Sanskrit as a minor or subsidiary subject, or in preparation for research; it can be completed in a year by a student giving a third of his or her time to Sanskrit. No previous experience of formal language learning is presupposed, and the course can be followed with or without a teacher.

For further details, e-mail <grevatt@softhome.net>



# **The British Association for The Study of Religions**

affiliated to: The European Association for The Study of Religions  
and The International Association for The History of Religions

## **50th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE (1954-2004)**

SEPTEMBER 13th - 16th, 2004  
Harris Manchester College, Oxford

## **THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS: MAPPING THE FIELD**

This conference aims to consider past, current and future trends and research. Panels and papers may be focused on individual religions (e.g. Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism); typologies (e.g. new movements, indigenous traditions); geographical areas (e.g. Japanese religions, religions in Europe or Africa); key themes (e.g. identity, gender, science and religions, mysticism); key figures (e.g. Eliade, Schimmel, Smart) and methods which contribute to the field (e.g. psychology, anthropology, philosophy, phenomenology, sociology, history etc.).

**The BASR annual lecture will be given by  
Professor Ursula King, Universities of London and Bristol**

Offers of panels, individual papers and reports of work in progress by June 1st 2004  
to: Peggy Morgan, Mansfield College, Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TF  
peggy.morgan@mansfield.ox.ac.uk

Conference registration form and BASR membership at  
<http://basr.org.uk>

A limited number of full student bursaries are available for postgraduates presenting  
papers or work in progress reports.  
Applications to Peggy Morgan as above.

# **IAHR**

## **TOKYO 2005**

### **XIXth World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions**

The 19th World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (**IAHR**) will be held in Tokyo, Japan, **24-30 March 2005**.

#### **General Theme of the Congress:**

#### **Religion: Conflict and Peace**

The Congress Secretariat of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies (JARS) and the Congress Academic Program Committee (CAPC) welcome proposals for papers on any aspect of the study of religion. Papers may treat religious phenomena from any culture and historical period, and from a wide variety of academic disciplines, including philosophy, history, sociology, philology, anthropology, psychology, and iconography.

The presentation of papers will take place during the time set aside for group sessions in the above schedule. Members of the IAHR may propose organized panels, symposia, round-table sessions, or individual papers.

#### **Important deadlines**

- **31 December 2003.** Proposals for individual papers, panels, symposia, and roundtable sessions.
- **April 2004.** Notification of acceptance of proposals; mailing of a second circular.
- **30 September 2004.** Payment of early registration fees by those whose proposals have been accepted, and submission of abstracts for the same to the Congress Secretariat.

For fuller information, see the Congress website at:  
<http://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/iahr2005/>

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# ASANAS

Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies 2004

Following the success of last year's conference, a second major international conference on Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies is to take place from **21-23 May 2004**, hosted by the **University of Wolverhampton**.

### **Confirmed keynote speakers:**

J Gordon Melton, Graham Harvey and Marion Bowman.

The conference theme is 'ASANAS goes mainstream?' and aims to highlight areas where Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies are increasingly accepted in conventional society and academia.

Offers of papers, and of co-ordinating multi-paper sessions, for the conference are requested on the following themes (although there will also be room for off-theme papers):

- ASANAS and mainstream society
- ASANAS and world religions
- ASANAS and Paganism
- ASANAS and psychology
- ASANAS and science
- ASANAS and the workplace
- ASANAS and academia

**Proposals for papers:** a title and abstract of 150 words required by **15 January 2004**.

Please respond to: James R. Lewis, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point,, WI 54481, USA

[jlewis@uwsp.edu](mailto:jlewis@uwsp.edu) Tel: +1 715-346-3803; Fax: +1 715-346-4215

**AESTHETICS AS A RELIGIOUS FACTOR IN  
EASTERN AND WESTERN CHRISTIANITY  
Utrecht, 21-24 June, 2004**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

The University of Leeds and the University of Utrecht announce the second in their series of international conferences, sponsored jointly by the University of Leeds and the University of Utrecht.

Christianity has always incorporated aesthetics in its expression of faith. Over the course of many centuries Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy alike have been a source of inspiration for all kinds of artistic activity and for theological and philosophical reflection on beauty. In contemporary secularised society the experience of beauty again seems to have become a medium of/for religious experience. For many people Christian art is the main way of getting into contact with Christian ideas, and in world literature Biblical and Christian themes continue to occupy an important place. The relationship between aesthetics and Christianity was especially relevant in Orthodox countries during the period of Communism, when theology as a creative intellectual discipline was virtually impossible. There are many aspects of the relationship between beauty and Christian faith which still merit our reflection.

*A wide range of sub-themes includes:*

- \* Theology of Aesthetics \* Aesthetics of Theology \* Iconography in the Orthodox Church \* Non-figurative art and Christianity \*
- \* Christian Themes in Modern Literature \* Music and the Sacred \*
- \* Church Architecture \* Aesthetic Experience and Conversion \*
- \* Aesthetics and Religious Identity \*

Papers are invited within the scope of the overall theme and Abstracts / Paper Proposals should be sent **no later than 15 December 2003** to:

Dr Jonathan Sutton <j.f.sutton@leeds.ac.uk> and Professor Wil van den Bercken <wvdbercken@theo.uu.nl>

A collection of thirty-three papers from our June 2001 conference on *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe* (Leuven, Peeters) is now in print. Our 2005 conference *Religion and the Media in Russia and Central Europe*, will be convened in Leeds in December 2005.

