

Aboriginal Religions. Aboriginal religions in Australia share many similarities with other primal religions, yet they are as distinctive and as different as the variety of aboriginal languages.

In traditional aboriginal cosmology there was awareness among some tribes of a deity, such as the All Father or All Mother, although these have not generally been important. A lesser, but more significant being is the widely known Rainbow Serpent. This Rainbow Serpent and a variety of formative spirit-beings were responsible for the formation of the present world order.

The foundation for the aboriginal view of reality is the primeval, mythical epoch called the Dreaming. The Dreaming events are recounted in the aboriginal myths. In the Dreaming a variety of formative spirit-beings emerged from the earth or sea and took on part plant or animal and human forms. They moved across the featureless landscape, forming the various topographical features, plants, animals, and humans. Some of the formative spirit-beings then returned to the earth, forming various topographic phenomena that are regarded as sacred sites.

While the initial creativity of the Dreaming is complete, the Dreaming is ever present to the people through participation in ritual, ceremonies or "corroborees," art, and song. The Dreaming myths give rise to the aboriginal understanding of their relationship with the land, animals, and plant life. Aboriginal people see themselves sharing a common ancestry with the plants and animals, being of common spiritual essence. Each group is obligated to others to perform the ceremonies relevant to their particular totemic ancestors to ensure the continuity and sustenance of the species.

The main religious activity is associated with keeping alive the Dreaming creativity in the present to ensure renewal or renovation of the cosmic order. In the ritual reenactment the primordial events are made present and the performer becomes the totemic ancestor. Some rituals are solely for initiated men and held in secret; some are exclusively for women; others are shared by both genders with separate responsibilities. The Dreaming spirit-beings provided a precedent for all ceremonies and social customs as well, so all of life is seen to be sacred; their responsibility is to keep them alive and productive. To the aborigine living is a religious activity. Human life begins and ends in the spirit world.

The change brought about by acculturation and white encroachment has been cataclysmic, resulting in widespread desacralization and demoralization of society. Consequently there have been few recorded revitalization movements, yet aboriginal religions have survived and changed dramatically among the tribal people.

Whether aboriginal religious tradition is still an important reality for individuals or not, ab-

original thinking processes, basic concerns, and needs expressed in the myths remain. For this reason missions and church need to treat aboriginal religions seriously, irrespective of how their significance is understood, and assist the aborigines in recapturing the gospel that addresses their needs. There remains a great need to explore the use of indigenous art, music, and corroboree to communicate the gospel.

ALBERT F. TUCKER

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African Traditional Religions. General designation for the religions of the ethnic groups of Africa. It does not describe a specific religion. It does not refer to the religious system of any particular group. By using expressions such as "African Traditional Religions," "African Primal Religions," or "African Religion," scholars seek to distinguish the indigenous religions of Africa from foreign and imported ones such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism.

Scholars of religion in Africa do not agree among themselves on the use of the plural for the term chosen to group together and describe the indigenous religious beliefs of African peoples. They also disagree on the necessity of keeping adjectives like "traditional" and "primal." There is, however, near unanimity about the fact that certain terms used in the past are no longer adequate or appropriate. For example, African religions have been called primitive, savage, native, tribal, pagan, animistic, or heathen. This way of describing African religions is now found mostly in older studies. Occasionally, in polemical literature, one may still see references to idolatry and fetishism as the main characteristics of African religions. "African Traditional Religions" and "African Religion" are, nevertheless, the terms most commonly used in current studies.

The preference for African Traditional Religions, African Religion, or an equivalent term represents an important shift in understanding African religious beliefs and systems. This shift in understanding and depicting the religions of Africa is a recognition of the fact that these religions must be studied in their own right. They are not varieties of primitive religion. They must be viewed as major living religions. In that sense, African religions belong in the category "world religions." One should not think, therefore, that "traditional" in African Traditional Religions indicates that these are dead or dying religions. They are the beliefs and practices of contemporary Africans. Their present vitality is best suggested by the use of African Religions or Religion

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since the adjective “traditional” may imply that these religions are either “past” or practiced by “non-modern” Africans.

Should one approach the study of religion in Africa with the assumption of unity or multiplicity? Are we faced with many ethnic religions or are these religions different manifestations of a coherent African religion? If a single coherent African religion does not exist, how useful is the linking together of all indigenous African religions? These questions have fueled much debate among students of religion in Africa. There seems to be a growing consensus that unity is a better way of conceptualizing the religious beliefs and practices of Africans. One must, however, use caution in generalizing about religion in Africa. One should neither proceed too quickly to make comparisons nor refrain from noting similarities. General and comparative studies of religion in Africa are indicated when one deals with questions of religious presuppositions, worldview, and structure. This kind of study is useful in its description of broad and general characteristics which may be common to the majority of African religions. For concrete everyday religious life and practice, however, there is need to be as specific as possible: for example, one may investigate the doctrines and practices of Yoruba or Akamba religion. Numerous monograph studies of African religions by anthropologists and others are representative of this approach. These and other specific studies provide the necessary complement to general comparative descriptions of African religion. They elucidate the ethnic grounding of these religions, thereby depicting the particular African traits.

Whether one studies the religion of a particular ethnic group or attempts to understand the general characteristics of African religions, one faces an important challenge: African religions do not have known founders or sacred books preserving their teachings and doctrines. Oral narratives and rituals are therefore the main materials from which scholars derive the beliefs of African peoples.

The examination of African religious ceremonies and narratives reveals that they focus on the importance of affirming life. A basic assumption seems to be that life is essentially good and that, ideally, people should have health and prosperity and enjoy fulfillment, honor, and progeny in the world. Yet, in their experience in the world, people seldom attain this ideal good life. Evil forces tend to frustrate people’s destiny or prevent the enjoyment of full life. Since evil forces, visible and invisible, destroy life, people need to find ways to protect themselves and maximize life. This seems to be one of the foundational principles undergirding African religious practices. It provides the basis for understanding the purpose

of religion as the prevention of misfortune and the maximization of good fortune.

The focus on preventing misfortune and maximizing good fortune makes African religions anthropocentric; that is, a major goal of African religions is to ensure the present well-being of humans and their communities. Harmony between spiritual and physical forces, the environment, and humans is the prerequisite for the well-being of the individual and the community. God, the all-powerful Creator of all things, is believed to be benevolent. In that sense, harmony, success, and abundant life come from him. But God is rather uninvolved in the daily lives of humans. He has given the responsibility of regulating human lives to spiritual entities that can be called “minor deities.” In this regard, Joseph Osei-Bonsu notes that “[t]he idea of minor deities is found among our people. These are believed to be the sons of the Supreme Being, created by him, and to whom he has delegated the supervision of the affairs of this world” (1990, 354).

Mediation between God and humans is the chief religious role of the minor deities. They share this role with the ancestors, the elders, and the various religious functionaries of African societies. Harmony in the world and all the conditions for health, prosperity, and abundant life are achieved by the mediation of these multiple intermediaries. This conception of mediation is crucial for understanding the essence of African religions. Mediation is also one of the fundamental points of divergence between African religions and Christianity since “the idea of intermediary divinities has no place in Christianity” (*ibid.*).

The relationship between God and the mediators, taken together with the focus on the “lesser divinities,” helps explain why it is nearly impossible to solve the nature of theism in African religions. One cannot categorically state that African religions are either monotheistic or polytheistic. Belief in God, the One and Supreme High Being, is widespread. Yet, the Supreme Being may not be approached without the help of intermediaries. This means that theism in African religions can be described as ontological monotheism with liturgical polytheism. It is liturgical polytheism that makes African religions pragmatic, anthropocentric, and resilient.

The utilitarian characteristic of African religions and their anthropocentric spirituality make them appealing to many modern Africans, especially those who want to live in continuity with Africa’s indigenous cultures and religions while embracing modernity. African religions have shown a remarkable ability for adapting to change. They have not disappeared in the encounter of African peoples with modernity, secularization, and missionary religions such as Christianity or Islam. The capacity for adapta-

tion has assured survival for African religions over the years. More recently, survival has given way to resurgence. The resurgence of African religions means that they will continue to be an important dimension of the context of Christian mission in Africa for the foreseeable future. Christian missionaries, evangelists, and theologians who are interested in Africa cannot, therefore, afford to ignore or neglect the study of African religions.

TITE TIÉNOU

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Ancestral Beliefs and Practices. Throughout the world, cultures recognize the continuance of life after death. Wherever this is true, such recognition often results in the belief that the departed ancestors are still alive and correspondingly need to be recognized or acknowledged in some fashion. Though this basic belief is commonly found around the world, the formal manifestations and means by which this belief is acted out are represented in a staggering variety of beliefs, ethical codes, and rituals.

Beliefs and Ethics. In parts of Asia where CONFUCIANIST thinking undergirds culture, the obligation of filial piety undergirds the ethical need to respect the ancestors. Maintaining one's place in life, and (in the case of the eldest son) carrying out the role of supporting the departed in their place in ongoing life is critical. The cult of the ancestors has critical social functions, such as maintaining order in society through sustaining respect for the elders and adherence to social roles. In many parts of southern Africa no important family decision would be made without hearing from the ancestors through divination, dreams, or possession. The dead are thought of as the *living* dead, and local ethical codes demand that they be granted the same respect in death that they enjoyed as elders while alive. When times are troubling, whether from drought or disease, the ancestors may be called upon to protect the living. Among indigenous peoples of Latin America, as also in Africa, the ancestors are still seen as participating in the community of the living, even though their attention may not always be welcome. In all these contexts, failure to acknowledge the dead may result in retribution by the dead on the living. Thus, the obligation to participate in the practices and beliefs is often seen as a cultural necessity. Even in the materialistic West the popularity of attempts to reach the dead, whether through seances or mediums, shows that the need for on-

going connection with the departed remains an important felt need.

Rituals. The rituals associated with the ancestors vary widely. They include personal devotions, household rituals, rites of the extended family or clan, and rites of the whole people on behalf of all of the ancestors. Rites of transition may be necessary to ensure that the departed is accepted by the spirit realm, and great funerals may be the means by which this is done. Cyclical rites, such as recognition on the departed's birthday or death date may be needed to cement the family together. Rites of crisis enable the living to beseech the dead for protection or deliverance from their troubles. They ensure that the living do not join the dead before the appropriate time!

Missionary Response. A perplexing problem for missionaries is understanding exactly what the beliefs are, what the roles of the ancestors are, and why the living feel they need to relate to them. Initially missionaries considered the relationship to be one of worship. More recently it has been recognized that worship, in the sense of paying homage to deity, is not always an appropriate word to use and "ancestral veneration" has become the accepted term. However, the reality is that the problem is not just one of vocabulary, but of finding ways to enable Christian communities to obey the fifth commandment (honoring mother and father) in their cultural context without violating warnings against contact with the dead (e.g., Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:9–14; 1 Sam. 28:3–20). Proposed answers have ranged from simply declaring ancestral practices Christian to abolishing them altogether. The missionary's main role is not to make decisions for the local community, but to assist that community in going to the Scriptures for guidance in evaluating the cultural beliefs and practices in light of God's revelation.

A. SCOTT MOREAU

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Animism. The term "animism" was coined by the early anthropologist E. B. Tylor and defined as belief in spiritual beings. From dreams and death early humans inferred the idea of the soul, Tylor argued. And if humans had souls, then perhaps so did animals, plants, and mountains. From the idea of a soul that survives the death of a body evolved the idea of disembodied spirits, gods, and eventually God. Animists impute human attributes to the world, and em-

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ploy the same actions used to affect humans (love, gifts, threats, punishment) to affect such things as rain. But since spirits are tied to the physical world, animists also employ actions designed to manipulate the physical world to control spirits.

At one level, animism is a term linked to an outdated theory about the primordial core of religion. Yet many anthropologists still use the term. They use it, first, as a synonym for traditional, tribal, FOLK, or PRIMAL RELIGION, as opposed to major WORLD RELIGIONS. Second, they use the term where religious belief focuses on spirits that interpenetrate the physical material world, and religious practice is characterized by attempts to manipulate the physical world by recourse to spirits and spirits by recourse to the physical world.

ROBERT J. PRIEST

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Anthropology of Religion. The anthropological study of religion is related to the sociological, psychological, and comparative studies of religions. Its unique contribution lies in its data—mainly the study of non-Western tribal and FOLK RELIGIONS—and its use of in-depth ethnographic descriptions and cross-cultural comparisons. Anthropological studies of religion fall broadly into four periods, each characterized by particular questions and theories.

Evolutionary Theories of Religion. Like medieval Christian theologians, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anthropologists sought to account for religions in a single comprehensive history, but unlike theologians they did so in naturalistic terms. They postulated the evolution of religion from simple animistic beliefs and practices to the complex religions of the present. They attributed this to the growth of human rationality, and divided it into three stages—animistic, metaphysical/theological, and scientific. Central to their debate were two questions: what were the origins of religion, and what role did it play in the evolution of human thought?

E. B. Tylor (1871) attributed the origins to an early belief in spirit beings that arose when primitive humans, reflecting on the nature of dreams and death, concluded that humans have invisible souls which leave the body and wander to distant places. Later they extended this notion of spirit or soul to animals, plants, and even inanimate objects. From a belief in spirits, Tylor argued, it is only a small step to belief in the “continuance” of these spirits beyond death in an after-world, their “embodiment” in objects, their “possession” of living persons, and the existence of powerful “high gods.” Robert Marett argued that belief in spirits was preceded by a stage in

which humans experienced a sense of awe at the great forces of nature, and came to believe in a mysterious impersonal power or *mana*. Sir James Frazer (1922) posited that religious beliefs are rooted in prelogical beliefs in MAGIC based on two mistaken notions of causality, namely, that of similarity (pouring water produces rain), and contagion (acts performed on one part of a person’s body, such as hair clippings, affects that person). Cultural evolutionists took religious beliefs seriously, but discounted these as prelogical and metaphysical attempts to understand the universe, which, in time, would be displaced by rational, empirical science.

Opposition to evolutionary theories of religion came from two quarters. In Vienna, Father Wilhelm Schmidt of the Kulturkreis School of Anthropology showed from missionary reports that most simple societies believe in an all-powerful creator God, a belief evolutionists attributed only to advanced universalistic religions. In the United States Franz Boas and his students called for empirically based history to replace the “arm-chair speculation” that had characterized evolutionary theories.

The theory of cultural evolution influenced the modern mission movement in several ways. First, many missionaries assumed the superiority of Western civilization and peoples. Members of other races might share in their goodness and wisdom, but Westerners were the leaders and would remain so for a very long time. Missionaries considered their task to be to “civilize” and “Christianize” the people they served. They built schools and hospitals alongside churches, and saw science as essentially a part of the curriculum as the gospel. This equation of the gospel with Western culture made the gospel unnecessarily foreign in other cultures.

Second, many missionaries saw traditional religions, with their fear of spirits, witchcraft, and magical powers, as animistic superstitions, and assumed that these would die out as people accepted Christianity and science. They saw little need to study these religions. Consequently, many of the old beliefs went underground because the missionaries had not dealt with them or provided Christian answers to the problems these addressed. Today these underground beliefs are resurfacing around the world and creating havoc in young churches (see also ANIMISM).

Social-Functional Approaches to Religion. During the period between the World Wars, anthropologists were heavily influenced by sociology which held that social phenomena, like natural phenomena, obey laws discoverable by empirical observation and human reason. Emile Durkheim (1915) argued that religion plays a vital role in maintaining cohesion and moral order in a society. He saw religion as a set of symbols that refer not to supernatural beings,

but to the society itself. Gods, spirits, and other religious symbols represent segments of a society, or its whole. By ordering these symbols in rituals, the social order is affirmed; and by declaring these symbols sacred, the authority of the society is validated, and the egocentric impulses of individuals that threaten to destroy it are suppressed. As individuals participate in religious rituals, they affirm their place in and subordination to the society. Religions, therefore, serve vital positive functions in maintaining societies, but their explicit beliefs cannot be taken as true statements about the nature of reality, or even of how the people view reality.

The central question social anthropologists asked was, What functions do religions serve in a society? In England A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, who studied tribal religion in Sri Lanka, R. F. Fortune, who studied sorcery among the Dubu, and Raymond Firth, who investigated the ritual cycle of the Tikopia, believed that religions help maintain social cohesion and order by declaring sacred those things that were directly or indirectly essential for their survival.

Bronislaw Malinowski (1935) went a step further. He refused to treat people as anonymous individuals trapped in social webs and their ideas as merely social projections, and recognized the importance of religious beliefs *qua* beliefs. All people, he said, have folk sciences by which they seek to meet their human needs through understandings of how the world works. Religion and magic, he noted, are rational responses to the universally experienced emotions of stress that arise when these sciences fail. The difference between religion and magic is one of purpose. Magic is utilitarian and instrumental. It is used to influence events such as unforeseen calamities that are beyond normal human control. Religion, on the other hand, is an end unto itself. It provides people with an explanation for suffering, crisis, and death, and thereby assures them that the world is indeed orderly and meaningful. Malinowski argued that we must understand the world as the people see it to understand why they act as they do.

Social anthropology has had a deep impact on missions in recent years. Earlier, mission leaders used geography to order their strategies. Missionaries went to India, Africa, or other 'countries,' and divided these into 'mission fields.' DONALD MCGAVRAN, PETER WAGNER, and the CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT showed how social dynamics play a major role in the growth and organization of the church. They introduced concepts such as homogeneous groups (see HOMOGENEOUS UNIT PRINCIPLE), people movements (see MASS MOVEMENTS), and RECEPTIVITY/resistance. The Unreached People movement shifted mission strategies based on geography to ones based on social organization (see PEOPLES, PEOPLE

GROUPS). Both were in danger, however, of social reductionism, where success is based merely on understanding and applying social principles and measured largely in quantitative terms.

American Historical Approaches to Religion. A second theoretical challenge to the theory of cultural evolution emerged in North America, and came to be known as American historicism. It was pioneered by Franz Boas (1858–1942), A. L. Kroeber (1876–1960), and their disciples. They studied the North American Indians whose cultures had been shattered and who were now living largely on reservations. Their central questions had to do with religious change, and their chief contributions were a series of historical accounts of nativistic and messianic movements that often emerge where traditional peoples are overrun by modernity. Ralph Linton studied the Ghost Dance of the North American Indians, and Glen Cochrane the Cargo Cults of Melanesia. From such studies A. F. C. Wallace (1956) developed a broad theory explaining these revitalization movements. American anthropologists were also influenced by Sigmund Freud, who saw religion as a projection of authority figures, and William James, who examined the personal emotional dimension of religion.

The American school influenced missions through the writings of ALAN TIPPETT, LOUIS LUBETAK, JACOB LOEWEN, and other missiologists dealing with CONVERSION and religious change, and through the work of HAROLD TURNER and those studying the African Independent Churches (see AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCH MOVEMENT) and other new emerging religious movements (see NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

Symbolic and Cognitive Anthropology. Before World War II, some anthropologists rejected the reduction of religion to social dynamics, and argued we must take religious beliefs seriously as beliefs because they are what people believe to be the true nature of reality. Their central question was how religions give humans a sense of meaning.

L. Levy-Bruhl (1926) saw primal religions as reflections of a "primitive mentality" which has its own rationality, one that is radically different from that of modern science. Primitive logic, he argued, is mystical, and governed by emotions, dreams, and notions about supernatural entities. JOHN TAYLOR (1963) captured this approach in his study of African religions. These scholars overestimate the rationality of Western thought, and ignore the fact that in much of their lives, all people use natural common sense.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard also moved from "function to meaning" in his study of magic and witchcraft among the Azande (1937) and Nuer (1940) of Africa. He argued that the Azande have sound empirical knowledge of nature which they distinguish from the 'mystical' workings of

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magic and witchcraft, and that the latter are rational systems of thought, given the assumptions the Azande have about the world. He held that cosmological beliefs provide people with their categories of thought, and noted that tribal religions are this-worldly religions concerned with "abundant life and fullness of years."

Edmund Leach, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, and Claude Lèvi-Strauss opened the door further to cognitive structural approaches to the study of religion. Douglas (1966) argues that religions create symbolic systems about purity and pollution, sacred and profane that reflect and reinforce social orders. Victor Turner (1974) analyzed the structure of religious rituals and showed how they serve as boundary markers, setting off various types of social reality and transforming persons from one status to another (see also RITES OF PASSAGE). Lèvi-Strauss (1966) affirmed that behind the empirical diversity of religions, human minds are fundamentally the same everywhere. He contended that religion, like science, provides humans with a sense of meaning by mentally ordering the world in which they live, and that this meaning is generated by the universal unconscious processes of the human mind.

Social and symbolic approaches examine the underlying structures of religions, but do not study the content of their beliefs. Taking a problem-solving approach, Clifford Geertz argues that religion provides answers to three fundamental human experiences that threaten to make life meaningless: the problem of bafflement when human explanation systems fail, the problem of suffering and death, and the problem of injustice or feeling of moral disorder and chaos. Religion answers these by appealing to higher realities outside of daily experience. Robin Horton (1964) goes further and examines the content of African religious beliefs. He sees them as theoretical models of reality, like those of science, but that they transcend the everyday world of common sense. Daryl Forde, Marcel Griaule, and others show that religions are philosophical systems that shape peoples' worldviews.

Symbolic and cognitive anthropology has much to contribute to missions, most of which has yet to be mined. These approaches take traditional religions seriously, and help us to provide Christian responses to the questions FOLK RELIGIONS ask rather than ignoring them as superstitions. They help us understand the importance of rituals (see RITUAL AND CEREMONY) and myths (see MYTH, MYTHOLOGY) in religious life, and the importance for missionaries influenced by the modern denigrating of these to rediscover their importance in the life of the church. However, while taking the religious beliefs of people seriously, most intellectualists fail to raise the ontological question of the truth of these reli-

gious beliefs. It is here that Christian anthropologists must go beyond the current approaches, and lead in new ways of studying religions.

PAUL G. HIEBERT

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Apologetics. Definitions and Distinctions. In a general sense apologetics (from the Greek *apologia*, "a defense") can be understood as the defense of the distinctive beliefs or practices of a particular religious tradition against criticisms from those outside that tradition. As such, apologetics can be found among a variety of religions and usually occurs when a particular religious tradition is confronted with different religious or nonreligious perspectives that call into question some of the central beliefs, values, and practices of that tradition. Although the term is usually associated today with Christianity, the history and literature of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are replete with examples of apologetics directed at alternative religious and philosophical perspectives.

Christian apologetics is the response of the Christian community to criticisms of the truth-claims about God, human beings, sin, salvation, and Jesus Christ, which are said to apply to all people in all cultures at all times. This inevitably brings Christian faith into conflict with alternative worldviews that assume quite different beliefs. The history of Christian missions is in part the story of very different peoples worldwide coming to modify their worldviews and to accept central Christian beliefs as true. An integral element in this process has been successful Christian apologetics, which helps people eliminate obstacles to belief and resolve questions of doubt.

Theoretical apologetics, or "problem solving" apologetics, is concerned with the objective justification of the Christian faith irrespective of any human response. The purpose here is to answer satisfactorily certain fundamental questions about the truth of the Christian worldview: How do we acquire religious knowledge? Can we know whether God exists, and if so, how? Are the Scriptures a reliable revelation from God? Did Jesus in fact rise from the dead? Discussion on this level involves highly technical issues in disciplines such as philosophy, history, archaeology, the sciences, biblical criticism, and so on.

Applied apologetics, or apologetics as “persuasion,” is very much concerned with human response to the proclamation of the gospel. It actively seeks to persuade others to accept Christian faith as true. Applied apologetics involves appropriate and culturally sensitive justification procedures and data in the actual defense of the truth-claims of Christianity to a particular target audience. Effective applied apologetics must be creative, flexible, and sensitive to the distinctives of each audience. Applied apologetics builds on theoretical apologetics; answers to questions raised on the applied level (How can I be sure that God really exists?) are logically dependent upon answers to corresponding questions on the theoretical level (does God exist?). But applied apologetics is person- and culture-specific in a way that theoretical apologetics is not. The kinds of issues raised in an Islamic context will differ from those emerging from Buddhist or post-Christian secularist contexts. Appropriate levels of sophistication in apologetic response will vary with individuals, depending on educational background. Appropriate means of persuasion will also vary with cultures; vigorous public debates on religious issues might be acceptable in one culture but counterproductive in others.

A further distinction is often made between positive (offensive) and negative (defensive) apologetics. *Negative apologetics* is primarily concerned with responding to direct attacks on the Christian faith, showing that the criticism is unjustified. *Positive apologetics* goes beyond merely responding to attacks and attempts to demonstrate that the unbeliever also ought to accept the claims of Christianity as true. Positive apologetics tries to show that there is adequate reason or justification for accepting the truth-claims of Christianity.

Theological Guidelines. Some biblical guidelines for apologetics should be noted. Scripture teaches that the mind and thinking processes are tainted by sin, and that the mind is used to distort what we know to be true about God (Rom. 1:18–20; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4). But the effects of sin should not be exaggerated. For even the unregenerate retain the image of God and can know some things to be true about God (Rom. 1:19–21).

Furthermore, the essential role of the Holy Spirit in effective apologetics must be acknowledged. Apologetics, just like evangelism, is ineffective apart from the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart (1 Cor. 12:3; Titus 3:5–6). It is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, removes spiritual blindness, and produces new birth (John 3:3–8; 16:8–11; 1 Cor. 2:14–16). But this does not make apologetics unnecessary any more than it renders evangelism optional. Although ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who produces confidence in the truth of the gospel within the believer (Rom.

8:16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13), the Spirit uses various means in bringing about this conviction of truth. By removing obstacles to belief and also showing positive grounds for belief, apologetics can be used by the Spirit to produce confidence in the gospel.

Scripture indicates that appeal to evidential factors in support of the truth-claims of Christian faith is legitimate. The examples of the Old Testament prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostles all illustrate appropriate use of evidential factors in support of one’s claims. When challenged on his authority to forgive sins Jesus responded by providing visible evidence of his authority in healing the paralytic (Mark 2:1–12). Paul frequently appealed to various forms of evidence in support of his claim that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 9:22; 13:16–41; 17:2–3, 22–31) and the bodily resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:3–19).

Apologetics is not the same thing as EVANGELISM. Evangelism, understood as the COMMUNICATION of the gospel of Jesus Christ, has a certain priority over apologetics. But where appropriate, evangelism should be supplemented by an informed and sensitive response to criticisms and questions, demonstrating why the unbeliever ought to accept the gospel as truth. Both apologetics and evangelism should be conducted with much prayer and conscious reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Christian theologians do not agree on the nature of appropriate Christian apologetics. Virtually all thinkers would accept that negative apologetics is appropriate and necessary; erroneous views should be refuted and specific criticisms of Christianity should be answered. But not all theologians endorse positive apologetics. For some, any attempt to demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith is to subject God and his revelation to a higher norm for truth and thus must be rejected. God’s self-revelation is held to be self-authenticating and in need of no external corroboration. Others regard this position to be epistemologically confused and contend that this view ultimately reduces to a cognitive relativism that is incapable of either justifying its own claim to truth or rejecting alternative perspectives as false.

Apologetics and Missions. Apologetics has a long, if not always distinguished, history in Christian missions. The early church produced some brilliant apologists (Justin, Tertullian, Clement, and later Augustine) who effectively addressed criticisms arising from Hellenistic culture and Roman paganism. During the twelfth through fifteenth centuries writers such as Peter the Venerable and RAYMON LULL wrote significant apologetic works directed against Islam. Thomas Aquinas’ enormously influential *Summa contra gentiles* was intended in part to be a training manual for Christian missionaries among Mus-

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lims in Spain. MATTEO RICCI in seventeenth-century China produced impressive and effective writings directed to the cultural elite influenced by Confucianism. Nineteenth-century Protestants such as W. A. P. MARTIN in China and Joseph Edkins in Japan wrote influential works defending Christianity and raising questions about opposing perspectives.

Some issues have been of perennial concern throughout various cultures and times. The problem of evil/suffering, for example, is a classic problem for apologetics, which finds expression in writings from ancient Hellenism as well as in Hindu, Confucian, and Buddhist critiques of Christianity. The Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe placed a new set of issues on the table. Christian apologetics in the West in the past three centuries has been dominated by the post-Enlightenment agenda, focusing on issues such as the existence of God, faith and reason, the relation between science and Scripture, the question of miracles, the resurrection of Jesus, and the reliability of Scripture. Given the increasingly global spread of MODERNITY and SECULARIZATION, non-Western churches will need to develop appropriate responses to these issues as well. However, each culture also presents a unique set of challenges to the gospel. Thus Christian communities in various cultures will need to study their own cultures, discern the particular challenges to Christian faith that arise within those contexts, and respond in a biblically sound and culturally appropriate manner to those issues.

A particularly urgent problem facing the church worldwide is the increasingly vigorous attack on the Christian claim to the uniqueness and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the only Savior for all humankind. Resurgence of the great religions of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, combined with a sense of nationalism and anti-Western sentiment, has made the exclusive claims of Christianity highly problematical in many cultures today. The West itself is increasingly characterized by ethnic and religious diversity. Such pluralization, combined with growing disenchantment with Christianity in the West and increased relativism in ethical and religious matters, makes religious PLURALISM an extremely attractive ideology. Thus, whether in the West or in non-Western contexts, the church must be prepared to show why it can claim that in Jesus alone can we find the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

HAROLD A. NETLAND

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Asian New Religious Movements. During the past 150 years, a wide variety of popular religious movements have emerged throughout Asia. In some countries, such as Japan, these appear in organized form as "new religions," but in other countries they are amorphous and unorganized. Thus, the discussion of religious phenomena in countries other than Japan must deal with popular religion in a somewhat broader sense than new religious organizations as such. "New" is relative, and must be used in contrast to the ancient established traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and so on, referring to movements mainly, but not confined to, the twentieth century.

With the exception of Japan, little literature is available on these movements in most of the Asian countries. Their newness and their fluid and changing nature makes them a difficult object of study. Also, there is a tendency on the part of most Western Christian observers to view such movements with indifference or disdain.

In Korea, popular folk religion is polytheistic, claiming eight million gods, including nature gods and the spirits of the living and dead. Divination, fortune telling, geomancy (religious significance in the orientation of buildings), ancestor worship, and shamans (*mudang*) and shamanic rituals (*kut*) with their elaborate dances and songs are all important elements in popular folk religion.

Nationalism is also a significant element. This is eminently true of the first post-Pacific War new religious group, the Tonghak (Eastern Learning) movement. Some of the new religions teach that Korea will become chief among the world's nations. Most new religions are directed toward alleviating economic and health problems; they anticipate a utopia on earth. Some new religions, such as Won Buddhism, are close to traditional Buddhism. Others, such as Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, are similar to Christianity, yet alien to orthodox Christianity.

The South Korean government's statistics put total membership at about one million in 1983 (3% of the total population). The number of adherents has not grown greatly because, unlike neighboring Japan, Christianity has proved to be more powerful in attracting the masses.

In modern Taiwan, prior to 1949, the year of the communist takeover in mainland China, many Buddhist and Taoist clergy, including renowned leaders like the Taoist Heavenly Master, moved to Taiwan from the mainland, creating a strong Buddhist influence there. Many new temples were built and old ones refurbished.

In popular religions, belief in ghosts and worship of ancestors is the backbone. One of the most popular observances is the Pho To festival (Universal Salvation). It is so widely celebrated that it is considered to be a force of unity in the

country. At this festival the suffering souls in the underworld are released to enjoy a month of freedom. People give offerings and join in celebrating the climactic “ghost-feeding” ritual, ghosts being the departed spirits of strangers.

Among the new religious groups are Li Chiao and Hsuan-yuan Chiao. One of the more aggressive Buddhist sects is Hsi Lai. It claims to be a return to the pure teachings of the Buddha. “Hsi Lai” literally means “coming to the West,” and this sect has visibility on the West Coast of the United States.

In Hong Kong, as in Taiwan, Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist influence is prevalent, but the extreme secular materialism of Hong Kong’s commercialism precludes the development of influential new religious movements. Popular FOLK RELIGIONS of the common people are centered in ancestor worship, but even this is losing its religious meaning, leaving only its social significance.

Both Malaysia and Indonesia are predominantly Islamic in background, and in recent decades have seen new thrusts of “Islamization.” Since Malaysia gained independence from Great Britain, there has been renewed effort to instill the ideals of Islam: peace, love, cooperation, honesty, hard work, honor, and abstinence from licentious behavior.

In Indonesia a new Islamic association, Sarekat Islam, was formed in 1912 and spread like wildfire into a million-member group which eventually came to lead a nationalist movement.

In the Philippines, tribal religion has produced many movements and cults that are separate from the mainstream of Roman Catholicism. For instance, tribes in northern Mindanao are known for their strong belief in the invisible forces of the spirit world and their peculiar rituals. In 1931 a violent anticlerical sect called Colorums of Central Luzon arose, aiming to establish an independent Philippine government.

There are numerous modern native cults in the Melanesian Islands of the South Pacific. Life here, lived in a half-way world between ancient paganism and envied modern Westernization, has given rise to some bizarre cults. For example, in 1939 a European missionary agitated for the need for a chairman and rules of procedure in formal meetings. He was misinterpreted, and a new religious movement called the “Chair and Rule Movement” arose in the Solomon Islands, which elevated a flag, a wooden chair, and a wooden ruler into a place of ritual importance.

In India, exposure to nineteenth-century British colonialism and modernization, along with Christian missions, stimulated various Neo-Hindu reform movements and new religious movements. After the introduction of Christianity by WILLIAM CAREY in 1793, there was a call for religious and ethical reform among Hindu intel-

lectuals. This resulted in the Samaj (Society) movement. In the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, there arose the Brahmo Samaj (Theistic Society), seeking a religious synthesis of Hinduism and Christianity. The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, has now spread throughout India and also to 120 locations abroad. It teaches the essential unity of all religions and the potential divinity of humans (*see also* HINDU NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

In Japan there have been a great number of organized modern sects technically called Shinko Shukyo (New Religions), and more recently a new phenomenon called Shin-shinko Shukyo (new New Religions, sects of the past decade, which generally focus on immediate benefits combined with mystical experience). Even under government control in the early decades of this century, the number of groups grew to 414 in 1930. The end of the Pacific War, when official state Shinto was dismantled, brought religious freedom, so by 1950 there were 742 New Religions registered with the government. This number has been greatly reduced since then.

The New Religions usually arose as a response to some kind of social crisis, the major crisis being the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War. Typically, they are founded by charismatic leaders, often a female who could be identified as a shaman. They tend toward monotheism, having one deity, one founder, and one revelation which sets the doctrine. They have a definite body of teaching, which usually takes a simplistic, optimistic view of the human situation. They are syncretistic, drawing from several strands of religion and culture, along with the worldview of Western science. They hold a this-worldly eschatology—they see that society can change toward a utopian goal. They offer concrete, material blessings and prosperity to their followers. They have an elegant sacred center, a national headquarters which functions as a foretaste of paradise for the believers who gather there. There is an emphasis on health and healing of sickness, and an emphasis on the power of positive thinking to solve life’s problems. They have effective propagation methods and are easy to join, and have ways of getting sizable offerings from members once they have joined.

We may classify a few of the large representative groups in Japan into the following three categories. The “*old New Religions*,” or those founded before the Meiji Restoration, are represented by Tenrikyo (Religion of Heavenly Wisdom), founded by Miki Nakayama in 1838, who identified the deity as “God the Parent.”

The Omoto Group. (1) Seicho on Ie (House of Growth), established by Masaharu Taniguchi in 1930, is a cross between Japanese spiritual tradition and American “New Thought.” (2) Sekai Ky-

Astrology

useikyo (World Messianity), established by Moki-chi Okada in 1950, focuses on the ritual of *jorei*, which channels divine light and healing through the outstretched palm of the hands. (3) Perfect Liberty Kyodan, founded by Tokuchika Miki in 1946, takes as its motto, "Life is art": live in a balanced, creative, esthetically expressive way. Sports and crafts are an important part of their religious practice.

The Nichiren Group includes the largest and strongest organizations: (1) Soka Gakkai (Value-creating Society), founded by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in 1937, claimed to be the fastest growing religion in the world in the 1950s, numbering 750,000 households. A later leader, Daisaku Ikeda, also established a political party, Komeito (Clean Government Party), which he claimed would usher in a time of peace and plenty all over the world. (2) Rissho Koseikai, now counting more than six million members, was established through the efforts of Nikkyo Niwano and Myoko Naganuma in 1938. Their emphasis has been on happy living, taught in small groups called *hoza*, and on world peace and interreligious cooperation (*see also* JAPANESE NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

Although the new religious movements of Asia are too varied throughout time and culture to make any general statement, at least it can be said that they are a clear sign of the hunger of the human spirit for something beyond physical and economic life. With this comes a challenge to Christian mission to satisfy that hunger.

We also are made aware of the intricate relationship among religion, culture, politics, and superstition. To be a truly redeeming influence in this complex situation, the church must realize its own cultural biases, strive to understand the dynamics of the new spiritual phenomena into which it is thrust, and at the same time discern the essence of the Christian faith, being willing to let go of nonessentials for the sake of contextualizing the meaning of Christ in any particular cultural setting.

KENNETH J. DALE

Bibliography. K. Dale, *Circle of Harmony: A Case Study in Popular Japanese Buddhism*; H. B. Earhart, *The New Religions of Japan*; J. H. Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*; N. McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods*; J. A. Saliba, *Perspectives on New Religious Movements*; F. von der Mehden, *Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia*; R. Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion*.