**Ivan Franko Lviv National University**  
**Social Humanitarian Consortium *Genesis* and**  
**International Study of Religion in Central and Eastern Europe Association**  
**(ISORECEA)**

announce the Fifth International ISORECEA Conference  
devoted to the scientific study of religious processes and changes in Eastern and  
Central Europe under the title:

**Challenges of Religious Plurality**

**for Eastern and Central Europe**

**11-14 December, 2003 Lviv, Ukraine**

The conference will focus on the following topics:

- Eastern and Western Christianity within the context of the mono- and poly-confessional situation in Central and Eastern Europe;
- functions of religion in post-Communist societies;
- political and religious tolerance;
- challenges faced by national churches;
- religion, nationalism, and national identities;
- impact of globalization on religion in Central and Eastern Europe;
- mainstream religions, traditional minorities, and new religious movements;
- religion and the media;
- Islam and other non-Christian religions in Eastern and Central Europe;
- church-state relations and state regulation of religion;
- inter-religious relations

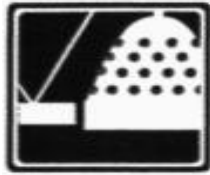
Full information on the conference and on membership can be found at  
[www.isorecea.org](http://www.isorecea.org)

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**Network for the Study of Implicit Religion, and**  
**Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion & Contemporary Spirituality**

27th Weekend, Denton Hall, Ilkley: inter-disciplinary, international, £125  
all-inclusive: 6 p.m. Friday 7 May – 3 p.m. Sunday 9 May 2004

Contact: Edward Bailey, 95 High Street, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1RD:  
01454 776518; [eibailey@csircs.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:eibailey@csircs.freeserve.co.uk)



## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES: WHAT'S THE POINT?**

**Lancaster University**

**15-16 December 2003**

A two day conference jointly organised by the  
**Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre of the  
Learning and Teaching Support Network (PRS-LTSN)**  
and the  
**Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University**

Starting from a consideration of the impact of **Ninian Smart** on the teaching of Religious Studies, this conference focuses on issues crucial to the field at the beginning of the 21st century and in the years after Smart's death. The question 'What's the point?' has multiple nuances, and starts from a premise intrinsic to Smart's work — that studying religion in comparative contexts is a vital academic discipline and worthwhile exercise that can widen horizons and deeper understandings of the world around us. It continues into the contemporary arguments — over whether 'religion' is a viable topic of analysis and whether 'Religious Studies' should exist at all as a field of study. Between these perspectives lies a host of questions relating to the ways we study, analyse and teach religion — from 'universalist' and 'comparativist', to 'particularist' positions. Linked to these broader areas of discussion are other basic questions: the language and the terms we use (or seek to avoid) in the research and pedagogy associated with the teaching of Religious Studies; and especially, how we deal with terms and words that have particularist orientations or value-laden meanings (e.g. fundamentalism, cult, millenarian) specific to certain cultural discourses, but that come to be applied to other cultures areas, and contexts.

*For fuller information see:*

[http://www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/relig\\_studies/events/](http://www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/relig_studies/events/)

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**Indic Health Conference II.  
Ayurvedic Identities Past and Present:  
The Case of Modern and Global Ayurveda  
2-3 July 2004**

On Friday 2 and Saturday 3 July 2004 the Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research (DHIIR), based at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, will host its Eighth International Conference. The conference will discuss the Case of Modern and Global Ayurveda as part of a larger project, the Indic Health and Medicine Research Programme (IHMRP), which has been the focus of DHIIR research since October 2000.

For up to date information on the conference please see  
<http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/CARTS/dhiir/indic/conf04.html>  
For information on the IHMRP as well as the DHIIR's work in general, please  
see <http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/CARTS/dhiir/>

Enquiries can also be made by post or by email. The contact address is:  
DHIIR, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge  
West Road, Cambridge CB3 9BS  
Tel: 44 (0)1223 763013; Fax: 44 (0)1223 763014  
E-mail: <dhiir@divinity.cam.ac.uk>

*See also the Section 'Religious Studies in the UK' in this Bulletin.*

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**Centre for the Study of Global Ethics (University of Birmingham)**

**and**

**World Faiths Development Dialogue**

**'If not global capitalism, then what?'**

Joint seminar series on alternatives to global capitalism  
**Autumn 2003 — Spring 2004**

Further details from:

Dr. Christien van den Anker, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics, 13  
Pritchatts Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2QU or by email to  
[c.l.vandenanker@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.l.vandenanker@bham.ac.uk) by 1st of August 2003.

**A regional conference of the IAHR  
organized by the  
INDONESIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OF  
RELIGION**

**Yogyakarta/Semarang 27 September – 3 October 2004**

Concepts of religious coexistence and cooperation are current in many societies and cultures. They are based not only on custom and law but also on various political and religious presuppositions. The aim of this conference is to consider such concepts, to study what difficulties arise in their practical application, and to discuss how problems have been or may be resolved. This subject is of particular urgency in the contemporary world, which is marked by various tragic conflicts with both global and local characteristics. It is also of great significance within the borders of individual countries. In the Indonesian language the word ‘harmony’ (*harmoni*) has been used in public discourse on this subject, and that is why it was preferred by the organizers in the title of conference. The focus will be both theoretical and very practical. The theoretical approach is that of the general study of religions (*ilmu agama*), while special sections are planned on ‘Religious harmony in grass-roots experience’ and ‘Muslim education in modern society’ which are expected to be very informative and stimulating.

The conference will therefore take on an international character, and it is hoped that participants from various parts of the world will be able to attend. Up to fifty participants from outside Indonesia will be able to participate. The international aspect of the conference is being coordinated by Dr. Edith Franke (Hannover, Germany) and Prof. Michael Pye (Marburg, Germany). Any enquiries relating to participation from outside Indonesia should therefore be addressed to one of them ([efranke1@aol.com](mailto:efranke1@aol.com) or [pye@staff.uni-marburg.de](mailto:pye@staff.uni-marburg.de)).

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School of Humanities and Cultural Studies

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FAMILY IN THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**

**July 2005**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

Among thematic studies of the world's religions there has been relatively little research into the representation of the family in religious texts and images. This conference aims to explore the representation and symbolization of the family and familial roles within a broad range of religious traditions, sacred literature and mythology. By using a variety of disciplinary perspectives, such as theology, religious studies, scriptural and literary studies, anthropology, history, gender studies, critical theory, film studies, history of art, etc., the conference will aim to examine the representation of the family as a whole, or individual roles and relationships within the family, from both tradition-specific and comparative perspectives. It will also consider some of the social and ethical implications of these representations for contemporary culture.

Conference papers are invited under two main themes:

**TEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS and CULTURAL SEMIOTICS**

Those interested in contributing a paper should submit a brief abstract (approx. 500 words) to Dr. Lynn Thomas at the address below.

For further details, please contact:

Dr. Tina Beattie, [t.beattie@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:t.beattie@roehampton.ac.uk), tel. +44(0)20 8392 3419

Dr. Simonetta Calderini, [s.calderini@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:s.calderini@roehampton.ac.uk), tel. +44(0)20 8392 3422

Dr. Lynn Thomas, [lynn.Thomas@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:lynn.Thomas@roehampton.ac.uk) tel. +44(0)20 8392 3249

Or write to one of the above at:

School of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Digby Stuart College, University of Surrey Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PH

### **III. RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE U.K. (Occasional series)**

#### **The Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research, Cambridge**

On Friday 2 and Saturday 3 July 2004 the Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research (DHIIR), based at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, will host its Eighth International Conference. The conference will discuss the Case of Modern and Global Ayurveda as part of a larger project, the Indic Health and Medicine Research Programme (IHMRP), which has been the focus of DHIIR research since October 2000.

This innovative programme has been developed to explore the nature, history and practical applicability of yoga- and Ayurveda-inspired approaches to health, medicine and wellbeing in the context of modern and developed societies. The IHMRP's main object is to contextualise and clarify – and make explicit - the contributions that Indic traditions have made in the fields of modern health, medicine and wellbeing, and how these contributions have been altered, enriched, developed and (re)interpreted during such processes of propagation and acculturation. The programme's practical aim is to gather, critically evaluate and eventually disseminate knowledge about how yogic and ayurvedic traditions have been, are being and can be adapted to modern needs and conditions, so as to be used efficiently and in discerning fashion for fostering human health and wellbeing.

The first part of the IHMRP (2000-2002) focussed on studies relating to the emergence and growth of Modern Yoga and research in this area is still ongoing. Part II (2002-2004) is dedicated to research on the history and development of Modern and Global Ayurveda. 'Modern Ayurveda' is here understood to start with the processes of professionalisation and institutionalisation brought about in India by what has been called the 19<sup>th</sup> century revivalism of Ayurveda. 'Global Ayurveda', on the other hand, refers to the more cosmopolitan and geographically widespread processes of popularisation and acculturation set in motion in the 1980s. Ayurvedic approaches to health and wellbeing are just starting to be recognised and, to a lesser extent, integrated in the context of modern medical sciences and healthcare outside of India. Assimilation at the level of complementary or integrative forms of medicine and self-care has however been more widespread, and this phenomenon deserves scholarly attention as symptomatic of needs and aspirations felt by a sizeable number of individuals in developed communities worldwide.

An international network of scholars, practitioners and experts (most of whom will have taken part in a specialists' workshop organized by the DHIIR in

December 2003) will present their research at the 2004 Conference. Their presentations will cover a wide range of methodological points of view, discussing the case of Modern and Global Ayurveda from historical, textual, philosophical, anthropological, socio-political, economic, biomedical and pharmacological perspectives.

**Dagmar Benner**

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#### **IV. RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

##### **Dead Maidens in Taiwan: Breaking Down Chinese Religious Tradition by Fang-Long Shih**

In my doctoral research, I use a feminist perspective to study women's position within Chinese religious culture. In particular, I look at women who die before they marry, such that they are prohibited from becoming ancestors and so become ghosts. The culture I examine is the Chinese religious culture of the Holo (also known as Taiwanese) speaking people of contemporary Taiwan.

*Research Questions:* It is a significant characteristic of Chinese culture that the world of the living impacts upon the world of the dead and the world of the dead impacts upon the world of the living. According to Confucian orthodoxy, human life is passed down from generation to generation in an unbroken chain along the male line. The family and ancestral altar, as the loci of the chain of life, have been enshrined as sacred institutions. Insertion into a family line and becoming an ancestor (i.e., the means by which a person receives life, a family-name, social status, and property) is essential to the process of identity formation in Chinese culture.

To be considered a socially complete person in living Chinese society it is necessary to achieve the status of an ancestor in the world of the dead. To be accorded ancestor status, according to the rules and exclusions peculiar to the Chinese patrilineal system, one has to be born either as a man or as a woman who must marry and have sons. This means that only men and those women who are wives and mothers of sons are socially acceptable and fully complete people. Marriage and giving birth to sons are a pressure to Chinese women in Taiwan and elsewhere in China.

Much anthropological work on Chinese religion concerns itself with what makes "the rituals performed...at death...central to definitions of Chinese cultural identity" (Watson and Rawski, 1988, p.ix), that is, those practices through which a dead person is transformed to the status of ancestor. The majority of anthropological studies of Chinese religion end up confirming ancestral orthodoxy and ascribing a relatively high degree of continuity to Chinese culture.

Unmarried women, that is, maidens, who do not marry or bear sons, have no place in a family line and on an ancestral altar and thus are excluded from family lineages and the social practices of remembering that ancestor worship enshrines. Women who die unmarried (i.e., who die without a husband, and who die without connection to any male line) fail to achieve ancestor-to-be status. This results in an end to any form of social continuity for maidens after death. Dead maidens are condemned to become ghosts whom nobody is obligated to take care of. Maiden ghosts are therefore hungry, homeless, and haunt the living in their search for a better lot. Dying without being incorporated into a male line as an ancestor, deceased maidens are considered to be highly polluted and extremely polluting. It is believed that they can bring misfortune to their family and others in society. This state of death, unlike ancestral death, bears no connection with any social-family group and I call it 'biological and social death'.

Traditionally, it is believed that maidens after they die would and should be completely severed from all social connections with living groups and that they ought to be forgotten. Scholars have tended to overlook the profound impact of homeless deceased maidens on the marginalisation of living maidens and vice versa. Also, death, in particular, maiden death in Taiwan is a taboo subject, meaning that it presents certain problems for research. There is precious little information available about maiden death practices in scholarly literature. Most of it is concerned with how Chinese ancestral orthodoxy maintains itself as a system. It ignores the fact that some maidens after death have attained continuity in the living world through practices that constitute forms of correction to exclusion/pollution/homelessness. I call them 'corrective practices'. Corrective practices usually involve the adoption of various after-life ideas from other religious traditions such as goddess worship, Daoism, Buddhism and Christianity.

*Research Methodology:* My doctoral research is conducted in terms of case-studies. I carried out detailed anthropological field-work, employing participant observation and semi-structured interview techniques. The taboo nature of the research meant that it was impractical to carry out sustained field-work in a single place. As such, I did my research at various locations gathering as much data as possible.