Astrology. Form of divination that regards the stars and planets as powers that influence the lives and affairs of people and nations and seeks to predict what those influences will be. Astrology seems to have originated in Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C., where it spread to India and appeared in Hinduism. Eventually it

spread to Greece, where it reached its fullest development during the Hellenistic period. It was through Hellenistic influence that the Arab world was introduced to astrology and it persisted there in spite of the later prohibitions of the QUR'AN. Forms of astrology also appeared in pre-imperial China, probably through Arabic influences, and it existed even in meso-American Mayan and Aztec cultures, though its sources there are uncertain.

Hindu astrology was part of the ancient Vedic literature and was also a part of medicine as well as a means of plotting the soul's likely plan in the present incarnation through natal charts that represented the individual's past karmic patterns. Chinese astrology is uniquely independent from Mesopotamian influences in its different zodiac and twelve animal signs that delineate human characteristics. It was Arabic astrology that eventually spread to the Western world in spite of biblical prohibitions through the translation of some Muslim works into Latin.

Several problems with astrology can be noted: (1) people who live above the Arctic Circle (66 degrees latitude) where the zodiac is not visible, can have no horoscope and thus were astrologically never born; (2) astrology is based on pre-Copernican astronomy and thus involves an untrue conception of the solar system; (3) before A.D. 1500 several planets like Uranus were never seen; thus if planets have influence then all previous horoscopes were invalid; (4) according to astrological logic identical twins should live identical lives, but they do not; (5) if planets that are closest influence more greatly, there should be mention of planet Earth's great influence; and (6) how can people with different horoscopes all die in a mass tragedy?

WILLIAM H. BAKER

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Atheism. The English term "atheism" is derived from the Greek *atheos*, "without God," and refers to a position that denies the existence of God. It is to be distinguished from AGNOSTICISM, which is the view that we cannot know whether God exists. In modern Western cultures atheism usually means denial of the existence of the Judeo-Christian God. In other religious contexts atheism means denial of the prevailing understanding of deity. Thus, Christians in the Roman Empire were accused of atheism for denying Greek and Roman polytheistic views. "Informal" or "practical" atheism occurs when, although belief in God is not explicitly denied, God is not allowed a significant place in one's life.

Historically, Democritus and Epicurus advocated a form of materialistic atheism, and in

modern Western thought atheism has been advanced by thinkers such as Karl Marx, Ludwig Feuerbach, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, J. L. Mackie, and Antony Flew. The philosophical and scientific school of logical positivism earlier in this century embraced atheism, dismissing language about God as cognitively meaningless. Modern secular humanism is another pervasive form of atheism, at least to the extent that it finds “insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of the supernatural” and affirms that “no deity will save us; we must save ourselves” (*Humanist Manifesto I*).

Some religious traditions are atheistic as well. Theravada Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Jainism are atheistic in that they deny the reality of any transcendent supreme Being. Other traditions, such as some branches of Hinduism, philosophical Taoism, and certain schools of Mahayana Buddhism, view the religious ultimate in monistic or pantheistic terms. In a loose sense, these traditions can be regarded as atheistic from the perspective of monotheism.

WILLIAM H. BAKER

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Baha’i. Although the Baha’i religion emerged from the Shi’ite sect of ISLAM, it has suffered more persecution from Shi’ites in Iran—especially since the 1979 Islamic revolution—than from any other group. This persecution is due largely to the fact that Baha’i believes in a later divine revelation that supersedes the QUR’AN. Baha’i has an estimated 5 million adherents, most of whom are located in Asia and Africa, and appears to be growing worldwide.

The fundamental teaching of Baha’i, from which other teachings stem, is the unity of the human race. Baha’i also teaches that, in spite of minor differences among them, all religions share a basic unity and have a common origin. All of the major religions are regarded as partial messengers of truth. Religion, science, and education should work together to produce a harmonious world in which the extremes of wealth and poverty are abolished. Baha’i is one of the few religions apart from Christianity to teach the absolute equality of the sexes. Baha’is believe that each person should search independently for truth, without influence from superstition or tradition. In addition, the emphasis upon world unity in Baha’i leads to concern for one common universal language and compulsory education for all.

Shi’ite Islam had taught that Ali, Muhammad’s son-in-law and legitimate successor, was succeeded by a series of descendants, the last of

whom disappeared in the ninth century A.D. It was believed that he would reappear someday as a messiah. In 1844 Ali Muhammad declared that he was the promised imam or successor of Ali and called himself Bab ud Din (“the gate of faith”). He became a reformer, advocating radical changes such as raising the status of women, which raised the ire of the political leaders in Persia. The Bab, as he was called, was executed in 1850, but before his death he predicted that another would come and establish a universal religion.

One disciple of the Bab, Husayn Ali, was imprisoned in Tehran and then exiled to Baghdad for ten years. During this time he came to the conclusion that he was the predicted founder of the new religion. He assumed the name Baha’ Ullah (“the glory of God”), and surviving followers of the Bab (called Babis) became known as Baha’is. After years of being driven from one Middle Eastern city to another, the Baha’is were imprisoned in a Turkish prison at Akko, in modern Israel.

From this prison Baha’ Ullah sent out missionaries to spread his teachings and wrote many books and letters before his death in 1892. His son, Abdul Baha, carried on his program and in 1908 was released from prison. He traveled widely in Europe and North America, spreading his teachings of peace, for which he received the honor of knighthood of the British Empire. Upon his death in 1921, his grandson Shoghi Effendi continued the work. Although there are no priests in Baha’i, the community builds temples in various locations for worship. The principal center is in Haifa, Israel, near the graves of Baha’ Ullah and the Bab.

WILLIAM H. BAKER

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Belief Systems. Belief systems are thought of in at least two different ways in missiological literature. First, as a level of mental construction they are understood to determine the legitimacy of questions, generate conceptual problems, and perform a constraining, heuristic, and justificatory role. Second, and more commonly, systems of belief are understood as an integral part of worldview. In this latter case, the study of *religious* belief systems has generated considerable interest among field missionaries.

Anthropologists have described two types of beliefs: instrumental beliefs, which are related to the concrete tasks necessary for survival, and transcendental beliefs, which involve states and elements of existence that cannot be learned directly from human experience. These categories are useful, but as yet anthropologists have not been able to agree on the meaning of some of the

Buddhist, Buddhism

most basic concepts they use to investigate transcendental belief systems—concepts such as religion, the supernatural, magic, and witchcraft. Even though the transcendental-instrumental dichotomy seems to be derived more from the perspective of Western anthropologists than from categorical differences and distinctions made by people in actual cultural contexts, ethnographic data have been useful in the study of religious belief systems in many societies.

Culture provides learned categories, called cognitive categories, used to sort out perceptions. Culturally molded cognition enables human beings to apprehend order in the “world” of their existence. Thus, in the WORLDVIEW of a society, culture furnishes people with beliefs regarding the universe and a belief system through which they give meanings to their experiences. Belief systems deal with very particular and detailed items in the worldview of people in a given society. Religious belief systems deal with specific beliefs about meaning and destiny of life. People in various cultures accept the respective symbolic interpretations of reality because of the authority of the supernatural being(s) or powers involved. A belief system tends to make explicit the implicit assumptions of the worldview in which they are found and in which they function, and to apply these assumptions to behavior.

Each society, then, has a more or less systematically structured religious belief system that can be studied and learned. MYTHS and RITUALS have been key areas of culture studied by anthropologists, and such data have done much to enhance missiological understanding of the deep structures of religious belief systems in various cultures.

NORMAN E. ALLISON

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Buddhist, Buddhism. A religion founded by a man from Northeast India, Siddharta Gautama (c. 566–486 B.C.), who, by virtue of his religious insight, came to be known as the Buddha (Enlightened One). The Buddha’s teachings (*dharma*) were rooted in the Hindu metaphysical systems of his day: a belief in the essential oneness of all being (*brahman-atman*) and the contingent nature of a phenomenal world driven by the dynamics of rebirth (*samsara*) (see REINCARNATION AND TRANSMIGRATION) and ethical progression (*karma*). What came to be called Buddhism, however, distinguished itself by calling into question two key Hindu beliefs/practices: the spiritual value of the CASTE system and the divine character of the Hindu pantheon.

The Buddha himself was a member of the caste known as *kshatriya*, the second highest caste (second to the priestly caste, the *brahmins*) whose members formed what amounted to the aristocracy of fifth-century B.C. India. His father was king of an area called Lumbini on the modern border between India and Nepal. Gautama was given all the privileges of royalty, but came to see the spiritual vacuity of wealth and power. In reaction, he left home and family, and adopted a lifestyle outside of all caste, that of a wandering religious ascetic. Over time, however, diligent practice of asceticism showed him that mortification was equally vacuous. The Buddha’s Enlightenment consisted of recognizing the futility of relying on either self-aggrandizement or self-denial as a path to freedom (*nirvana*). Instead he began to teach a Middle Way, a path that consisted of moral living (*sila*) even as one learned, through mediative practice (*samadhi*), that the highest wisdom (*panna*) is beyond all cultural and social constructs, including caste.

In order to register this implicit denial of the spiritual necessity of caste, the Buddha chose not a frontal attack, but an emphasis on the temporariness of all of life by characterizing all life as suffering (*dukkha*). In Four Noble Truths he summarized the character, origin, and ubiquitousness of suffering. In the fourth Noble Truth, the Buddha taught a path made of moral and meditative injunctions designed to position the spiritual seeker in a lifestyle more receptive to the ultimate wisdom of Buddhist teaching. The effect of this was to move the locus of religious practice away from Vedic ritual and temple sacrifice (the traditional loci of classic forms of Hinduism and indigenous Indian religion) to a much more personal centered, interior based set of practices. Thus, in Buddhism caste moved from being the determiner of religious life (as in Hinduism) to being a temporary factor (in India, at least) of conditioned existence. The Buddha encouraged a movement already apparent in Indian religious life in general from a socially constructed religion to a readily adaptable cross-cultural religion focusing on the universal wisdom of his teaching rather than social realities.

Indian culture was apparently ready for this reform. Emphasis on caste had created a top-heavy religion of privilege (Hinduism) that made access to ritual and practice the province of high caste *brahmins* and *kshatriyas*. Lower caste Hindus and those outside of caste altogether were attracted to the Buddha’s no-nonsense, meditative-practice teaching. If the Buddha’s sermons (*suttas*) are any indication, he also attracted his share of high caste Hindus. His movement grew rapidly during the Buddha’s 45-year itinerant ministry.

A result of this emphasis was a sharp lessening in importance of the elaborate Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses. Although most converts to Buddhism probably did not give up their veneration of local deities altogether, the Buddha made it clear that these were penultimate in importance when compared with the importance of self-reliant spiritual searching. In the long term this change in the function of the gods and goddesses led to the shaping of different schools of Buddhism as it spread throughout Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet. In each of these situations, the Buddha's teachings proved to be adaptable to local cultures without losing their essential features. Southeast Asian THERAVADA, Chinese MAHAYANA, Japanese ZEN, and Tibetan VAJRAYANA Buddhism, in all their varieties, are distinctive *and* distinctively Buddhist.

This cultural adaptability is one of the reasons Buddhism has grown to be the world's fourth largest religion with an estimated 300 million adherents. Because the Buddha emphasized the heavy and ultimately illusory role history and culture play in the way we view the self and the self's spiritual search, Buddhism has proven to be effective in advocating itself to non-members. In Christian terms, Buddhism is a missionary religion. The Buddha, near the end of his life, encouraged his followers, especially the members of the order of monks (*Sangha*), to go and spread his teachings to all sentient beings. This has made Buddhism a major player on the world's religious stage. It has now begun to spread rapidly in Western countries, with significant Buddhist populations in Western Europe and North America.

This growth has also made Buddhism a major competitor to Christianity both in the West and around the world. The cross-cultural adaptability of Buddhism is rivaled only by the ability of Christianity and Islam to transcend national, ethnic, and economic borders. This makes Buddhism an ideal religion in the increasingly global climate in which modern humanity finds itself. Buddhism has shown itself adept at addressing the traditionally thorny issues that arise around the interfacing of science and religion, for example. In some senses, the advantage here goes to Buddhism (over Christianity and Islam) because of its "semi-theistic" stance toward the gods and the divine in general. Although different branches of Buddhism take different postures toward "divinities," gods and semidivine beings, in all forms of Buddhism gods of whatever sort are stages on the way, with final Enlightenment the task of the human individual in the end. The effect of this is that religion and science can be seen as fully compatible human endeavors, both extending human growth, both to eventually be transcended, as will all of *samsara* or the phenomenal world.

This same compatibility, however, creates a dilemma when it comes to ethical considerations. If all of reality is conditioned and impermanent, and the goal is to eventually supersede it with the unconditioned emptiness of Nirvana, then both the motivation and execution of ethical considerations can be problematic in a way that does not pertain for theistic religions with a supernatural mandate. Modern Buddhist scholars and practitioners, aware of the importance of this issue in a world filled with cultural injustices and oppression, are currently hard at work on developing a concept of "engaged Buddhism" that addresses the problems of social injustice without giving up on Buddhism's metaphysics.

Buddhism is also ideally positioned to address the essentially therapeutic emphases of modern life. Early Buddhist psychological analyses of the human person, especially the mental states, are perhaps the most sophisticated in all of human history. These analyses—found across the Buddhist traditions, all the way from Theravada Abhidhamma analysis to Zen Buddhist suprarationalism—all serve in the Buddhist systems to elaborate on the *anatta* or no-self teaching of Buddhism. This refers to the essential Buddhist understanding that the individual self is a construct of historical and cultural factors, a construct that must be superseded in order to achieve Enlightenment. This makes the goals of Buddhist psychology and associated spiritual practice very different from comparable Christian and Muslim analyses and practice.

But the analyses themselves are profound across religious traditions, and the resulting practices, particularly the meditative ones, extremely effective in helping achieve self-knowledge. Indeed, most Westerners who become attracted to Buddhism do so because of their interest in the spiritual meditative practices which form such a rich core of the Buddhist religious tradition. Theravada Buddhist *vipassana* practice (insight meditation) has achieved a wide following in the United States, as has Zen meditation and the Tibetan meditation practice of the numerous *dharmadhatu* centers throughout the Western world. Westerners searching for the peaceful stress reduction that such practices effectively engender are soon attracted beyond the meditative technique to the metaphysical understandings not far below the surface.

At that metaphysical core, one finds a spiritual conundrum between all forms of Buddhism and all forms of orthodox, theistic Christianity: The question of whether a single, personal, transcendent God exists in relationship with discrete, eternally real human souls. After all the analyses are done, Buddhist religious traditions do not recognize such a God, and Christian traditions cease being Christian if they fail to do so.

TERRY C. MUCK

Cargo Cults

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Cargo Cults. Cargo cults are distinctive manifestations of a cultural phenomenon indigenous to Melanesia. They share much in common with other revitalization movements and NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (NERMS). Such movements have often posed a threat to missions and INDIGENOUS CHURCHES.

The term "cargo cult" focuses on the most notable aspect, the expectation of acquiring large quantities of material goods. The Melanesian use of the term *kago* refers to a restoration of a primeval, idyllic order. The cult anticipates a socioeconomic and spiritual renewal that involves a radical change in the existing socioeconomic order. There is an expectation of peace, health, social justice, and material prosperity that resembles the Jewish SHALOM but can also be cosmic in dimension.

Traditional MYTH provides the indigenous socioreligious ideology for many of the known movements. The relevant myth frequently expresses how there was an idyllic state in the primeval past that was destroyed or lost due to some failure on the part of the mythical ancestors. Arising from the myth there are aspirations for the primeval idyllic state to be restored in the present. Magical-literal understanding of the process of cause and effect gives the movements their particular expression while the use of rituals of analogy and reenactment is thought to bring about the desired effect. The existence of cargoistic ideology alone, however, does not always result in a cult movement. A situation of cultural stress caused by a sense of deprivation, such as may occur in the presence of a "superior" culture, is a common precursor to a movement. Then the availability of a charismatic or prophetic leader often catalyzes cargoistic ideology into a cargo movement.

The classical cargo movements have not been so common in recent years due to economic progress and acculturation. Nevertheless, the ideology and thinking processes behind them are still evident and are thought to provide the dynamic for secessionist, nationalistic, and political movements as well as community development enterprises. Under Christian influences cargoistic ideology may provide the dynamic for people movements to embrace the gospel. The ideology and thought processes may result in SYNCRETISM, spirit-revival movements within the church, and independent churches.

Missions and national churches need to take the spiritual-social aspects expressed in the movements seriously because they reflect the concerns of the practitioners. Missions and national churches should seek to ameliorate cargoistic tendencies by preaching a holistic salvation and practicing the presence of the KINGDOM OF GOD in power and lifestyle. Church and mission should also enable indigenous peoples to understand economic processes and the concept of linear history as the context of God's revelation.

ALBERT F. TUCKER

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Caribbean New Religious Movements. As with the LATIN AMERICAN NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS, many of the spiritistic groups in the Caribbean can trace their origination to the atrocities of the slave trade and the need for the populations who had been forcibly removed from their homes to maintain some frame of religious identity. Often that identity was underground, and outward conformity to colonial Christian norms served as a cover for inward nonconformity. Movements include Voodoo (Haiti); Convince, Kumina, Myal, and Rastafarianism (Jamaica); Shango and Obeah (Trinidad); Abakua and Sant'eria (Cuba); and Kele (St. Lucia). In this article we will describe some of the more significant groups (for a treatment of the factors involved in their development seen in light of the whole Caribbean historical experience, see CARIBBEAN). It should be noted that the selected groups introduced below can be characterized by the general themes described here, but within each movement there are also multiple folk-level variations maintained at the local level.

Descriptions of Selected Movements. *Convince* rituals in Jamaica combine Christian and spiritistic elements. The most utilized spirits are those of departed members, but African spirits are the most powerful. Believers, called *bongo* men, can be controlled by more than one spirit simultaneously. Their rituals (some held annually, others as need arises) include Christian prayers and Bible readings, veneration of the spirits, dancing and possession, and sacrifice.

Various *Rastafarian* groups emerged from the black population of Jamaica in the 1930s. Rastafarians venerate Haile Selassie I, the former emperor of Ethiopia, envisioning him as a black messiah who will liberate them from white oppression. The earlier emphasis on repatriation to Africa has waned in contemporary times. Rastafarians typically follow vegetarian dietary regulations, smoke marijuana, and wear their hair and beards in dreadlocks. Their most prominent musi-

cian, Bob Marley, popularized reggae music as a Rastafarian style.

In Trinidad *Shango* groups honor various spiritual powers. Shango (the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning) is one of many powers which may possess adherents. These powers include other Yoruba deities as well as Christian figures. Each Shango cult center holds an annual four-day ritual for the particular spirit recognized at that center involving nightly prayer (including Christian prayers), drumming and singing, possession, and culminating with animal sacrifice.

Voodoo (or *vodun* or *vodou*) originated in Haiti in the late 1700s. Separated from their home, the slave populations fused a variety of belief systems and practices and developed a religion strong enough to withstand later French persecution. Usually centered on a temple, the ceremonies are festivals in which spirit possession is prominent. In it the spirits (*lwa*), who range from African deities to stereotyped Christian saints, are thought to ride the participants like horses. They provide protection for the possessed, so long as the devotees maintain an appropriate schedule of sacrifices and offerings. Popularized through practices such as *zombi* (in which a living person's mind is altered so that he or she comes under the control of evil practitioners) and voodoo dolls (which are magically linked to an intended victim whose pain parallels damage done to the doll), voodoo is widely known outside of the Caribbean.

Missionary Implications. The historical connection of the spiritist religions to the trauma of the slave trade, their ability to meet important felt needs in their adherents whose lives are often bound up in oppression and poverty, the emotional ties of the followers to local leaders, the perception that Christianity and spiritistic practices can be readily mixed, and the ingrained ability to present one appearance on the surface and keep deeply held values underneath make genuine conversion to Christianity a complex issue. Missionaries working among these movements will need to consider all of these factors if they are to enable the adherents to respond fruitfully to the claims of Christ as Lord over all of life.

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Christo-Paganism. Christo-paganism is a kind of SYNCRETISM that exists and persists where the process of evangelization has been defective and incomplete, leaving the pre-Christian animistic

belief-system and practices virtually intact but fused with some Christian elements.

The Australian anthropologist-missologist ALAN TIPPETT has vividly described his own careful observation of the phenomenon in parts of Mexico and Guatemala. In these nominally Christian communities Tippet saw stark evidence of the old animistic belief-system and associated practices in the devotion of Catholic Indians of Mayan descent. He watched them on their knees approaching shrines "more Aztec than Christian," and "others putting paper or cloth under their bloodstained [*sic*] knees get charged with power for magical or healing purposes," all being done as Christian ceremony.

Tippet also discovered "Christian strands of thought" in the "dominantly animistic context," which he found to be typically portrayed in the native Mexican autobiography, *Juan the Chamula*. Juan, who saw himself as a faithful Catholic, believed, among other things,

that the Savior watches over people on the road. He died on a cross to save the wayfarer from the Jews, who sent her away because they knew she was supposedly cannibalistic.

Originally the sun was cold as the moon, but it grew warmer when the Holy Child was born. He was the son of a virgin among the Jews, who sent her away because they knew the child would bring light. St. Joseph took her to Bethlehem, where the Child was born. The sun grew warmer and the day brighter. The demons ran away and hid in the mountain ravines. (pp. 21-22)

Christo-paganism may manifest a variety of elements: the survival of discrete cultural complexes; the persistence of the old mythical belief-system; the demand for a therapeutic system; and a vivid notion of the living dead. Many cases could be cited from various parts of the world, both Protestant and Catholic. Many Catholics are intensely aware of the problem; not all instances are as extreme as those mentioned above, but resemble more what DAVID HESSELGRAVE calls "multireligion." For example, some Batak Protestant Christians in Indonesia visit the gravesites of important ancestors at Easter; they make food and other offerings to them and seek their blessing on the temporal affairs of their descendants. Those Bataks from the more profoundly converted regions shun such things. Tippet observed a vivid example of Christo-paganism in Australia: aboriginal dreamtime paintings displayed behind the Communion Table.

Such phenomena are the very antithesis of *possessio*, which is the investing of an existing practice with specifically and exclusively Christian significance. They represent an ANIMISM merely submerged, not replaced. The indigenous

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pagan culture has been suppressed by an external cultural power, not converted. The pagan worldview has been neither adequately critiqued nor displaced by a Christian one; the old associated practices have been neither converted to authentically Christian use nor supplanted by appropriate functional substitutes.

JOHN MCINTOSH

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Comparative Religion. The comprehensive study of religions as phenomena using both historical and systematic methodologies, as far as possible without dogmatic presuppositions, comparing and contrasting both universal and particular features of these religions.

The study of religion as a Western academic subject is a relatively new discipline. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, when one studied “religion,” the subject matter was one’s own religion with occasional thoughts on how other religions compared with *my* religion. The study of religion, in other words, was synonymous with theology. In the mid-nineteenth century, several trends gave these occasional and dogmatic thoughts about other religions a new, distinctive character. One trend, ironically, was the Christian missions movement, which was reaching the peak of several centuries of development and was supplying Western scholars with a wealth of material on non-Christian religions. Second, at this same time anthropologists and archaeologists were studying non-Western cultures and sending back an avalanche of data on cultural and religious practices from Asia, Africa, and Micronesia. Third was the full flowering of a way of looking at such data in a way that emphasized human rationality, as opposed to divine agency. This Enlightenment viewpoint was tailor-made for attempts to make some sense of this body of religious information.

This early science of religion produced scholarly works of two types. One is typified by the work of a man often called the father of religious studies, Max Müller (1832–1930). Müller, using data obtained through his linguistic studies, traced the history of religious systems and then wrote comparative studies that made “religion” the underlying category of study rather than a specific religion. The second is typified by the work of James George Frazer (1854–1941), who took the catalog approach to making sense of this deluge of religious information. His twelve-volume *Golden Bough* is organized according to cross-religious categories, such as MAGIC, TABOO,

and TOTEMISM, with religious data from different religious traditions filed under the appropriate heading.

One can see in this early work the influence of a positivistic approach to data—in short, the scientific model. The task of the scientist of religion was to gather as much data as possible, and then do theory construction that attempted to explain the data in wider and wider circles of inclusivity, with the goal not of discovering metaphysical truth but of describing accurately and meaningfully the religious phenomena of the world in which we live. Given this reliance on the scientific model (in an attempt to distinguish this study from theology), it is not surprising to find that when the prevailing scientific theory of the nineteenth century changed, the study of comparative religion began to change.

In some ways, Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution was a godsend for comparative religionists. One effect of Darwin’s explanatory thesis was to remove the need for periodic or constant divine intervention in human affairs in order to explain why things happen as they do. Divine intervention, of course, was a staple of premodern explanatory theses. By making it scientifically respectable to offer secular explanations for human phenomena, evolutionism opened up a whole new arena of activity for the fledgling science of religion. Sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers quickly filled this new arena with huge explanatory theses that attempted globally to describe the origins and development of all religion in comprehensive schemata.

This was the age of the great sociologists of religion, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Max Weber (1864–1920). A uniquely American contribution to the discipline was offered by the psychologists of religion, typified by William James (1842–1910) and his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Perhaps more than any other, the philosophers of religion began to produce systematic philosophies of the development of religious consciousness, such as that produced by Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955).

This ferment of scholarly activity in kindred disciplines encouraged the carving out of methodologies designed specifically for the study of religion. Objective histories of specific religious traditions began to appear from the studies of scholars like Nathan Soderblom (1886–1931) and William Brede Kristensen (1867–1953). Other scholars, in the cataloging tradition of Frazier, adapted a methodology loosely related to Edmund Husserl’s philosophical phenomenology and began to develop cross-religious categories in order to better compare and contrast religious traditions. Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950) and Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) published works in the PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION tradition, which relied on a method that advocated a temporary

suspension of one's own beliefs (*epoche*), in order to clearly identify the unique character of religious phenomena (*sui generis*), with the goal of understanding only (*verstehen*). These two approaches to the data of religious studies, the longitudinal, historical study and the cross-sectional phenomenological study, have been dominant methodologies in comparative religion.

In other ways, Darwin's theory of evolution sent the discipline of religious studies down a dead-end road. The search for a common origin and developmental pattern to all religion proved to be a remarkably contentious and ultimately frustrating enterprise. The data of religions from around the world proved to be elastic in the extreme when it came to theory shaping. Some of the developmental schemes posited all religions coming from animistic roots where all being is invested with spiritual power (see ANIMISM), moving toward a more well-defined POLYTHEISM and finally the great monotheistic religious traditions (see MONOTHEISM). Others of the developmental schemes took roughly the same material and posited theories that taught exactly the opposite: that the original conceptions of God were of high gods, monotheisms that over time devolved into polytheistic and then spiritist religions, with more and more layers of gods between humans and the high gods. And as more and more of the world's religious systems were studied, they proved as a group to be less and less amenable to step-by-step developmental patterns.

In most academic circles, the recognition that these essentially Western-based universal categories and developmental patterns do not necessarily fit other cultures led to a move toward cultural RELATIVISM, which argued that no generalizations are possible from culture to culture (see also PLURALISM). Each must be studied totally on its own terms. This move matched some of the insights of phenomenologists regarding the subjectivity of the religious scholar himself or herself, but went beyond those insights by suggesting that suspension of one's own point of view might be a chimera, that relativity extended not only to cultures but also to cultural observers. Many scholars began to see in cultural relativism a dead end as pronounced as the one faced by evolutionists—in this case, a dead end leading to an inability to have any kind of cross-cultural (and cross-religious) communication at all. This gave rise to two middle roads between universalism and particularism. The first came to be called functionalism, a view that did not find the core of religion in truth-claims of the gods or the gods' representatives, nor in the unconnected, conditioned realities of discrete cultures, but in the function religion performed in addressing personal and societal needs. The needs that functionalists identified as "religious" varied. But for all func-

tionalist, "religion is as religion does." Functional theories of religion are among the most widely used in religious studies today, and in one sense may be seen as extensions of Emile Durkheim's pioneering work. It is particularly useful to sociologists of religion such as Wach (1898–1955) and Robert Bellah (b. 1927), and anthropologists Mary Douglas (b. 1921) and Clifford Geertz (b. 1926).

A second middle road between universalism and particularism is structuralism. With roots in the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), and given methodological form by social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (b. 1908), structuralists see the use of language and language systems as the mediator between universals and particulars. Religions and cultures came to be viewed as analogous to languages. Each language (or religion), is different with its own vocabulary and grammatical rules. Each language (or religion), however, also has structural features in common that seem to run across all languages or religions. Structuralists say these features allow people of one religious tradition to recognize themselves in another person's religious tradition, but to preserve the otherness of that tradition because those features' full meaning resides more in the holistic pattern of that religious tradition than in the content of a particular belief. The recognition of these common structural features allows empathy that may lead to understanding, but not to understanding itself. Structuralism is on the cutting edge of approaches to religion being explored by scholars today. History of religions and phenomenological methodologies still provide much of the on-the-ground content and data of religious studies, but those data are increasingly filtered through the lens of structuralist forms.

Evangelical Christians can make good use of these different approaches to the study of religion so long as they are seen as useful tools in gathering and handling data of a very specific nature and not as normative methodologies over against theological and revelatory ones. They become problematic for evangelicals when these theories begin to claim for themselves absolute status, replacing propositional and ethical absolutes with methodological ones.

TERRY C. MUCK

Bibliography. W. Capps, *Religious Studies: The Making of a Discipline*; T. Muck, *The Mysterious Beyond: A Guide to Studying Religion*; E. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*.

Confucianism. A system of social, political, ethical, and religious thought based upon the teachings of Confucius (c. 552–479 B.C.) and his disciples. For over the past two thousand years Confucianism in its various forms has been in-

Confucianism

fluent in shaping the cultures of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan.

Confucius (from *K'ung Fu-Tzu*, "Master K'ung") was born into a family of lower nobility. According to tradition, after serving in various minor posts in the state of Lu, at the age of fifty Confucius attained a relatively high rank but became disillusioned with the lack of interest in his social ideas. Retiring from public service, Confucius spent some thirteen years traveling from state to state in an effort to inspire social and political reforms. He then returned to the state of Lu to concentrate upon teaching his disciples and, according to tradition, to edit the Confucian classics.

Confucianism looks to the Five Classics—the Book of Poetry (*Shih Ching*), the Book of Rites (*Li Ching*), the Book of History (*Shu Ching*), the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Ch'un Ch'iu*), and the Book of Changes (*I Ching*)—as authoritative. Following his death, the teachings of Confucius were collected in the Analects (*Lun Yü*), probably compiled in the third century B.C. In addition to the Five Classics are the Four Books—which include the Analects, the Great Learning (*Ta Hsüeh*), the Doctrine of the Mean (*Chung Yung*), and the book of Mencius—which form a smaller corpus of authoritative texts.

Traditionally the family has been the center of Chinese social life. This is reflected in the classical Confucian emphasis upon the Five Relationships, namely, the relationships between father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, elders and juniors, and rulers and subjects. Hierarchical relationships, with carefully defined reciprocal obligations for all parties, provided for order and stability, not only in the family but in society at large. Confucius emphasized the virtue of filial piety (*hsiao*), or respect and honor for one's parents. The duty of the son is to obey his father in all things while he lives and to honor and continue to obey him after he is dead. Filial piety thus came to be closely identified with the ancient cult of ancestral veneration, through which the continuity of familial ties were reinforced (see ANCESTRAL PRACTICES). In turn, the father has a great responsibility for the well being of the family.

Another central virtue for Confucius was *jen*, often translated as "benevolence" or "humaneness." *Jen* might be regarded as the ideal embodiment of moral virtue, combining both righteousness (*i*) and propriety (*li*). Confucius developed the notion of *li* (often translated "ritual," "propriety," "principle," or "order") into a moral and religious concept. *Li* contains both an external and internal sense. Externally *li* refers to proper patterns of behavior which, when performed correctly, express and reinforce harmony among the various hierarchically ordered elements of the

family, society, and cosmos. *Li* also includes the idea of right moral attitude and motivation in actions.

Mencius (c. 371–289 B.C.) and Hsün Tzu (c. 298–238 B.C.), two of the most influential teachers after Confucius, offered strikingly different analyses of human nature. Mencius held that human nature is essentially good and that humanity's task is to uncover and cultivate this inherent goodness, thereby realizing the congruence of human nature with the way of Heaven (*Tien*). Hsün Tzu, by contrast, while acknowledging the perfectability of humanity, stressed the evil aspect in human nature. Strict controls in the form of laws and education are necessary for an ordered and harmonious society.

During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), Confucianism became recognized officially as state orthodoxy, the Confucian canon was formalized, and the beginnings of a religious cult of Confucius emerged. Although attempts to deify Confucius were initially rejected, sacrifices to Confucius were practiced by the literati and eventually such sacrifices were included among the state sacrifices performed by the emperor. In A.D. 630 an imperial decree called for establishment of a state temple to Confucius in every prefecture, in which sacrifices to the sage could be regularly offered. In later centuries there were attempts to purify the increasingly elaborate cult of Confucius by restoring his image as "The Perfectly Holy Teacher of Antiquity" as well as counter-movements to recognize sacrifices to Confucius as equal in standing to those offered to Heaven and Earth. However, with the revolution of 1911 the cult of Confucius languished in China, although it has continued to flourish among the Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Is Confucianism primarily a social ethic or a religion? Scholars are divided on the question of Confucius's own views on religion. Some see him as essentially agnostic, a social and ethical humanist who was primarily concerned with "this worldly" relationships. When asked about death Confucius replied that he knew nothing of life; how could he know about death (*Analects*, XI. 11)? When asked about the spirits he said one should respect them but keep them at a distance (VI.20). On the other hand, Confucius placed great value on proper performance on the ancestral rites (III.12), an activity with clear religious overtones. He claimed the authority of Heaven (*Tien*) for his views: "Heaven is the author of the virtue that is in me" (VII.23).

Christianity has had an ambivalent relationship with Confucianism. Some Christians, as for example MATTEO RICCI in the sixteenth century, saw in classical Confucianism much which could be adopted and utilized in establishing Christianity in the Chinese context. Ricci saw common-

ality between Christianity and Confucianism particularly in ethical teachings and what Ricci saw as a primitive monotheism in early Confucianism. Others regard this as a misinterpretation of Confucianism and stress the discontinuities between the systems. Given the enduring influence of Confucianism in many Asian societies, the church in Asia must continue to engage in a serious manner the themes and values of Confucianism. Fundamental questions for Christian CONTEXTUALIZATION concern the Confucian understandings of the religious ultimate (Heaven, Lord on High) and the spirits of the deceased, assumptions about the inherent goodness of human nature, and the relation between Confucianism and ancestral veneration rites.

HAROLD A. NETLAND

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Contextualization. The term “contextualization” first appeared in 1972 in a publication of the Theological Education Fund entitled *Ministry in Context*. This document laid out the principles which would govern the distribution of funds for the Third Mandate of the TEF. The scholarships were awarded for the graduate education of scholars in the international church. Contextualization was described as “the capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one’s own situation.” A precedent for the new term, “contextual theology,” resulted from a consultation held in Bossey, Switzerland, in August 1971. The Ecumenical Institute of the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES had sponsored that earlier discussion under the theme “Dogmatic or Contextual Theology.”

The lament behind the Third Mandate of the TEF was that “both the approach and content of theological reflection tend to move within the framework of Western questions and cultural presuppositions, failing to vigorously address the gospel of Jesus Christ to the particular situation.” Further, it was declared that “Contextualization is not simply a fad or catch-word but a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word.”

While the document had a limited purpose, the implications coming from it resulted in a movement which has had an impact on the theory and practice of mission. The contextualization concept was a timely innovation. New nations were struggling for their own life. The mission enterprise needed new symbols to mark a needed separation from the colonialistic, Western-dominated past (see COLONIALISM).

There is no single or broadly accepted definition of contextualization. The goal of contextualization perhaps best defines what it is. That goal is to enable, insofar as it is humanly possible, an understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ, the Word, is authentically experienced in each and every human situation. Contextualization means that the Word must dwell among all families of humankind today as truly as Jesus lived among his own kin. The gospel is Good News when it provides answers for a particular people living in a particular place at a particular time. This means the WORLDVIEW of that people provides a framework for communication, the questions and needs of that people are a guide to the emphasis of the message, and the cultural gifts of that people become the medium of expression.

Contextualization in mission is the effort made by a particular church to experience the gospel for its own life in light of the Word of God. In the process of contextualization the church, through the Holy Spirit, continually challenges, incorporates, and transforms elements of the culture in order to bring them under the lordship of Christ. As believers in a particular place reflect upon the Word through their own thoughts, employing their own cultural gifts, they are better able to understand the gospel as incarnation.

The term “contextualization” is most commonly associated with theology, yet given the above definition, it is proper to speak of contextualization in a variety of ways encompassing all the dimensions of religious life. For example, church architecture, worship, preaching, systems of church governance, symbols, and rituals are all areas where the contextualization principle applies. Context, on which the term is based, is not narrowly understood as the artifacts and customs of culture only, but embraces the differences of human realities and experience. These differences are related to cultural histories, societal situations, economics, politics, and ideologies. In this sense contextualization applies as much to the church “at home,” with all its variations, as it does to the church “overseas.”

In mission practice the more visible aspects of contextualization were closely related to older terms such as ACCOMMODATION, ADAPTION, INCULTURATION, and INDIGENIZATION. Issues such as forms of communication, language, music, styles of dress, and so on had long been associated with the so-called three-self missionary philosophy which was built around the principle of indigenization. Indigeneity often was understood as “nativization,” in that the visible cultural forms of a given people would be used in expressing Christianity. In going beyond these more superficial expressions, the new term “contextualization” tended to raise the fear of SYNCRETISM. This would mean the “old religion”

Contextualization

would become mixed in with the new biblical faith and that culture would have more authority than revelation. Some felt, therefore, that the older concept of indigenization should not be changed but, rather, broadened to cover more adequately the field of theology.