*Theoretical Position:* If, in anthropological studies of Chinese religion, the study of ancestor worship has tended to be analysed in terms of a structure which determines the characteristics of Chinese and gender identity, I am seeking to shift the focus to study maiden death as a radical outsider category of identity that provides a space in which other identities might emerge. Moreover, if, in religious studies, the study of religion has tended to assume that religion is a separate and autonomous realm of beliefs and practices, I am seeking to move

the ground to see religion as beliefs and practices that are intertwined within multiple spheres of life.

Indeed, in my doctoral research, I examine six case studies of corrective practices as ‘texts’ that are then read as reflections of and negotiations with traditional social relations and wider processes of economic and political change in Taiwan, from a rural, agricultural and hierarchical society into an urban, industrial and democratic society, in the last four decades. I explore conflicts between traditional, modern and post-modern values relating to the role of maidens in Chinese family structures and ancestral orthodoxy. I analyse how Chinese ancestral orthodoxy and family structures are broken down and transformed by these corrective practices. I also analyse how orthodoxy and structure resist the pressures of change and attempt to reproduce continuity in the face of these pressures, and therefore, produce a broken continuity.

All the above points make my particular study of maiden death an original and significant subject of research. I engage in this research on behalf of maidens. I intend to raise public awareness of the discriminating issue of maiden death. I attempt to redress the imbalance of the cultural representation of maidens in ancestral orthodoxy. I try to represent the experiences, interests and needs of maidens, both living and dead. I aim to trace the path of social change in order to come up with suggestions of benefit to women. My research is itself a ‘corrective practice’, and thus, a ‘political’ activity.

Dept of the Study of Religions, SOAS, University of London  
Email: shihfanglong@hotmail.com

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## V. BOOK REVIEWS

Lourens P. van den Bosch (2002). *Friedrich Max Müller: A Life Devoted to The Humanities*. Leiden: Brill. 579pp. hbk. ISBN 90 04 12505 1

In this scholarly and densely referenced work, Müller is seen as ‘one of the great scholars of the nineteenth century’ and ‘an influential figure in the cultural life of Victorian Britain’, who contributed greatly to the spread of knowledge in the humanities. These phrases affirm the title of Nirad Chaudhuri’s earlier biography *Scholar Extraordinary* (1974) which this volume seeks to complement.

Bosch does not try to present a further full biography, though a biographical essay begins the work, but provides instead a study of the main areas of Müller’s interests, which he delineates as: *Language and Thought; Mythology in Comparative Perspective; The Science of Religion; Christianity, Colonialism and Missions; Philosophy of Religion* and with a concluding section on *Müller’s Legacy*. It shows Müller as much more than an unworldly Oxford don, steeped in Sanskrit, working on the first critical edition of the *Rig Veda* and editing the *Sacred Books of The East*. He was renowned and respected across Europe and in India and became a member of Queen Victoria’s Privy Council in 1896. His broad approach to the humanities and preparedness to give public lectures on a variety of topics and to a broad audience were typical of the publicly minded nineteenth century scholar.

The volume also highlights Müller’s limitations as a man of his time, for example in his search for the origins of religion and interest in a single future religion of all humanity, but it also shows his critical use of the discourse of evolutionists in favour of an emphasis on history. Müller uses a variety of terms in his explorations which are still with us as part of current debates and controversies: comparative religion; the science of religion and the history of religions, along with an emphasis on philosophical reflection and being as free as possible from preconceived opinions. He also expresses realistic views about both regress in religions from the time of their foundation and how scholarship is superseded from one generation to another. By the end of his life his views on language were already out of date, though Bosch indicates that recent work may provide more sympathetic space for Müller’s ideas. In the area of so-called ‘science’ of religion and comparative religion, L. H. J. Jordan was critical of assigning Müller a founding place, whilst J. E. Carpenter saw him as the initiator of the modern comparative study of religions.

An important issue then, as now, was how far any deeply religious motive in his work ‘to reveal the authentic religion of the human heart’ and seek the ‘ideas, values and norms that were at the basis of all religions’ as the ‘universal guidelines for mankind’, as in his support for the 1893 Chicago World’s Parliament of Religions and his interest in mysticism, make him too rooted in

German and Indian idealism and his science of religion too much a servant of his theology. He can also be criticised for over-emphasising language and belief in his understanding of religions, ignoring other dimensions such as ritual and social life, for example. Bosch comments that Müller's theological views make him what we would now call a religionist and gives a balanced account of the criticisms and place of Müller's ideas in both religion and mythological studies to the present.

Bosch also brings the debate about Müller's Christian inclusivism up to date with a section comparing his position and roots in Kantian idealism with that of the pluralist John Hick and his attempts to evaluate religions by their fruits. This contemporary focus on Müller's legacy is also highlighted in a discussion of Peter Byrne's assertions that Müller's understanding of the nature of religion provided the concept of religion on which the modern study of religion has been built, which is another way (though critically) of seeing Müller as the founding father of the field. Bosch has given us a well-focused, excellently researched, critically balanced and contemporarily relevant study of an academic giant.

**Peggy Morgan**

Sandra Cate (2003) *Making Merit, Making Art: A Thai Temple in Wimbledon*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. ISBN 0 8248 2357 5 (hbk).

Many Bulletin readers will know Wat Buddhapadipa in Calonne Road, Wimbledon as a focus for student visits. From 1984 until 1992 the inside of the traditional Thai temple in the grounds was painted by a group of Thai artists in brilliant acrylic colours and with an innovative use of Buddhist stories and themes interwoven with contemporary images. They were the first Thai Buddhist murals painted outside Thailand and presented something new for this UK context, for example of Margaret Thatcher and other world leaders, Van Gogh, Jaws, Stonehenge, Kew Gardens, spacecraft, cans of Heineken beer and a Thai International Airways plane in amongst the Buddhist visual text.

This necessarily complex book examines this phenomenon and in doing so draws on art, religion and culture, history and ethnography. It investigates artists as social actors and interpreters and donors/sponsors within their political, cultural and international frameworks and moves between the multiple audiences drawn into the visual experience of the radical / neo-traditional / modern creation of the artists who are able to experiment in UK in ways that would have been difficult, if not impossible, in Thailand, and whose work has since affected the art scene in Bangkok.

The research underpinning this ethnographic study was undertaken between 1992 and 2000 in Thailand, London and U.S.A. All the Thai artists responsible for the murals and several of the sponsors were interviewed in both English and Thai in Thailand and temple monks, visitors and other artists in England. The

Thai translations were checked by a native Thai speaker. The ethnographer is an outsider, a foreigner to the Bangkok art world and London, but tries to look through insiders' eyes. She attended vipassana meditation sessions (the main practice of this Buddhist community) in both Thailand and London and by participating in, as well as observing, other temple activities in London 'gradually became a practitioner of Buddhism as well, learning by observation and instruction to behave as other lay members of the community, though with many mishaps' (p.xii). She is reminded soon after her arrival at Wat Buddhapadipa that it is above all a temple and that religion and the workings of merit are inextricably entwined with her study. The artists were mostly male and donated their labour to the temple and to the Buddha, receiving only modest living expenses. 'They worked abroad with an agenda of transforming Thai mural painting into an art that speaks in the present tense' (p.4). The artists indicate that they intend to communicate emotion rather than just story lines in their visual use of colour and inclusion of contemporary features. One of the most interesting parts of the book for me was the detailed discussion of the impact of the visual experience of the paintings of the Defeat of Mara and the Enlightenment from the artists' and author's perspectives. The paintings seek not just to inform but to involve the onlookers, whoever they are, in the issues of meaning they explore.

Key issues of identity, authority and value interact at Wat Buddhapadipa. The royal and high political patronage of the temple supports its place in enhancing the image of Thainess and of modern Thailand abroad, as well as intending to promote vipassana meditation and Buddhism in the west. But there is also a mediation of opposites, a both/and of traditional/modern, religion/art, global/local and a carrying of multiple meanings between Thailand and UK on the Thai International plane(s) imaged in the murals, which illustrate the donation of tickets for the artists' travel by this (then) government-owned airline, which thus became a sponsor of this merit-making project. The participants and audiences are also multiple and include Thai government officials and sponsors, artists, Buddhist monks, laity and tourists (Thai and others), student educational groups etc. They are all drawn into the visual experience by the variety of cultural images that are included and by the overwhelming impact of the brilliant colours and liveliness of the scenes. All of these aspects of the enterprise are carefully analysed in this multi-dimensional study.

The book has extensive footnotes, a full bibliography, a glossary of Thai words, thirty-two pages of full colour illustrations, which give a good flavour of the art work under discussion for those who have not visited the temple, and an index.

**Peggy Morgan**  
**Mansfield College, Oxford.**



Baumer, Christoph (2002). *Tibet's Ancient Religion: Bön*. 200 pp., Transl. Michael Kohn. Bangkok: Orchid Press. ISBN 974-524-011-7. (Asia and Europe), 0834805170 (U.S.A.).

After returning from a recent visit to Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet, I was delighted to read this lucidly written book, explaining in detail the different layers of Tibetan religion and culture. This lavishly illustrated study integrates many historical, phenomenological, comparative and empirical data on Tibetan religion not easily found elsewhere. Its Swiss author bases his account on extensive fieldwork in Tibet and the Central Asian Chinese region to which he has made 16 research visits, resulting in this and other books and documentary films. His scholarship is meticulously grounded in the specialist studies of eminent Tibetologists whose English, German, French and Italian sources he cites while always remaining accessible to a wider readership.

The goals of this study are fourfold:

(1) It aims to provide a chronological presentation of the myths and history of Tibet from the perspective of the *Bönpo*, the ‘people of Bön’, still existing today with their own monasteries, beliefs and practices. This account, enhanced by a long chronology, is most helpful since most books on Tibet refer only briefly to Bön as ancient animistic beliefs without explaining their continuing, separate existence as well as their influence on and by Buddhism;

(2) It seeks to explain the relationship between Bön and Buddhism, their mutual influence, similarities and differences. The origins of the ancient Bön nature religion are lost in time whereas a systematised form of Bön developed in the eleventh century under the influence of Buddhism. Prayer flags, the circumambulation of shrines, certain pilgrimage routes, some of the death rituals, the cultic dances with their shamanistic elements, possibly even the specific form of Tibetan monastic debating, may originally all stem from Bön. Interestingly, Bön circumambulation is always anti-clockwise, contrary to the Buddhist clockwise direction. Special attention is given to the parallelism between Bön teachings and those of the Tibetan Nyingmapa school;

(3) It provides a photographic documentation of different Bön monasteries in central and eastern Tibet, and in Naxi Yunnan in China, but not of those in Nepal, Sikkim or India, although several photos of the new Bön Menri monastery near Dolanji in northern India are included. Its abbot, Tenpa'i Nyima, is recognized as the contemporary head of all Bönpo, and much is made of the fact that in 1988 the Dalai Lama officially recognized Bön as the “fifth school” of Tibet, bringing about the definitive reconciliation between Tibetan Buddhism and Bön;

(4) It conveys something of the grandeur of the Tibetan landscape, of the primal power of nature, the majestic snow mountains, the elemental force of sun and rain, the magic beauty of its high mountain lakes. The author has admirably succeeded in this with the superb quality of his stunning photographs that document widely unknown, almost unresearched regions. He also refers back to the work and visits of some earlier western scholars and explorers, among others Sven Hedin, Jacques Bacot, and Guiseppe Tucci.

Bön practices are also found outside Tibet, especially in the Chinese Yunnan province, where the author visited the small ethnic groups of the Naxi, Moso and Pumi. I found the matriarchal practices of the Moso of particular interest. The book also deals with the complex historical relations between the Tibetans and Mongolians, Manchurians and Chinese, including the Chinese occupation of Tibet since the 1950s and the destructive activities during the Chinese cultural revolution. It is mentioned that of the 330 active Bön monasteries at the beginning of the twentieth century only five survived the destructions undamaged. By now about half of these have been reconstructed, the majority in East Tibetan provinces. The author is of the view that the Chinese, in spite of all their brutal oppression, were unable to quash Tibetan religiosity because of the Tibetans' deep nature religion grounded in Bön, which can go on living without institutions and buildings, if necessary, for it is fed by the spirit of nature permeating the Tibetans' every part of life.