In addition to giving greater attention to the deeper levels of culture, the new term “contextualization” became distinguished from indigenization in other ways. Indigenization always implied a comparison with the West, whereas contextualization focuses on the resources available from within the context itself. Indigenization was static while contextualization is dynamic, as a still photograph might be compared to a motion picture. The older indigenization was more isolated while contextualization, though locally constructed, interacts with global realities.

The fact that the early documents about contextualization were formulated in offices related to the World Council of Churches also made the concept difficult to accept in the nonconciliar circles. The heavy emphasis on justice and social development left little, it seemed, for evangelism and conversion. Scholars in Latin America were among the earliest to write about what they saw as an appropriate theology for their context. The direction this new theology took alarmed many evangelicals.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY became almost as a household word in the 1970s and 1980s. Evangelicals felt it demonstrated an inadequate use of the Bible and relied too heavily on a Marxist orientation. This was difficult for North American conservatives to accept. Even before his book, *Ministry in Context*, GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ had already written his *Theology of Liberation* (1971). Soon afterward J. MIGUEZ BONINO followed with *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (1978). These major innovations opened up further thinking on contextualization. They followed closely the volatile 1960s in the United States. Ideas about contextualization in the United States first became associated with the controversial issues raised by the Vietnam War and American racism. “Black Power,” as advocated by James Cone (1969), had become a popular application of what contextualization is.

Because of this ferment HERMENEUTICS quickly became the central point of contention among evangelicals. The question was asked whether truth is derived primarily from human experience or from REVELATION. At first there was little consensus among evangelicals about the role of CULTURE and social issues, especially in theology. The contextualization debate made serious new thinking possible, especially with regard to culture and the way in which it connects to the biblical record.

Throughout the 1970s the writing and discussion on contextualization began to clarify directions that evangelicals should take. A Lausanne-sponsored gathering at Willowbank (Bermuda) in 1978 adopted the theme “Gospel and Culture.” The conference took seriously the role of the cultural context of the believer as well as the biblical text in defining evangelization and church development. The late 1970s also saw the rise (and demise) of the quarterly, *The Gospel in Context*. The journal’s brief life demonstrated how creative and stimulating worldwide contextualization could be.

The decade of the 1970s also brought remarkable progress in finding ways to carry out contextualization. Each of the ways, or “models,” as they are called, carries certain epistemological assumptions, as well as philosophical ideas about truth. While the models each have their differences, they also have several features that they share in common. Some are more centered on human experience while others show a greater dependence on widely accepted teachings of the church and the Bible. Thus, the assumptions undergirding some of these models make them less acceptable to evangelicals. Variations exist within a given model and certain features of more than one model may be combined. A brief review of the models will show how diverse the approaches to contextualization are.

Adaptation model: One of the earliest approaches was to make historical-theological concepts fit into each cultural situation. Traditional Western ideas are the norm. These are brought to the local culture. What is irrelevant may be set aside and what must be modified can be changed. The faulty assumption here is that there is one philosophical framework within which all cultures can communicate, assuming that other forms of knowledge are not legitimate.

Anthropological model: The beginning point is to study the people concerned. The key to communication and pathways to the human heart and spirit lies in the culture. The assumption is that people know best their own culture; worldview themes, symbols, myths are repositories of truth for all people. While this is true, unless discernment about a culture is brought to the Word for affirmation or judgment the contextualization exercise can become distorted and misleading.

Critical model: The critical aspect of this approach centers on how features of traditional culture—rituals, songs, stories, customs, music—are brought under the scrutiny of biblical teaching. Here the culture and the Scriptures are evaluated concurrently in the search for new ways to express belief and practice. One must ask who will carry out the process, and how accurate are the meanings derived from both customs and the Scripture.

Semiotic model: Semiotics is the science of “reading a culture” through “signs” (see SYMBOL, SYMBOLISM). This comprehensive view of culture interprets symbols, myths, and the like that reveal the past as well as studying “signs” that indicate how the culture is changing. These realities are compared with church tradition in a process of “opening up” both the local culture and Christian practice. To master the complicated method would tend to separate an indigenous researcher from the people and the context.

Synthetic model: Synthesis involves bringing together four components: the gospel, Christian tradition, culture, and social change. These elements are discussed together using insights offered by the local people. Also there must be a recognition of sharing insights with “outsiders.” Each contributes to the other, while each maintains its own distinctives. The openness and legitimacy given to all views would tend toward ambiguity and a kind of universalism.

Transcendental model: This model does not concentrate on the impersonal aspect of theology, that is, to prove something “out there,” but is primarily concerned with what any truth means to the subject and to members of the subject’s community. Likewise revelation is understood as the active perception or encounter with God’s truth. Much criticism can be raised. How can one be an authentic believer without objective context and why is such Western sophistication necessary?

Translation model: Based on translation science, the nearest possible meanings of the original text are sought out in the receiving culture. Exact forms may not be possible, but expressions and forms that are equivalent are introduced. Attempts were made to identify the “kernel” or core of the gospel which then would apply to all cultures. The problem of subjectivity in selecting forms is a risk, as is separating the Word from what is culturally negotiable.

In contextualization, evangelicals have a valuable tool with which to work out the meanings of Scripture in the varieties of mission contexts and in conversations with the churches of the Two-Thirds World. A built-in risk of contextualization is that the human situation and the culture of peoples so dominate the inquiry that God’s revelation through the Bible will be diminished. To be aware of this danger is a necessary step in avoiding it. Contextualization cannot take place unless Scripture is read and obeyed by believers. This means that believers will study the Scriptures carefully and respond to their cultural concerns in light of what is in the biblical text. Culture is subject to the God of culture. Culture is important to God and for all its good and bad factors, culture is the framework within which God works out God’s purposes. Some indications of the gospel’s presence in the soil may be evi-

dent, but Scripture is something that is outside and must be brought into the cultural setting to more fully understand what God is doing in culture, and to find parallels between the culture and the Bible.

The strength of contextualization is that if properly carried out, it brings ordinary Christian believers into what is often called the theological process. Contextualization is not primarily the work of professionals, though they are needed. It is making the gospel real to the untrained lay person and the rank-and-file believer. They are the people who know what biblical faith must do if it is to meet everyday problems. The term “incarnational theology” is another way of speaking about contextualization (see INCARNATIONAL MISSION). This means that Christian truth is to be understood by Christians in the pews and on the streets. The objective of contextualization is to bring data from the whole of life to real people and to search the Scriptures for a meaningful application of the Word which “dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The missiological significance for contextualization is that all nations must understand the Word as clearly and as accurately as did Jesus’ own people in his day.

DEAN GILLILAND

Bibliography. S. B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*; D. S. Gilliland, *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*; D. J. Hesselgrave and E. Rommen, *Contextualization: Meaning and Methods*; W. A. Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*; R. J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*.

Cults, Cultism. Cults and new religious movements tend to emerge during times of social change and cultural upheaval. Whether the locale is North America or in a developing nation, cults are most successful when people experience alienation, rootlessness, and uncertainty as a result of rapid social change. When people experience a dislocation from previously stable social structures, they often question the efficacy and relevance of traditional social institutions like the family, government, and conventional religion. From the perspective of biblical Christianity, the new cultic movements are viewed as spiritual counterfeits and their leaders as false prophets.

It is imperative that Christians involved in missions be aware of the intrusion of these groups into mission fields around the globe. Cult missionaries can be found in virtually every country where evangelicals are ministering. In those countries where Christianity is not the dominant religion, indigenous populations are often unable to distinguish between legitimate Christian witness and the outreach of cultists because the latter often claim to be Christian and invoke the Bible as a source of their authority. It

Cults, Cultism

is essential, therefore, that Christian missionaries work to develop discernment skills among the people they are attempting to disciple.

The need to “guard the gospel” is illustrated by an event experienced a few years ago by a young couple involved in missionary service in Martinique, a French island in the West Indies. There they led a church-planting ministry that required heavy investment in personal evangelism and community outreach. From their labors there emerged a tiny church that gradually grew to the point of self-sufficiency. But while the missionaries were away on a leave of absence, the infant church was invaded by JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES. When they returned, they discovered that many of the members, including some of the leaders, had been influenced by the teachings of that cult and had joined with them.

This scenario is repeated over and over worldwide. New Christians, lacking a solid foundation in the faith and knowing little about the strategies and hallmarks of cults and aberrational Christian groups, are caught in a snare of deception and false teaching. It has been said that because of the enormous recent increase of cultic missionary activity overseas, missionaries today are often as likely to confront someone from an American-based cult as they are someone from another world religion. The missionary zeal of the cults in many instances surpasses that of Christian denominations.

There are several ways to define cultism and to understand how cults work. It is possible to analyze cults from sociological, psychological, and theological perspectives. For the Christian, it is important to consider the truth-claims of any religious group. God’s objective truth, as revealed in Scripture, is the standard for evaluating all belief and practice. Therefore, any group, movement, or teaching may be considered cultic to the degree that it deviates from the Holy Scriptures as interpreted by orthodox, biblical Christianity and as expressed in such statements as the Apostles’ Creed.

The majority of people who join cults are consciously or unconsciously embarked on a spiritual search. Some converts to NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS are vulnerable because they have no formal religious affiliation whatsoever and therefore lack the necessary discernment skills to evaluate the many religious groups that beckon. Someone has said that “nature abhors a vacuum.” It is especially during times of cultural upheaval that people, uprooted from traditional ways of thinking, are susceptible to the influx of new ideas. G. K. Chesterton once remarked that when people cease to believe in God, they do not believe in nothing. They believe in anything.

What is an appropriate response for the Christian missionary to the cultists who are engaged in real spiritual competition for the souls of

searching individuals? First, we must recognize that to reject the cultic alternatives to Christianity is not to suggest that there is no truth in them. Error is always built on a foundation of half-truths. Spiritual counterfeits often contain an element of the real thing. Until we identify the web of error that characterizes all groups which depart from the baseline of truth found in the Bible, we have only partially understood the dynamics of the cults and new religions. When missionaries encounter members of cults and new religious movements, they can affirm the cultists’ spiritual search while at the same time refuse to accept the presuppositions they may hold. We should seek to establish a common ground rather than attempt to win an argument. Many cultists, for example, share the Christian’s concern for the environment, world peace, and alleviating hunger. Seeking common ground with the cultist will provide an opportunity to introduce the claims of Jesus Christ.

It goes without saying that missionaries (or any serious Christian) attempting to reach cultists for Christ must be sure of their own faith and be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. In the final analysis, the clash between Christianity and the cultic ways of understanding reality results from differences in worldviews. The Christian missionary must be prepared to present an alternative model of spirituality, an alternative WORLDVIEW that is centered on biblical faith and the person of Jesus Christ. All believers are necessarily engaged in the task of APOLOGETICS, or defending the Christian faith.

Cultic movements gain most of their converts not from other WORLD RELIGIONS but from the ranks of Christians who are lacking a solid biblical foundation for their faith and who are naive regarding the recruitment tactics of cults. Therefore, it is imperative that mission agencies and non-Western church leaders give priority to the task of educating new Christians about the dangers of false teaching and demonstrating how to effectively respond to the cultic challenge. In short, while evangelizing cults and new religions may be part of the missionary’s opportunity to share the gospel of Christ, more attention should be given to the task of equipping local believers to become grounded in the faith so that they can discern truth from error and therefore avoid cultic entrapment.

Just as missionaries must be familiar with the culture and religion of the people they want to reach, they must also attempt to learn as much as possible about the cult or new religious movement that is often seeking to proselytize nonbelievers and immature Christians. It is also important to identify the reasons why people are attracted to cults. It is easy to overlook the fact that theological and doctrinal attractions are

often secondary to personal and social reasons. People find cults appealing because the groups meet basic human needs: the need to be affirmed, the need for community and family, the need for purpose and commitment, and the need for spiritual fulfillment.

The tragedy is that cults often exploit the significant human and spiritual needs that are going unmet in today's world. As missionaries approach the task of equipping local Christians, they must first examine their own commitment to the truth of the gospel and to the authority of God's Word. Once we understand that the gospel is really true and stands up to the most difficult scrutiny, our own faith is enlarged and we become more eager to encourage the faith of others. We all need to develop a firm framework of truth by which to evaluate the claims of other groups.

From that framework, the missionary can help young Christians to understand two core characteristics of all cultic teachings: (1) *A false or inadequate basis of salvation*. The apostle Paul made a distinction that is basic to our understanding of truth when he wrote, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8–9). All cultic deviations tend to downplay or distort the finished work of Christ on the cross and emphasize the role of earning moral acceptance before God through our own righteous works as a basis of salvation. (2) *A false basis of authority*. Biblical Christianity by definition takes the Bible as its yardstick for determining truth, whether in matters of faith or in practice. Cults, on the other hand, commonly resort to extra-biblical revelation as the substantial basis of their theology (e.g., Unificationists rely on the *Divine Principle* of Rev. Moon, the MORMONS cite *The Book of Mormon*).

Just as Christian believers in the West have historically been involved in and supportive of overseas or "foreign" missions, we must also be sensitive to the fact that cults are expanding their influence worldwide. The cults are *coming*, but equally important is the reality that *the cults are going*. Are we prepared for the inevitable spiritual and human casualties that such movements leave in their wake?

RONALD ENROTH

Bibliography. R. Abanes, *Cults, New Religious Movements, and Your Family: A Guide to Ten Non-Christian Groups Out to Convert Your Loved Ones*; R. Enroth, ed., *A Guide to Cults & New Religions*; R. Rhodes, *Reasoning From the Scriptures With the Mormons*; idem, *Reasoning From the Scriptures With the Jehovah's Witnesses*; idem, *The Heart of Christianity*; M. T. Singer, *Cults in Our Midst*.

Decision-Making. A decision begins with an unmet need, followed by the (1) *awareness* that there is an alternative to the situation, an (2) *interest* in the alternative, and (3) *consideration* of the alternative. This consideration reviews both utilitarian and nonutilitarian issues involved. A (4) *choice* is made, and (5) *action* must follow to implement the decision. Action will require (6) *readjustment*. That, in turn, may create the awareness of further necessary changes, and the decision cycle is repeated.

Decision-making in practice, however, seldom happens in a simple, circular fashion. There are pauses and rapid skips forward and backward. There is no clear beginning or end in the decision process. Each of the identified stages must be expanded to gain a clear picture of the complexity of decision-making.

Improving Quality of Decisions. A Decisional Balance Sheet lists all known alternatives with the anticipated positive and negative consequences of each. The Decisional Balance Sheet will lead to improved decisions when seven criteria for information processing are met:

1. Consider a wide range of alternatives.
2. Examine all objectives to be fulfilled by the decision.
3. Carefully weigh the negative and positive consequences of each alternative.
4. Search thoroughly for new information relevant to each alternative.
5. Assimilate and use new information or expert judgment.
6. Reexamine all known alternatives before making a final decision.
7. Make careful provision for implementing the chosen decision.

Personality and Decisions. Individuals have been categorized as *sensors* or *intuitors* in their decision-making approaches. Sensors analyze isolated, concrete details while intuitors consider overall relationships. Intuitors have been found to have better predictive accuracy in decisions.

Other studies have suggested four personality styles in decision-making:

Decisive, using minimal information to reach a firm opinion. Speed, efficiency, and consistency are the concern. *Flexible*, using minimal information that is seen as having different meanings at different times. Speed, adaptability, and intuition are emphasized. *Hierarchical*, using masses of carefully analyzed data to reach one conclusion. Association with great thoroughness, precision, and perfectionism. *Integrative*, using large amounts of data to generate many possible solutions. Decisions are highly experimental and often creative.

It cannot be assumed, however, that individual decisions are the fundamental level of deci-

Dialogue

sion-making. In most societies of Central and South America, Africa, and Asia, no significant decision (individual or group) is reached apart from a group process to achieve consensus. In the more individualistic orientation of North American and European societies, group decision is often achieved through a process of argumentation and verbosity, with the sum of individual decisions expressed in a vote.

Group Decisions. A group decision is reached by accumulating emotional and factual information in a cyclical fashion. Beginning with a position accepted by consensus, new possibilities are tested. If accepted, those ideas become the new “anchored” (consensus) position; if rejected, the group returns to the original position, reaching out again as new possibilities emerge. The final stage of group decision is the members’ public commitment to that decision—the essence of consensus.

Group judgment is not better than individual judgment, unless the individuals are experts in the area under consideration. Ignorance cannot be averaged out, only made more consistent. A lack of disagreement in group discussion increases the possibility of “groupthink” (an unchallenged acceptance of a position). A lack of disagreement may be construed as harmony, but contribute to poorer-quality decisions.

Higher-quality decisions are made in groups where (1) disagreement is central to decision-making, (2) leaders are highly communicative, and (3) group members are active participants. Clearly, achieving social interdependence in the group is prerequisite to quality decisions. However, mere quantity of communication is not sufficient; the content of intragroup communication affects the quality of decision. The more time spent on establishing operating procedures, the lower the probability that a quality decision will result. Gaining agreement on the criteria for the final decision and then systematically considering all feasible solutions increases the probability of a good decision.

Consensus decision-making groups show more agreement, more objectivity, and fewer random or redundant statements than nonconsensus-seeking groups. Achievement of consensus is helped by using facts, clarifying issues, resolving conflict, lessening tension, and making helpful suggestions.

Cultural Effects on Decision-Making. A group must have decision rules, explicitly stated or implicitly understood, to function. These rules vary with culture; thus a decision model effective in societies of an American or European tradition will probably not function well in Asian or African groups. For example, probability is not normally seen as related to uncertainty in some cultures. For these cultures, probabilistic deci-

sion analysis is not the best way of aiding decision-making.

Perception of the decision required by the decision-maker must be considered. What is perceived depends on cultural assumptions and patterns, previous experience and the context. The problem as presented is seldom, if ever, the same as the perception of the problem. The greater the differences in culture, the greater the differences in perception.

DONALD E. SMITH

Bibliography. R. Y. Hirokawa and M. S. Poole, *Communication and Group Decision-Making*; I. L. Janis and L. Mann, *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment*; D. K. Smith, *Creating Understanding*; G. Wright, ed., *Behavioral Decision Making*.

Dialogue. The subject of vigorous discussion, dialogue seems to defy definition. Most agree, however, that dialogue includes face-to-face conversations involving persons who have fundamentally different religious convictions for the purpose of understanding and growth. In the debate on religious PLURALISM and dialogue, convictions on its nature and use appear to settle into three positions. The position held by pluralists rejects traditional views on biblical revelation, proclaiming interreligious dialogue as a new epistemology; extreme conservatism calls for the rejection of dialogue in favor of proclamation; a more centrist view affirms dialogue as a means of understanding and communication without rejecting biblical revelation.

Ontological and epistemological relativism form the basis for pluralist dialogue. Within this framework, dialogue is seen as a primary avenue toward universal religious truth. Through interfaith discussion under an attitude of equal respect for person and faith, dialogue may reveal supreme truth that transcends various religious traditions: the ultimate truth behind all cultural expressions of religious experience, whether that experience finds expression through Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity. Important aspects include entering dialogue with little or no predetermined expectations, complete honesty, openness, and willingness to change, even concerning important theological issues. Thus, through interfaith dialogue, the Christian may convert from Christianity, the non-Christian may convert to Christianity, or both may become agnostic. Adherents to this position include John Hick, Paul F. Knitter, John R. Cobb, Raimundo Panikkar, and Leonard Swidler.

This position, however, views RELATIVISM as a universally accepted paradigm, possibly creating a naiveté concerning the willingness of other parties to agree to the relativistic preconditions and the possibility that such dialogues become limited to other pluralists from various faiths.

This position also evidences a lack of attention to smaller religious movements in the pluralist literature. Little space is given to dialogue between Christians (even liberal) and Satanists, to give an extreme example.

The opposite view may be called the antidiologue position; it is held by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, among others. Drawing presuppositions from conservative Christian tradition and nineteenth-century positivism, this position assumes an absolute, complete, and accurate comprehension of biblical truth as expressed in evangelical orthodoxy, forming “an exact correspondence between theology and Scripture” (Hiebert, 1985, 7). Any dialogue that contains the possibility for theological change is often perceived as a threat. Accordingly, as JOHN STOTT points out, proclamation commands the central element of this position. Careful attention is given to the presentation of the message in monologue form with less attention to surrounding beliefs or circumstances. Dialogue with non-Christians is often considered to involve compromise with anti-Christian forces, violating 2 John 7–11. Preaching in monologue style seeks to accurately communicate propositional truth, thus safeguarding the purity and integrity of the biblical message.

Weaknesses include substantial evidence of cultural and subjective bias in biblical interpretation, undermining the presupposition of exact correspondence. Accordingly, adherents may experience difficulty discerning and respecting differences in conservative biblical interpretation that stem from divergent worldviews. In addition, greater possibilities exist for insensitive presentations that can hinder comprehension of central biblical issues. For example, cultures that value relationships and conversation more than preaching may find difficulty in responding to the message.

The third position seeks to affirm both the understanding and communication aspects of dialogue without surrendering biblical absolutes, the latter being a crucial distinction from the pluralist definition of dialogue. This position, combining critical realism with theological conservatism, is held by (among others) Stott, E. STANLEY JONES, KENNETH CRAGG, Carl F. H. Henry, and Bishop STEPHEN NEILL. Through interpersonal dialogue, one listens and learns as well as shares scriptural truth. Biblical evidence for this position includes examples from the ministry of Christ (John 3–4; Luke 18:18–29), the ministry of Peter (Acts 10:27–48), Paul (Acts 13:8–18; 17:16–34; 19:8–10; 20:6–7), and the common sense of Proverbs 18:13. Stott summarizes his argument by stating that true biblical dialogue reflects authenticity, humility, integrity, and sensitivity—all without relinquishing essential biblical mandates for salvation. The position

calls for careful discernment between people who are valued by Christ and religious systems that oppose him, and it is the position generally practiced by evangelical missionaries.

The weaknesses of this position include possible difficulties in maintaining a balance among interpersonal relationships, biblical truth, and resulting psychological equilibrium. Additionally, losing biblical perspective may also lead toward SYNCRETISM. However, the strengths of this approach far outweigh the weaknesses.

STEVEN J. PIERSON

Bibliography. P. J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics*; J. Hick and P. F. Knitter, eds., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*; P. Hiebert, *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (1985): 5–10; P. F. Knitter, *No Other Name?*; D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*; T. C. Muck, *JETS* 36 (1993): 517–29; H. A. Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*; E. Rommen and H. Netland, eds., *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*; J. R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*; L. Swidler, *After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection*.

Divination, Diviner. Divination is the practice of seeking secret knowledge, usually of the future, by occult means. A wide variety of techniques are used, with the expectation that insight will be provided by supernatural beings or power. Divination is and has always been a widespread practice among non-Christian peoples and, unfortunately, among many who call themselves Christians.

Diviners are specialists in using the techniques of divination to discover the information sought by their clients. The power to gain such information is assumed to be obtained by either directly petitioning a spirit or magically through the correct performance of given rituals. Most of those who specialize in working with satanic power combine divination with their other activities. SHAMANS, spirit mediums, priests of various cults, witches, sorcerers, witch doctors, and the like usually practice divination in addition to whatever else they do.

Among the techniques used are dreams, horoscopes, and astrological tables, water witching, examination of entrails or tea leaves, observing the activities of birds or other animals, the positions of coals or stones, cards, dice, crystals, and palmistry. In Scripture we find reference to divination through examining a dead animal's liver (Ezek. 21:21), throwing down arrows (Ezek. 21:21), using a cup (Gen. 44:5), casting lots (Jonah 1:7), astrology (Isa. 47:13), and consulting the dead (Lev. 19:31; Isa. 8:19). God's disapproval of the use of such techniques to gain information from evil spirits (Lev. 20:6) is to be carefully distinguished from his willingness to

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use casting lots under his guidance to discern his will (Josh. 18:6, 8, 10; Acts 1:26).

A specialized form of divination, trial by ordeal, is used in many societies to discover secret information regarding the guilt or innocence of a person accused of a crime. Ordeals may involve such things as forcing accused persons to dip their hands in hot oil, swallow poison, have a hot knife pressed against their bodies, or some other act with the understanding that if they are harmed they are guilty. In Numbers 5:11–31, Moses is commanded to instruct the Israelites to use an ordeal involving an oath and the drinking of “bitter water” to discern the guilt or innocence of a wife suspected of adultery.

Divination remains common today. The techniques used are empowered by demons with very real results. Diviners are able to use Satan’s communication system to find things that have been lost, make predictions concerning the future that, if believed, bear startling fruit, and to thoroughly impress those who know no greater power. Those who would present Christianity in a way that is attractive to the majority of the peoples of the world need to take such manifestations of satanic power seriously. Jesus came into a power-oriented world (like ours) and showed us how to use God’s power and passed on his authority and power to us (Luke 9:1; John 14:12) to enable us to confront and defeat the enemy in contexts where he is influencing people through divination.

CHARLES H. KRAFT

Bibliography. D. Burnett, *Unearthly Powers*; A. C. Lehmann and J. E. Myers, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion*.

Festivals, Religious. Religious festivals are cyclic phenomena in most, if not all, religious traditions. They are extremely varied in form and function. Such festivals include the Jewish Passover; the Christian Christmas; the Hindu Deepâval, Dasara, and Kubha Mela; the Xocoth Huetzi of the Aztecs; the New Yam festival of the Igbo; and the Muslim Ramadan. Religious festivals are fundamentally rites of symbolic, expressive communication and religious celebration. All religious festivals fulfill some of the social, psychic, and spiritual needs of the people who practice them, reflecting a universal, inner human quest to relate to the transcendent.

In the social dimension religious festivals function as significant means of informal socialization and contribute to a sense of corporate identity, thus promoting social cohesion. There is an aspect of gaiety and flexibility in the format of festivals, but where these elements are replaced by rigid formalism the rituals easily become a burdensome, legalistic ritualism. Ritualism destroys the very re-creative purpose of the festivals. This will only continue to be the case as these festivals can withstand the threat of SECU-

LARIZATION through tourism and CONSUMERISM. Taking a wider perspective, some religious festive cycles have been shown to be important as socioreligious mechanisms in maintaining a dynamic balance between consumption and conservation in the environment.

From a religious perspective, festivals establish and strengthen the link between the sacred and the profane; the temporal existence and the experience of the eternal. They renew and transform the profane and affirm the essential goodness of life, while at the same time they critique its destructive elements. Festivals interrupt the mundaneness and profanity of life. Religious festivals raise the level of consciousness of the continuity of life by allowing participants to withdraw temporarily from profane time into sacred time while also bringing a measure of sacredness to all of life.

A religious festival often involves reenactment of historical or mythical events, making the sacred past present in experience or the benefits of the event made a present reality. It can also be a medium to communicate the experience of thanksgiving, atonement, redemption, and hope. The uniqueness of Christian festivals lies in their source in divine revelation of God and in the ritual meaning and perception of the participant’s role. Christians not only celebrate the past and present, but also anticipate a future life in the consummated kingdom of God. Christian celebrations involve reenactments that do not renew the initial redemptive act, but the benefits of that act are made present. The Christian is an observer and recipient of the divine act, not a participant in the divine act.

The Christian engaging in cross-cultural ministry must consider making use of the ritual symbolism to communicate the gospel to avoid a foreign message or SYNCRETISM. Religious festivals reveal the significant religious concerns of the practitioners and have an important social and possibly an ecological function. For these reasons Christians also need to consider the use of functional substitutes that are both indigenous and Christian to fulfill at least the social (and environmental) needs.

ALBERT F. TUCKER

Bibliography. R. L. Browning, *Religious Education* 75 (1980): 273–81; M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*.

Folk Religions. Most scholars trained in Western schools define religion in terms of the formal, institutionalized religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, most of which claim universal application. These have sacred texts and commentaries, philosophical traditions and orthodoxies, profes-

sional leaders and schools, and organized churches, temples, and mosques.

During the age of exploration, travelers, missionaries, and colonial administrators encountered a great many oral religions around the world. These centered around rituals, myths, ancestors, spirits, witchcraft, and magic, and were particularist in nature. Each tribe and people group had its own gods, and did not seek to convert other peoples to its beliefs.

The initial response of Western scholars was to see these oral religions as superstitions based on prelogical thought. They called these 'ANIMISM,' in contrast to 'religions,' which they believed were logical and true. They assumed that when the high religions came, the people would abandon their superstitions. Consequently, Christian missionaries rarely took time to study the traditional religions or to deal with them.

As missionaries and anthropologists began to study traditional religions, they found that underlying these are sophisticated conceptual systems that can be articulated by the philosophers in these societies. Moreover, they found that when traditional religionists became Christians, Hindus, or Muslims, they did not abandon their old ways, but added high religious beliefs over the old leading to two-tiered religious systems. While the leaders might be committed wholly to Islam or Hinduism, the common folk went to the mosque or temple to answer some questions, and to the shaman and witch doctor to answer other ones. Most converts were folk Muslims or folk Hindus. Christian missions faces the same problem of split-level religion. Lay Christians around the world go to churches on Sunday, but to traditional healers, exorcists, diviners, and priests during the week. To understand this religion of the common folk, we need to examine the nature of formal and informal religion.

Formal religions deal with ontological questions regarding the ultimate origins, meaning, and end of this world, of humankind, and of individual persons, which they affirm are universally true for all people. Most of the leaders are literate and develop sophisticated philosophical systems based on sacred texts to answer these questions, and are concerned that the laypeople learn and accept these truths. Formal religions have local traditions—the local gatherings of lay followers who live their lives out in the world, and have little knowledge of or time for the theological debates of the great tradition. They provide the people with a sense of the cosmic story and their place in it as they participate in the prescribed rituals.

But high religions often leave unanswered the existential questions ordinary people face in their everyday lives. What is the meaning of life here on earth when I am caught in meaningless drudgery to make a living? How can I prevent calami-

ties such as illnesses and crop failures? Why did my child die so suddenly, leaving no one to care for me in my old age? People know that they need to care for their bodies to be healthy, and to plant and tend their fields to get crops, but when their folk sciences fail, what do they do? If their formal religion provides no answers, they turn to animistic practices—to magic, spirits, ancestors, divination, and other local religious practices.

Folk religions are ad hoc mixtures of local expressions of formal religions and local animistic beliefs and practices. They are sets of loosely related practices, often mutually contradictory, used not to present a coherent true view of reality but to produce immediate results. They provide answers to the existential questions of everyday life. One is the meaning of life here on earth, and an explanation of death, not for those who die, but for those who remain behind and must deal with the grief and loss. A second is the desire for a good life, and the need to deal with the constant crises of life such as illness, spirit possession, droughts, famines, and defeats in battle. A third is the need to make everyday decisions regarding marriage, farming, business, hunting and raids, and the problem that much is unknown. A fourth is the desire for justice and social order, and the constant experiences of injustice, offense, and pollution. Folk religions provide various courses of action to those facing illnesses, bad fortunes, sudden deaths, failure in love and marriage, and guidance for those making important decisions.

The relationship between the leaders of formal religions and the animistic practices of their followers is an uneasy one. In many cases, such as in Islamic fundamentalism, the leaders condemn them as heretical and seek to stamp them out, often by force. In other cases, such as in Hinduism, formal and local folk beliefs and rites are interwoven in complex accommodations. Tribal and local gods are absorbed into Hinduism by identifying them as incarnations of one of the high Hindu deities. Local rites are embedded in orthodox rituals, and goddesses and local spirits are enshrined under the trees and on the edges of Hindu temples.

Given this difference in focus, it should not surprise us that Christian missionaries and leaders trained in formal Christianity called people to eternal salvation, and often failed to address the everyday problems the people were facing. Consequently the people continued to go to traditional healers and diviners. In many cases, new converts knew that the leaders objected to their old ways, so they continued these practices in secret. Animistic beliefs and practices did not disappear, nor were they stamped out. They simply went underground. The notable exception are the independent churches arising around the world, which often seek to provide answers to

God

the problems of everyday life (see AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCH MOVEMENT).

Dealing with folk religious beliefs and practices remains an unfinished task in the CONTEXTUALIZATION of the gospel in churches around the world, young and old. They often have few answers to the questions of sickness, spirits, witchcraft, ancestors, and guidance, so Christians turn to their old ways for answers, even as they go to church for forgiveness and fellowship with God.

There is a growing awareness of the need for the church to provide a whole gospel that addresses both the ultimate and existential questions the common people face. It must present the Good News of forgiveness, salvation, and reconciliation with God. It must also show that this Good News answers the everyday questions of the people. If it does not proclaim a whole gospel, lay folk will continue to come to the church for eternal salvation, but turn elsewhere to deal with the spiritual problems of everyday life. The result will continue to be a two-tiered Christianity, which, in the long run, will make Christianity marginal in their lives, or turn it into CHRISTO-PAGANISM in which the gospel becomes captive to the local culture and its worldview.

PAUL G. HIEBERT

Bibliography. P. Hiebert, D. Gilliland, and T. Tienou, *Folk Religions*; A. C. Lehmann and J. E. Myers, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*; G. Van Rheezen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*.

God. The relationship between the Christian doctrine of God and mission is best explored within the context of salvation history. By tracing that path we see that mission is in fact God's gracious, loving response to the problem of human SIN. Every cardinal attribute of God is brought to bear on the problem of sin (see also DIVINE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD).

We begin with an attempt to assess the range or scope of God's salvific desire. Using only the New Testament, we would have no difficulty concluding that God's desire is universal (1 Tim. 2:1-6). He has acted to reconcile the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19) and has gathered a people for himself from among the Gentiles, that is, from all nations (Acts 15:14). Most of the Old Testament, however, seems to be the history of God's dealings with but one special people, Israel. Nevertheless, God's desire to save all people of all nations can be argued from several Old Testament perspectives (see also OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF MISSION).

First, it should be noted that God's involvement in human affairs has not been limited to any one part of the race. This unlimited scope of God's interaction with humankind is evident in several aspects of CREATION. Scripture clearly

portrays God as the Creator and Sustainer of the world and in particular the human race (Gen. 1:1-2:19; 14:19; Isa. 40:28). The intent of the command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28; 9:1) is obviously universal as were the results of obedience. Thus, the repeated affirmation of his ownership of creation is justified (1 Sam. 2:1-10; Ps. 24:1; Ps. 50). All peoples are his. All depend upon his custodial activity, that which sustains existence as we know it (Ps. 104:14).

The unlimited scope of God's dealings with humanity can also be seen in his sweeping and universal judgment of sin. The effects of Adam and Eve's fall were not limited to one people or ethnic group. As humankind began to spread out across the face of the earth, the effects of sin were carried with them and intensified (Gen. 3:1-7; 4:1-12; 6:5-8). At each stage of this devolution, God's response in judgment matched the range of sin's pandemic spread. In Genesis 3:14-19 judgment was meted out to each participant: the serpent, Eve, and Adam. Similarly, the flood brought divine wrath to bear on all sinners (Gen. 6:5-6). God's response is no less inclusive when sin once again engulfs humankind, as reported in Genesis 10-11.

But God's promises and implementation of restoration are also universal. In concert with each wave of judgment, God keeps hope alive with the promise of reconciliation. After the fall, in the midst of God's condemnation of the initial sin, there is a promise of the Seed, a descendent of the woman who would "crush the head of the serpent." Many have referred to Genesis 3:15 as the first statement (protevangelium) of God's ultimate answer to sin, anticipating Christ's redemptive work on the cross. After the flood, God reestablishes his relationship to humans by entering into a covenant with the whole of humanity (Gen. 9:9-17). That the covenant with Noah has universal implications can be seen from the inclusive language (*every* living creature, all generations). After the affair at Babel, God calls out Abraham and promises that through him *all* nations will be blessed.

Thus, we see that the pattern established by God's general intercourse with humanity also applies to his judgment of sin. God's concern for reconciliation extends to every people (Pss. 67:4; 82:8; 96:10; Isa. 2:4; Joel 3:12; Mic. 4:3).

God not only desires salvation universally, he has taken concrete, practical steps to accomplish that. From the Old Testament perspective this is reflected primarily in the election of Israel (see also DIVINE ELECTION). God enters a covenant with one person and his descendants. However, these developments alter nothing with respect to God's universal salvific will. In fact, the election of Israel is best viewed as a continuation of God's interaction with all nations. Each of the promises given in response to the first two stages of

sin's spread, although universal in scope, do anticipate narrower foci of implementation (Gen. 3:15, the seed; Gen. 9:26, the blessing of Shem).

The *locus classicus* for the concept of election is Deuteronomy 7:6–8 (see also 9:4–6; 10:14ff.; 14:2). Here we see that in being chosen Israel is called a holy people and treasured possession. This description gives us significant insight into the nature of the election.

No human standard was applied and used as the basis for election. We see that Israel is not chosen on the basis of special social characteristics or cultic and moral integrity. In fact, we are told that they were the least among the nations. We know that they were just as vulnerable to the effects of sin as other peoples. So it is wholly because of God's love and grace that Israel is afforded such a privileged position. And yet, they were also not the only people to be favored by God. The nations remain in the purview of election. Deuteronomy 7:8 links election to the promise given to Abraham and with that to the universal scope of God's redemptive purpose.

The purpose of election also rests squarely within the context of God's universal design. The intended result was for Israel to be a blessing and a light for the nations (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; Gal. 3:8). Election does not only imply privilege, but also responsibility. The history of Israel is an extension of God's dealings with the nations to which Israel is to be light (Exod. 19:5–6).

Thus, it comes as no surprise that others were allowed to participate in the benefits of that privilege (Gen. 14:19, Melchizedech; Gen. 16:13, Hagar [Egyptian]; Exod. 12:38, 'mixed multitude'; Deut. 31:12 'foreigner'). In fact, there is so much material of this sort that many have inferred that Israel clearly understood the universal salvific implications of its election.