I learnt much from studying this book. Just looking at the unique photographs is such a delight, and its nuanced account, enriched by excerpts from the author's travel diary, conveys so much about the vast, yet intricate context of Tibetan religion, the power of its symbolism, the great wisdom of its beliefs about the nature of existence, human life and the universe, the variety of its deities, including the fascinating female deities and unusual protector deities – what a vast pantheon at the roof of the world, what rich cross-cultural influences from India and China in a unique mixture with the ancient Bön religion from Tibet.

This English edition is a slightly revised version of the German original, but its pagination, illustrations, annotations and bibliography are essentially identical to the earlier, 1999, publication. Several maps show Buddhist and Bön monasteries, and the routes travelled by the author. My only criticism concerns the absence of a glossary of Tibetan terms, and the fact that the bibliography lists some books with German titles where English translation or originals could have been given.

The great visual power of this work conveys more than any words can do. A real treasure — may it be widely discovered and cherished.

**Ursula King, University of Bristol**

## VI. TURNING POINT

### **Dr W. Owen Cole reflects on the role of people in his work.**

The president said: ‘Would you like to write a piece for the *BASR Bulletin* about the book that has most influenced you in your study of religions?’ Her compelling voice made me look immediately at my library shelves! *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*; *Varieties of Religious Experience*; Ninian Smart’s *Doctrine and Argument*; Hew McLeod’s *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, they were all candidates but then I realised that the greatest influence had been people. Some were teachers: John Hinnells, who introduced me to religious studies at a time when I was feeling that confessional Religious Education had no future but had no clear perception of an alternative, and later gave me the opportunity to write *The Sikhs: Their Religious beliefs and Practices*; Ursula King, who encouraged and supervised my academic development; the Shap Working Party on World Religions, through which I found ways of expressing my ideas on RE. Above all, however, there have been faith members, first those on the Religious and Cultural Panel of the Yorkshire Committee for Community Relations, and then individuals and members of the communities, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs, especially and also Christians, my father being the most important.

My encounters challenged my traditional views. Liberal Christian though they were they still informed me that Christianity was the final revelation. I met women and men, including Humanists, who were far more spiritual than I was and am, and convinced me that God has no favourites. At this point I could become boringly anecdotal, but life is an anthology of stories. I will mention only three.

I took a car full of Sikhs to a conference in Harrogate. Chapelton to Aiwoodley to Harrogate — this was the route of their ambition. In the hotel, my room was next to the bathroom where bathing began at about 5:00 a.m. On the principle of ‘If you can’t beat them join them,’ I rose at 7:00 a.m. to find that there was not even warm water! This was experiencing the Sikh practice of rising at Amrit Vela the hard way. Not long afterwards came the 500th anniversary of Guru Nanak’s birth. I was invited to serve on the organising committee. How many churches would ask a member of another faith to participate in such a way? — And the college choir gave a performance of the Mul Mantra! It was through this experience that I formed a friendship with Piara Singh Sambhi and his family which lasted until his death: during these twenty years my family shared in every aspect of their lives. Through them I met Sikh friendship, hospitality and generosity, and was introduced to Dr Gobind Singh Mansukhani, my first host in India in 1973. When I visited the

Harimandir Sahib (westerners called it the Golden Temple), I was welcomed with humbling hospitality as I have been wherever I have gone.

Lumb Lane is a neighbourhood in Bradford. I went along it most days on my way to Belle Vue Grammar School, long before Muslims had settled in it and civilised it. A Lumb Lane image persisted even though inside the house were little palaces. To dispel this I encouraged the DES to send teachers to India, Pakistan and the Caribbean. This they did but Leeds chose other teachers for the visits so eventually the Rowntree Trust gave me a bursary. My itinerary included a short stay in Pakistan at a Sufi Centre where I slept in a mosque at night, adopted Islamic prayer after some thought and went to Muslim villages by day. Once I went to Rawalpindi and on arrival thirsted for a cup of tea. My friends found a place to pray behind the service station and joined me when they had completed their devotions. On another journey we were far from a mosque when prayer time came. My hosts just drew a square in the sand appointed one of themselves to be imam and began to pray. Devotion and generosity characterised my time in Pakistan and India. My host, the Sufi Barqat Au was committed to welfare work and was embarking upon a project to build a dispensary and small hospital. Back home when I reported on my visit a Christian priest responded; 'Ah, Christ in Islam', to which I replied, 'No, God in Islam!' Christian evangelical imperialism has accompanied me every time I go to India. 'How many converts did you make?' is still a question I am asked on my return.

My third experience, and the one which has had the most lasting expression, came when I was supervising a student on teaching practice. She had told her children the story of the Good Samaritan, it was only three o'clock, and she confided that she had run out of material! I asked if I might take over and told the multi-faith class the Sikh story of Bhai Khanayah who tended any wounded soldiers he came across as he roamed the battlefield with a water skin. The ten Sikh children grew six inches and looked around the class proudly. In an English classroom they had heard something of their heritage! That set me on the journey of multi-faith Religious Education.

This contribution may not be what was wanted or expected. That cannot be helped. I have been a reluctant academic, if I have been one at all. Inter-religious dialogue or encounter and the provision of sound, multi-faith Religious Education is what really concerns me to the end that ours may be a truly inclusive society. Almost all our children pass through the state education system yet churches and other faith communities still pay inordinate attention to faith schools, neglecting the well being of most of their children, and true academics easily forget that the future of their university departments depends on school pupils who are well motivated by able teachers, and become eager to pursue their studies further in places of higher education. Meanwhile governments continue to be reluctant to take our subject seriously, linking it

with nurture into (mostly) Anglican beliefs and practices instead of a broad spectrum of understanding beliefs and values.

Sorry, I've banged on long enough — but there's a world out there eager to inspire us and waiting to be met and encouraged or challenged or both!