As we continue to follow the course of salvation history, we recognize that the developments described in the New Testament are largely the result of God having completed his plan of redemption. With the coming of Christ, we have the concretization of salvation, a new covenant, and a new people. Christ fulfills the promise made by God, initiates a new covenant, calls into existence a new people of God, and inaugurates the Christian mission (activation of witness).

In Galatians 4:4 we are told that when the "fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem those who were under the law." The idea here is not that time has simply run its course, but that an appointed time or the fulfillment of the promise had arrived. God himself initiates the final stage in redemption history by sending his Son into the world.

The context for our understanding of these events is the one already established by the Old Testament, namely, that of the Abrahamic promise, the covenants, and the anticipated blessing

of all nations (*see also* ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). This is exactly the approach taken by Paul in Galatians 3. In Galatians 3:1–5 he raises the fundamental question of just how they received the gift of redemption (which is now a concrete reality). Their own experience provided an obvious answer. They received the gift of the Spirit as a result of their obedient response to the message of faith. In Galatians 3:6–9 Paul supplements this line of argument by appealing to Scripture (Gen. 15:6), showing that it was Abraham's willingness to have faith in God's plan and not some level of religious performance, which led to God declaring him righteous. That leads to the conclusion that the true children of Abraham are those (any, including the Gentiles) who have faith (Gen. 17:7; Rom. 9:6ff.).

The promise made to Abraham is referred to here as the gospel (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). So it is faith, not ethnicity or keeping the law (3:10ff.), which leads to redemption. The law did not change the conditions of the promise (Gal. 3:15), it only revealed sin as sin. The object of faith is Christ, God's plan, as accomplished by Christ (Gal. 3:10–14), which is precisely what the promise envisioned. This fact is established by highlighting the singular of the word "seed." The promise was not intended to include all the descendants of Abraham, but *the* descendant, Christ (Gal. 3:16) and all those who are in him (Gal. 3:26–29). As in the Old Testament, the scope of the promise is universal (Gal. 3:8).

The Book of Acts picks up the theme of unrestricted mission. In 1:8 we see Jesus diverting attention from the question of time and placing it on the disciples' responsibilities. These included worldwide outreach. Consider the similarities to the GREAT COMMISSION passages.

But not only has God kept his promise by sending the Son, he also enables the new people of God to fulfill their responsibility by sending the Spirit. Even a cursory reading of the Book of Acts impresses one with the prominence and importance of the HOLY SPIRIT. And here we see how the work of the Spirit relates to that of the other members of the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit generates the missionary spirit. The drive toward spontaneous expansion comes only after Pentecost. The missionary spirit is first and foremost the spirit of sacrifice. The early Christians were willing to put their very lives on the line (Acts 15:26), give up everything familiar, family, homes (Acts 13:3), rather than retain the best for themselves, as is often the case today.

The missionary spirit is also a spirit of courage. Consider the way in which the apostles faced imprisonment, beatings, and a host of other dangers. The challenges were, of course, not just physical. They were willing to challenge

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existing paradigms and power structures (Acts 4:31; 21:3). Are we any less in need of courage?

The missionary spirit is the spirit of love. First Timothy 1:5 teaches that the sum of all teaching is love—unconditional love for all.

The Holy Spirit guides the missionary outreach of the early church. This was done in several ways. First, the Holy Spirit is presented as the initiator of missionary outreach (Acts 13:1ff.). Second, the Spirit inspires the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 10). Third, the Spirit guides the course of missions (Acts 16:9–10).

The Holy Spirit achieves the results. In John 16:8 Jesus teaches that it is the Spirit who opens the eyes of the world to its own sinfulness. There is no natural awareness of guilt. Consider the sermons given in Acts. They reflect a dependence on the Spirit in that (1) they call for a decision (Acts 2:28), (2) they promise forgiveness (Acts 2:28), and (3) they warn about the coming judgment.

Having followed the implementation of God's plan of salvation, we conclude that it is God himself who has been and is engaged in missions. Several decades ago Georg Vicedom popularized the term *MISSIO DEI* in a book with that title published in 1961. In it he suggested that he was using the phrase in order to underscore the fact that mission is above all God's work, that is, God is the active subject of mission. In that case mission is actually an extension of God's salvific desire and activity. Vicedom goes on to challenge his readers by suggesting that if our assumption that God desires mission because he is himself involved in mission is correct, then the church can be God's instrument and tool only if it allows itself to be used by him (p. 13). This may well be a needed reminder at the beginning of the twenty-first century. God, and not human agencies, is in charge of the mission of the church.

EDWARD ROMMEN

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Gods and Goddesses. People have always considered everyday life to be closely associated with the sacred which is encountered in the form of powers and divine beings. Concepts of gods and goddesses have developed as answers to fundamental human questions of how one can cope

in an uncertain world. This topic most aptly fits those religious systems classified as POLYTHEISM, where the divine is perceived as many distinct entities. Gods and goddesses have been perceived in every conceivable expression: the sun and moon, earth and sky, climatic phenomena, animals, heroes, and various aspects of human life.

In ancient agricultural societies the earth goddess was an important deity regarded as the giver of life and of fertility. Often seen as Mother Earth, in ancient Mesopotamia she was commonly known as Ishtar or Ashtoreth. She was known to the Israelites through the Canaanites, and many turned to worship her soon after arriving in the Promised Land (Judg. 2:13; 10:6). The goddess was also known in the ancient civilization of the Indus Valley prior to the Aryan migration from the north. Frequently the moon is associated with the goddess of fertility because she seems to relate to the rhythms of life. The rhythm of fertility is also symbolized by deities depicted as dying and then rising. The modern pagan movement in the West has sought to recover the worship of the Earth Mother, who is variously spoken of as Gaia or The Lady, and is considered in the threefold form of young maid, mother, and old crone.

Often associated with the earth goddess was the sky god who brings rain, which fertilizes the earth that produces the harvest. For example, in the ancient Middle East the goddess Ashtoreth was associated with the god Baal. The fertility rituals associated with these deities took place at mountain shrines spoken of as high places in the Old Testament (1 Kings 14:23). The Baals were often considered to be the lords of particular areas, so they had appropriate surnames, for example, Baal-Peor (Num. 25:3). Baal was the great fertility god of the Canaanites whose worship throughout Israelite history was a continual challenge to the worship of Yahweh.

In the more complex civilizations of the ancient world, the pluralism of divinities was considered to operate as a pantheon, a community of gods and goddesses. The pantheon was based on a complex system of MYTHS and legends that gave an explanation of the nature of the sacred in every area of social life. There was often a senior god conceived of as the father of the gods, a supreme being associated with the sky. For example, Zeus was the high god of the Greeks, Jupiter for the Romans, and Odin for the Vikings. Sometimes this supreme deity was regarded as old or remote, so that the real powers were with the more immanent and vigorous gods. In other cases, one god ruled, and the others performed the basic functions that maintained life and order. These gods married and had offspring, fought wars or made peace.

Civilizations like those of the city-states of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and the Aztecs had a hierarchical pantheon governing through a human ruler. A close relationship was sometimes conceived between a particular god and the political might of a city. Thus the Babylonians would take the idols of conquered nations back to their temples in Babylon as symbols of Babylonian domination.

Many gods had their own special domain. Those who displayed great physical powers often functioned as gods of protection and war. The Vedas of ancient India spoke of the storm god Indra, and Thor was the storm god of the Viking people. Mars was the Roman god of war protecting the state. Often the king was considered an embodiment of such a god. An example was the Japanese emperor, who was regarded as the sun god. Other deities were associated with the arts and technology. Thoth was the Egyptian god of wisdom, and Njord was the Scandinavian patron of shipping. Ogun was the Yoruba god for all those who worked with iron, the blacksmith, the goldsmith, the hunter, and even the taxi driver in modern times. The Greek god Hades, Seth of the Egyptians, and Ereshkigal of Mesopotamia received the dead into their abode. Thus there was a great variety of religious expression relating to state cults, local cults, and occupational cults. A deity might with time grow or decline in importance, so even within ancient societies there was continual change, making it difficult to draft simple typologies.

Scholars have attempted to distinguish between gods and ancestors, or between divinities and lesser spirits. An ancestor is usually a deified human, a cultural hero who through great exploits has risen to the status of a god (see ANCESTRAL PRACTICES). The famous Chinese general Kuan-ti was deified as the warrior protector of the empire. Although these distinctions may be useful, they can mislead, and it is usually best to begin with the categories that the particular society has set up. The Lugbara of Africa, for example, distinguish between ancestors and *adro* spirits. Ancestors remain close to the image of human beings, while the *adro* do the reverse of normal human behavior: they are cannibalistic, incestuous, and walk upside down. The ancestors express the pattern of the human world with its social order, while the *adro* represent the dangerous world of the bush. This contrast of opposites explains the perplexing features of life.

Gods and spirits are often believed to be able to reveal themselves or express their will to humans. A common manner is through DREAMS, especially those that are vivid or unusual. People ponder these dreams and ask others to help interpret whether they are warnings or promises. Another means of divine revelation is through a trance; a person possessed by a deity. In these

cases the god is believed to speak directly and express his will through the mouth or the actions of the individual (see POSSESSION PHENOMENA).

In return gods and goddesses require homage and SACRIFICES. These are usually offered at special times of the year in order to give thanks. Among the Ga of Ghana the great annual festival is *hummowo* ("hunger-hooting"), when all the corn remaining from the previous season is cooked and presented at the shrine of the gods and ancestors. Then the first of the new corn is offered to the deities, after which the people have a time of feasting and license. Sacrifices can also be required to make atonement for violations of rules and TABOOS, to remove evil or sickness from a person or a community. Most Hindus perform simple rituals of *puja* in which vegetables, fruits, and flowers are offered to the image of a deity. RITUALS, however, often become elaborate, so that only religious specialists (priests) are able to perform them correctly. Among the Aryans the Brahmin priests came to dominate the religious ritual because of their knowledge of the Vedic hymns and the complex ceremonies, which required years of study.

Monistic religious traditions assume that the whole of reality is divine, but even here gods and goddesses can be an important feature, regarded as manifestations of the one divine reality. Within the Hindu tradition the *bhakti* way (*bhaktimarga*) is a type of devotion that leads to liberation. The worship of Vishnu in the form of Krishna or Rama is very popular in India, as is the worship of Shiva and his consort Sakti. *Bhakti* reflects not only a special relationship to a particular form of deity, but also the mood of the devotee. It is characterized by chanting of the sacred name, reciting and acting the great stories of the deity, and singing hymns of praise. Various combinations of human relationships have been used to depict this devotion to the deity: servant to master, child to parent, friend to friend, lover to beloved.

DAVID BURNETT

Hindu, Hinduism. "Hindu" is a term originally used by Muslim conquerors of India to refer to the indigenous peoples of North India whom they subjected in the second millennium A.D. Later "Hinduism" came to be used by British colonizers for the religion of these Hindus without initially realizing how diverse and distinct the religious communities among the Hindus were. Today, both terms are used popularly by both Hindus and others to refer to their religious life, but at best these terms serve only to distinguish Hindus from other religious groups such as Muslims and Christians. "Hinduism" is useful only generally to refer to a cluster of mutually distinct beliefs and related practices ranging from animism to Tantric occultism to polytheism to the-

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ism and impersonal monism. These typically have warrant in Hindu texts which provide a rich treasury of symbols that are understood, combined, and used very differently. Though there is no unified religious entity that corresponds to the term "Hinduism," one can speak intelligently of Hindu traditions. What follows is a description of the history and development of those traditions.

Vedic Texts. Most Hindu traditions draw selectively upon a body of authoritative religious texts called Vedas which were written down in the 1500–300 B.C. period by the priests of warlike and nomadic Aryans from Eastern Europe who conquered and settled in the Indus River Valley of present-day Pakistan. These texts in four parts (Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads) express their early beliefs and practices (Rig Veda) as well as later changes that occurred as they reinterpreted and modified traditional sacrifices to the deities and speculated about the primary source of life and experience (Brahman). The Vedas are known as *shruti* (that which is heard) to distinguish from later literature, also authoritative to many, called *smriti* (that which is remembered). Examples of *smriti* include some or all of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Vedas give evidence of an enduring Brahman priestly class assisted by other ritualists who made offerings to deities who inhabited earth, sky, and deep space. Some of these deities continue today to be addressed in worship such as Agni and Soma. Vedic Rudra is known today as Siva who along with deities such as Vishnu, Krishna, and Rama, are widely popular with Hindus. The priests also officiated at the observance of more than forty *samskaras* or RITES OF PASSAGE such as birth, initiation, marriage, and death. Though the number of these rites has diminished in modern times, they are vital to the life cycle of Hindus. CASTE, the stratification of society into classes of people who observe common rituals and taboos, is rooted in the Vedas (Rigveda 10:90) and serves to distinguish Hindus from one another socially and often religiously. The Indian Constitution prohibits civil discrimination on caste lines but the private lives of Hindus continue to be significantly governed by caste rules governing social contact, family life, and marriage.

The Upanishads, last of the Vedas, introduce concepts that pervade formal Hindu thought and mass consciousness. Reincarnation, (see also REINCARNATION AND TRANSMIGRATION) not known in the Rigveda, emerges as the notion that the *atman* (soul) continues existence after death according to conditions determined by karma. Karma is the belief that every act, thought, and attitude has its consequences for good or bad either in this life, the life to come, or both. This

law is inexorable in that it affects all persons and cannot be set aside or its operation countered. Reincarnation and karma emerge as enduring notions for Hindus and are basic in revised forms in many other Indian religious communities such as Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs.

Shastras. The Shastras are additional supplemental literature seen as authoritative though not all are universally recognized by Hindus. The epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were probably composed some time at the end of the Vedic period and narrate myths and legends, some with possible historical footings. The Ramayana is a favorite for its story of Rama who seeks to recover his wife Sita from Ravana, the demon king of (Sri) Lanka. With the kindly help of the monkey deity Hanuman, Sita is rescued; the couple are reunited and serve as models of the ideal Hindu couple. The Mahabharata, larger than the Ramayana at well over 90,000 stanzas of 32 syllables each, contains the Bhagavad Gita (Song of God) whose impact on Hindu traditions is profound and, other than the Vedas, probably unequaled.

The Bhagavad Gita tells the story of relatives who find themselves in opposing armies on a battlefield in north India. The dilemma of the Pandava warrior, Arjuna, is similar to that of cousins in the American Civil War who faced one another across the firing line. Arjuna's servant-cum-chariot driver reasons with him that it is required of a warrior to do his duty and leave the consequences aside. This reflects a widely held view, reinforced in later Hindu literature, that the way to liberation is to perform socially required acts without attachment to their merits and consequences. Karma in the Bhagavad Gita has as one of its notions the idea that acts done with detachment do not have bad effects. Arjuna is finally convinced he should do his duty but the text shifts the reader's attention from the battlefield issue to a startling revelation that the chariot driver is in reality Krishna, the Supreme Lord and God of the universe. His message to Arjuna and the reader is that liberation (*moksha*) is possible by the grace of Krishna for those who worship him in self-surrender. Thus the Bhagavad Gita, which comingles several religious themes, subordinates them all to the doctrine of *bhakti* (devoted surrender).

Bhakti. For most Hindus, *bhakti* (devotion or surrender to a personal deity) is a daily experience in either the home or the temple and is expressed as *puja* (worship, adoration) in song, prayer, flowers, incense, fruit, and money before a symbol or image of the deity. Popular deities such as Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, Shiva each have wives and mounts such as a bull (Shiva) to transport them. Stories of their lives and exploits are told in Puranas (Old Stories) which were written from A.D. 500–1500. *Bhakti* is considered of two

kinds, perfect and imperfect. Perfect bhakti is when the devotee worships the deity selflessly and without ulterior motives. This is thought to be impossible without the aid of a GURU (spiritual guide) who may himself be regarded as an *avatar* (descent) of the deity. Further, the grace of the deity is necessary for such pure devotion. Imperfect bhakti entails worship that is mixed with personal petitions and requests. Bhakti has inspired a rich body of music and hymns in the vernacular languages of India. Bhajans (hymns) and kirtans (musical performances) are an essential part of bhakti piety. Historic temples for major deities are found in such cities as Calcutta (Kali), Puri (Vishnu, Jagganath), Mathura (Krishna), and Madurai (Minakshi, Shiva). Deities have sometimes been combined into a single form and name as in the case of Trimurthi, which combines Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma. Many deities have fascinating biographies and mythologies. Krishna is known in the Bhagavad Gita as Supreme Deity but in the Puranas as mischievous prankster and womanizer. Vishnu has ten avatars, including the Buddha and Krishna. Siva is known for his fierce demeanor against opponents as well as his generative powers symbolized by the *lingam* (stone phallic shaft). Shiva's wife Parvati (also Durga, Uma, Kali) has her own following centering in a widely celebrated festival called Durga Puja. Many Hindus worship more than one of the many regional and pan-India deities with no sense of impropriety or contradiction since each has special qualities and appeal.

Hindu Religious Thought. While the alleged 330,000,000 gods of India defy easy classification and comprehensive study, Hindu thinkers have systematized in logical and defensible terms the meaning they derive from their religious literature. Thus, Hindu thinkers and their followers established unique positions, debated their merits with each other, and further competed with highly refined proposals of others such as Buddhists and Jains. There are many significant religious systems among which are Advaita Vedanta, Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita, Yoga, Carvaka.

Advaita Vedanta was proposed by Shankara (A.D. 788–820) to resolve unsystematic Upanishadic passages that affirmed views of both theism and monism. Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta is one of several Vedantic systems, each of which claims to authentically interpret the last book of the Vedas and to identify the goal toward which they point (Vedanta). Based upon one of the major themes of the Upanishads, Shankara regarded highest reality (Nirguna Brahman) as non-dual, without attributes, and impersonal which, through *maya* (occult power) the universe was mysteriously created. The misinformed ignorantly (*avidya*) take Brahman as a personal deity (Ishvara, Saguna Brahman) which is a useful position until one discovers highest reality. Shan-

kara thus accommodates bhakti while pointing seekers beyond it to the higher goal of moksha (liberation) through an intuitive and unmediated apprehension of reality, thus ending samsara (the rounds of birth and death due to reincarnation). Moksha is the unitary experience by which the soul is made one with Brahman much as a drop of water is dropped into the ocean.

Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) was Ramanuja's (A.D. 1017–1073) rejection of Advaita and constitutes a defense of bhakti since he refused to regard Ishvara, which for him was Vishnu, as something to be sublated through a non-dual experience. The world was created by a personal god who had qualities which included *maya* (power to create) through which matter (*prakriti*) and souls were formed. The world and souls are real yet derived and dependent, having no existence independent of Brahman. He spoke of Brahman as the soul of the world and the world as the body of Brahman. Liberation was possible by meditation and the grace of the deity, thus ending samsara. The soul, like fish in water, is enveloped in and totally surrounded by the deity but not identical to Brahman as in Shankara.

Dvaita (dualism) is the third of these above Vedantic positions and as proposed by Madhva (thirteenth century) takes the position that the correct synthesis of shruti and smriti is that highest reality (Vishnu, Narayana), the material world, and innumerable souls are all independent realities. Thus, the central problem of all Hindu thinkers which is to solve the relation between identity/the one and difference/the many is resolved by affirming a difference among five eternally distinct realities: Brahman and souls, Brahman and world, world and souls, souls and souls, and the finite objects of the world themselves. Brahman is thus absolutely independent though it sustains a relationship with other entities not as cause but as source since the qualities found in other entities in limited ways are found perfectly in Brahman. Souls at liberation remain distinct, contrary to Ramanuja who taught that they become indistinguishable in their purity. Madhva is unique in Hindu thought by teaching that heretics and sinners who reject his truth will suffer in hell eternally. The usual notion is that hell is not an irreversible state but given time and good karma one can escape it through the operation of samsara.

YOGA is based upon the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali (second century B.C.). Though the meditative techniques and postures of yoga have in the past and present been adopted to reach very diverse religious goals, Patanjali used it to achieve a distinct religious aim: distinguish within oneself *purusha* (changeless self) from *prakriti* (changing matter). The truth about these two eternal realities is that there is no connection. But one is falsely led to believe that when change occurs it

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is the self (purusha) that changes when in fact is only mind (citta, prakriti). Moksha is achieved when through meditation one ceases to confuse the changeless with the changing and experiences the absolute identity of the self and Purusha. The steps toward this goal, ideally guided by a guru, begin with ethical restraint followed by proper postures, controlled breathing, and restricted sense-awareness so as to ultimately still the mind allowing purusha to shine unhindered. The cessation of mental modifications means that the self is known to be unchanging, thereby eliminating the possibility of karmic action leading to reincarnation.

Carvaka is the system defending the belief that perception is the only valid source of knowledge about the real. It is sometimes called Lokayata, meaning only the visible world is real. The world is made up of a complex of four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. There is no place given to the time-honored notions of atman (soul) or Brahman nor to the traditional practices of bhakti, which does puja and requires the services of priests and temple functionaries. Thus, Carvaka is iconoclastic and, in contemporary terms, thoroughly secular. While it has had its historic advocates, many modern Hindus today whose education leads to a materialistic worldview, would find themselves in significant agreement with Carvaka's tenets. This fact alone is enough to warn Westerners against facile comparisons between a "spiritual" India and a "secular" West.

Hindus in the Modern Era. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen Hindu reforms as well as renaissance. Reform societies such as the Brahma Samaj spoke against practices deemed cruel and offensive. The Arya Samaj launched a defense of Hindu ways as a counterattack to Christian critiques. The establishing of independent India as a secular state introduced controls on Hindus and others in the name of public order and morality. Since the 1960s the Western world has seen the introduction of the Krishna Consciousness society, Transcendental Meditation, and groups led by gurus such as Sai Baba and Bhagavan Rajneesh. Thus Hindu traditions have been both constricted and advanced by the cross-currents of the modern world.

JAMES F. LEWIS

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Hindu New Religious Movements. In nineteenth-century India a variety of forces led to the emergence of new Hindu groups. The Brahma Samaj (Theistic Society, 1828), a Hindu social

and religious reform movement, sought to end offensive Hindu practices such as widow burning (*sati*) and temple prostitution (*deva-dasi*). The Arya Samaj (Society of Aryans), established in 1875, supported some reforms but reacted defensively by claiming the superiority of the Hindu tradition. The Ramakrishna Mission seeks today to advance Hindu social and religious concerns through its many chapters located throughout the subcontinent and the world. The Vedanta Society, now found in many cities of Europe and America, traces its origins to the charismatic efforts of Swami Vivekananda, who effectively represented Hindu beliefs at the 1893 Chicago World's Parliament of Religions.

With the countercultural movement of the 1960s Hindu beliefs, practices, and groups began further advances in the Western world. Strengthened by increased immigration from India, Hindu temples and organizations flourished. Swami Bhaktivedanta Prabupada began to attract celebrities in New York City in the 1960s, leading to the establishing of the Krishna Consciousness Society based upon the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Transcendental meditation, with origins in the Hindu thought of Maharishi Maheshyogi, sought to mainstream meditation and mantra through marketing the "science of creative intelligence." Other gurus such as Bhagavan Rajneesh and Sai Baba gained followers. Hindu texts, meditative practices, and rituals have been a deep well from which diverse NEW AGE thought has drawn. However, as seen by many Hindus on the subcontinent itself, these represent less than an authentic continuation of Hindu traditions. But Hindu thought has a history of adapting to the changing religious landscape, which is precisely what is observed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

JAMES F. LEWIS

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Human Condition in World Religions. Common to most religions is the notion that human beings—and, in many cases, the cosmos at large—suffer from some kind of undesirable condition. Violence, murders, and wars; natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods; the inability of people to get along with each other; illness and death; a sense of anxiety and alienation—all of these indicate that something is seriously amiss in our world. A sense of longing for the transcendent suggests a reality beyond the world of ordinary experience, and religions characteristically hold that our ultimate well-being is linked to this transcendent realm.

However, in spite of these common themes the various religions offer quite different diagnoses of the human predicament. Monotheistic religions generally regard the problem in terms of an unsatisfactory relationship between God the Creator and his creatures. Central to Christianity, for example, is the idea of SIN as deliberate rejection of God and his righteous ways. The biblical view of sin must be understood with reference to a holy and righteous God to whom human beings are morally accountable. Sin includes not only individual acts that transgress God's righteous standard but also a condition or state of rebellion against God, resulting in alienation from God. The original sin of Adam and Eve resulted in a condition of sinfulness that has been passed on to all humanity (see also FALL OF HUMANKIND). The suffering and evils we experience are all due ultimately to sin and its tragic consequences.

JUDAISM, rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, has focused extensively on the PROBLEM OF EVIL and suffering. Although it acknowledges the heart of the problem as human moral failure in committing sins against God, Judaism generally does not share Christianity's belief in original sin and total depravity. Rather, a more optimistic view of human nature stresses original virtue and the capacity, with God's gracious help, of working toward progressive moral development.

ISLAM holds that human beings have erred by straying from the right path of obedience to Allah. But sin in Islam is more a weakness or deficiency in human character rather than the radical corruption of human nature. People are subject to temptation from Iblis (the devil), but it is within their power to resist and remain faithful to Allah. The suffering and trials we encounter in this life are regarded not only as punishment for individual sins but also as Allah's way of testing the sincerity and faithfulness of his followers.

Quite different views of the human predicament are found in religious traditions originating in the Indian subcontinent. Here the problem is *samsara*, the wearisome and repetitive cycle of rebirths through which one transmigrates in accordance with *karma*. Birth leads inevitably to death. Death in turn inevitably results in rebirth in another body, and it is the impersonal cosmic law of *karma* that determines the conditions of each existence. HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, and JAINISM, although differing in certain key respects, all accept the framework of *samsara* and *karma*, and thus the religious goal came to be identified with liberation from *samsara* by rendering ineffective the principle of *karma*.

In spite of this common framework, however, various traditions within Hinduism and Buddhism give different views on the nature of the problem. Often the root problem is identified

with ignorance (*avidya*), or holding false views about reality resulting in *samsara*. But even here various differences emerge. In Advaita Vedanta Hinduism *samsara* arises from and is rooted in false views about the nature of Brahman and the relation of the self to Brahman; in Theravada Buddhism, by contrast, it is the false belief in an enduring, substantial self (*atman*) which, when combined with desire and craving, results in suffering and rebirth. Buddhism identifies the human predicament with the claim that all existence is characterized by pervasive suffering, dissatisfaction, and impermanence.

In Chinese religious traditions, or at least non-Buddhist traditions, the human predicament is not understood in terms of the cycle of rebirths so much as failure to attain the proper balance and harmony within the social nexus, which in turn is patterned after the cosmic harmony of Heaven and the Tao. Proper alignment and harmony—within the person, the familial and social contexts, the realm of ancestors and spirits, nature, and the cosmos at large—result in human flourishing. Disharmony on any level can result in the suffering and problems encountered in ordinary life. TAOISM in particular emphasizes balance and proper alignment with the Tao, the Way or eternal principle immanent within the cosmos. Problems in society are due to the imposition of artificial constraints that prohibit the free expression of life in accordance with the Tao. CONFUCIANISM, by contrast, has been concerned with cultivating proper relationships and order within society based on virtue and moral character. With Mencius, and later Chu Hsi, Confucianism has emphasized the inherent goodness of human nature; evil results from corrupt external influences. On a popular folk level, the reality of the spirit world and the importance of proper alignment with spiritual powers is indicated by widespread practices of divination, ancestral rites, and recognition of a vast array of deities, spirits, and demons that can influence life in this world for good or ill.

Animistic traditions and primal religions, which do not make a sharp distinction between the world of ordinary experience and a transcendent spiritual world, attribute problems in everyday life such as illness, death, natural disasters, wars, and infertility to various spiritual powers believed to be capable of impacting affairs in this life. Thus, great care is taken to maintain proper rituals through which the many ancestors, demons, spirits, and gods who hold such power can be appeased.

The recognition that something is profoundly wrong with the way things are can be a point of contact between the Christian gospel and followers of other traditions. Augustine captured this sense of alienation well in his statement at the beginning of the *Confessions*: "You [God] have

Ideologies

made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless and will find no rest until they rest in you.”

HAROLD A. NETLAND

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Ideologies. The term “ideology,” derived from the Greek *idea* and *logos*, literally means “knowledge or science of ideas.” In a general sense ideology refers to a particular set of ideas or beliefs that distinguish a given group or perspective. In modern times the term has assumed various pejorative connotations and is used to refer to a collection of beliefs and values held by a particular group for certain “hidden” motives or for other than purely epistemic reasons. Thus ideologies are typically regarded as sets of ideas used by particular groups in support of certain economic, political, or social agendas. With K. Marx and F. Engels the term took on a specific meaning, referring to a set of beliefs presented as objective whereas in actuality they merely reflect the material conditions of society and the interests of the ruling classes. Thus the dominant ideas of any era not only reflect the views of the ruling classes but also serve their interests. More recently, the Frankfurt School, associated with J. Habermas, has developed the notion of ideology as a set of ideas and communicative structures inherently distorted by power relations.

Some examples of modern ideologies include political liberalism, Marxism, democratic socialism, nationalism, and fascism. Political liberalism, as found in the writings of Locke, Rousseau, Mill, and Rawls, teaches that personal liberty is a fundamental good and that the ideal society is one in which individual liberty will be maximized. Intrinsic to liberalism is confidence in individual autonomy and the right of the individual to think for himself or herself. This, in turn, tends to make the liberal very suspicious of any claims to absolute authority, including any claims to religious authority rooted in God and the Bible. Christian mission, which is based on belief in the authority of Scripture and a divine mandate to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations, will characteristically be viewed by liberalism as a direct threat to individual liberty through the imposition of some divine mandate for society.

MARXISM (as developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin) is an economic theory advocating the ownership of all property by the community as a whole. Intrinsic to Marxism is confidence in the basic goodness and productivity of human beings as well as a denial of the existence of God. Thus Christianity's belief in human depravity

and the sovereignty of God will be met with staunch resistance, since such religious beliefs are perceived to be serving the interests of the dominant classes by suppressing the lower classes and obstructing the progress of communism.

Democratic socialism, although similar to Marxism in some respects, is a theory of what is wrong with society and how these ills can be remedied through production and distribution by society as a whole rather than through private individuals. Contrary to this, the Bible advocates (notwithstanding some misinterpretations of Acts 2) responsible stewardship of property by the individual. Christianity is perceived as the sponsor of capitalism in spite of the fact that historically Christianity has existed in virtually all forms of society and is nonpolitical in its biblical form.

NATIONALISM is the belief that a nation exists more in terms of a given group of people than in terms of political boundaries, and that a nation's peculiar interests and security are more important than international interests and welfare. The primary virtues thus are patriotism and pride in a given nation's customs, language, or traits. In view of such attitudes as these, the Christian mission may be perceived (and historically this has unfortunately sometimes been the case) as an attempt to colonize and subjugate others in the name of a foreign religion.

Fascism stands in contrast to liberalism in its denial of the value of individual freedom. It is a system of government in which there is a rigid one-party dictatorship characterized by forcible suppression of anything that opposes it, such as unions, other political parties, and minority groups. Fascism is closely related to Nazism, but fascism originated in Italy in 1922 and Adolf Hitler later incorporated much of its ideology. These forces were defeated in World War II, but some extremist groups that are fascist in nature still exist. Their glorification of war, racist sentiments, and despotic tendencies are in direct conflict with evangelical Christianity, which is biblically required to avoid war if possible, to be indifferent to race and ethnic origin, and to respect incumbent governments regardless of their nature.

Conservatism in its purest form is the rejection of ideology. Whereas ideology is concerned with the rethinking of political and social systems, conservatism (as its name implies) seeks to conserve or maintain what it regards as good in the past and to uphold tradition. In this sense, biblical, evangelical Christianity is “conservative,” for it consists in preserving intact the apostolic message from one generation to another.

If ideologies oppose the Christian mission it is in part because in the past some forms of Christianity forgot their true mission and took on politi-

cal ambitions or at least unwittingly served in aiding political causes by exporting aspects of foreign cultures. This poses an obstacle that Christian mission must overcome through disassociation as it seeks to make disciples of all nations.

WILLIAM H. BAKER

Bibliography. P. Corbett, *Ideologies*; G. Graham, *Politics in Its Place*; K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*; M. Seliger, *Ideology and Politics*.

Idolatry. Idolatry is a major concern in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament alone there are twelve different words relating to idols or idolaters. In the New Testament, idol (*eidōlon*—or one of its cognates) is used almost thirty times. Under the old covenant, idolatry was strictly forbidden (Exod. 20: 4–5; Lev. 26:1; Deut. 5:8–9) and in the new, believers are warned to avoid any participation with the practices associated with idol worship (1 Cor. 8:7–12; 10:7; 1 John 5:21).

According to some historians, idolatry had its origin in the ancient kingdom of Babylon. This would seem logical in that it is the area of one of the oldest civilizations in recorded history. However, idolatry is instinctive in the heart of fallen people (Rom. 1:21–23) and could probably be assumed to have existed long before recorded civilization. There were at least two major forms of idolatry in the ancient Near East which influenced Israel: the worship of false gods through images and ceremony; and the false worship of the true God by means of images and pagan-influenced ceremony.

The basic concept behind idolatry is assigning divine attributes to some power other than the true God. Images are used as representations of the force or personality being worshiped and often reflect the divine attribute most coveted by the worshiper. For this reason, in paganism, multiple gods are represented because it is inconceivable that one being could possess all of the forces and mysteries witnessed by humans.

Israel, like all of fallen humanity, fell into idolatry because they sought a god with whom they could identify. The true God of Israel was invisible, mysterious, transcendent, and required behavior consistent with his own nature. Idols could be seen, designed to meet human expectations, and manipulated. They were morally weak like the humans who served them. Thus, the natural instinct was to gravitate toward that which was more consistent with human ideas and standards. The divine self-revelation given to Israel was so far beyond human design and concepts that Israel was easily seduced by the pagan ideas and religions which surrounded them.

Likewise, New Testament believers, most of whom had come from pagan lifestyles before their conversion, would be prone to return to the comforts of the familiar and humanly conceived. New Testament writers often warned of the dangers of the surrounding new religious systems which practiced idolatry in many forms. Paul implied that idolatry was more than just having an image before which to bow. In Ephesians 5:5, he stated that a covetous man is an idolater. Covetousness is the improper desire of some material object or place of power. In this sense, materialism can be identified as idolatry. Many Christians who would scoff at the idea of bowing before a statue or image are none the less prone to covet material goods. It is not uncommon to hear of Christians who have replaced dedication to God with the pursuit of money, career, entertainment, or other things of only temporal value.

For missionaries, idolatry can come in two forms. On the one hand, they will confront cultures (especially Hindu and Buddhist cultures) which openly participate in idol worship through images and ceremonies. Learning to communicate the invisible, transcendent, omnipotent, and sovereign God to those who are conditioned to relate to hundreds of deities is a significant challenge. It must be remembered that these missionaries do not have the luxury of the Old Testament prophets who lived in theocratic Israel. They cannot march into these foreign lands and chop down idols. They must convey the true and living God in a manner consistent with the New Testament commission.

The other form of idolatry may come from within their own hearts. Missionaries often sacrifice material goods, family, comforts, and human securities. In this sacrificial lifestyle, the temptation to become covetous or to substitute God's work for more humanistic ideals of living is a serious enticement. Looking to medical doctors, savings accounts, or human advice in place of looking to God is idolatry. It needs to be remembered that God may use any of these human tools to bless and encourage his servants but they are no substitute for God himself.

L. E. GLASSCOCK

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Indigenous American Religions. It is somewhat difficult to apply the term “religion” to the indigenous peoples of America. Some Native American peoples have neither the word nor the concept of religion in their language. For them the entire life experience is an integrated set of belief and behavior that includes everything that is physical, social, emotional, cultural, political,

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material, non-material, spiritual, secular, supernatural, and mystical.

Also, it must be pointed out that there is no single dominant religion among Native Americans. Each group has a religious tradition that is unique to its own heritage. Native Americans do, however, share certain common religious characteristics. Some of these are to live in harmony with nature and the universe; respect for "Mother Earth"; belief in spirits; the practice of communicating with the powers of nature; shamanism; ritualism; and creation stories.

A large number of American Indians are involved today in practicing and adhering to the religious traditions of their ancestors. Also, it is to be noted that in Native American communities all across America there is a revived interest on the part of many to return to the heritage and traditions of their fathers and grandfathers.

The intrusion of outside religious concepts and practices have had an impact on many of the tribal traditions, causing considerable opposition and/or change. There are at least four major influences today that are affecting the religious thinking and practice of American Indians. These are: pan-Indianism; the NEW AGE MOVEMENT; The Native American Church; and Christianity.

Although the term "pan-Indian" has a considerably broader definition, it is used here specifically to describe the practice of an Indian from one group borrowing and adopting the religious beliefs and practices from another Indian that were not necessarily a part of his/her own group's tradition. This phenomenon occurs frequently at pow wows where Native Americans are dressed in "traditional," fancy-dance, or grass dance and jingle dress costumes that are not particularly a part of their own tribal tradition. For many Indians the pow wow is much more a social event than a religious one, but for some participating in the pow wow is very much a religious experience. A number of Indians have found a source of "Indian identity" in the pow wow and have adopted much of what is associated with the pow wow as the expression of their personal religion. Some of the religious customs that have been exchanged between different tribes include the use of the pipe, sweat baths, the use of sweet grass, smudging, vision questing, and songs.