**W Owen Cole, Chichester**

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## **VII. TRIBUTE**

### **Professor Dorothy Mary Emmet 1904-2000**

On 24 September 1954 Dorothy Emmet was one of the nine founding members present at the first meeting of the British Section of the International Association for the History of Religions, the forerunner of BASR. She was later made an honorary life member and of those at that first meeting, is now survived only by Geoffrey Parrinder. She wrote in her last book, which was a collection of reminiscences of 70 years in philosophy entitled *Philosophers and Friends* (Macmillan 1996) that 'the 1950s were the best time I have known for doing philosophy in an interdisciplinary setting'. The breadth of her interests included anthropology and sociology as well as philosophy of religion, but she says of religion that 'I did not find that I could form any firm view of what religion was about'. David Pailin in recent correspondence said that he attended a course on philosophy of religion which she took in Manchester in 1959-1960 and that he remembers her expressing interest in Van der Leeuw's *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* and in the notion of 'rites de rebellion'. He also remembers her returning to Manchester in 1994 to lecture on the theme 'could God be a person'? I met Dorothy Emmet only once when she came to Lancaster to lecture on the possibility of a contemporary iconography, a lecture which I remember as both innovative and stimulating.

Dorothy Emmet read philosophy and classics at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford from 1923 and hearing R. H. Tawney speak on behalf of the miners during the general strike in 1926 roused in her a serious concern about political and social issues. The practical outreach of this was her work in WEA summer schools and involvement in the Maesynhaf settlement in the Rhondda Valley where she taught unemployed miners. In 1928 she took up a Commonwealth Fellowship at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass, U.S.A. to which A. N. Whitehead came from Harvard to lecture to a small group of about eight women. This was the beginning of a long friendship and engagement with his thinking. After another spell with the miners, Dorothy Emmet went to lecture at Newcastle in 1932 and then in 1938 to Manchester where she became Reader in 1945 and Sir Samuel

Hall Professor of Philosophy in 1946. She resigned that post to retire to Cambridge in 1966. During her retirement she continued to write and lecture and, as one of the Epiphany philosophers, was involved with the journal *Theoria to Theory*. She was also elected as an emeritus fellow of Lucy Cavendish College as well as being an honorary fellow of her alma mater, Lady Margaret Hall.

Of her published work, David Pailin wrote in the Guardian Obituary.

‘Her philosophical interests in social and political affairs resulted in *Function, Purpose and Powers* (1958) and *Rules, Roles and Relations* (1966). In *The Moral Prism* (1979) she returned to the complexity of individual moral decisions, considering how reliable moral judgements are to be made when there is no single moral theory that adequately solves all problems. Later, she returned to earlier interests in *The Effectiveness of Causes* (1986), *The Passage of Nature* (1992), and *The Role of the Unrealisable* (1994)’ before the final book of reminiscences of 1996.

## **Peggy Morgan**

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## **VIII. DISCUSSION**

### **Empathy or diagnosis? — Robert Segal and Frank Whaling**

At the end of his hagiographical tribute to Wilfred Cantwell Smith (*Bulletin* June 2003), Frank Whaling writes that Smith’s ‘stress on empathy remains important at a time when lack of empathy for “religion” and “religions” remains curiously strong among a cohort of scholars of religion’ (p. 41). He names no culprits.

Defined properly, ‘empathy’ is a means to an end. Defined unduly narrowly, it is the end itself. Defined properly, empathy means seeing religion from the actor’s point of view. Defined unduly narrowly, it means seeing religion from the actor’s *professed* point of view. As a mere means to an end, empathy is equivalent to data gathering, and everyone practices it. Defined unduly narrowly, empathy is restricted to a single variety of data gathering: conversation. The result is superficial: only that information which actors know about themselves.

But what of things about themselves that actors are unaware of? When, back in 1897, Durkheim showed that even something as intensely personal as suicide was affected by the degree of social solidarity, so that Catholics, whatever the IR personal unhappiness, had lower rates of suicide than Protestants, he was seeking to deepen, not to reject, the actor’s point of view. Anthropological fieldwork *utilizes* informants’ report but is not limited to them. In the light of what, thanks to the social sciences, we now know about what makes persons

tick, it is arbitrary to limit what makes believers tick to what they *think* makes them tick.

It is equally arbitrary to limit the goal to empathy. For the intellectually curious, the end is figuring out not simply *what* adherents believe but *why*. Put another way, the means are description, the ends theory. Undeniably, the why goes beyond empathy, but not against it. Indeed, one had better have reliable data about the actor's point of view, lest an account misrepresent what it is an account of.

My guess is that those who for Whaling supposedly lack empathy do so both because they go beyond the actor's professed point of view and because they go beyond description to explanation. By my usage, empathy is employed not just by those who salivate over religion like Smith but also by those who abhor religion like Freud and Marx. Both Freud and Marx take for granted that religion inspires adherents and does so because of the intensity of the belief in God. That is, they 'empathize'. But they want to know more: they want to know why religion has this clout. To answer this question, they develop at once methods for uncovering the *unrecognized* believer's point of view and theories to *account for* that point of view. What is psychoanalysis but the most relentless means of securing the actor's fullest point of view? Far from spurning empathy, Marx and Freud build on it.

The proper metaphor for religious studies should be not conversation, or 'dialogue,' but diagnosis. A patient may harbor the disease but is not thereby the final authority on the disease. In the study of religion, the theorist, like the doctor, knows best.

**Robert Segal, University of Lancaster**

### **Frank Whaling replies —**

Empathy is important in Religious Studies. It applies whether one is an insider, an outsider, a participant observer, an onlooker observer, or a long-term fieldworker. It involves the intention to get outside one's own bias and presuppositions into the intentions and worldview of others.

It is not just data-gathering. At an everyday level it is ordinary courtesy — taking others seriously and intending to see religious persons and phenomena insofar as possible 'as they are'. More deeply it involves not merely getting inside religious communities, rituals, ethics, social involvement, myths, beliefs, sacred texts, aesthetic symbols, spiritualities, and so on, it means also getting beyond the 'professed points of view' of religious 'actors' to their intentions, feelings and values. It is to attempt to walk in their shoes, to find out what makes them tick, and to see the world in some way through their eyes.

It involves more than conversation. Learning a language to communicate, learning a sacred language to engage, honing humane skills of imagination,

warmth, detachment and creative insight — all these come into play. Also relevant, whatever one's own view or non-view of transcendence, is sensitivity to others' views of transcendence.

Different methods are important in Religious Studies. Many of us have written on this. Humanities and Social Science approaches are needful and necessary. The dilemma comes when methods are transformed into metaphysics which explain religion and even explain away religion and reduce it to something else. They become ends rather than means.