A second influence that today is impacting American indigenous religions is the New Age Movement. This movement is bringing Indians and non-Indians together in a somewhat strange way in which a number of non-Indians have adopted so-called Indian religious traditions. They are practicing various aspects of tribal religion having been taught these "ways" by a number of self-proclaimed and self-appointed Native American religious leaders. Some who have joined the

New Age Movement because of environmental interests have been attracted to American Indian religion because of its closeness to and its respect for nature. It is the desire of these proselytes to Indian religion to somehow protect the environment by means of association with Indians and their religious beliefs and practices.

The Native American Church is an indigenous Indian religion that makes use of a cactus plant that grows wild in the Rio Grande Valley. It is best known by the name "peyote" from the Aztec word "Peyotl." It is classed as one of the hallucinogens and contains the drug mescaline. Apparently the use of peyote in religious rites came to the Native Americans of North America out of Mexico. It was first discovered among Indian tribes of Oklahoma in the late 1800s. By 1906 the use of peyote had spread from Oklahoma to Nebraska. The Native American Church was incorporated in Oklahoma in 1918. In 1944 the Oklahoma articles of incorporation were amended and the organization was named the "Native American Church of the United States." The peyote religion has made considerable inroads on Indian reservations and among Indian communities all across North America. Because of its spread into Canada the organization was once again renamed in 1955 as the Native American Church of North America. Today the Native American Church claims several hundred thousand members. While the religion is not native to North American Indian tribes it is Indian. White men do not control or dominate this religion and Indians are not converted to it by white missionaries. Different tribes have combined the use of peyote buttons with certain traditional religious practices as well as with the use of some Christian beliefs to form a religion which is both indigenous and significantly Indian.

The influence of Christianity on Native Americans has had considerable impact on the practice of indigenous religions throughout the entire history of Indian-White relations. Many of the atrocities perpetrated against Indians by the dominant White society were unfortunately carried out in the name of Christianity. This is an aspect of history for which White America has yet to accept responsibility and for which it needs to seek repentance and forgiveness. While a number of Indians have converted to the "Jesus Way" over the past several hundred years, Christian missionaries, governmental officials and U.S. military personnel have done much to curtail and even prohibit Indians from practicing their tribal rites and ceremonies. Today Indians are granted much more freedom to practice their indigenous religions than in previous times. Many Indians today are rejecting any attempt to "Christianize" them while at the same time others are converting to the Christian message. Perhaps the greatest impact that Christianity is hav-

ing among Indians today is that which is promoted and propagated by Christian Indians themselves rather than by non-Indian missionaries. It is estimated that between 2 and 10 percent of Native Americans are classified as evangelical Christians.

LEONARD RASCHAR

Initiation Rites. These communal rituals, which are RITES OF PASSAGE, mark changes in social status or position which an individual undergoes by passing through culturally recognized life phases. Rites are generally connected with pregnancy and childbirth, transition from puberty to adulthood, betrothal, marriage, death and funerals, and in some societies associated with formal training of craftspersons (or professionals), religious specialists, and warfare. Initiation rites are the process by which individuals are made to be, and taught to function as, recognized members of society. These rites constitute some of the most significant educational experiences in the life of an individual by dramatizing and reinforcing the values of a given society as the initiate internalizes the knowledge, feelings, and aspirations of the social system. They serve to establish the function of the individual in his or her responsibility to the whole society and the society to the individual. The rites help achieve competence and the psychological growth necessary for healthy human functioning as well as safeguarding the cultural system.

In each case the rites involve three stages: (1) separation—the person is removed from normal routine and sometimes also regular social associates; (2) LIMINAL period—the in-between stage where physical and symbolic rituals are taken to extinguish the old status; during this stage there may be physical hardship, such as circumcision, incision, and/or other physical scarification, and the transmission of rules, goals, activities, folk lore, values, beliefs, and so on; (3) incorporation—the public acknowledgment of the new status. Ceremonial recognition of the changed social status legitimizes the permanently altered status with all its rights and obligations to the larger society.

The attendant rituals reflect a symbolic enactment of death and rebirth. The physical distress (frequently physical mutilations) of the initiation rites makes a difference between the old and the new life. Thus male or female (clitoridectomy) circumcision is quite common. The more painful the ritual, the more a person values the new status. There may be universal symbolism to genital operations—a ritual slaying with a rebirth into a new status. The bloodletting is an attempt to initiate, and thus participate in life-creating powers, quite common in FOLK RELIGION. Initiation rites are often associated with Third World societies which seem to place greater emphasis on

the formal recognition of physiological and social changes, rituals which Western societies have supposedly outgrown. This is not so. There may be no single set of ceremonies marking transitions, only a confusion of rites which mark greater independence. However, note the customs or rites which accompany pregnancy, birth, christening/baptism, coming of age, marriage, and death/funerals in the West. Because some rites also have educational functions in which the initiate must learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills consistent with the behavior appropriate to the new status graduation ceremonies from educational institutions, religious ordination, military bootcamp, entry into new professions, and so on, serve the same purpose.

PHILIP M. STEYNE

Islam, Muslim. Islam is the largest non-Christian religion in the world. It is the only faith to supplant Christianity in large geographical regions, and has proved the most resistant to Christian missions since its rise in the early seventh century. Although the Arab world remains the heartland, a majority of Muslims lives in Asia—the largest numbers in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Central Asia.

Early Development. Muhammad (A.D. 570–732) was born in Mecca, a commercial and religious center of Arabia, where he reacted against the polytheism and injustices of his day and received what Muslims believe were revelations from God, later recorded in the QURAN (“the Recitation”).

The faith that emerged incorporated elements from local Judaism, Christianity, and Arabian monotheism. In addition, much of the pagan pilgrimage to the Ka`bah sanctuary in Mecca was incorporated after the idols of tribal patron deities were removed and only references to Allah (“the god”) remained.

Muslims came to understand their faith as the original revelation that had been given through a series of “prophets,” including Moses and Jesus, and finally through Muhammad, whose revelation corrected any corruptions that had affected Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices.

The “five Pillars” of Muslim practice include first the confession of faith: “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the apostle of God.” The first half links Muslim and Christian, as the second half divides them. The second, the ritual prayer, borrows its name (*salat*), ablutions, postures, and much of its content (with the exception of brief references to Muhammad) from Jewish and Christian sources. The original Muslim orientation of prayer was toward Jerusalem like the Jews, before it was directed instead toward Mecca.

The third, almsgiving, is designated by an Aramaic loan word *zakat*, which the Jewish rabbis used for charitable gifts. Likewise, the fourth,

Islam, Muslim

fasting, is indicated by a Judeo-Aramaic loan word, *sawm*. The practice of abstaining from eating and drinking in the daytime but not at night was a Jewish practice. Apparently the fast originally coincided with the Jewish fast before the Day of Atonement, but then it was changed to replace the pre-Islamic Arab sacred month of Ramadan.

Although the fifth pillar, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca, was the adoption and reinterpretation of a pagan practice (see also PILGRIMAGES), it incorporates some elements that God used in his schoolhouse for the children of Israel. Its name, *hajj*, is the same word the Israelites used for a festival in Jerusalem in Psalm 81:4 (3 in English). The circumambulation of the sanctuary replicates the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Ps. 26:6). The wearing of special garments and the prohibition of the cutting of hair while in a consecrated state follow biblical practices (e.g., Lev. 16:4; Num. 6:5).

Varieties of Expression. Muslims developed a strong sense of community governed by divine law (*Shari'ah*), which in both its quranic form and subsequent development resembled Jewish oral Torah and rabbinic law. It developed to include all human duties to God and society from religious observances to family, penal, and international law.

An Islamic law developed to guide the outer paths of Muslims duties; mysticism (see SUFI, SUFISM) developed to guide the inner path of piety, with emphasis on the experience and devotional love of God. Being more inclusive in nature, it borrowed freely from Christians and Hindus and others and facilitated the spread of Islam from North Africa to Southeast Asia through a network of orders or brotherhoods. Its expressions range from devotional dimensions of many orthodox (or orthoprax) Muslims, to beliefs and practices of some orders that are removed from formal Islam.

In the latter cases it blends into "folk Islam," that mixture of indigenous animistic elements into the beliefs and practices of many who consider themselves to be Muslims. This modifies the traditional bridges and barriers to Christian mission among Muslims.

The major division within formal Islam is between the Sunnis (85 percent worldwide; see SUNNI, SUNNISM) and the Shi'is (15 percent worldwide; see SHI'ITE, SHI'ISM). It was occasioned by differences over who should lead the community after the death of Muhammad. The Sunni majority followed the Arabian pattern for choosing a chief: the elders elected a caliph as a political leader. The Shi'ites, reflecting ideas closer to those of divine kingship of the previous empires of West Asia, believed leadership should pass to the senior male of Muhammad's family, called an imam. He was not only to be a political

leader like the Sunni caliph, but also a religious leader as a vehicle of divine guidance.

Various trends have been discernible in the Muslim community up to the present day. One is the adaptationists, who have advocated a process of Islamic acculturation. They include today's modernists who advocate religious, legal, educational, and social reforms. The second are the conservatives, who feel that the boundaries of legitimate religious interpretation ceased in the ninth century after the four orthodox schools of Sunni law were established.

Finally, there are the fundamentalists, who reject the accretions of Islamic history and seek to return to the fundamentals of the Quran and practice of Muhammad (Sunna), believing that they exhibit a pattern of values and law adequate for modern life. They do not reject modern technology but only the secular values that frequently accompany it. Some have radical social programs and others, conservative. Some are militant while others support the status quo. Yet at the threshold of the third millennium many of the expressions of Islam are experiencing resurgence.

Spread. Islam has been spread by both peaceful and militant means. On the one hand, the Quran states that there is no compulsion in religion (2:256/257) and enjoins witness in a kind manner (2:143/137; 16:125/126). On the other hand, it calls Muslims to fight against polytheists and hypocrites (9:5, 38-52) and even Jews and Christians until they submit and pay tribute (5:29), after which the latter two are to be protected.

A distinction needs to be made between the expansion of military and political power and conversion, which involves spiritual allegiance. The conversion of conquered people, if it occurred, was often a slower process. The adoption of Islam ranged from total conversion, to allegiance for expediency because of its advantages, to forced submission.

One hundred years after Muhammad's death in 632, the Muslim Arab armies had conquered North Africa, Spain, Syria, and the Persian (Sassanian) Empire. By 870, Islam had become the dominant integrating faith of a vast empire of many cultures extending from North Africa into Central Asia. During this period the basic Shari'ah law developed, to which many Muslims have turned, up to the present day.

Between 870 and 1041, various regions of the empire assumed a measure of independence. Islamdom continued to expand partly by military means but more often by trade. Berbers in North Africa became at least nominally converted to Islam and, through their caravan trade across the Sahara, provided the means for Islam's penetration into black Africa. On the eastern side of the Muslim lands the Muslim Ghaznavids in the Afghan mountains conquered northwestern India.

From 1041 to 1405, the Turkic Seljuqs and Mongols invaded the Islamic lands from Central Asia. The CRUSADES also took place during this period. Though they have poisoned Muslim attitudes ever since, they were initially a response to the Byzantine emperor's request for help against the expansion of the Seljuk Turks into Western Anatolia as the Kipchak Turks in the Ukraine had cut off Christian Russia from them.

The Islamic empires continued to expand and consolidate between 1405 and 1683. The Ottomans captured Constantinople and ended the Byzantine Empire but were not able to capture Vienna in 1683. Islam continued to follow the trade routes into Sub-Saharan Africa, especially through traders who were also teachers.

In the subsequent centuries there has been Muslim activism and revival and great biological growth. The major expansion into new areas has been in Africa and the West. In Africa, Islam and Christianity continue to grow rapidly southward by conversion growth at the expense of AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS. Islam has become a significant presence in Europe and North America through immigration. In the African American community in the United States where it has grown—sometimes in modified form—it has provided a vehicle of ethnic pride and social betterment.

Contemporary Muslim mission has been organized both to win converts and to counteract Christian missionary efforts. The conferees at the Muslim World League Conference in Mecca in 1974 called for the government takeover of mission hospitals, schools, and orphanages, the banning of Christian literature in Muslim countries, and cutting off financial support from countries allowing missionaries to Muslims. On the other hand, Muslim missionaries are being trained at centers like al-Azhar in Cairo. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Koran Printing Complex is printing millions of Qurans in various languages for free distribution. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has expended billions for Islamic institutions around the world. Other organizations like the Islamic Society of North America include among their goals and those of their member organizations propagating the faith by various means.

Christian Missions. Muslims have been the most resistant faith community to Christian evangelism for a number of reasons (*see also* MUSLIM MISSION WORK). Aside from the spiritual obstacles, the hindrances are first, sociological: group solidarity leads to family and community ostracism and persecution of the convert. The Law of Apostasy can lead to death.

Second, they are theological: since Islam is the only world religion to rise after Christianity, Muslims believe that all that is of value in Christianity is already in Islam, and they commonly

hold that the Bible has been corrupted. (The Quran is understood to deny the Trinity and Christ's incarnation, sonship, and crucifixion.)

Third, the obstacles are political: since Islam applies to every area of life including the political, non-Muslims are normally considered second-class citizens whereas Muslims are a majority. Despite the ancient churches in many Muslim lands, Muslims commonly associate Christianity with the West.

Fourth, the frequent association of Christianity with the West has often raised cultural barriers: Western forms of worship and church structure have been utilized without the realization that almost all Muslim forms of worship have been adopted or adapted from Jews and Christians. Finally, the barriers are historical: much of the contact between Muslims and Christians militarily, politically, and religiously has been hostile.

J. DUDLEY WOODBERRY

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Islamic New Religious Movements. New Religious Movements (NERMs) is not an Islamic term, but like other clearly defined religious traditions, Islam has experienced frequent movements of renewal and innovation. These movements generally push some principal tenet or doctrine of Islam to the outer edges of acceptable interpretation. They most often center on a key figure who claims to have received or embodied new religious insight. Sufi (mystical) Orders have occasionally moved in this direction. Shi'ite Islam, with an inherently strong emphasis on the special spiritual state and insight of the Imams, is particularly productive soil for the growth of Islamic NERMs. Islamic NERMs often develop out of attempts to synthesize orthodox Islam with indigenous ethnic, cultural, and folk religious values and practices.

Often such movements develop so distinctly that they abandon their Islamic identity completely. The Druzes, a closed community of some six hundred thousand persons living in Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, began as a twelfth-century Islamic NERM within the Fatimid Isma'ili sect of Cairo. Druze beliefs are characteristically

Jain, Jainism

gnostic. With the claim of divinity for the founder, its own line of prophets, and distinct sacred literature, the Druzes stand well outside the broad Islamic tent. More recently, a mid-nineteenth-century reform movement of Shi'ite Islam in Iran developed into the modern BAHAI' faith. The sect claimed special spiritual status for the founder, Baha' Ullah, and quickly left behind all traditional Islamic religious identity.

Two of the more significant contemporary movements that maintain an Islamic self-identity are the Ahmadiyyah and The Lost Found Nation of Islam (Black Muslims). The Ahmadiyyah was founded by Mirza Ahmad in late-nineteenth-century India in response to the political, economic, and religious imperialism of the Christian West. Mizra Ahmad developed his own distinct doctrines of Jesus, claimed that contemporary Christianity was the apocalyptic Antichrist, and finally claimed that he was the Mahdi and the Second Coming of Jesus. The Ahmadiyyah adopted aggressive missionary techniques and are stridently anti-Christian. There are approximately 500,000 Ahmadis worldwide, with the greatest strength in Pakistan and West Africa. They view themselves as the true Muslims, but are regarded by the vast majority of Sunni Muslims as heterodox.

Ahmadiyyah missionaries to American inner cities in the 1920s and 1930s had some influence in the emergence of a distinctly African American Islamic NERM, the BLACK MUSLIMS. Elijah Muhammad (Elijah Poole) began the movement in Detroit sometime in the mid-1930s. The movement was primarily a black separatist one with many doctrines and practices that were not only outside Islamic norms, but seem to have little connection to Islam at all. Clergy were termed "ministers" and houses of worship were called "temples" rather than mosques. On the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, his son assumed leadership and gradually directed the Nation to abandon most of its eccentric doctrines and adopt more authentic Islam. Most African American Muslims moved in this direction and the movement has continued to grow, now numbering over one million. Louis Farrakhan led a smaller faction that retained the name "Nation of Islam" and many of its heterodox beliefs. This continuation of the original movement is quite small, numbering under fifty thousand. The Black Muslim movement has had some success outside the United States, particularly in Trinidad.

Islamic NERMs continue to arise, but due to the intense social and religious pressure of Islamic societies and occasional political pressure from sympathetic governments, most either remain small and underground, move completely

outside the Islamic context, or die out rather quickly.

JAMES D. CHANCELLOR

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Jain, Jainism. Jainism is the religion of the Jain community and describes the way of life of those who follow the *Jina* (spiritual victors), human teachers who have attained infinite knowledge and preach the doctrine of *moksha* (liberation), also called *tirthankaras* (builders of the bridge across the road of suffering). One of India's most ancient non-Vedic traditions, widely regarded as the earliest heterodox offspring of HINDUISM, Jainism is often confused with BUDDHISM with which it bears some superficial similarities. Down through the centuries the Jains, however, have succeeded in maintaining their distinctive identity and the integrity of their belief system and way of life within the highly accommodative climate of Hinduism.

Although the beginnings of Jainism are commonly associated with Vardhamana Mahavira, who lived in the sixth century B.C., the Jain literature does not recognize him as founder or prophet, but as the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*. Jains today have deified him as the last and greatest savior with ideas of sinlessness and omniscience attributed to him. As a religious movement, Jainism seems to have arisen as a reaction to Brahminical Hinduism, and due to its rejection of the authority of the Vedas, is often perceived as a heresy of Hinduism. The Jaina system is opposed to the idea of God as a supreme personal being. The universe itself is regarded as uncreated and eternal, made up of eternal souls (*jivas*) and eternal elements (*ajivas*).

Jainism shares with Hinduism belief in *karma* (moral retribution) and *samsara* (transmigration of the soul), although these concepts are interpreted in highly fatalistic terms within the theoretical pessimism integral to the Jaina system. It thus posits a very negative view of life in which humanity is trapped within an essentially painful and evil cycle of human existence. *Moksha* (liberation) from bondage to this cycle of birth and death is through a process of fourteen stages of spiritual evolution, involving rigid, self-denying ascetic practices. The five great *vratas* (vows) prescribing these ascetic practices are: not to kill, not to lie, not to steal, to abstain from sexual intercourse, and to renounce all worldly attachments.

Ahimsa (nonviolence) is one of the central beliefs and practices of Jainism. This cardinal principle of Jainism received worldwide attention as the essential ethical basis of the Indian movement for national independence as articulated and practiced by its chief architect, Mahatma

Gandhi, who was himself deeply influenced by Jain thought and values. The deep reverence for life among the Jain community is reflected in a lifestyle which includes strict vegetarianism and noninvolvement in vocations such as farming, cattle breeding, and the armed forces. Large numbers of them have thus turned to careers in finance, commerce, and banking, making them one of the wealthiest and most influential communities in India.

Although Jainism has a very limited following of about 4.5 million adherents and the vast majority of them live in India, its influence has been powerful and far-reaching. The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of an enterprising and influential Jain diaspora in North America, Britain, Africa, and the Far East. The Jain concern for peace, vegetarianism, and the environment contributes to the movement's universal appeal. The opportunity that Jainism presents for Christian missions is highlighted by the fact that there appears to be no specific Christian ministry directed toward the Jain community to date.

IVAN SATYAVRATA

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Japanese New Religious Movements. The modern era has seen the emergence of a large number of NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS in Japan which, although heavily influenced by the traditional Japanese religions, are manifestly different from SHINTO, BUDDHISM, and CONFUCIANISM. Development of these new movements falls into three distinct stages: the period of social upheaval during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries following modernization and the Meiji Restoration of 1868; the immediate aftermath of World War II; and the period beginning in the 1970s and continuing to the present.

During the first period new religious movements such as Tenrikyo, Kurozumikyo, and Omotokyo appeared, whose founders tended to be shamanistic figures drawing heavily on the Shinto tradition. Prior to World War II, however, their activities were severely restricted by the Japanese government, which had established Shinto as the state religion with the emperor as the supreme figure. Omotokyo, for example, was heavily persecuted because of its claims that its shamanistic leader, Degushi Onisaburo, was a living god whose authority outranked even the emperor's.

The founders of the new religions that came into prominence after World War II were mostly Buddhist laymen and laywomen who advanced their own novel interpretations of Buddhist teachings. The postwar Japanese Constitution

guaranteed complete freedom of religion, providing these Buddhist offshoots the social space in which to grow. These groups emphasized earthly prosperity based on the ritual of ancestor worship (see ANCESTRAL PRACTICES). Soka Gakkai, one of the most successful of these movements, claims over ten million adherents and exerts considerable political influence.

Japan was undergoing rapid modernization during the first two stages. Japanese society faced significant changes in social values and morés. The new religions addressed the very real concerns of poverty, disease, and social unrest with practical and tangible answers. In the third stage, beginning about 1970, Japanese culture expressed a new fascination with mystical and occult phenomena. Some profound transformations in Japanese society led to these new religious quests.

By 1980 Japan had emerged as a postindustrial society characterized by the revolution in information technology. As the rapid economic growth of the postwar era began to slow down people began to discover that simple acquisition of material goods did not satisfy. Their country having achieved the goal of becoming an economic superpower, the Japanese people found they had no clear purpose in life. In an effort to fill the spiritual vacuum many people began to experiment with YOGA, mystical meditation, and the OCCULT. Furthermore, the intense pressures faced by young people as well as adults fostered widespread disillusionment with life. A rigorous and highly competitive educational system, with little sympathy for those less gifted, often left students emotionally spent and empty. Japan's "economic miracle" had been achieved at tremendous cost, as company employees had to spend long hours on the job, usually at the expense of their families and their own health. These conditions produced deep frustrations for everyone—for the men who become known as "workaholic," their wives who were often left alone to raise the family, and the children who tried to cope with new family structures as well as school pressures. Across the social spectrum, then, there was a widespread search for meaning and fulfillment.

The religious movements of this third stage, such as Agonshu, AUM Shinrikyo, and Shuukyō Mahikari Kyodan, tried to fill this spiritual void. Many of these groups combine mystical experience, occult practice, and a pseudoscientific perspective. The most famous movement, AUM Shinrikyo, was founded in 1984 by Shoko Asahara, who imitated the style of a Tibetan guru and attracted many young people with his unique mixture of meditation, mystical experience, and utopian eschatology. In accordance with this unusual eschatology, in March 1995 cult members diffused highly toxic sarin gas into the subways

Jew, Judaism

of Tokyo, killing twelve people and injuring six thousand.

Unfortunately the Christian church in Japan has not been particularly effective either in responding to the widespread frustration and sense of spiritual emptiness in contemporary Japanese society or in reaching those involved in new religious movements. Japanese Christians must develop a deeper understanding of Japan's particular social context and its own religious traditions, which are quite different from those of the West.

HISAKAZU INAGAKI

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Jew, Judaism. Judaism, the religion of the Jewish people, includes the totality of Jewish life and thought. As a religious civilization Judaism embraces the historic and cultural experience of the Jewish community from earliest times to the present. Judaism has significantly influenced the formation of both Christianity and Islam.

The terms "Hebrew," "Israelite," and "Jew" come from the Jewish Scriptures, which Christians read as the Old Testament. God calls the first Jew, Abraham, promising him offspring, land, and blessing (Gen. 12:1–3; see ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). This covenant has universal significance for the nations, and particular relevance to Abraham's physical descendants. Under Moses, the Hebrews were redeemed from slavery in Egypt and called into a covenant relationship at Sinai that embraced personal and social ethics as a reflection of their spiritual relationship with Yahweh. The election of Israel has a missionary dimension in that Israel is called to be a priestly people and a light to the nations as she bears witness to God.

Biblical Israel's identity developed in reaction to the idolatry and polytheism of her neighbors. Yet the history of the Jewish people shows how failure to live according to the covenant led to destruction and the loss of the ten northern tribes (722 B.C.). Judah, the remaining tribe, gave its name to the southern kingdom. After the exile (586 B.C.) the term "Jew" (*Yehudi*) referred to subjects of the Babylonian/Persian province of Judah. Judaism survived in exile and restoration by becoming a religion of the book, the Torah, a concept wider than that of "law," with a more general sense of "revelation" and "instruction." Transmission and application of the Torah, especially as found in Pentateuch, were reinforced by the development of the synagogue as an institution for prayer, study, and community life.

By the time of Jesus the Jewish people had fragmented into a variety of groups (Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes), with a majority living outside the land of Israel. After the destruction of the temple (A.D. 70) the successors of the Pharisees, the rabbis, had a normative influence on the development of later belief and practice. They codified the laws of the Pentateuch into the Mishnah ("repetition," c. A.D. 200) and reformulated the religion without direct need of temple, land, or sacrifice. The term "Judaism" (*ioudaismos*) signifies the self-definition of Jewish groups in their struggle against the influence of Hellenism.

In the period of rabbinic Judaism (A.D. 200–500) Judaism became a religion of the dual Torah, the written and oral law, culminating in the completion (c. A.D. 500) of the Talmud ("teaching"), an extended commentary and discussion of the laws (*halachah*). The sages distanced the religion from that of the Jewish Christian sects (Ebionites, Nazarenes) by inserting the *Birkat Haminim* ("Blessing of Heretics") into the synagogue liturgy (c. A.D. 110), forcing Jewish Christians to identify themselves or withdraw.

In the medieval period the Jewish people developed strategies for survival in the frequently hostile environments of Islam and Christianity (the CRUSADES). Attempts at conversion led to public disputations over messianic prophecies, such as that between Nachmanides and Paulo Christiani in Spain (1263). Such encounters were often held under duress, and with an agenda of forced conversion. Jewish mysticism (*Kabbalah*) thrived, with a resurgence of messianic expectation (Shabbetai Zevi 1665).

In the period of emancipation (1700–1900) rationalism and humanism enabled Jews who came out of the ghettos to be actively involved in European society. Thinkers such as Spinoza, Lessing, Marx, Freud, and Einstein, often influenced by their Jewish backgrounds, made significant contributions to secular knowledge. Others distanced themselves in ultraorthodoxy (Hasidism). Reform and Liberal Judaism developed alternative patterns of liturgy, belief, and lifestyle. Patterns of emigration at the beginning of the twentieth century led to increased assimilation. ZIONISM, a secular nationalism with religious aspects, was motivated by European and Russian anti-Semitism. It became a viable project that resulted in the formation of the state of Israel (1948). Eligibility for citizenship in Israel has been challenged in a number of cases of Jewish believers in Jesus, giving rise in a secular context to the traditional "Who is a Jew?" question.

More than anything else Zionism has provided an antidote for the effects of anti-Semitism (Nazism) and the trauma of the Holocaust. However, the Jewish community today is characterized as

much by “post-Holocaust disillusionment” as by a vibrant faith in the God of Israel. From a Christian perspective the creation of the state of Israel (1948) renewed the eschatological hopes of many premillennialists, and the renewed use of Hebrew as a spoken language provided new impetus for literature production and the development of worship resources.

Theology. While Judaism has always avoided credal formulation, stressing orthopraxy over orthodoxy, the ethical and religious values of Judaism can be summarized in the Ten Commandments and the Thirteen Principles of Faith of Maimonides (1135–1204), which gave Judaism a credal form in the “Thirteen articles of faith,” combining a biblical theism with Aristotelian philosophy. The identity markers of Sabbath, circumcision, and the food laws (*kashrut*) have continued to be important distinctives of the Jewish people, as have celebration of the Jewish festivals, especially Passover and the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). In recent years women have taken a more active role, with the ordination of women rabbis in the Reform and Liberal synagogues, but the traditional model of the woman’s role is still the most common.

Judaism revolves around the core themes of God, Israel, and the Torah, as summarized in the *Shema*, the confession of faith of Deuteronomy 6:4. A further central topic is that of the land, *Eretz Israel*. Belief in the coming of the Messiah, while one of Maimonides’ principles, is interpreted in various ways, but generally with the conclusion that Jesus was not the Messiah because he failed to fulfill the required messianic prophecies, though it may be argued that the concept of the Messiah was redefined by Judaism to specifically rule out the radically new formulation of the messianic program given by Jesus. The additional social cost of becoming a Christian has prevented many Jewish people from accepting Jesus with a willing heart. Memories of the medieval forced conversions (Inquisition) make it especially painful for Jewish people to think of “betraying their people” through conversion.

Mission. From its beginnings Christianity has defined itself and its mission in response to its Jewish origins, in proclamation of its Jewish Messiah, Jesus. In the patristic and medieval periods, debates between Jews and Christians on the messianic prophecies were frequent, but they often degenerated into polemics fed by the anti-Judaism (loosely referred to as “anti-Semitism”) derived from a misreading of the New Testament and fed by the institutional aims of the church. With lamentably few exceptions the Jewish people were despised, rejected, and persecuted by the church, and the “teaching of contempt,” the idea that the suffering of the Jews is due to their rejection of Jesus, has continued to

feed both religious and secular forms of racial prejudice.

In the light of this some Christians have renounced the call to evangelism, seeing their mission to Israel today as one of support and reconciliation, with DIALOGUE rather than evangelism as the method (*see also* JEWISH MISSIONS). Following the proposal of Franz Rosenzweig that Jesus brought the new covenant for Gentiles (non-Jews) but that Jewish people already have a revelation of God in the Torah, some have adopted a TWO-COVENANT THEORY with a necessary redefinition of Christology, seeing the uniqueness of Christ as an anti-Semitic formulation untenable by Christianity today.

Despite this an increasing number of Jewish people have become believers in Jesus in recent years. Jewish attitudes to Jesus have changed from antipathy to a desire for a “Jewish reclamation of Jesus,” a significant factor in the increasing understanding of the Jewish context of the New Testament and Jesus himself. Also, the efforts at CONTEXTUALIZATION of the gospel have seen much fruit, as the growing number of messianic synagogues and organizations like Jews for Jesus have successfully challenged the notion that you cannot be Jewish and believe in Jesus. The network of mission agencies and others involved in Jewish evangelism has been strengthened by the work of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). Today, perhaps more than at any time in the past two thousand years, it can be said that Jewish people are coming to know their Messiah.

RICHARD S. HARVEY

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Jewish Missions. Christians endeavor to bring Jews to faith in Christ. The apostles first proclaimed the messiahship of Jesus to their own Jewish people. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, evangelized in the synagogues first in each city on his itinerary. As the number of Gentile Christians grew, the Jewishness of Jesus and the gospel was ignored by the church or transformed so that no one could recognize the Jewish nature of Christianity. There arose a common teaching that the Jews were rejected by God and the church alone was the heir to all the covenant promises. Despite the hostile climate, some Jews continued to find their way to Christ in all ages.

The medieval disputations cannot properly be called “missions.” Though arguments from Old Testament messianic passages were presented that are still used in Jewish apologetics to this day, much of the case presented by the Chris-

Latin American New Religious Movements

tians was to deny the validity of the Jews as the chosen people of God.

The first period of modern Jewish missions was from 1790 to 1914. Beginning with the Pietists of eighteenth-century Germany, there was a considerable amount of interest in Jewish missions in the Protestant church. Jewish mission organizations were established in the Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches, as well as through independent mission societies. These groups worked among the Jews of Europe and (what was then called) Palestine. By the end of the nineteenth century, American Jewish missions came into their own.

The distinctives of Jewish missions in this first period were: (1) Jewish missions were regarded in the church as a valid endeavor; (2) the method of outreach was through literature distribution, reading rooms, door-to-door visitation, and converts' homes, schools, and hospitals; (3) the apologetic was based on Old Testament prophecy and sometimes employed rabbinic literature, but little actual contextualization took place.

Two key changes took place in Jewish missions in the twentieth century. First, between the two World Wars and increasingly after the Holocaust, a weakening of evangelical theology led many denominations to replace the concept of mission with that of "dialogue." Significant exceptions were the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, the Presbyterian Church in America, and, most recently, the Southern Baptist Convention.

The second change was in the approach of Jewish missions. Jewish people in the Western nations were no longer poor immigrants nor were they mostly religious. But not until 1970 did Jewish missions change accordingly. Moishe Rosen, who went on to found the Jews for Jesus organization, pioneered a new methodology that included (1) the use of contemporary literature oriented to the secular Jewish person; (2) greater visibility and boldness in approach; (3) a heightened contextualization in outreach as Jewish Christians expressed their faith in a Jewish frame of reference.

In response, countermissionary organizations were formed, most notably Jews for Judaism. Though their successes in winning Jews away from Christ were few, they succeeded in creating a climate of hostility toward Jewish missions and messianic Jews. Nevertheless, their efforts for the most part helped focus attention on the issue.

The heart of Jewish missions remains the example and teaching of the New Testament. This core is best encapsulated by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:16 and Romans 9–11. Since 1970, Jewish people have been coming to Christ in record numbers. Today it is estimated that between 0.5 percent and one percent of Jewish people are Christians. Recent happenings of

note include the indigenous work being done in Israel by Jewish believers and increased access to Russian Jews with many opportunities to tell the gospel.

RICH ROBINSON

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Latin American New Religious Movements.

Across Latin America widely diverse religious groups have proliferated over the past century. In addition to the significant growth of evangelical and Pentecostal forms of Christianity, there has also been substantial non-Christian or syncretistic religious renewal in three forms: (1) the resurgence in popularity of indigenous religions, (2) the incursion of North American cults into Latin contexts (e.g., MORMONS and JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES), and (3) the rise of syncretistic spiritualist groups. It is the final form which is most important in terms of NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS in Latin America, encompassing the greatest number of people and ranging from Afro-Cuban Akabua and Santería to Brazilian KARDECISM and Umbanda. There are parallel movements in the Caribbean such as Trinidadian Shango, Haitian Voodoo (or vodun), and Jamaican Rastafarianism (see CARIBBEAN NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS). Typical of each is the amalgamation of beliefs and practices from indigenous American, African, and European spiritistic belief systems.

The African Influence. Though pervasive among the spiritistic groups, in many cases the African influence on Latin American religion is subtle and African rites and symbols are usually combined with other belief systems. The disruption brought about by the slave trade, the trauma of abuse, and the lack of written religious doctrinal systems resulted in many of the African populations dislocated into Latin contexts borrowing from other cultures and adding new religious practices as a means of dealing with their overwhelming and tragic circumstances. So it comes as no surprise that in the new world, both Christian (Protestant and Roman Catholic) and indigenous American religious practices would to varying degrees be amalgamated with their own, seen in such systems as Kardecism and Santería and the pervasiveness of mediums, shamans, and priests across the various groups.

On a country by country basis, by far the greatest impact of African religion is found in Brazil. The earliest Afro-Brazilian movements to be identified were the Candomblé in the northeast and the Macumba in the southeast. More recently groups known as Xangô, Tambor de Mina, and Nagô in the northeast, and Pajelança,

Catimbó, and Batuque in the northeastern and central regions have been described. All exhibit particular cultural traditions which indicate that they started with African slaves brought into local settings.

Details of the origin and development of the Afro derived groups are typically scarce but they have some elements in common. Cultic rituals are performed at centers named after West African deities. There is typically a hierarchical structure with an "overseer" who has authority over the others. Mediums consecrated to the deities offer assistance to those who need help from the deity. This help sometimes involves POSSESSION PHENOMENA and rituals. Finally, animal sacrifices are performed in some of the groups.

Examples of Significant Spiritistic Movements. While a large number of the newer spiritistic religious movements exist in Latin America, four may be noted as examples: Abakua, Santería, Candomblé, and Umbanda (the latter two under the umbrella term Macumba). In most of these groups the members consider themselves Christians. Their syncretistic approach allows them to keep their feet planted in two worlds: Christian teachings meet their ultimate concerns, while spiritistic practices are geared to meet the daily realities of life (both achieving success and warding off disasters).

Abakua is one of four main African-derived Cuban movements (others are Santería, Mayombe, and Regla de Arara). It originated in 1834 and is named after its founder. Adherents follow patterns of secret societies, with two main branches (one of which excludes Caucasians from membership). Elements derived from Yoruban tradition include possession dances; Christian elements include crucifixes and pictures of Christ and Mary. *Abakua* influence has spread through Cuban emigration to Miami and New York City.

Santería (or *Lucumí*) originated in Cuba and has spread widely among Hispanic populations in Miami, New York, and Los Angeles. It is yet another example of the blend of Christianity and West African religions, along with recognition of a supreme being which embraces belief in a multitude of *lower* saints or spirits who interact with humans. *Santería* is well known for its emphasis on magic. Rhythmic drumming, possession phenomena, divination, and animal sacrifices characterize the religious ceremonies.

Macumba is a cover term used for two Brazilian spiritistic movements, Candomblé and Umbanda. Both can trace their origin from African slaves brought into Brazil in the 1550s. Candomblé is the largest of the Macumba cults, a secretive combination of Yoruban religious tradition, Roman Catholicism, and European culture. Patterned in fashion similar to many Latin American movements, Candomblé includes lengthy initiation rites involving animal sacrifice,

possession phenomena, and appeals to the spirits (*orixa*) for protection and retribution against one's enemies. It is especially prominent in the Brazilian state of Bahia.

Umbanda is the most widespread form of spiritism and has its largest membership in Brazil. It arose in Rio de Janeiro in the 1920s and spread quickly throughout the country. There is no official organization to join and most Umbandists consider themselves members of the Roman Catholic Church in good standing. Catholic saints are given the names of African deities so an outsider cannot know if an adherent is praying to the saint or the African deity. The movement is actively opposed by the Church.