To claim that in the study of religion the theorist knows best, that those who abhor religion 'empathise' with religion, that religion is like a disease which needs psychoanalysts like Freud to understand and diagnose it, that thinkers like Marx (who indirectly through Marxism severely persecuted religion) have 'built on empathy', is to transform helpful methods into metaphysics. It is to despise religious believers, groups and traditions, and those who study them and take them seriously. The cultural despisers of religion purport to be pundits and arbiters of religion.

The main raw materials and building blocks of our discipline remain religious believers, groups, and traditions, throughout history — tribal, indigenous, dead, minor, major, new religious movements, new spiritualities, and so on. The retreat from concern for the practicalities of religious believers, groups and traditions in the direction of reductionistic theorising in scholars' studies is implicitly a retreat from empathy in the direction of disregarding religious data or even 'creating' religious data out of the provenance of the scholar's own mind.

Other disciplines, such as music and aesthetics, have maintained a care for their discipline through detached and structured empathy. Should not we do likewise?

**Frank Whaling**  
**Emeritus Professor of the Study of Religion at Edinburgh University**

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## IX. RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY BASR MEMBERS

(Please send in your details by e-mail where possible.)

### PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS

#### **Chryssides, George D.**

(2003). 'Scientific Creationism: A study of the Raëlian Church'; in Christopher Partridge (ed.) *UFO Religions*. London: Routledge, pp.45-61.

'A Bookshelf on New Religious Movements'. *REsource (The Journal of the Professional Council for Religious Education)*, 26:1, Autumn, pp.4-7.

'Are New Religions at an End?': New Religions, Unitarians and the Millennium' *The Inquirer*, 7576, 14 June, p.8.

'New Religions, Unitarians and the Millennium: Last of the series' *The Inquirer*, 7579, 26 July, p.10.

#### **Cole, W. Owen**

(2003). with V. P. Kanitkar. *Hinduism*. London: Hodder and Stoughton (new edition).

*Sikhism*. London: Hodder and Stoughton (new edition).

#### **Cox, James L.**

(2003). Cox, James L and Gerrie ter Haar (eds.) *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003.

'The African Christianity Project and the Emergence of a Self-Reflexive Institutional Identity', in James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar (eds.). *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, pp.1-7.

'African Identities as the Projection of Western Alterity', in James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar (eds.). *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, pp.25-38.

**Jackson, Robert**

(2003) *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

‘Citizenship, Religious and Cultural Diversity and Education’ in Jackson, R. (ed.) *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*, London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp.1-28.

‘Citizenship as a Replacement for Religious Education or RE as a Contributor to Citizenship Education?’ in Jackson R., (ed.) *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*. London: RoutledgeFalmer, pp.67-92.

‘Should the State Fund Faith Based Schools? A Review of the Arguments’, *British Journal of Religious Education*, 25:2, pp.89-102.

(2002) ‘Social Plurality, Global Citizenship and Religious Education’, *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values* (Germany) 14:1, pp.107-15.

‘Reflecting on the Interpretive Approach: Islam in Non-Islamic Western Societies’, *Journal of Religious Education* (Australia), 50:2, pp.37-44.

‘Can School Education in Religion Facilitate the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-discrimination with regard to Freedom of Religion or Belief?’ in L Larsen and I. T. Plesner (eds) *Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief*, Oslo: University of Oslo / The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, pp 18-27.

**Killingley, Dermot**

(2003) ‘Hinduism’. In Ridgeon, Lloyd (ed.) *Major World Religions*. London: Routledge-Curzon, pp.8-58.

‘Modernity, reform and revival.’ In Flood, Gavin (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.509-525.

**Segal, Robert**

(2003). ‘Response to Laurence Coupe’s “Myth Without Mystery: The Project of Robert Segal”’. *Religious Studies Review*, 29, pp.14-17.

'Jung on UFOs'; in Partridge, Christopher (ed.) *UFO Religions*. London: Routledge' 314-28.

(2002). 'Myth as Primitive Philosophy: The Case of E. B. Tylor,' in Schilbrack, Kevin (ed.) *Thinking through Myths*. London: Routledge, pp.18-45.

Entries on 'Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien,' 'Mythos/Mythologie: Begriff und Begriffsgeschichte,' and 'Mythos/Mythologie: Mythos und Ritual,' in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4th ed.

Introduction to Smith, William Robertson, *Religion of the Semites* Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, pp.vii-xlii.

'Bruce Lincoln's Theorizing Myth,' *Religious Studies Review* 28, pp.191-96.

'Myth and Politics: A Response to Robert Ellwood,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 70, pp.611-20.

(2001), 'Eliade, Mircea,' *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 7, pp.4406-09.

'Myth in Religion,' *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 15, pp. 10273-78.

'Robertson Smith's Influence on Durkheim's Theory of Myth and Ritual,' in Idinopulos Thomas A. and Wilson, Brian C. (eds.) *Reappraising Durkheim for the Study and Teaching of Religion Today*, Leiden: Brill, pp.59-72.

(1999) 'Durkheim in Britain: The Work of Radcliffe-Brown'. *JASO (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford)* 30:2, pp.131-62.

### **Sutcliffe, Steven J.**

(2003) *Children of the New Age: A History of Spiritual Practices*, London: Routledge.

(ed.) 'Studying "New Age": Reconfiguring the Field', *Culture and Religion* 4:1, May.

'Category Formation and the History of 'New Age'. in *Culture and Religion* 4:1, pp.5-29.

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## **XI. GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

The Editor welcomes contributions on events and issues relating to the Study of Religion. The following guidelines on length should be observed.

Conference reports (short, one-day)	500-800 words
Reports on major conferences	1,000-1,500 words
Notices of forthcoming conferences	Not more than one page
Book reviews	500-800 words
Religious Studies in location	750-800 words
Research in progress	800-1,000 words
Turning Point	800-1000 words
Tributes	normally 500 words

The Editor is pleased to advise, where necessary. The BASR Executive Committee particularly welcomes accounts of research in progress by post-graduate students, articles describing RS at a particular location.

The *BASR Bulletin* will carry notices of relevant conferences and calls for papers (up to one page) free of charge. Preference is given to conferences where members may offer papers; other non-participatory conferences, which are more akin to courses, may be included if space permits.

Flyers may be sent out with the Bulletin, for a pre-paid charge of £50 each.

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