Missiological Implications. Since many of the followers of Latin American spiritistic religious movements consider themselves Christians, reaching them for Christ is a complex process. Helping them see the implications of Christ's lordship over the spirit realm and finding new ways to deal with oppressive circumstances in life is difficult at best, and simplistic solutions which deny the power of their spiritistic practices will only continue to keep such practices underground. The sensitive missionary will work to understand the role of the spiritistic practices in meeting the social, physical, emotional, and religious needs of the adherents. As a result, he or she will attend not only to issues of ultimacy but also to the pragmatic issues of daily living in helping believers engage Christ's power over all areas of life.

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Mahayana Buddhism. Form of Buddhism dominant in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. It arose between 150 B.C. and A.D. 100 in reaction against THERAVADA BUDDHISM for its literal interpretation of Buddha's teachings as well as its narrow concern for personal salvation through strenuous monastic disciplines achievable only by a few. The term "Mahayana" (Greater Vehicle) expresses the ideal of universal enlightenment in contrast to "Hinayana" (Lesser Vehicle), which aims at salvation for oneself. Its followers thus have a deep sense of mission. Even as they seek their own salvation, they do so mainly for the sake of others. Mahayana represents a radical reinterpretation of the most fundamental concepts

Martyrdom

in Buddhism—the concepts of Buddha, Arhant, Emptiness, and Nirvana.

In Theravada, the Buddha is regarded merely as the historical human sage who attained his own enlightenment, the merits of which cannot be transferred. However, in Mahayana, the concept of the Buddha becomes that of the absolute Being embodying ultimate truth and infinite compassion. The historical Sakyamuni was thought of as nothing but one of the many earthly appearances of the transcendent Buddha. There were Buddhas before and after him. Amitabha is an example. Thus Mahayanists do believe in a divine Being, faith and devotion to whom constitutes an essential part of salvation. While Theravada emphasizes self-effort for liberation, Mahayana emphasizes the gift of merit from Buddha. Thus the idea of grace is implicit.

Equally important is the idea that Buddhahood is attainable by all. Mahayana teaches that every human person possesses the Buddha nature. With proper help, one is capable of becoming a Buddha. This leads to the development of the idea of Bodhisattva in the place of the Theravada Arhant. An *arhant* is “the worthy one” who has achieved enlightenment for himself or herself, ready to be released from the cycle of rebirth to enter into *nirvana*. A Bodhisattva has likewise achieved liberation from rebirths, has even achieved transcendence, but puts off *nirvana* in order to remain in the world for the sake of delivering others. The merits of his or her virtues and wisdom can be transferred. A Bodhisattva has to go through ten stages of purification to become a Buddha. However, once the seventh stage is reached, he or she has already assumed a true Buddha nature. Progress to Buddhahood is then irreversible and sacrificial benevolence for others is spontaneous. A Bodhisattva may be regarded as the agent of salvation to those who have faith in him or her. This explains the rise of the cult of various Bodhisattvas. The cult of Avalokitesvara (“Kuan-yin” for the Chinese, and “Kannon” for the Japanese) is a good example. Self-reliance for salvation in Theravada is thus transformed into salvation through faith in a transcendent agent in the Mahayana.

Mahayanists on the one hand regard all empirical phenomena, including their constitutive elements, as void and empty; on the other, however, they affirm the reality of the indescribable Absolute. Only the Absolute is real, all empirical entities are illusions. The Madyamika School (founded by Nagarjuna, circa A.D. 15–250) follows the Middle Way. They first expose the “selfhood” of all things as void or “empty.” All phenomenal entities are like shadows without substance of their own. There is no coming into being or disappearing, no differentiation or identification. However, they do not therefore affirm absolute nothingness. They affirm the reality of

the Absolute. The Yogacara School (founded by the brothers Asanga and Vasubandu in the fifth century A.D.) affirms the reality of the Absolute Mind. Only Consciousness is real. All appearances of external reality are nothing but false imaginations of the mind. All of these can be eradicated only by rigorous meditation. For both schools, *nirvana* is therefore complete identification with the Absolute. Once this is achieved, one sees that the only reality is the Absolute; all the rest is revealed to be nonreality. Since the Absolute is indescribable, true knowledge is therefore unutterable. All knowledge that can be conceptualized and expressed must also be empty. Even the principle of *sunyata* (emptiness) itself is empty. Nonattachment is the ultimate principle for salvation.

Buddhism spread to China in the first century A.D. It first encountered stiff resistance. For more than two centuries, Buddhism remained foreign. Kumarajiva (A.D. 344–413) and his followers made significant contributions in the indigenization of Mahayana Buddhism in China. They used the best literary style and the most prominent philosophical ideas of the time for the propagation of Buddhism. Translation of carefully selected Buddhist texts proved to be highly significant. Mahayana Buddhism took on a distinctively Chinese character and evolved into several schools such as the T’ien Tai, Hua-yuen, Pure Land, and Ch’an. Taoist influence is quite evident. Buddhism was introduced into Japan from China, and it began to prosper there in the seventh century A.D. PURE LAND BUDDHISM and ZEN BUDDHISM became most prominent. Whether in China or Japan, it is the practical aspects of Buddhism that seem to be most emphasized.

CARVER YU

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Martyrdom. The role of martyrdom in the expansion of the church is the common thread that links the church of all ages with its suffering Savior. Tertullian, third-century leader in the church of North Africa, wrote to his Roman governors in his *Apology*, “As often as you mow us down, the more numerous we become. The blood of the Christians is seed.” But martyrdom is not unique to Christianity. People have sacrificed their lives throughout the ages for a variety of reasons. To define the distinctive meaning of Christian martyrdom requires investigation of the Bible and church history.

Definition. The word *martyr* is an English word transliterated from its Greek equivalent (*martyrus*). It is closely associated with the word

witness as used in the Scriptures. The Old Testament Hebrew equivalent is *moed*, which is used in reference to the place where God establishes his covenant with his people.

In the New Testament, the ideas of truth and Scripture are integrated into the verb form *martyreō*. Jesus uses it to establish his witness as truth (Matt. 26:65; Mark 14:63; Luke 22:71). John the Baptist links Jesus, truth, and Scripture. Luke speaks of witness to the whole world (Acts 1:8).

The word *martyr* also extends its meaning to include Christ-like values, such as faithfulness, truth, witness, and lifestyle. Eventually, even “death-style” is subsumed. The first Christian-era martyr known is Stephen (Acts 7) who, interestingly, was put to death by “witnesses” for his witness. In Revelation 3:14, the last word is given concerning Jesus Christ who is “the faithful and true witness.” The word does away with any distinction of what a true believer might live and die for. Death does not stop the witness given. It merely adds an exclamation point of truth, faithfulness, and love for the glory of God. It is the supreme witnessing act. Neither personal gain nor personal opinion provides the motive for such a death.

Church Growth and Martyrdom. Tertullian also wrote, “For who, when he sees our obstinacy is not stirred up to find its cause? Who, when he has inquired, does not then join our Faith? And who, when he has joined us, does not desire to suffer, that he may gain the whole grace of God?” Current estimates are that roughly 150,000 Christians are martyred each year, down from a peak of 330,000 prior to the demise of communist world powers. Some project that the numbers will increase to 600,000 by A.D. 2025, given current trends in human rights abuses and growth of militant religious systems.

Those inflicting contemporary Christian martyrdom include political regimes with counter-Christian agendas (e.g., official atheistic powers, such as China and the former Soviet Union); sociopolitical regimes enforcing religious restrictions (e.g., Egypt, Sudan); ethnic tribal regimes bent on eliminating minorities (e.g., Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi) and religious regimes (e.g., Muslim countries in which *Sharia* is the official legal system).

Conclusion. Martyrdom will continue to be associated with the progress of gospel proclamation until the KINGDOM OF GOD is established. Jesus said, “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). The sword was not to be used by his disciples against others, but could be expected to be used against them. Paul said, “All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffer-

ing” (2 Thess. 1:5). Finally, as Augustine wrote in *City of God*: “Despite the fiercest opposition, the terror of the greatest persecutions, Christians have held with unswerving faith to the belief that Christ has risen, that all men will rise in the age to come, and that the body will live forever. And this belief, proclaimed without fear, has yielded a harvest throughout the world, and all the more when the martyr’s blood was the seed they sowed.”

J. RAY TALLMAN

Bibliography. R. Daniel, *This Holy Seed*; S. Bergman, *Martyrs: Contemporary Writers on Modern Lives of Faith*; J. Hefley and M. Hefley, *By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century*; WCE.

Muslim Mission Work. Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, died in A.D. 632. From that point on the conflict between the world’s two largest monotheistic religions (Christianity and Islam) has raged on unabated. Each persuasion has a great commission to fulfill. Each is convinced it is the unique path to God. Each declares that truth is revealed only in its scriptures. Thus the stage is set for mutual antagonism.

Certain critical historical events have caused Muslims to be resistant to the Christian message. The CRUSADES of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a terrible violation of basic human rights. Even though these events took place hundreds of years ago, Muslims today are still angry concerning the outrages against their ancestors.

Between 1700 and 1960, colonialists from the so-called Christian West reigned over much of the Muslim world. Missionaries took advantage of friendly rulers to gain permission to preach Christianity. Muslims in these countries had no recourse to legal procedures by which to expel missionaries.

The issue of Palestine came to the fore in 1948 as the United Nations, with the stroke of a pen, mandated the new state of Israel into existence. Muslims had been living in Palestine for over thirteen hundred years. What right, they asked, did the world have to radically change the political status of their land? Jihad was their declared response.

Lastly, the antagonism between Christianity and Islam has been enhanced by the Muslims’ perception of Christians as pig eaters, wine drinkers, and perpetual adulterers. Western media have presented a powerful depiction of moral depravity in countries where most of the citizens would declare themselves to be Christians.

Muslims do not generally make a distinction between nominal Christians and practicing Christians. They look upon the 1.8 billion as one community. Accordingly, Christians are to be indicted as a whole for all of the reasons we have listed. Thus the task of Muslim evangelism is

Myth, Mythology

made exceedingly difficult, quite apart from theological distinctives.

Historically, Christian outreaches among Muslims made little impact prior to the mid-1960s. A few names stand out as exceptions; RAYMOND LULL (c. 1235–1315); HENRY MARTYN (1781–1812); and SAMUEL ZWEMER (1867–1952). But even these giants of faith failed to see large numbers of Muslims come to Christian belief through their evangelistic efforts.

Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population (in excess of 170 million), has produced the greatest number of converts to Christianity. In the 1960s, as a result of an uprising against communism, hundreds of thousands of Muslims embraced Christianity. Even today there continues to be a significant rate of conversion, especially on the island of Java. Other countries where there have been large numbers of converts to Christianity include Bangladesh and Ethiopia. Overall, however, there are few conversions to Christianity. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Algeria, and Afghanistan have produced but a small number of converts.

Among the evangelical missions emphasizing outreach among Muslims are the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Frontiers, TEAM, SIM, and Interserve. Frontiers is unique in that the mission force of five hundred adults is totally focused on Muslim evangelism. Almost all of their personnel are engaged in tentmaker ministries that allow them opportunity for personal witness.

The Samuel Zwemer Institute was founded in 1978 by Don McCurry. This small organization has produced a number of research projects related to the world of Islam. Fuller Theological Seminary offers the master's and Ph.D. degrees in Muslim studies. Columbia International University inaugurated a master's program in Islamicism in 1996. Other Bible colleges and seminaries offer specialized courses on Islam. International Missions, Inc., administers a practical-cum-academic summer program geared to Muslim outreach.

One of the more innovative departures from traditional evangelistic methodology was pioneered by International Christian Fellowship (ICF), which merged with SIM in 1989. In the mid-1970s an ICF team of twenty-seven missionaries from six nations introduced a contextualized style of Muslim evangelism in Bangladesh. Their threefold goal was to (1) see a large number of Muslims accept Christ, (2) disciple these believers within their social and cultural context, and (3) minimize financial assistance to the converts. The approach included wearing local Muslim-style clothing, living in simple rented accommodations, adopting certain Muslim vocabulary, following a general pattern of Islamic worship styles, writing and designing attractive literature that would be appreciated and easily understood

by the target Muslim community, initially seeking to win male heads of families to Christ, avoiding ministries that required high-profile institutions, and engaging in discipleship of new believers who would be encouraged to remain within their own community. This style of outreach has produced thousands of Muslim converts to Christianity in Bangladesh. Various missions and church bodies working both in Bangladesh and in other Muslim countries have incorporated segments of this methodology into their evangelistic strategy. Critics have averred that such contextualization is extremely vulnerable to syncretism. Most advocates of the new paradigm would agree and have taken steps to minimize this possibility.

Islamic shari'a law has been partially implemented in a number of Muslim countries. This legal system strongly opposes conversion from Islam to Christianity. In certain nations converts have been sentenced to death. This strict interpretation of shari'a law generates fear and inhibits all but the most courageous from any serious investigation of Christian claims to truth.

Arab oil money has fueled a new ethos of excitement and optimism within the Muslim world. New mosques are being built in many countries. Muslim missionaries from Egypt and Pakistan can be found in remote villages of Asia. Jobs are being offered to poor Christians who are willing to convert to Islam. Muslim organizations are surfacing in much of the Two-Thirds World. Their goal is to propagate Islam while assisting the poor. Muslim spokespersons have attributed their recent successes in evangelizing to their having learned the techniques that Christians have been using for decades.

Those dedicated to Muslim outreach face many challenges in the contemporary world. Yet more Muslims have probably turned to Christ in the past three decades than in any similar period throughout all of history.

PHIL PARSHALL

Bibliography. N. L. Geisler and A. Saleeb, *Answering Islam*; G. Livingstone, *Planting Churches in Muslim Cities*; D. M. McCurry, ed., *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*; B. Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam*; P. Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*; J. D. Woodberry, ed., *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*.

Myth, Mythology. The word "myth" in popular parlance connotes fiction or untruth. However, for the majority of the world's people, just as for the people of biblical times, mythology acts as a root metaphor for reality. While not always based on fact as seen from a rationalist viewpoint, myth is truth from the perspective of people for whom it establishes identity—it is their scripture.

Every society has myths at some level: epics that proclaim cosmic origins; folklore depicting family, cultural or national events, and heroes; etiological stories to explain how some things came to be; and fairy tales that entertain while passing moral value to the next generation. Mythology can serve as a people's history and a rationale for their beliefs and values. It provides intellectual edification by communicating particular cultural lessons or knowledge. Mythology may also be used to validate appropriate behavior or to chastise inappropriate behavior. Passed down through the generations as oral literature or ritual drama, myth provides a sense of identity and place. The message may be encased in a series of stories organized to present a moral (cultural objectives and values) in acceptable forms.

If missionaries understand a people's mythology, they can present biblical themes in a similar style that will catch people's attention and relate God's wisdom to daily living. A people's acquaintance with epic could be used to introduce Genesis: similarly, a variety of mythic forms offer parallels to the parables of Jesus. Just as people respond to the truth of myth, they may come to faith in God who approaches human beings in the context of their myth.

R. DANIEL SHAW

Bibliography. A. Dunes, *The Study of Folklore*; B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*; R. D. Shaw, *Practical Anthropology* 19 (1972): 129–32.

Neopagan, Neopaganism. The term “neopagan” is attributed to Tim Zell, founder of the Church of All Worlds, who coined it to refer to all worshipers of the Mother Goddess who were not part of the Wicca movement. Followers of the neopagan tradition tend to follow the basic rituals developed by Gerald Gardner, but have added a substantial degree of variety and diversity, depending on their emphasis. Some pagan groups focus on particular cultural religious traditions, such as Celtic, Druidic, Egyptian, or Norse rituals and practices.

Neopagans worship the Great Mother Goddess, who along with her consort the Horned God (Pan), represent the male and female principles basic to life. Through the use of magic neopagans seek to draw on the cosmic powers that underlie the universe in their own personal quest for blessing, success, fertility, and harmony. Worshipers are generally organized into small autonomous groups, often called “covens.” Worshipers meet semimonthly at new and full moons to worship the Great Mother Goddess and to practice their magic. They generally observe eight major solar festivals, including Halloween (October 31), Yule (December 21), Candlemas (February 2), Spring Equinox (March 21), Beltane (April 30),

Summer Solstice (June 21), Lammas (August 1), and Fall Equinox (September 21).

DOUGLAS J. HAYWARD

Bibliography. D. Cole and E. Fitch, *A Book of Pagan Rituals*; J. G. Melton, *Magic, Witchcraft and Paganism in America, A Bibliography*; J. B. Russell, *A History of Witchcraft*.

New Age Movement. The New Age movement offers many challenges to missiology and missionary endeavors. Many in the West have rejected atheistic materialism and are openly embracing spiritual ideas and experimenting with spiritual practices that are not Christian, despite some superficial similarities to Christian terminology. Since those caught in this spiritual error must be reached with the gospel, it is imperative to understand their worldview and its weaknesses.

Sociologically, the “New Age movement” is a misnomer because it is neither a unified social movement nor an organized conspiracy, notwithstanding its common themes and emphases. Nevertheless, New Age perspectives are affecting vast segments of Western culture. The American counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s served as a cultural magnet for a wide variety of non-Christian worldviews. Experimentation with mind-altering drugs was often combined with explorations into oriental religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, various indigenous pagan traditions such as Druidism and Shamanism, and Western occult practices. Although the flamboyance of the hippie culture is largely gone, many of its animating ideas live on in the New Age movement.

In the late 1980s, many dropped the term “New Age” because of its associations with glitzy and glamorous elements—such as an occult fascination with crystals—that were not reckoned as central to the worldview. In the 1990s essentially New Age ideas are being presented as a “new spirituality,” a generic orientation to life that draws on spiritual strength in a very individualized manner. Although the influence of the New Age movement is global, it is probably the strongest in North America and the West in general (since it appeals more to post-Christian cultures than to pre-Christian situations). The new spirituality is eclectic and syncretistic; however, several common elements emerge.

New Age thinking looks to the self for spiritual power. This orientation is often mixed with a messianic and apocalyptic mood emphasizing the urgent need for massive individual and social renewal to solve the personal, social, and international problems facing the planet. As one New Age slogan puts it, “The only way out is in.” Individuals and societies can only evolve harmoniously and usher in the New Age by tapping into the power within. New Age luminary Deepak

New Religious Movements

Chopra claims in his best-selling book *The Seven Laws of Spiritual Success* (1994) that we all have unlimited potential to create wealth and happiness, once we awaken from the illusion of limitation and inadequacy. Chopra claims that we are all gods and goddesses. PANTHEISM is at the heart of the New Age; its god is an impersonal and amoral field, force, principle, power, or substance that is the one true reality. God is not respected as a personal and moral Creator who is ontologically separate from his creation.

Second, this new spirituality stresses the unity of all things (MONISM). Humans are not separated from each other, from the planet, from the universe, or from God. All is one. Chopra uses pseudoscientific terms to dub this oneness a quantum field of pure potentiality. The theme of monism unites most New Age thinking, although the emphasis on the individual's unique spiritual journey contradicts the ancient monistic Hindu teaching that individuality is nonexistent and illusory. The New Age effort to accommodate Western individualism while retaining an essential monism is deeply problematic.

A third essential New Age belief is that our consciousness must be transformed if we are to harness the power of our divinity. A number of spiritual practices, such as YOGA, visualization, MEDITATION, hypnosis, and consciousness-raising seminars, are recommended as means to the end of self-realization or God-realization, which are viewed as synonymous. The Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement, for example, has been instrumental in the West since the late 1960s in initiating millions into a Hindu form of yoga, which has been disingenuously presented as a religiously neutral self-help method. Many New Age books and seminars also promote the spiritual benefits purportedly available through contact with angels or other spiritual entities, which are understood in unbiblical terms (see Isa. 8:19–20; Col. 2:18–19; 1 John 4:1–4).

A new slant on New Age ideas comes from the culture of computer networks known as “cyberspace.” Some claim that the electronic connections achieved through the Internet form a type of mystical, unified consciousness. Visionaries speak of “technoshamanism” as an electrically enhanced tool for spiritual awareness. Timothy Leary, LSD guru of the counterculture, was influential in advancing these ideas.

Fourth, this new spirituality emphasizes a pleasant view of the afterlife, usually involving a benign view of REINCARNATION. Many accounts of near-death experiences speak of the peace and light of the afterlife where there is no hell to fear and no holy God to face. The categories of heaven and hell (Matt. 25:46) are rejected as rigid, negative, and dualistic.

Fifth, New Agers are syncretistic, which forces them to reject the exclusive and absolute claims

of Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). For them, the mystical essence of all religions is pantheistic monism. Therefore, Christ is viewed as a master or guru who taught that we could attain his status by tapping into the “Christ consciousness.” The view that he is “God’s only son” (John 3:16) is dismissed as parochial.

Sixth, since all is one and we are all divine, a sense of absolute, objective, universal, and transcendent moral authority vanishes for many New Agers. A phrase commonly heard is that “we create our own reality,” which means we are under no higher ethical standard (see Isa. 5:20).

Missiologists, missionaries, and others must develop an APOLOGETIC and an evangelistic strategy adequate to refute the New Age worldview (1 Peter 3:15–16; Jude 3). This entails subjecting pantheism, monism, OCCULTISM, reincarnation, SYNCRETISM, and RELATIVISM to exacting critiques, both logically and theologically (2 Cor. 10:3–5). Such an endeavor will expose: (1) the hollowness of an impersonal and amoral deity that cannot possibly love anyone, since it is impersonal; (2) the illogic of a monism that denies the pluralities we presuppose in everyday life; (3) the dangers of occultism and the reality of Satan and his fallen angels; (4) the lack of evidence for and the illogic of reincarnation; (5) the fact that syncretism is false, since religions make contradictory truth-claims; and (6) the errors of RELATIVISM that deny the essential and objective ethical categories of morality.

Constructively, we must set forth the cogency of the Christian worldview, particularly with respect to the uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus Christ as the one mediator between sinful humans and a holy God (1 Tim. 2:5). This will demand sound EXEGESIS (since New Agers misinterpret Scripture) and historical argumentation concerning the reliability of the Bible and its superiority to other supposed revelations about Christ. It will also involve earnest prayer for the spiritual protection, wisdom, humility, and courage required to face a very seductive and influential spiritual counterfeit (2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10–18).

DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS

Bibliography. D. K. Clark and N. L. Geisler, *Apologetics in the New Age*; D. Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age: Is There a New Religious Movement Trying to Transform Society?*; idem, *Confronting the New Age: How to Resist a Growing Religious Movement*; V. Mangalwadi, *When the New Age Gets Old*; E. Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age*; J. W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic World View Catalogue*.

New Religious Movements. The term “New Religious Movement” (NeRM) lacks precise definition but has become the term of choice among scholars in a conscious attempt to eliminate the more sensational and pejorative connotations of

“cult” or “deviant religion.” In general, the term is used to identify religious groups that adhere to a theological perspective and a structure or pattern of religious behavior that is self-consciously distinct from the dominant society. The group may be “new” in the innovative sense in which distinctly original religious visions and structures are developed in the context of the existing religious milieu (MORMONISM in the United States and BAHÁ’I in Iran). The term may also apply to mainline or marginal subgroups within established religious traditions that are imported whole into a new social and religious setting (Hare Krishnas in the United States and Mormonism in Asia).

NeRMs share a set of characteristics. The relative force of each characteristic will vary, but in general NeRMs are marked by strong charismatic leadership, clear boundary markers between members of the group and society at large that reflect and intensify the necessity of a high level of commitment, a claim to have access to or possession of Truth that is not available to anyone outside the group, and a pronounced emphasis on personal needs and experience.

While the emergence of new religions is as old as history itself, the last half of the twentieth century has been a remarkably fruitful time for the development and growth of NeRMs. This is a worldwide phenomenon and reflects the power of broad social trends characteristic of the modern age that have given rise to the rapid increase and relative success of numerous NeRMs.

Cultural globalization has enhanced the potential for the success of NeRMs in several distinct ways. Mass communication has brought the world to our doorstep, raising the level of awareness and interest in a wide range of religious traditions. Modern migration movements have placed numerous societies in direct contact with a wide range of alternative religious traditions, greatly increasing opportunities for interpersonal religious interchange. Being confronted with a Buddhist neighbor is significantly different than being confronted merely with Buddhist philosophy.

The post-World War II era has seen a marked decline in the power of established institutions to retain broad-based loyalty and commitment. Political and social institutions also reflect this change, but it has become increasingly characteristic of the modern religious landscape. This breakdown in the power of institutions is tied to the rise of individualism. Individualism acts as a two-edged sword, at once freeing persons to seek individual choices outside the constraints of social conformity while also leaving persons isolated and alone, highly responsive to the message of communal wholeness characteristic of many NeRMs.

The rise of RELATIVISM as the dominant ethical ethos of modern life, when combined with the social changes noted, helps reinforce a climate of moral and spiritual confusion. The most successful religious responses to this general climate of confusion have been a call to return to the old paths (worldwide fundamentalism) and the quest for new paths to an unknown future (NeRMs).

Beyond these generalized characteristics of the modern age, there appear to be specific social and cultural conditions that are particularly conducive to the rise of NeRMs:

- Secularization—decline of the authority and status of established religious institutions for participation in public discourse
- Generational discontinuity—the loss of confidence among youth in the ability of the values, institutions, and mores of the mature generation to meet the political, economic, social, and religious needs of the future
- Religious freedom—the lack of political and social constraint on personal religious orientation and practice

Postwar Japan is a classic case where these factors have coalesced to form a very fertile field for NeRMs. There are over 11,000 distinct Buddhist groups in Japan, the great majority formed in the postwar era (*see also* JAPANESE NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

While the twenty-first century has every potential of being most hospitable to NeRMs, the fact remains that the vast majority of NeRMs do not succeed in attracting and holding a significant following. In the United States nearly 75 percent of persons who join such movements leave within the first two years. The Mormon experience is a rare exception. Even those movements that appear to succeed remain quite marginal. In the United States the Hare Krishna never numbered more committed disciples than the average Sunday morning attendance of one large evangelical church. However, there are factors that generally mark off the more successful movements:

- A balance between continuity and tension with the dominant culture. Successful NeRMs must provide an alternative, but they cannot be too different.
- Effective charismatic leadership that balances a new vision with sufficient organizational skill.
- Strong internal relationships and clear boundary lines that mark off the group as distinct, if not unique, but do not result in complete isolation.

North American New Religious Movements

- Sufficient socialization of children that limits defections and ensures continuity.

Evangelicals generally characterize and respond to NeRMs in terms of their distance or deviation from orthodox Christian belief and practice. This theological approach is centered on an analysis of truth claims and should be motivated by a concern for the truth and for persons. It is wise and prudent for evangelical Christians to learn about the theology, practice, and methods of expansion of NeRMs and be prepared to speak the truth of the gospel of Christ in love. However, considerable caution should be exercised in linking those efforts with the secular anticlerical movement that carries a strong antireligious bias, affirms the right of the state to control religion, and is not constrained by Christian ethical concerns.

JAMES D. CHANCELLOR

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North American New Religious Movements.

From the time of the earliest English settlements, North America has had two religious personalities. The primary personality has been broadly Christian, with the clear dominance of Protestant Christianity. The alter ego has been one of remarkable religious diversity, the home of the free and the innovative. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (NeRMS) have been part of the American character from the beginning. However, the last half of the twentieth century has been particularly rich in number and variety of NeRMS. The Institute for the Study of American Religion identifies 1,667 different religious groups in North America, of which 836 are classified as “unconventional.” Of these nonconventional movements, nearly 500 arose after 1950. These figures do not include movements not defined as religious, such as *est* and primal therapy, nor does it include the many groups that are too small or secretive to be studied. Thus, 1,500 to 2,000 is a reasonable estimate of the number of NeRMS in North America.

The term “NeRMS” lacks precise definition. The differences among NeRMS in North America are enormous and it cannot be assumed that a characteristic of one movement applies to others. However, these movements share at some level most, if not all, of the following general characteristics. NeRMS are innovative in doctrine, worldview, forms of religious expression, and social arrangements. They tend toward an emphasis upon subjective experience and focus upon meeting personal needs. NeRMS are characterized by strong charismatic leadership; the group attributes to the leader the capacity for extraordinary insight, revelation, and authority.

NeRMS tend to be separatistic, aiming for not only a different vision of society but a different model for society. They tend to be more holistic than conventional religious bodies, with higher levels of conformity and commitment.

NeRMS in North America fall into three broad categories: the revival of ancient religious traditions, variations on traditional Christian themes, and movements flowing out of the more established religious traditions of the non-Christian world. Many movements represent a synthesis across these category lines.

Many NeRMS that fall within the broad definition of “NEW AGE” are not at all new, but rather represent a modern revival of ancient and folk religious traditions. ASTROLOGY, one of the oldest and perhaps the most universal human religious expressions, plays a major role in most of these groups. Gnosticism, or the belief that humans are capable of direct and transcendental knowledge of God through esoteric ritualism or symbolic interpretation of Scripture, undergirds the worldview of many NeRMS. NEO-PAGANISM, the calling back to life of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and European deities, is a growing phenomenon in North America. Some persons heavily invested in the modern feminist and ecological movements have found a religious home in the neo-pagan revival.

Many NeRMS in North America grow directly out of more conventional Christianity. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of powerful forces swept through American Protestantism—adventism, the Holiness Movement, and Pentecostalism. These forces certainly do not constitute a new religious movement, but when one or more became highly intensified, particularly under strong charismatic leadership, groups emerged that are clearly and self-consciously outside the broad American Protestant tradition. Branhamism, JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES, and The World Wide Church of God are classic examples of this form of NeRM. In addition, there are a number of groups that began as a variant of the Christian tradition, but have so synthesized ancient or folk traditions that the “Christian” aspect is little more than an overlay.

The third broad category of NeRMS consists of groups that reflect the flow of established religions into North America. The religious heritage of India has been an influential component of the New Age phenomenon (*see also* HINDU NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS). Transcendental Meditation, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna), and ZEN BUDDHISM are the most widely known of these movements, although there are many others with origins in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. While few movements have drawn significant numbers of indigenous Americans as committed disciples, their influence on the overall religious ethos of North America is growing in significance. The

UNIFICATION CHURCH is especially significant. It has roots in Protestant Christianity, introduced into Korea in the nineteenth century. The founder, Sun Myung Moon (b. 1920), combined elements of Christianity with Korean folk shamanism and a Taoist worldview. (Such synthesis is not unusual in NeRMS. There are thousands of such movements in Africa alone; *see also* AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCH MOVEMENT.) However, in the 1970s Moon came to North America and introduced his vision as both a NeRM and the final stage in the evolution of Christianity.

Perhaps the most significant issue facing evangelical Christians is not the “what” but the “why” of NeRMS. Scholarly research has developed a general profile of the convert to a NeRM. The greater number of converts are young, usually in their late teens or early twenties. Most are isolated and unattached. The vast majority of converts are single, geographically disconnected from family and located in a new or unfriendly environment. With the exception of ethnically centered groups (BLACK MUSLIMS, SANTERIA), most converts are from middle-class or upper-middle-class families and are better educated than the general population. Converts generally have a “seeking spirit” but have experienced alienation from family, friends, or society as a whole. Many converts experienced alienation and disillusionment with conventional American religion. They are on a quest for meaning and value and the quest has not been satisfied by mainstream American Christianity. The growth of NeRMS is not simply the result of failure in the church, but it may be more productive to view NeRMS less as a threat and more as a challenge.

A number of factors should be borne in mind when dealing with someone involved in a NeRM. In North America adults enjoy religious freedom. Forcible “deprogramming” is illegal, unethical, based upon faulty assumptions about “mind control,” and is much more likely to do harm than good. It is indisputable that the vast majority of converts leave NeRMS voluntarily and few suffer long-term damage or disabilities. While it is important to learn all one can about a particular movement, one should treat with skepticism information from the movement itself or from secular anti-cult organizations. It is important to maintain contact with the person involved in the NeRM, fostering a good relationship of trust, and manifesting love and care for the convert.

JAMES D. CHANCELLOR

Bibliography. R. Ellwood and H. Partin, eds., *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*; R. Kyle, *The Religious Fringe: A History of Alternative Religions in America*; R. A. Tucker, *Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement*.

Occultist, Occultism. The SHAMAN and other practitioners of the occult (the term comes from the Latin for “hidden” or “concealed”) rely on secret techniques to gain access to the supernatural realm and obtain knowledge or power. Occult practices include ASTROLOGY, DIVINATION, reliance on charms or fetishes, fortune telling (tarot cards, tea leaf reading, Ouija board, palm reading), MAGIC, numerology (attaching special significance to numbers), automatic writing (and speaking), seances, witchcraft (*see* WICCA), and so on. The practices are as varied as the cultures in which they are found.

Practitioners typically separate what they consider good practices (white magic) from evil ones (black magic or SORCERY). Biblically, the two are inextricably intertwined, since the same techniques that are used for one may be used for the other. Occultic practices and practitioners of all types are judged harshly in the Bible (Deut. 18:9–14). Such practices are demonic in origin, however harmless they may appear to be on the surface, and are forbidden to the Christian.

Often in history people came to faith when missionaries successfully challenged the occult practitioners with the power of God (*see* POWER ENCOUNTER). At the same time the missionary must be aware not just of the practices but of the purposes they serve within the culture. For example, people rely on the occult for protection from spirits, sorcerers, evil people, bad luck, and so on. Those who come to Christ and give up occult protection need appropriate Christian substitutes to help them face their fears. Without such substitutes, they may return to the occult. Those who fear spirits or sorcerers need to know how to use prayer to exercise the authority they have in Christ. Those who fear bad luck need to understand God’s sovereign and loving control over the universe. Creative application of the truths of God to the needs of the people is an important component of missionary work among occultists.

A. SCOTT MOREAU

Bibliography. D. Burnett, *Unearthly Powers*; R. Enroth, *NTCERK*, pp. 606–7; G. Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*.

Persecution. Suffering experienced by those whose opinion or belief is being attacked by another group. For the first Christians who came from a Jewish heritage, SUFFERING and persecution were both part of their lot. Jews living under Roman rule could expect to be persecuted if they chose to follow Jesus (e.g., Matt. 5:10–12; 10:23; Luke 21:12; John 15:20).

The Jews as a people had been persecuted for centuries prior to Christ’s birth. Christians who came out of Judaism still faced hostility from Rome. In addition, at least until A.D. 70, they

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faced persecution from the Jewish leaders. Such persecutions often had the opposite of the intended effect. The persecution of the church after Stephen's MARTYRDOM did not stop Christianity but spread the gospel beyond the confines of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Paul's conversion resulted from the Damascus road encounter with Jesus while he was traveling under Jewish authority to persecute the church in Damascus (Acts 9:1–31). In testimony and correspondence Paul frequently referred to his persecuting work (Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13). James was martyred by Herod, and when the populace approved he had Peter arrested for the same purpose (Acts 12:1–11). Through God's intervention, the tables were turned and Herod lost his life, while Peter escaped and was able to continue sharing his faith. Jewish persecution of Paul for his evangelistic work led to his arrest and eventual transport to Rome under guard. In this, however, the Jews living in Rome as well as Paul's escorts and his guard detail all had the chance to hear the gospel (Acts 28:17–30; Phil. 1:12–14). Persecution, though violent and intended to shut down the church, often had the opposite effect.

The Roman rulers initially tolerated Christians as a subject within Judaism, but Nero's scapegoating of them after the A.D. 64 fire in Rome started a pattern of persecution which continued for almost 250 years. With varying intensity, Christians were perceived as a threat to the state. Though not consistently applied throughout the Roman Empire, and with periods of hostility followed by temporary reprieves, the reality of Christianity's illegality as a religion remained part of the Christian experience until the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313) officially legalized Christianity in the empire. Though two relatively brief periods of persecution followed (under Licinius in 322–23 and Julian in 361–63), official toleration of Christianity across the Roman Empire was assured.

Contemporary Situation. While it is true that Christians have over the course of history persecuted others (e.g., Muslims during the CRUSADES; Jews during the Middle Ages and the modern era), including other Christians (e.g., the Donatists, Anabaptists, Puritans, and Huguenots), by and large it is accurate to say that Christians have been the recipients of hostility. Far from being only a thing of the past, persecution today continues to be a reality faced by many Christians, particularly those in militant religious states. It is estimated that more Christians have lost their lives through persecution in this century than all other centuries combined, though generally there has been little publicity of this in the secular press of free countries. David Barrett estimates that some 160,000 Christians were martyred in 1996 simply because they were Christians. Contemporary researchers have

begun to speak out on behalf of the persecuted (e.g., Shea and Marshall), noting that the Western church and Western governments have been largely silent in the face of an increasingly well-documented reality.

A number of mission organizations have also been founded to investigate, publicize, and advocate on behalf of those at risk, including Brother's Keeper, Christian Solidarity International, International Christian Concern, and Voice of the Martyrs. Additionally, existing agencies are incorporating departments which emphasize the persecuted church, including Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Open Doors, and World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Liberty Commission. The National Association of Evangelicals (U.S.) published a statement of conscience in 1996 reflecting "deep concern for the religious freedom of fellow believers, as well as people of every faith" and many agencies and churches have joined the WEF-sponsored International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Missionary Implications. With the recent increase in interest in reaching the unreached, persecution of missionaries will likely grow rather than shrink in the coming decades, simply because so many of the unreached live under religious or political ideologies that suppress the spread of the Christian message. Additionally, Christians are often perceived as part of the West in general, and the official anti-Western tenor in these countries will exacerbate the potential problems.

Almost no missiological training in the West offered today will help future missionaries training face persecution, though it appears that house seminaries in China prepare their future pastors for interrogation. Missionaries, especially those going into at-risk situations, would benefit from realistic preparation for the possibilities they may face. In addition, having been trained, they may also be more able to offer both preparation and aid to indigenous Christians who suffer because of a choice to follow Christ in a hostile environment.

A. SCOTT MOREAU

Bibliography. G. W. Bromiley, *ISBE Revised*, 3:771–74; W. H. C. Frend, *ER* 11:247–56; P. Marshall, *IBMR* 22:1 (January 1998): 1–8; idem, *Their Blood Cries Out*; E. M. B. Green, *NBD*, pp. 913–14; H. Schlossberg, *A Fragrance of Oppression*; N. Shea, *In the Lion's Den*.

Phenomenology of Religion. In broad terms phenomenology (from the Greek, *phainomenon*, "that which appears" or "that which shows itself") is the study of "phenomena," or the ways in which "appearances" manifest themselves to human consciousness. Phenomenology of reli-

gion is the study of religious phenomena. It is helpful to distinguish phenomenology as a distinctive philosophical movement and methodology from phenomenology of religion, although the latter has been to some extent influenced by the former.

Philosophical Phenomenology. The term “phenomenology” was used as early as 1764 by J. H. Lambert, and it appears in the philosophical works of I. Kant (d. 1804) and G. W. F. Hegel (d. 1831). But its more modern meaning comes from the penetrating work of Edmund Husserl (d. 1938), founder of the phenomenological movement. Later philosophers who followed Husserl in phenomenology include M. Scheler (d. 1928), M. Heidegger (d. 1976), J. P. Sartre (d. 1980), and M. Merleau-Ponty (d. 1961). Phenomenology in philosophy is not so much a school with a clearly defined set of teachings as it is a broad methodological movement comprising diverse thinkers united by certain ideals and assumptions. Central to philosophical phenomenology is the investigation of phenomena that appear in immediate experience, allowing the distinctives of the phenomena themselves to control any description of the experiences.

Douglas Allen provides five characteristics of philosophical phenomenology. First, it is *descriptive in nature*. Philosophical phenomenology is concerned with classical issues in epistemology and ontology, but it holds that an indispensable element in dealing with such questions is a rigorous description of the phenomena of experience.

The concern with rigorous and accurate description leads to a strong *opposition to reductionism* in treatments of experience. Although philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty certainly went beyond mere description of experience, they exemplify phenomenology’s reaction against earlier movements (empiricism, rationalism, idealism), which tended to reduce the elements of experience to more simple factors, thereby losing the richness of experience.

Third, phenomenology, under the influence of Franz Brentano (d. 1917) and Husserl, has characteristically emphasized *intentionality*. A careful investigation of experience, it is held, indicates that all consciousness is consciousness of something. All states of consciousness are directed toward something, the intentional object.

Fourth, in an effort to allow the phenomena to speak for themselves, phenomenologists advocate a method of *bracketing*, or what Husserl termed the *epoché*. Bracketing involves the methodological suspension of beliefs and judgments accepted by the phenomenologist, or the attempt to free oneself from unexamined assumptions that might interfere in the investigation of the phenomena. A totally “objective” stance that is not colored by any prior values or assumptions

is, of course, impossible. But as a methodological ideal, bracketing enables one to minimize the distorting effects of such commitments.

Fifth, many phenomenologists also see the “intuition of essences,” or the *eidetic vision*, as a major part of the task. Careful analysis is said to reveal the essences (or the “whatness”) of the phenomena, uncovering essential features that enable us to identify and categorize the phenomena.

Phenomenology of Religion and Missions. Understood as an identifiable movement within the study of religion, phenomenology of religion can be traced back to Max Müller (d. 1900) and the *Religionswissenschaft* (history of religions) movement, which saw itself as a descriptive, objective science free from the biases of theology and philosophy. Among the more significant phenomenologists of religion was W. Brede Kristensen (d. 1953), who advocated a careful comparative approach to the study of religion that was rigorously descriptive and also sought an empathetic “feeling” for the data that reflected the stance of the believers themselves. Rudolf Otto (d. 1937) was concerned to recognize the irreducibly religious nature of religious experience, drawing attention to the “numinous” dimension that lies beyond the rational and conceptual elements. Gerardus vander Leeus (d. 1950) was enormously influential between 1930 and 1950, emphasizing in his work the special place of “power” in religion. Other notable phenomenologists include Friedrich Heiler (d. 1967) and Mircea Eliade (d. 1986).

Although there are significant differences in methodology and conclusions among the leading practitioners in the field, phenomenology of religion is generally characterized by its concern for a comparative, systematic, empirical, and rigorously descriptive approach to the study of religious phenomena. It has come to be understood in a loose sense as the descriptive study of religious phenomena, or as Ninian Smart puts it, “the procedure of getting at the meaning of a religious act or symbol or institution, etc., for the participant.” It is an “attempt at value-free descriptions in religion” (*The Science of Religion*, pp. 20–21). It is antireductionistic, and seeks to preserve what is distinctively religious in the phenomena. Practitioners emphasize the importance of empathy or sympathetic understanding, and try to avoid (at least in principle) making judgments of value or truth about the phenomena under investigation.

Understanding religious worldviews is essential for those engaged in Christian mission, and the phenomenology of religion can be a useful tool toward that end. Phenomenology’s concern with rigorous description of the phenomena can be helpful in understanding the religious symbols of a culture, and its emphasis on “bracket-

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ing” can help the missionary be aware of his or her prior assumptions, which might distort an understanding of such symbols.

It is also important, however, to recognize that phenomenology of religion has its limitations. Phenomenology of religion cannot stand alone and it should be combined with the related disciplines of cultural anthropology, ethnography, history, and so on in forming a comprehensive understanding of the religious worldview. Furthermore, the Christian missionary can never be content merely with a descriptive approach to religious phenomena. Questions of truth and compatibility with biblical values must be addressed, and doing so will involve going well beyond the phenomenology of religion. Evaluation of the religious phenomena is inevitable and, when conducted properly, is an essential part of engaging the culture in Christian witness. Evaluations should be made, however, only after careful study of the phenomena on their own terms and such assessment should be based on clear biblical principles and values and not on one’s own cultural biases.

HAROLD A. NETLAND

Bibliography. D. Allen, *ER* 11:273–85; J. D. Bettis, ed., *Phenomenology of Religion: Eight Modern Descriptions of the Essence of Religion*; M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*; W. Brede Kristensen, *The Meaning of Religion: Lectures in Phenomenology of Religion*; N. Smart, *The Science of Religion and the Sociology of Knowledge*; idem, *The Phenomenon of Religion*; E. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*; G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*.

Power Encounter. The term “power encounter” was coined by Fuller missiologist ALAN TIPPETT to label an event commonly experienced by the peoples of the South Pacific as they converted to Christianity. Tippettt noted that people usually had come to Christ in large groupings (“PEOPLE MOVEMENTS”) soon after a major confrontation that tested the power of their ancestral gods against that of the Christian God, resulting in an obvious victory for the latter. These encounters were reminiscent of the scriptural encounters between Moses and Pharaoh (Exod. 7–12) and between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).

South Pacific peoples were (and are) keenly aware of the presence, activity, and power of spirits. Their leaders were openly committed to the gods of their islands. They credited these gods with providing protection, food, fertility, and all other necessities of life for them. But they also lived in great fear of their anger and vengeance. To challenge the ancestral gods was unthinkable for most South Pacific peoples. Nevertheless, in turning to Christ, often after years of weighing the consequences, it was chiefs and priests, those who

knew the gods and their power best, who chose to challenge them. In doing so, they wagered that the Christian God had greater power than their gods and cast themselves completely on him for protection from the revenge of their gods.

A typical power encounter would involve a priest or chief, speaking on behalf of his people, publicly denouncing their allegiance to their god(s) in the name of Jesus and challenging the god(s) to do something about it. When the god(s) could not respond, the victory belonged to Jesus and large numbers of the people usually converted. As Tippettt noted, power-oriented people require power proof, not simply reasoning, if they are to be convinced.

The value and validity of an approach to evangelism that involves power confrontations is widely accepted today in missiological thinking and practice, since it is recognized that most of the peoples of the world are power-oriented. Current theorists, however, have expanded Tippettt’s original concept to include healing and deliverance from demons as power encounters. They see Jesus’ ministry as including numerous such power encounters. These encounters are usually less spectacular than those Tippettt described but, it is argued, qualify as genuine power encounters since they involve the pitting of the power of God to bring freedom against the power of Satan to keep people in bondage. Furthermore, such “signs and wonders” frequently result in the conversion of families and even larger groups who accept the healing or deliverance as demonstrating the presence and power of God. There is, however, some difference of opinion over whether such encounters should be planned or simply taken advantage of when they occur.

It is important to note that conversion through power encounter does not assure that the movement will be stable and enduring. Throughout the Scriptures we see that people can observe God’s mightiest demonstrations of power but soon go right back to the gods who were defeated. Thus it was both after Moses defeated Pharaoh and Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal. So it has been in many of the power events in the South Pacific and elsewhere. As always, the crucial dimension in conversion is what happens after the turning, whether people feed and grow in their new relationship with Jesus Christ or neglect it and let it die.

CHARLES H. KRAFT

Bibliography. C. H. Kraft, *Christianity With Power*; M. G. Kraft, *Understanding Spiritual Power*; A. R. Tippettt, *People Movements in Southern Polynesia*; C. P. Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*.

Power Ministries. Proactive involvement in power ministries has not been characteristic of evangelical missions until recently. Two mind-

sets which have been widespread among traditional evangelicals, including evangelical missiologists, have made them very cautious about participating in ministries that call upon the Holy Spirit to manifest outwardly the kinds of power ministries prominent in the Gospels and Acts. (1) The first mind-set is the doctrine of cessationism, which postulates that certain gifts of the Holy Spirit which were in use by the apostles and first-century church leaders had been given to the church only until the New Testament canon had been completed at the end of the apostolic age, at which time they ceased and are no longer to be expected in the church. The power ministries being introduced into evangelical missiology today would be included, for the most part, in the list of gifts which are thought to have ceased, and therefore cessationists could not accept the validity of contemporary power ministries. (2) The second mind-set among traditional evangelicals is a worldview suffering from what missiologist Paul G. Hiebert called the FLAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE. The Western worldview, strongly influenced by scientific rationalism, has a difficult time comprehending just how the supernatural powers of the invisible world can and do affect daily life of human beings. The non-Western worldview deals with such powers on a daily basis, and therefore is much more in tune with assumptions made by Old Testament and New Testament writers than are many Westerners. Exceptions to this among Third World leaders are generally those who have been trained by Westerners in Western-oriented institutions.

Both of these mind-sets were seriously challenged by evangelical leaders over the final two decades of the twentieth century. As a result cessationism has weakened in popularity. The major work reflecting this is Jack Deere's *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (1993). Changes in Western worldview are taking place more slowly except in circles influenced by the charismatic movement, by the New Apostolic Reformation, by missiologists, and by the New Age. The book which has been influential in helping evangelicals think through the paradigm shift is Charles H. Kraft's *Christianity with Power: Your World View and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (1989). A consequence of this is that evangelical mission leaders, although not in one accord, are much more open to power ministries as a component of mission strategies than they have been in the past. Of the many facets of power ministries now being advocated and used by evangelical missionaries, six may be noted as areas of particular significance.

Supernatural Signs and Wonders. Jesus sent his disciples out to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God accompanied by healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead. He

told them that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they could expect to do even greater works than he did. In the framework of Third Wave thinking, John Wimber's *Power Evangelism* (1993) has been very influential in this area.

Prophecy. A frequent experience of the apostles was to hear God speaking direct words to them for instruction or admonition or comfort. The gift of prophecy is mentioned in the lists of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Recently, beginning particularly in the 1980s, many evangelicals have begun to accept not only the gift of prophecy, but also the contemporary office of prophet. Two works have been particularly helpful in moving evangelicals out of the assumption that God does not exhibit any revelatory activity today, namely, Wayne Grudem's *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (1988) and Jack Deere's *Surprised by the Voice of God* (1996).

Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare. Taking seriously the biblical assertion that a major obstacle to world evangelization is the fact that Satan, the god of this age, has blinded the minds of unbelievers (see 2 Cor. 4:3–4), a number of evangelicals have argued that he does this by means of dispatching high-ranking demonic beings, sometimes referred to as TERRITORIAL SPIRITS, to keep cities, nations, people groups, religious blocs, and other social networks in spiritual darkness. They attempt to follow the lead of the apostle Paul, who asserts that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they use the weapons of SPIRITUAL WARFARE, principally intercession, to neutralize these powers to the greatest extent possible in order to prepare the way for the harvesters who are the missionaries, the church planters, the pastors, and the evangelists. The major apologetic for strategic-level spiritual warfare is C. Peter Wagner's *Confronting the Powers* (1996), while the contrary position is expounded in Clinton Arnold's *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (1997) (see also POWERS, THE) and Chuck Lowe's *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelization* (1998).

Spiritual Mapping. Prayer directed against the forces of the invisible world is seen to be more powerful if it is accurately targeted. The assumption is that the more we can discover about the devices of Satan (see 2 Cor. 2:11), the more vulnerable he and his forces become, and the less he will take advantage of us. Spiritual mapping is said to be the intercessor what X-rays are to the surgeon. One of the leading figures in advocating spiritual mapping is George Otis Jr., whose principal works are *The Last of the Giants* (1991) and *The Twilight Labyrinth* (1997).

Identificational Repentance. Corporate repentance has been recognized as a principal

weapon of spiritual warfare. The enemy frequently keeps people blinded to the gospel because unremitting corporate sins, both past and present, provide what is the equivalent of a legal right for the powers of darkness to afflict whole populations. Present generations can identify with and repent for corporate sins of their ancestors, removing the legal right of the enemy and opening the way for the healing of national wounds, and for the expansion of God's kingdom. The chief textbook describing this principle is John Dawson's *Healing America's Wounds* (1994).

Prayer Evangelism. While prayer has always played a role in the process of evangelization, some have felt that the potential power of prayer as a proactive evangelistic tool has been underutilized. The major work arguing that prayer can be used as an evangelistic methodology, rather than simply as a back up to other methodologies, is Ed Silvano's *That None Should Perish* (1994).

C. PETER WAGNER

Powers, The. Given the reality of TERRITORIAL SPIRITS and their hostility to the gospel and to the people of God, some missiologists have been calling the church to take a direct and aggressive stance toward these supernatural powers. New strategies have been devised involving practices such as "spiritual mapping" (discerning the spirit powers) and "warfare prayer" to enable evangelists and Christian leaders to nullify the influence of territorial spirits and thereby enhance the receptivity of a people to the gospel. Many have wondered, however, whether these new practices are biblically rooted and, more importantly, whether believers have the authority to engage territorial spirits.

Since the mid-1980s numerous stories of Christians effectively battling territorial spirits have surfaced from all over the world, including the United States, Argentina, Korea, Japan, Canada, and elsewhere. More than anywhere else, Argentina became the focal point for the implementation of a strategy involving a direct attack against territorial rulers. Some evangelists and pastors in that country exercised authority in Jesus' name to cast out or bind the spirits over certain cities. According to the practitioners, the results have been dramatic. Once the territorial ruler has been identified and cast down, massive outpourings of people converting to the gospel have followed and churches have grown exponentially.

Following the 1989 LAUSANNE CONGRESS II in Manila, an international group was formed to share and discuss ideas about battling the powers in the context of world mission. The "Spiritual Warfare Network" (SWN) has met annually under the leadership of C. PETER WAGNER, professor in the School of World Mission at Fuller

Theological Seminary. The group officially became part of the prayer track of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement. Wagner compiled many of the new insights and went public with a strategy for engaging high-ranking powers over cities and territories—a strategy he called "Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare" (SLSW). Wagner's numerous books on the issue have attracted significant attention as he has essentially become the principal spokesperson for SLSW.

At the heart of the new strategy is a threefold emphasis on (1) discerning the territorial spirits assigned to a city, (2) dealing with the corporate sin of a city or area, and (3) engaging in aggressive "warfare prayer" against the territorial spirits. "Spiritual mapping" is one method for discerning the territorial spirits. According to George Otis, Jr., the originator of the spiritual mapping concept, this task involves conducting an extensive spiritual analysis of a city or country especially focused on the religious history of the area. This information can provide specific clues for understanding the spiritual forces that are at work. This information is given to intercessors who can then pray with much more specificity and according to how the Spirit leads them.

Some advocates of SLSW have taken "spiritual mapping" much further and have sought information from pagan and occult contexts about spiritual forces. They have even understood mapping to be the attempt to uncover the demonic grids of power in a given city. This uncritical acceptance of information from occult or idolatrous contexts has led a number of critics to wonder whether some SLSW advocates are falling into a syncretistic form of Christian animism.

Since the mid-1990s, a strong emphasis in SLSW has been placed on the practice of "identificational repentance." In fact, the Philosophy of Prayer statement for the United Prayer Track of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement states, "no aspect of warfare prayer is more important than identificational repentance." The assumption here is that corporate sin in a city or area has provided openings for high-ranking principalities and powers to establish spiritual strongholds. These must be dealt with through the corporate identification with the sins of a city and then confessing and repenting of these sins as a means of effecting reconciliation and thereby breaking Satan's grip on the city. The strongest advocate of this approach has been John Dawson.

Some advocates of SLSW believe that by engaging in identificational repentance they can "remit" the sins of others. But there is no sense in which one Christian can apply the atoning and forgiving work of Jesus to another person who has not personally exercised faith in Christ. What these proponents often mean, however, is

that the intergenerational curse resulting from the sins of the ancestors can be lifted by identifying oneself with those sins and confessing them. But once again, there is no scriptural evidence supporting the notion that believers can vicariously confess the sins of other people and remove God's temporal penalty, or curse, on the corporate sin. Advocates of identificational repentance have also often inappropriately applied covenant promises given to the nation of Israel directly to contemporary nations and cities. Believers do not function in a priestly role between God and their nation in the sense that they bear a responsibility for confessing the sin of the unbelieving population to God. Their responsibility is to confess their own sins (perhaps even corporately) and proclaim a gospel that consists of the possibility for reconciliation between sinners and God.

The final aspect of battling territorial spirits—and perhaps the most controversial part—is the direct engagement with the territorial spirits. Some have called this “warfare prayer,” but it is not properly prayer since it is not directed to God. Many proponents of SLSW would contend that there is a stage in the battle where one needs to take authority in the name of Jesus and command the ruling spirit(s) to leave. They contend that just as Jesus himself commanded Satan to leave after his temptation with the words, “Away with you, Satan!” (Matt. 4:10), believers have the responsibility to come against him in the cities and regions of their ministry.

There are difficulties with this last aspect of the strategy. Jesus was not evicting Satan from Jerusalem with his remarks, he was simply telling Satan to leave his person. In fact, there is no example in the Bible of any leader discerning a territorial ruler and commanding it to leave its territory. Jesus did not throw down the ruling spirit over Galilee or Judea; Paul did not command the spirit over Corinth to “be gone” nor did he bind the territorial ruler over Rome. Perhaps most instructive is the fact that in the most informative Old Testament account about territorial spirits, Daniel was not engaging in any kind of warfare prayer against the heavenly powers (Dan. 10:13, 20, 21). He was involved in praying and fasting on behalf of the people of Israel and actually had no awareness of the angelic struggle in the spiritual realm until he was told *after the fact* by the interpreting angel.

Debate still continues over the propriety of SLSW, but the current consensus remains to be that God has not given believers the authority or responsibility to cast demons out of cities or territories. God himself will direct his angels to fight the battles against the high-ranking powers.

CLINTON E. ARNOLD

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Primal Religions. Primal religions are indigenous local traditional or tribal religions that are nonuniversal. They existed before the more widely practiced mainstream religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. They are also referred to as FOLK RELIGIONS, though that term encompasses local varieties of syncretistic mainstream religions (e.g., folk Islam, folk Buddhism, or folk Christianity). Primal religions lack sacred scriptures and are passed orally from one generation to another. They deal with the pragmatic considerations of daily life.

Primal religions are one expression of the desires and deep longings people have for a relationship with a power, a spiritual being, or someone beyond themselves. In primal religions, all of life is religious and it is not possible to separate it into distinct parts. There is no distinction between the sacred and the secular. Often there is no word in the language for “religion” per se; rather there are sacred traditions. Primal religion often has a sacred lore or metaphysic related to the natural environment. For example, *Nom* is the word for God in Ham (also known Jaba), an ethnic group in Nigeria. *Nom* translates as “sun” or “creator of the sun” (as well as creator of all else). The Bajju, a neighboring group, use *Kadza* for God, a word that means “rain” or the “one of the rain,” “creator of the rain.”

Such religions display an incredible diversity. They are best described locally or regionally of like religious systems rather than generically of things characteristic of all of them. For example, the Australian aborigines speak of the dreaming or dream time, which draws together linear time and the mythical time of their totemic animal ancestors.

In sub-Saharan Africa among speakers of Benue-Congo languages, including all the Bantu languages, there is widespread belief in God as the creator, with lesser spirits who traditionally were prayed to as intermediaries between humans and God. It also includes belief in other spirits who inhabit parts of nature, such as trees, snakes, rocks, rivers, and certain areas. This intermediate level includes the ancestral spirits who are believed to dwell with the living, watching over them and giving blessings or curses to people. People venerate or respect them and pray

Prophetic and Identity Movements

to them, pour libations and offer sacrifices to them (see ANCESTRAL PRACTICES). People's spirits live prior to birth and continue following death, with REINCARNATION purported to occur for many. These ancestral spirits appear from time to time as masquerades who speak to people and bless or punish people according to their deeds. Traditionally some groups, such as the Yoruba, believed in a pantheon of gods, while many others believed in one good god, the creator and sustainer of life.

The goodness of God in sub-Saharan Africa relates to a basic problem, namely, why people suffer misfortune, become ill, and die. The answer derives from their theology of God as being good. It deals with the widespread belief that individuals have an innate spiritual power that they can use to affect others in the supernatural realm, causing misfortunes, illnesses, and death. Evans-Pritchard, an early British social anthropologist, termed this explanatory system WITCHCRAFT. It is a system with its own internal logic. Use of *spiritual power* is a more accurate term, to distinguish it from Western definitions of witchcraft. There is a recognition both of the immediate cause (e.g., a person is hurt in an automobile accident) and an ultimate spiritual cause (e.g., someone is harming another in the spiritual realm). Diviners often use some form of divination to ascertain the spiritual cause of a problem (see DIVINATION, DIVINER).

The primal religion of Benue-Congo speakers contrasts with that of Nilotic language speakers, for whom the high god is of central importance with the ancestors and other spirits being insignificant. Speakers of Nilotic languages include the Maasai, Luo, Dinka, Nuer, and many others within the East African cattle complex of ethnic groups.

Most primal religions mark important times in the annual seasonal cycle, such as cultivating, planting, and harvesting (e.g., celebration of the first produce harvested). Religious rituals also mark RITES OF PASSAGE of individuals, such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death rituals. Other rites of passage are celebrated as well, depending on the culture. For example, in Kerala state in India there was the *tali* tying, an early marriage ceremony for a girl with a boy. He might or might not become her husband following puberty. In some cultures the first pregnancy was marked with religious celebrations (see RITUALS AND CEREMONY).

If we were to look for commonalities among different primal religions, we can use analytic categories such as beliefs, rituals, symbols, sacrifices, prayers, taboos, and trances (altered states of consciousness). Whereas from a Western perspective beliefs are central, from the perspective of many who hold primal religions practices are central. These religions are more often danced

out than believed. Beliefs must be implied and extracted from religious practices.

Today there are revitalization movements in many primal religions worldwide. Some of these movements have received impetus from outsiders who encourage a resurgence of belief and practice of primal religions.

When missionaries come into an area, they need to understand the local religious system. Failure to do so results in traditional religion answering one set of questions and Christianity answering another set. The local Christians feel it necessary to retain both the primal religion and Christianity to address these differing issues, and thus Christianity becomes an overlay on the traditional religion. If Christianity is to become truly relevant and transformative, it must address the same issues as the primal religion. This means the Christian missionary must understand the local primal religion and its means of dealing with specific issues, then together with local Christians search the Bible for a Christian perspective on those issues.

People who practice primal religions are often open to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their pragmatic approach to life allows them to try whatever religious system might help them solve their daily problems. Further, some will see a more mainstream religion as helping them integrate into the wider world, where such a religion is more acceptable than is their local religious system.

CAROL V. MCKINNEY

Bibliography. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*; R. C. Mitchell, *African Primal Religions*; H. Smith, *The World's Religions*.

Prophetic and Identity Movements. Social renewal movements through which people seek identity in the midst of dislocation. While the distinction between the two terms is typically blurred, generally speaking those that are dominated by charismatic and visionary prophets or prophetesses are called prophetic movements. They typically are seen in regions of the world newly impacted by the forces of MODERNIZATION or COLONIALISM. In traditional societies, modern change agents provoke an unavoidable need for social, cultural, and religious readjustment. In these times of great upheaval, prophets often emerge who are able to reinterpret the sociocultural and religious order.

These movements have been studied in such diverse locations as Brazil, Colombia, the Caribbean area, Melanesia, the Philippines, Indonesia, New Zealand, sub-Saharan Africa, Russian Asia, and among Native Americans in North America. Despite cultural differences, they usually manifest most or all of the following characteristics: (1) An individual possesses some familiarity with

a major religious tradition (usually Christianity), receives a revelation (commonly in a dream or vision), and begins to proclaim this new message to a receptive population. (2) There is a dramatic break with some traditional ways, particularly those concerned with magic. (3) Rituals and symbols emerge that contain elements of both the traditional and modern religious systems. (4) The typical concerns of FOLK RELIGIONS, such as healing, protection from evil powers, and divine guidance, are retained. (5) The movement promotes moral reform, spiritual renewal, and identity-recovery for a people undergoing profound cultural change, often with political ramifications. (6) A remarkable missionary zeal propels the movement across tribal and national boundaries.

The great majority of prophetic movements has occurred in sub-Saharan Africa. Two of the continent's best-known and most influential prophets were WILLIAM WADE HARRIS of Liberia (1850–1929) and SIMON KIMBANGU of Congo (1889–1951). In 1910, Harris, in obedience to a vision, set off on a preaching tour that led him across coastal Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. By 1914, an estimated 120,000 people had responded to his call to embrace the "one true and living God" by discarding fetishes and other religious traditions. The movement swelled the ranks of Methodist and Catholic missions alike, and spawned independent movements such as the Harrist Church and the Church of the Twelve Apostles. Kimbangu's faith was nurtured in a British Baptist mission, but after a cataclysmic three months of public ministry in 1921 he had gained nationwide renown as a healer who could even raise the dead. Masses flocked to hear him preach. Giving himself up for arrest to nervous Belgian officials after three months in hiding, Kimbangu spent the remainder of his life in prison. Meanwhile, his followers clandestinely diffused his message throughout Belgian and French Congos and Angola until legally recognized in 1959.

Early missionary response to prophetic movements was characteristically negative. Many of the churches and organizations they spawned, however, remain to this day. The Harrist Church in Cote d'Ivoire numbers over one hundred thousand; the Kimbanguist church numbers around 5 million. Their endurance has obligated missionaries and missiologists to assess whether to embrace them as true sister churches in Christ. Some are clearly syncretistic and heretical, yet have moved significantly away from primal animism. Others could be labeled Hebraic by their ambivalence toward the New Testament gospel and their identity with the culture and prophetic themes of the Old Testament. Some, however, have emerged as independent Christian churches that confess the primacy of the Scriptures and the person of Jesus Christ. In the postcolonial

age, church and mission leaders have increasingly voiced their conviction that the latter type of prophetic movements may indeed be culturally authentic expressions of the universal Church of Jesus Christ.

J. MICHAEL CONNOR

Bibliography. M. L. Martin, *Kimbangu: An African Prophet and His Church.*; D. A. Shank, *Prophet Harris, the "Black Elijah" of West Africa.*; H. W. Turner, *Religious Movements in Primal Societies.*

Proselytism. The term "proselyte" derives from a Greek word, *proselutos*, often translated as "one who comes over." It is not a word from classical Greek, but is a Septuagintal term, being found more than seventy times there, translating the Hebrew term *ger*. This biblical word was originally used to describe non-Israelites who chose to live as residents within Israel, but it developed to mean someone who voluntarily converted to the religion of Israel.

References to proselytes began to multiply during the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, when multitudes of non-Jews, attracted by the radical monotheism and high moral standards of Judaism, began to convert to the Jewish faith and lifestyle. Many of these people, particularly among the men, stopped short of the final commitment of conversion but dedicated themselves as much as possible to the Jewish faith and practice. The term "proselyte" came to be used in a more technical sense for such people.

In more common usage, however, the term came to mean someone who converted from any one faith to another. Proselytism became a general term for the propagation of one's faith, and people and religions were referred to as proselytizing if they gave high priority to trying to persuade those of other faiths or ideologies to convert. In contemporary Judaism it is still used to describe non-Jews who convert to Judaism, and is employed without value judgments of any kind, although the Jewish people would not see themselves as a proselytizing community. In everyday Christian contexts, it has remained, more or less, a description of highly motivated, high-profile, and well organized EVANGELISM.

In the specific context of Christian missiology, however, the term has become one that is used in certain quarters to refer to unethical behavior in the attempt to persuade others. The first negative use of the word comes from post-Enlightenment eighteenth-century writers who associated it with those who, in their view, claimed to have a monopoly on truth. It was then associated with the type of person who aggressively tries to win converts to a cause or ideology (including religion). In the wake of the two World Wars of the twentieth century, and in particular since the 1960s, we have seen a further development of

Pure Land Buddhism

this use of the term in the writings of European and American theologians.

The documents of Vatican II include the following statement: "Proselytism is a corruption of Christian witness by appealing to hidden forms of coercion or by a style of propaganda unworthy of the gospel." The WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES endorsed this same definition: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from . . . whatever . . . does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself."

In other words, in spite of the ongoing assumption by most Christians that proselytism is simply a synonym for evangelism, albeit of a planned and organized nature, it is now being used in a more technical sense by certain missiologists and others to refer only to a specific type of "evangelism." It refers to the abuse of people's freedom and the distortion of the gospel of grace by means of coercion, deception, manipulation, and exploitation. This type of "recruitment of members" does go on in a number of cults and NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS, and so there is clearly a need for some term to describe such unacceptable behavior; but confusion has certainly been created by the use of this existing and well-established word.

Christians need to be alert to this issue of appropriate and inappropriate methods of sharing their faith with others, but they must also be aware of the agenda of those who wish to present the very desire to share one's faith as unacceptable in principle. In particular, the church must resist the growing tendency in Western cultures to label all Christian evangelism as, by definition, an expression of the arrogance and insensitivity presupposed in this new understanding of proselytism.

A major task of missiology as we approach the twenty-first century is to facilitate a confident motivation to share the gospel that is scrupulously ethical in its every expression.

WALTER RIGGANS

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Pure Land Buddhism. Devotional schools of MAHAYANA BUDDHISM that focus on the Buddha Amitabha and his transcendent realm known as the Pure Land. The origins of Pure Land Buddhism are in India, but it gained its largest following in East Asia, after the Pure Land scriptures were translated into Chinese. From China, where it was known as "Ching Tu," the Pure Land traditions passed on to Japan, where the largest schools are the "Jodo Shu" (Pure Land) and the "Jodo Shinshu" (Pure Land True Sect).

The Pure Land schools are the most popular form of Buddhism in Japan today.

Three aspects of the Pure Land tradition are especially significant. First, Pure Land Buddhism teaches that rebirth in the Pure Land (culminating in *nirvana*) is attained by reliance on the grace and merit of the Buddha Amida (Japanese for Amitabha). Unlike other forms of Buddhism, Pure Land rejects "self-effort" in attaining liberation. Believers, while holding a rosary with 108 beads supposedly left by Amida, chant the "nembutsu," a prayer of faith and gratitude to Amida. The Japanese Shinran Shonin (1173–1263), founder of the Pure Land True Sect, emphasized that anyone could reach the Pure Land at death by relying solely on the merits of Amida Buddha. Amida, while still a Bodhisattva, had vowed that he would not become a Buddha until he had accumulated sufficient merit to save all who would call on him for rebirth in the Pure Land. Shinran, sometimes called the "Buddhist Martin Luther" for his doctrine of salvation by grace alone, composed the following hymn:

Although the great chilliocosm may be filled
with flames,
Yet he who hears the Holy Name of the Buddha,
Always in accord with steadfastness, Will freely
pass to the Pure Land.
Have ye faith in Amida's vow which takes us in
eternally,
Because of him, of his great grace the light
superb be thine.

However, there is a fundamental difference between Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity in that whereas Amida is understood to be a human being who attained divinity through his own efforts, and thereby earned sufficient merit to transfer to others, Christianity maintains that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God. The grace of Amida, then, is fundamentally different from that of Jesus Christ, because true grace must originate from the almighty God himself.

Second, the notion of the Pure Land has some similarities to the concept of heaven or paradise in Christianity. Pure Land believers maintain that heaven (the Pure Land) is the destiny of believers and that hell awaits unbelievers. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the Buddhist Pure Land is substantially different from biblical eschatology and the scriptural accounts of heaven and hell.

Third, it is significant that Pure Land Buddhism has been most popular among the lower strata of society. Followers of the Pure Land traditions are aggressive in outreach to the common people. Thus the form of Buddhism that evangelicals in Asia are most likely to encounter is Pure Land Buddhism. Significant similarities between aspects of Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity offer possibilities for points of con-

tact with Pure Land Buddhists, thereby facilitating evangelism. However, Christians must be careful to emphasize the very clear differences between Pure Land Buddhism and the gospel of Jesus Christ as well.

BONG RIN RO

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Qur'an. The Qur'an (from an Arabic verb meaning "to read" or "recite") is regarded by Muslims as the word of God, sent down to the lower heavens during Ramadan and revealed from there to the Prophet Muhammad. Islamic theology declares that the Qur'an was not created; it is instead the earthly expression of the Well-Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh al-muhfuz*), which is with Allah. It is held to be untranslatable; one reads the Qur'an only in the original Arabic. The science of Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*) is extremely important in Islam.

Muslims believe that additional revelation became necessary after the *Tawrat* (the Torah, or Old Testament) and the *Injil* (the Gospels, or New Testament), revealed to Moses and Jesus respectively, were corrupted before their canonization was completed late in the fourth century A.D. The Qur'an is now considered to be the only reliable revelation of God, collected as it was within twenty years of Muhammad's death and allegedly transmitted through succeeding generations without alteration. Roughly equivalent to the New Testament in length, it is divided into 114 chapters, arranged from longest to shortest.

The Qur'an's major themes include the nature of God, the nature of humanity, the establishment of a worldwide Muslim community, the day of judgment, and the separation of humans into paradise and hell. A substantial amount of legal material is included as well, covering moral precepts, dietary regulations, and standards for community life.

Christians today are divided over whether specific portions of the Qur'an may be used to witness to Muslims. Some believe that certain narratives indicate the superiority of 'Isa (Jesus) over Muhammad. That the second coming of 'Isa rather than Muhammad forms a vital part of Islamic eschatology is a case in point. Presented properly, it is claimed, such passages may be used as a bridge to speaking of Christ's lordship. Others insist, however, that the overall teaching of Islam regarding the person and nature of Jesus (that he is merely a prophet and not part of a triune God) is so deeply ingrained in the Muslim mind-set that such an approach will inevitably fail. Further, it is claimed that to hold only

certain passages as truthful runs the risk of raising the question why Christians accept only the passages with which they happen to agree, but consider the Qur'an as a whole to be the work of men, not a divinely inspired book.

Rather than attempting to show the similarities between Qur'anic teaching and biblical doctrine, it is perhaps best to emphasize the contrasts between the two. The Muslim scriptures display a sub-Christian view of Jesus, denying his divinity, crucifixion, and resurrection; they alter considerably the narratives dealing with the Hebrew patriarchs; and they substitute a work oriented soteriology for the biblical teaching of salvation by grace through faith alone.

LARRY POSTON

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Redemption in Other Faiths. The common biblical words for "redemption" refer to deliverance from some evil by payment of a price. However, the Hebrew *pdh* and *g'l* occasionally seem to have a broader significance: God's deliverance from adversity without payment of a price (2 Sam. 4:9; 1 Kings 1:29). But while a wider sense of redemption is sometimes seen in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., in Ruth), the climactic event of redemption is the deliverance of Israel in the exodus. The New Testament develops this further. Although redemption still has a national application (Luke 24:21) and a wider meaning (e.g., Heb. 11:35), it refers primarily to the atoning work of Jesus Christ through his sacrificial death for the sin of the world. Other faiths contain parallels to the wider biblical concept of redemption, and even to some extent to the specific saving work of Christ at the price of his sacrificial death. But such parallels are only a shadow of the unique redemption in Jesus Christ.

Modern Judaism believes in the redeeming triumph of good over evil both nationally and individually. The Talmud uses *pdh* to speak of ransom, while *g'l* signifies redemption dependent on the covenant people's repentance and obedient good deeds. Thus a price is paid, deliverance is achieved for the nation and for the believer, God triumphs in his goodness over all evil.

In Islam the QUR'AN admonishes people to ask forgiveness for sin (40:55; 47:19; 48:2). The word for deliverance relates to the Hebrew for "cover" and thus to the atonement, which "covers" sins. Sura 37:107 talks of the sacrifice of Ishmael as a ransom; this is in keeping with the annual *qurban* sacrifice offered by Muslims on *Eid-ul-adha*, but seems to contradict 22:37 with its teaching that animal sacrifices are not propitiatory.

Redemptive Analogies

In Brahmanic Hinduism, sacrifice (*ajna*) generates cosmic power and plays a meaningful part in stimulating the gods to bring blessing to the cosmos. But *ajna* does not entail expiation of sin and bears little if any idea of propitiation of the righteous anger of God or the gods. Yet such sacrifices do deliver from the effects of evil, bringing blessings and material benefits to the world. Through animal sacrifices individual worshipers may also look to the gods to answer prayers, deliver from evil, and bring good things into their lives.

In Chinese and Japanese traditional religions sacrifices were propitiatory rather than expiatory; they were the means of approach to the gods and to the ancestral spirits of the nation. In Japan people also believed that sacrifices could supply the material needs of the gods and thus induce them to produce material blessings for the people. We may note in this a resemblance to earlier traditional religions in pre-Christian Europe, where the annual sacrifices of maidens satisfied the sexual needs of male deities and thus brought about increased fertility in humans and cattle as well as good crops. In contemporary traditional religions animal sacrifices may be used as a means toward reconciling opposing tribes or families. The shed blood delivers from the evil of hostility and brings the blessing of peace.

We conclude that parallels with Christian redemption do exist in other faiths (see also REDEMPTIVE ANALOGIES). Sacrifices are used to appease deities, just as propitiation is a means of access to the Christian God. And many peoples believe in a redemption that delivers from evils and brings blessings both nationally and individually. But Christian redemption is also unique. There is no equivalent in other faiths to the God-initiated atonement through his own Son. The Jesus Christ who serves as an effective vicarious sacrifice for sin and brings the fullness of salvation to God's people has no parallel.

MARTIN GOLDSMITH

Redemptive Analogies. A concept introduced in Don Richardson's *Peace Child* (1974) and further developed in his *Lords of the Earth* (1977) and *Eternity in Their Hearts* (1981). Richardson surmises that God, who ordained facets of Hebrew culture (e.g., animal sacrifice, the brazen serpent) to pre-figure Jesus as "the Lamb of God" and as one to be "lifted up," providentially plants Christ-foreshadowing elements in other cultures as well.

An example of this is found in John's Gospel, where Jesus personifies "Logos," a Greek philosophical name for a principle of constancy hidden behind all that is changing in the universe. In Acts 17, Paul links the biblical Elohim with "Ag-

nosto Theo," the "unknown god" of pagan Athens.

Elohim historically has found numerous expressions of the Creator God in various cultures worldwide. For example, he who became "Deus" in Latin and "Dios" in Spanish became also "Gott" in German, "Shangti" in Chinese, and "Hananim" in Korean.

Redemptive analogies may be either *general* to many cultures or *special* to one culture. The apostle Paul, who constantly moved from one cultural context to the next, naturally favored general redemptive analogies: farmer/crop, athlete/prize, soldier/armor, teacher/pupil, and the like. General redemptive analogies communicate to a wider audience but are less potent cultural bridges.

John, ministering primarily to Jews and Greeks, chose analogies unique to Jewish and Greek culture respectively, such as those mentioned above. An analogy that people recognize as *special* to their own culture can have greater impact among them.

Special redemptive analogies occur in two categories: (1) those indigenous symbols linked to MONOTHEISM, that is, the nearly universal sky-god traditions which yield already familiar aliases for Elohim in Gentile languages worldwide, and (2) those pertaining to *indigenous ethics*, that is, requirements of Old Testament law that are found "written on the hearts" of Gentiles who have never heard of Torah. Richardson cites Yali places of refuge in Irian Jaya, Dayak "scapecrafts" in Borneo, and the Chinese way of writing "righteous" using symbols which mean "I under the lamb."

Richardson finds that most writers on PEOPLE MOVEMENTS miss the role of redemptive analogy as the cultural catalyst God often uses to trigger such movements. Missionaries who know how to find and employ redemptive analogies, he claims, are more likely to experience the mass response a people movement brings. Many conservative theologians downplay the importance of GENERAL REVELATION. They credit it only with a negative role of bringing enough knowledge to condemn, but not enough to save. Richardson perceives redemptive analogies as evidence that God has been making a positive communication through general revelation. Indeed, Acts 14:17 and Romans 2:14, 15 clarify general revelation as the progenitor of gospel-foreshadowing redemptive analogies in cultures around the globe. Is general revelation's contribution ever so positive as to generate saving faith apart from knowledge of special revelation? That, Richardson maintains, is a separate question.

DON RICHARDSON

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ated in *Righteousness*; J. Padinjarekara: *Christ in Ancient Vedas*.

Religion. Religion is a word/concept that attempts to cover a type of human experience as it relates to a transcendent reality. Religion is a familiar word that communicates a commonly recognized content. But for all its familiarity, it is a difficult word to define. This difficulty of definition has three main sources.

The first is a common and unavoidable one. As a word, “religion” is a Western creation from the Latin root, *religia*, meaning “to unite.” As a Western word, religion has accumulated meaning that is often more in concert with the structures of Western religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (where the task of religion is to “unite” the human and divine spheres), than with Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism (where the task of religion is to recognize the oneness of all being) or indigenous religions (where the task is to live in harmony with the god-imitating structures of tribe or ethnic group). Still, although the Westernization of the word/concept must be recognized, these origins have sometimes been overemphasized to the point that an essential idea is lost: some word must be used to describe this seemingly universal class of human experience and a word whose root means to join or unite is not that far off from the task of religions, be they Western, Eastern, or indigenous.

The second source of difficulty in defining religion stems from a general uncertainty over where exactly the essence of this common class of human experience is located. “Theologians” or professors of a particular religious tradition locate the essence of religion in the reality of the God, gods, or transcendental principle of their religious belief. For theologians, then, religion becomes the set of beliefs, and institutions that relate, identify, or explain that transcendence to human beings and the material realm. Others locate the essence of religion in a common human nature, although they tend to assign different aspects of human nature as the *locus classicus* of human religious experience. Some, like Anders Nygren, see religion as a function of rationality: “Religion is belief in divine beings.” Frederick Schleiermacher, on the other hand, found religion’s root in human emotions: “Religion is the feeling of absolute dependence.” Still others locate religion in a set of volitions: “Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness” (Alfred North Whitehead). Social scientists locate the essence of religion in a function of human social behavior, whether personal/psychological or social: “Religion is the feeling, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider

the divine” (William James). “When a certain number of sacred things sustain relations of coordination or subordination with each other in such a way as to form a system, having a certain unity, but which is not comprised within any other system of the same sort, the totality of those beliefs and their corresponding rites constitutes a religion” (Emile Durkeim).

Each of these locations—transcendence, human nature, human society—produces valid and useful definitions of religion. Their diversity, however, means one must be clear in their use. Clearly stating the definitions one is using, and the purposes of those definitions, is mandatory. The diversity also points out the complexity of the word/concept. “Religion” is an attempt to bring under one broad umbrella an incredible diversity of religious ideas and practices.

The third source of the difficulty of defining religion is positing transcendence itself. Most definitions of religion recognize, if not the reality of, then the belief in, an entity that is above and beyond the mundane world of everyday existence. Yet by definition such an entity is beyond definition. When it comes to a definition of religion, this poses different yet related problems for all three of the approaches to religion we discussed in the last section. For the teachers of a particular religion, this transcendent principle is usually a presupposition, not only in terms of existence but in terms of qualities and nature. Any definition of religion in such a context, then, is heavily influenced by the nature of the presupposed transcendent. For those who locate religion in a common human nature, transcendence takes on a dual role of creator and created of the essential human nature. For social scientists, transcendence is reduced to a psychological or sociological construct, at least in so far as their study of religion is concerned. For all three, the reality of transcendence is lost as soon as it is defined.

For evangelicals, none of these three categories of definitions—and their attendant problems—should be considered out of bounds. Religion is ultimately a confessional enterprise, even for the a-religious. But religion may also with profit be viewed as a facet of human nature and an observable social construct. That the roots of each of these may be interpreted differently need not diminish their descriptive value.

TERRY C. MUCK

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Religious Scriptures. The word “scripture” comes from a Latin term meaning “that which is written.” A vast amount of sacred literature (the BIBLE, QUR’AN, the Vedas, Tao Te Ching) is pre-

Religious Typologies

served in written form. Oral tradition (story, poem, song, proverb, etc.) also occupies a similar place among the sacred lore of certain societies. Scriptures are a powerful source of meaning, cohesiveness, and self-identity for a particular community, shaping its worldview and providing moral guidelines.

Nature of Sacred Scripture. Although there is considerable diversity among religious traditions concerning the nature and function of sacred scripture, some common themes emerge.

Sacredness. Religious scriptures are regarded as sacred due to their connection with the divine. Within oral traditions a special power is sometimes regarded as being inherent within the sounds of certain sacred words or symbols. The sacred power is said to be released through proper singing or incantation of the words (e.g., the mantra in Vedic HINDUISM).

Authority. Written scriptures are regarded as authoritative because of their connection with the divine or transcendent. But the nature of such authority varies: Christianity and ISLAM ascribe definitive authority to their scriptures, whereas some traditions of Hinduism and BUDDHISM have less strict understandings of authority for their scriptures. But for most traditions the scriptures are normative for worship, doctrine, and behavior.

Revelation. MONOTHEISTIC traditions regard their scriptures as specially revealed by God, although Christianity and Islam have very different views on the nature and content of such revelation. Hindus distinguish between *smṛti* (“that which is remembered”) and *śruti* (“that which is heard”), the latter being regarded as texts specially revealed to the sages. Buddhist scriptures are not regarded as products of divine REVELATION so much as the authoritative insights of “enlightened ones.”

Inspiration. The sacred writings of most traditions are regarded as inspired in a general sense, although monotheistic traditions have more clearly defined notions of divine inspiration. For Islam divine inspiration of the Qur’an means there is no human contribution to the writing of the Qur’an; it was dictated in Arabic to Muhammad. Christians maintain that the Bible is fully inspired by God, but that God used the distinctives of human authorship in putting his Revelation in writing.

Canon. Most traditions have an authoritative list of sacred texts. In monotheistic traditions such as Christianity and Islam the canon (Bible, Qur’an) is clearly defined and is “closed” (material cannot be added to or subtracted from the authoritative canon). Some branches of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shinto have less clearly defined notions of canonicity, and in some cases the canon is regarded as “open”—new authoritative scriptures can be recognized.

Content of Sacred Scripture. Religious texts reflect a wide range of content.

Story. Sacred narrative unfolds the nature of divine beings, the beginning of existence, the purpose of life, and the like. Narratives can include paradox, riddles, or parables, and can be presented in ways that are contrary to normal experience. Story has the capacity to communicate important truths and to move the believer toward the desired ideal.

Doctrine. Scriptures communicate certain beliefs, both explicitly and implicitly. The religious communities, reflecting upon scriptures, formulate authoritative teachings, dogmas, and systems that help transform believers, delineate sacred time and space, and provide explanation for the crises threatening human existence.

Ritual. Scripture also prescribes acceptable rituals and patterns of behavior relating to the sacred. Actions pertaining to sacrifice, purification rites, and pilgrimage are defined. Worship is encouraged through song, praise, prayer, chant, petition, meditation, and the like.

Experience. The dilemmas of human existence are expressed in scriptures in the form of confession of sinfulness; struggles with suffering, frailty, and ignorance; and descriptions of the precariousness and insignificance of human life. Human experience with evil is a common theme. The scriptures bring meaning to these struggles and hope for their resolution, here or in the hereafter.

Ethics. Models for proper behavior encompass the entire range of life, including private and public conduct, customs, standards of morality, regulations for purity, rewards for righteousness, punishments for error, and satisfaction or atonement for sin.

Sacred scriptures thus provide identity, authorization, and ideals for those of a particular religious tradition. Whether the Bible, Torah, Qur’an, Vedas, Tao Te Ching, Adi Granth, or the Avesta, the holy writ of a people tells how institutions were formed, covenants ratified, and the divine acted so that believers may have a charter for their history and an explanation for their existence.

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Religious Typologies. A religious typology is a means of classifying different religious systems. A number of religious typologies have been proposed, including the following.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) posited three stages in the evolution of thought: (1) the theo-

logical stage, with spiritual beings; (2) the metaphysical stage, with abstract invisible forces; and (3) the positivistic stage, where causes are sought in a scientific and pragmatic manner. E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) proposed five stages: (1) ANIMISM, belief in spiritual beings and an afterlife, (2) fetishism, (3) belief in demons, (4) POLYTHEISM, and (5) MONOTHEISM. Sir James Frazer (1854–1941) postulated that humans began with MAGIC. When they found magic ineffective, they turned to religion, and finally to science. This schema, especially the belief that science if pursued far enough will yield ultimate answers, is held by many today. R. R. Marett (1866–1943) believed animatism is basic to a religious system. His theory is based on his learning about *mana*, supernatural power that is present in certain men, spirits, and natural objects, in some Pacific cultures, and similar concepts in other cultures. Karl Marx (1818–83) theorized that the disappearance of religion would result in a classless society. He viewed religion as a tool of exploitation of the people. He predicted that as cultures and societies become more modernized and industrialized, SECULARIZATION would eventually eliminate religion.

Each of the above theories has failed under reality checks. Fieldworkers found that people in technologically primitive cultures believe in God, the sustainer and creator of life. Thus many groups have been monotheists for centuries. Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954), who conducted field research in South America among people in Tierra del Fuego, in Africa (Rwanda), and on the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, provided data that contradict these early theories.

Wallace proposed four typologies: (1) individual religious systems, (2) communal religions, (3) ecclesiastical institutions, and (5) universalistic religions. A possible fifth category is secularism, including secular humanism. Each of the more complex religious systems, with the possible exception of secularism, encompasses all that are below it. Traditionally the type of religious system often correlated with the level of sociopolitical complexity of the society. For example, hunter and gatherer societies tend toward individual and communal religious institutions while state societies tend to have ecclesiastical and universalistic religions.

In individualistic religious systems, individuals function as their own religious specialists (e.g., the vision quest by North American plains Indians). Communal religions have great diversity. Ecclesiastical religions have creeds, sacred scripture, and religious specialists who are organized hierarchically (e.g., the religions developed in Egypt, China, Mesopotamia, Rome, Greece, Mesoamerica, South America, and Africa; examples include the religions of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca). In universalistic religions, adherents claim

that their religious messages apply to all of humanity (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism). These are known as the great religious traditions.

In secularization and accompanying individualism, religion becomes a private affair, separate from social, political, and economic institutions. Secular humanism is the dominant ideology in many modern states. One problem with this perspective is that it is not possible to abstract religion from the rest of culture. To do so undermines a culture's moral and ethical foundations. Religion, with its moral and ethical principles, is essential for a stable healthy society.

CAROL V. MCKINNEY

Bibliography. M. Harris, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*; J. R. Hinnells, ed., *A Handbook of Living Religions*; H. Smith, *The World's Religions*; E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, 2 vols.; A. F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View*.

Renewal Movements. Change is an inevitable part of life. All cultures and religions experience times of decline and decay. In order for them to survive, revitalization and renewal are necessary.

Cultural Revitalization. Revitalization movements are a deliberate effort to construct a more satisfying CULTURE. Though they may include religious elements, their major focus involves the entire cultural system. When reality provides no escape from the frustration of social deterioration, revitalization movements offer a way out.

The Ghost Dance of the American Indians, the Mau Mau of Africa, and the CARGO CULTS of Melanesia longed for the defeat of an enemy, freedom from slavery, and arrival of utopian riches. These dreams were nurtured by anxiety that reached an explosive intensity. In each case, the anticipated overthrow of an existing system—and inauguration of a replacement—was an attempt to reduce stress.

According to Anthony Wallace, a common sequence in revitalization movements involves: (1) the normal state in which needs are adequately met by existing components in the society; (2) a period of increased stress, where frustration is amplified by outside domination or lack of material goods; (3) a time of cultural distortion when normative methods of releasing tension are laid aside; and (4) the rise of a revitalization movement, a dynamic group within a community dedicated to overcoming degradation in their midst. Often these movements are out of touch with reality, doomed to failure from the start. Sometimes revitalization movements stir a latent power within a culture whereby satisfying correctives are generated. As a result, further decline is avoided, achieving a new normal state.

Revelation, General

Spiritual Renewal. Religions remain viable only as they periodically experience renewal. The divine side of renewal is called revival. The human manifestation is labeled nativistic, messianic, millennial, or renewal movements. Though they differ in form and content from place to place and from time to time, renewal movements typically emerge when religions lose their vitality. Where renewal furnishes a system of meaningful beliefs and practices—a system useful in dealing with the realities of life—old beliefs and practices are altered or abandoned (depending on the extent and immediacy of the need for change). Under such circumstances, teachers, leaders, messengers, prophets, or messiahs provide supernaturally sanctioned reinterpretations of traditional ideologies, establish a new sect within the old religious system, or begin a new religion. Spiritual renewal usually involves both borrowing and inventing, a reworking of old and adding of new religious elements.

Renewal is instigated by various conditions and implemented through different processes. Religion grows stale when excitement, sacrifice, and commitment give way to cold, mechanical, and impersonal performance. What began as a vibrant movement hardens into a lifeless organization. Vision is lost. Focus shifts from people to programs, from flexibility to rigidity, from ministry to administration. The shell of religiosity no longer satisfies the human need to meet the holy. A seedbed for change, the conditions for renewal are present.

Religion should be an intensely personal matter expressed in a closely knit community. When these are absent, renewal will focus on individuals and organizations. Individual renewal is needed when religious fervor wanes. Spiritual refreshment comes from above (chants, sermons, prayer, meditations, songs, and pilgrimages help fan the dying embers of a sagging faith into the glowing warmth of a new life). Newness expresses itself in two areas. First, individual renewal will result in personal restoration. People will rededicate themselves to their religion, recommit themselves to their God or gods. A personal restoration includes abandoning an old life and adopting a new life that brings knowledge, healing, liberation, purity, salvation, or forgiveness. Second, individual renewal will express itself in ritual rejuvenation. Ritual is a way of acting out religion, a way of escaping the secular routine of daily living to enter spiritual realms. The solution to dead rituals is not rejecting but regenerating them. Renewal reinstalls the sacred in worship. A confrontation with the holy restores a sense of awe, mystery, or respect for the divine.

Organizational renewal is needed when an institution imposes dehumanizing rules and procedures on its members. Since some sort of reli-

gious system is essential, the solution is not destroying but renewing organization. Reforming churches, monasteries, fellowships, orders, agencies, and movements will minimize their evil and maximize their good. Organizational renewal takes two forms. First, it manifests itself in para-institutions. Those organizations that stand alongside existing institutions address particular issues that have been neglected, lost, or deemphasized by the older organizations. Such groups attract talented people with high commitment. As older organizations lose members and resources, they either die, create rivalries, or renew themselves. Recent Christian para-institutions include Focus on the Family, Promise Keepers, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Christian Business Man's Club, Youth for Christ, Navigators, and Campus Crusade for Christ (see PARACHURCH AGENCIES). Non-Christian para-institutions include the Rastafarians, Radhasoami, Eckankar, Theosophy, and the Anthroposophical Society.

Organizational renewal reveals itself in new structures. When bureaucratic inertia and membership nominalism deaden an organization, those who retain the commitment of the "founding fathers" may begin anew. Reshaping the old seems hopeless. New structures become a viable option. Catholic orders and Protestant denominations are salient Christian examples of this phenomenon. Black Muslims, New Thought Movement, The Self-Realization Fellowship, Soka Gakkai, Great White Brotherhood, and the Bahai faith are new structures that grew out of non-Christian religious organizations.

Culture and religion provide a worldview that describes and explains the nature of the universe, humanity, and the holy. As circumstances render elements of WORLDVIEW impracticable, new beliefs and practices are required. Where change is slow, there is usually time for gradual adjustments. Where change is rapid, traditional beliefs and practices fail to help adherents adjust quickly enough. As a consequence, cultural revitalization and spiritual renewal often develop. When these adaptive efforts succeed, new cultural and spiritual expressions are born that will last until they also become irrelevant to the ever-changing ways of life.

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Revelation, General. Apart from revelation, there is neither genuine knowledge of God nor Christian faith. The core idea of revelation comes from the Hebrew *gamlah* and the Greek

apokalyptō, whose basic meaning is “to uncover” or “to disclose.” Revelation is the activity of God whereby he “uncovers” or discloses what was previously not known nor could be known.

The Scriptures speak of two kinds of revelation: general and special. General revelation is distinguished from special revelation in mode, content, and function. Special revelation is that divine activity whereby God discloses himself (knowledge, will, and purposes) to specific persons at particular times in history for the purpose of redemption. The inspired record of this is given in the BIBLE. On the other hand, general revelation is God’s universal self-disclosure. Through general revelation a general knowledge of God has been made available to all humanity at all times. The main biblical passages which relate to general revelation are Psalm 19:1–6; Job 36:24–37:24; Romans 1:18–32; 2:14–15; Acts 14:15–17; and Acts 17:16–34 (many include John 1:9).

These passages speak of four ways (modes) in which general revelation is conveyed. First, the most evident mode of general revelation is the created order (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1:19, 20). Something of the greatness, majesty, and nature of the Creator is disclosed by what he has made. Second, God’s continuing care for what he has made testifies to his reality and goodness (Acts 14:17). Prayer and sacrifice during difficult times and thanksgiving during plentiful times have been a universal human experience, indicating a natural awareness of human dependence upon God. That God provides for human needs discloses his care and kindness. Third, human moral CONSCIENCE is another source of general revelation (Rom. 2:14, 15). God has created human beings with the ability to know moral right and wrong. This sense of right and wrong, at least partially, corresponds with God’s moral nature. Fourth, the innate awareness of God, or what John Calvin called the *divinitatis sensum* (sense of divinity), is another way in which God is disclosed. This innate awareness is the seed of religion. Though this seed has germinated differently in the many and diverse religions of the world, these religions testify to the internal awareness of the reality of God and the desire to know him. History is possibly a fifth mode of general revelation. Traditionally many have held that God discloses himself through the course and events of history. Certainly God acts in history and is directing the course of history. However, significant questions have been raised concerning our ability to discern God and his purposes in history. Even with the benefit of special revelation, the significance of particular historical events are often ambiguous and open to differing interpretations.

Dealing with the concrete content of general revelation is more problematic. The question of

what can be known about God on the basis of general revelation alone (natural theology) has received considerable attention. The views of this have varied widely. Pluralistic theology, a contemporary form of liberal theology, contends that any knowledge or experience of God has its source in some form of general revelation only. It denies special revelation and rejects the uniquely inspired status of the Bible.

Thomas Aquinas is representative of a second approach that has had wide acceptance traditionally. Aquinas argued that God’s existence could be proved and some knowledge of God attained through rational reflection on the created order. Such knowledge is not sufficient for salvation but was deemed to be adequate to prove the existence of God. The limitations of this view have become increasingly evident. The ability of these arguments to convince largely rests upon one’s presuppositions and worldview.

A third approach is provided by John Calvin, who saw general revelation as having the ability to supplement and deepen the knowledge of God provided by special revelation, but only as general revelation was viewed through the “spectacles” of special revelation. Calvin insisted that because of sin it is not possible to develop a systematic and reliable knowledge of God. At best one gains bits and pieces of knowledge of God. In the twentieth century, Karl Barth’s complete denial of general revelation represents the other extreme of the continuum of views. For Barth, the infinite qualitative distinction between God and humanity (God’s total otherness), humanity’s sinfulness, and Barth’s tendency to equate any revelation with salvific experience of God led to a complete negation of the possibility of true knowledge of God, however minute, through general revelation. While this approach has appealed to many, it does contradict the testimony of Psalm 19, Romans 1:19f., and Romans 2:14–15.

Some of the difficulty in determining the precise content of general revelation rests in the fact that Scripture itself does not deal exhaustively with the issue. However, some indication is given of what can be known of God in general revelation. Psalm 19:1 states, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” God intended creation itself to reveal the great intellect, wisdom, creativity, and ability of the One who made it all. Romans 1:20 declares that God’s “eternal power and divine nature” can be known through that which he has made. It should be evident that he has the abilities and power necessary to effect that which he has made and that he possesses the attributes normally associated with deity.

Other considerations, however, mitigate against the attainment of concrete and consistent knowledge of God through general revelation. Human sinfulness (Rom. 1:21f.; 2 Cor. 4:4),

Revelation, General

human finitude (i.e., the natural limitations on human perception and understanding), and the fact that creation itself suffers under God's judgment (Rom. 8:20, 21), all contribute to the human inability to derive a natural theology. Special revelation is necessary to overcome these barriers to knowledge of God. Although general revelation potentially and in principle yields a definite knowledge of God, the actual attainment of such knowledge is severely limited and can only be attested through consistency in Scripture. General revelation points to God's abilities but is less clear on his character and purposes. The same creation that points to God's kindness because of his provision for human needs (Acts 14:17) also is the cause of great suffering through catastrophes, droughts, and the like. Calvin rightly asserted that we must look at general revelation through the "spectacles" of Scripture. Special revelation provides the necessary interpretive framework from which one can more clearly discern the abilities, character, and purposes of God witnessed to by general revelation.

What then is the function of general revelation for us today? Scripture suggests two ways in which it continues to serve God's purposes. On the one hand, it is an evidence of God's continuing love and mercy toward humankind. God continues to provide a witness to himself (Acts 14:17) and to stir humanity to seek him (Acts 17:27). On the other hand, general revelation serves God's redemptive purposes. Human rejection of general revelation demonstrates both God's justice in judging human sin (Rom. 1:19ff.; 2:12–16) and the need for special revelation and the gracious provision of redemption through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Implications for Missions. One's understanding of general revelation has important implications for several areas that pertain to the church's obligation to and practice of missions.

View of Other Religions. This is particularly true in relation to non-Christian religions. Religious PLURALISM presupposes that some form of a universal, general revelation is the ground of all religions, Christianity included. Karl Rahner's "Anonymous Christian" thesis represents an inclusivist approach which, while maintaining the superior and definitive nature of special revelation, allows for the possibility of true knowledge and redemption in other religions. As such, other religions are not hostile or in competition with Christianity. Rather, they are limited attempts to respond to God's general revelatory activity that need to be completed or corrected by special revelation. Evangelical theology's perspectives have ranged between seeing religions as well-intentioned but erroneous means of responding to God to being the product of active rebelliousness to what has been revealed by God in general revelation.

Religious expression is the consequence of the fact that God reveals himself and that humanity has both the innate ability and urge to know him. The only source of knowledge of God available to non-Christian religions is general revelation. However, the fallen state of creation and human nature results in the corruption of truth available in general revelation. Scripture's teaching on false worship, the inevitable and willful distortion of general revelation (Rom. 1:19ff.), Satan's deceptive activities, as well as redemption, all indicate that, whether well-intentioned or not (humanly speaking), non-Christian religions cannot attain true knowledge of God or accomplish reconciliation with God. Christianity must regard other religions as inadequate (at best) forms of worship which must be replaced by indigenous and culturally relevant forms of true worship based on special revelation (cf. Acts 17:22ff.).

Nature and Source of Salvation. Basing themselves on general revelation, many today hold that SALVATION is possible apart from the proclamation of the gospel. The pluralist maintains that all religions are equally ways of salvation and the source of knowledge for salvation (usually understood as some form of moral life) is general revelation, to which all people have equal access. Inclusivists maintain the necessity of Christ's atonement for salvation, but not the necessity of knowing and confessing Christ. If one responds to what knowledge of God is made known in general revelation, this faith is just as efficacious a saving faith as that faith which is consciously placed in Christ and the proclaimed gospel.

Scripture may permit an openness to the possibility that some may find full acceptance by God apart from the knowledge provided by special revelation or the gospel (e.g., Melchizedek). However, Scripture is silent concerning how such individuals came to faith so we must be careful about drawing conclusions from such exceptions. Scripture is more clear that humanity has willfully distorted what truth is given in general revelation and that the proclamation of the gospel is needed for salvation (cf. Rom. 10:14, 15). Therefore, an important element in the church's motivation for mission is the recognition that general revelation is not a sufficient source for salvation. In obedience to the Lord's command and in light of human estrangement from God because of SIN, the church is compelled to go to all the world with the gospel of salvation.

Contextualization. CONTEXTUALIZATION is concerned both with communicating the gospel to other cultures and with the development of culturally relevant theology. The universal nature of human beings, of their religious need and experience, and of general revelation make contextual-

ization of theology possible. Therefore, we both expect to find areas of common ground from which to communicate the gospel and some points of truth and experience in other cultures which can deepen our understanding of God and help shape culturally relevant theologies. We should avoid the extremes of radical discontinuity between the gospel and culture, as in neo-orthodoxy, and radical continuity between gospel and culture, as in liberal and pluralistic theologies. The SYNCRETISM of the latter is avoided only by subjecting the ideas, insights, and practices of culture to the criteria and authority of Scripture. Those elements in culture that are consistent with Scripture can be utilized in contextualizing the gospel and theology.

Dialogue and Cooperation. The postmodern spirit and religious pluralism have been leading advocates of religious DIALOGUE. They presume the basic equality of all religious expressions and seek to grow in knowledge of God through mutual dialogue and cooperation. A biblical understanding of general revelation, Scripture, Christ, and salvation cannot approach other religions in this way. True worship and knowledge of God comes only through submission to Christ and the revelation provided in Scripture.

The doctrine of general revelation does allow for the possibility of interreligious dialogue in areas of mutual concern (moral, social, ecological, etc.). Further, dialogue is a legitimate way to gain mutual understanding and respect and may even cause the Christian opportunity to reflect differently on his or her faith in such a way as to gain new understanding. But Scripture is the sole authoritative and reliable source of knowledge of God. Truths gained through reflection upon general revelation are at best partial and must always be judged by Scripture.

WAYNE JOHNSON

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Rites of Passage. Activities, usually rituals, marking culturally recognized transitions from one place to another, or from one stage of life to another. A rite of passage may mark any change of status—geographic place, condition of life, social position, or age. It gives public recognition to changed roles and relationships in the community, provides for readjustment of the society, affirms its values and beliefs, and helps the individual adjust to a new status.

Life transitions that commonly involve rites of passage are birth, initiation (admission into distinct groups of the society may occur several times, on entering different groups), marriage, parenthood, death.

Three phases of rites of transition are recognized: separation, transition, and incorporation, though these often overlap in the ritual activities (see RITUAL and CEREMONY). *Separation* marks withdrawal from a group and beginning the move to another place or status. *Transition* is the time between stages, having left one place or state and not yet having entered the next. It is also called the liminal phase of passage or segregation. Transitional people occupy ambiguous social positions, exempt from ordinary distinctions and expectations, and are frequently cut off from normal social contacts and behavior (see LIMINAL, LIMINALITY). Rites during the transition phase are often collective, building intense community spirit. A reversal of ordinary behavior may be a feature. Sometimes special conditions are imposed such as humility, poverty, obedience, sexual abstinence, or silence. *Incorporation* (also called integration or aggregation) is formally reentering society after completion of the rite. A new identity is recognized that establishes a changed social status. The missionary must consider if existing rituals can be given new meaning, or if a functional equivalent that is distinctly Christian can be introduced. Rites of passage can be a powerful medium for teaching and building Christian community.

DONALD K. SMITH

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Ritual and Ceremony. All religions have ways to attract the attention of supernatural beings and forces. These highly symbolic acts take many forms: MAGIC, supplication, SACRIFICE, or other means deemed necessary to restore and maintain balance between the supernatural and natural realms. Ritual brings MYTH to life and, though a performance invoking the action of powers that would otherwise not be present, allows for a display of beliefs and values. Such sacred drama is often performed by a religious practitioner who assists common people who are not equipped to approach these powers alone.

Anthropologists recognize three broad types of ritual. (1) Rites of transformation include ceremonies associated with stages of the life cycle (e.g., birth, naming, initiation, marriage, retirement, death), the recognition of conversion, and revivals or pilgrimages (see also RITES OF PASSAGE). (2) Rites of crisis are associated with healing, decision making, or dealing with calamity. (3) Rites of intensification answer the human need for order and identity (birthdays, planned

Sacrifice

festivals, and ancestral traditions). Ritual often takes place in stages that remove people from the mundane (e.g., ablution, removal of shoes, or silence upon entering a house of worship), bring them into the sacred (through worship), and return them to the mundane (e.g., putting on one's shoes before reentering the streets), better equipped to handle life.

Typically approaching religion as cognitive rather than experiential, Western missionaries have thereby rejected a holistic coincidence of supernatural and natural. This separation has created confusion for people who attempt to make God relevant to daily living. But by adapting Christian rituals to specific cultural contexts missionaries can demonstrate how God enters into relationship with people; for example, they might make use of the analogies between Christian baptism and pre-Christian initiation rites. However, care must be taken to ensure allegiance to God rather than to the ritual. The focus must be on God's intention to impact human affairs rather than on the power of a ritual to attract God's attention.

R. DANIEL SHAW

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Sacrifice. The call to follow Christ is a call to sacrifice because it involves a willing abandonment of self in favor of Christ. Christians should be willing to “give up everything they have” (Luke 14:33) as disciples of Jesus Christ (see Matt. 4:20, 22; Mark 10:21, 28, 52; Luke 5:28; John 1:43; 21:19, 22). In fact, on several occasions Jesus stressed that Christians are to give up their own life in deference to him (Matt. 10:37–39; Mark 8:34–38; Luke 17:33; John 12:25–26). Jesus is our hidden treasure and pearl of great value for which we willingly sell all that we have (Matt. 13:44–45). As such, forsaking everything else for Jesus is ultimately no sacrifice at all—it is the wisest choice. Missionary martyr JIM ELIOT understood this and said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Hampton and Plueddemann, 1991, 16).

Paul, the great missionary, spoke of “Christ Jesus my Lord for whose sake I have lost all things” (see Phil. 3:5–9). Paul was willing to sacrifice and suffer because Christ had become his Lord and Master. The lordship of Christ over us leads us to understand that we no longer belong to ourselves, but rather to him who bought us with his own blood (see Luke 6:46; Rom. 14:7–9; 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

Paul expressed it well when he defined his identity in the following way: “the God whose I am and whom I serve” (Acts 27:33). He belonged to God so he had to serve him! Until the lordship of Christ becomes a central tenet in our WORLD-VIEW, the call to sacrifice in his behalf will be extremely difficult. But once the knee bows to Christ and he is enthroned in our lives, sacrifice can become joyous service to our King! Even suffering for his sake can become something for which we “rejoice” (Rom. 5:3, see also Matt. 5:11–12; 2 Cor. 4:17; 11:23–33). Missionary pioneer J. HUDSON TAYLOR understood this and wrote, “What we give up for Christ we gain. What we keep back for ourselves is our real loss” (*ibid.*, 119).

If a degree of sacrifice, then, is to be expected of all disciples, it should be even more so a hallmark of Christian missionaries. On behalf of the gospel, they are often called to forsake many things that are otherwise biblically allowable: cherished relationships, life-long dreams, comfortable living conditions, personal goals and plans, homeland cultures and models of ministry, relative anonymity, financial security, and many personal possessions. They do this willingly, while understanding that such sacrifice may not be appreciated even by those whom the Lord has called them to serve. Why endure such things? The worth of souls, the sanctification of sinners, and the example and glory of Christ are the reasons expressed by missionaries as being sufficient to counter whatever afflictions, persecutions, or deprivations they may face in their labors.

But where is the corresponding devotion to sacrifice for the missionary cause among Christian laypeople in our day? In a day of unparalleled affluence, many Western Christians are amassing luxury upon luxury and struggling to save for the future while millions of men and women made in God's image perish for lack of gospel knowledge. It is little wonder that non-Western missionaries are taking the place of Western missionaries in their Great Commission-centered living.

May the Holy Spirit break our hearts and bow us before Christ the Lord so that lives of sacrifice become the rule instead of the exception in our churches! Otherwise we will languish in our luxuries. As the psalmist cried out:

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation to all nations” (Psalm 67:1–2).

ED GROSS

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Salvation. The scriptural words for “salvation” in Hebrew and Greek refer to deliverance from any danger or distress. This article is concerned with salvation in its missiological context. So, it deals with salvation only as it relates to the rescue of humans from the cause and effects of SIN.

The History of Redemption. Sin entered the world through Satan’s tempting of the first humans (Gen. 3; James 1:13). Adam and Eve yielded to Satan and chose to rebel against God by sinning. The effects of sin on Adam and Eve were: the loss of fellowship with God, the corruption of their entire being, their exposure to God’s wrath and punishment including a life of misery, inevitable death and eternal separation from him (see Gen. 3:8, 24; Isa. 59:1–2; Gen. 6:5; Rom. 3:1–10; 8:7–8; Eph. 2:1–3; Job 5:7; Isa. 57:21; Rom. 5:14; 6:23; *see also* FALL OF HUMAN-KIND). Adam stood as the representative of all his descendants. The consequences of his decision not to follow God were to affect forever his descendants and the world for good or for evil. All humankind has been affected by the consequences of the sin of its representative, and the fruit of which has been transmitted to each one through the process of birth (see Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; John 3:6). As a result, none of Adam’s heirs are perfect. They are under God’s righteous judgment (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 1:18–20; 3:23).

The Bible, though, reveals from the very beginning God’s response to sin as a gracious plan to reverse the horror of evil. Sin’s instigator, Satan, would be crushed by one of Eve’s male descendants (Gen. 3:15). Through subsequent revelations and the initiating of symbolic animal sacrifices, God taught the descendants of Adam that he loved them and would accept them if they dealt with their sins according to his will (Gen. 4:1–16; 6:8–9; Job 1:1–5; Heb. 1:1). His gracious plan of redemption has always been applied to sinners through the channel of FAITH (Gen. 15:6; Heb. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; 3:19–26; Eph. 2:8, 9). And true, saving faith was always distinguished from a temporary or merely intellectual faith—which could not save (Heb. 11; Luke 8:13; James 2:19).

Later in Moses’ record of human history, God called Abraham and promised to produce a nation through him and through his descendants God would bless all the nations (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–6; 17:6–7; Rom. 4:18–22; *see also* ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). The rest of the Old Testament is a complex history of how God in his providence graciously fulfilled that promise in ways that teach, help, and encourage believers of all ages (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:14–16).

He gave to Abraham many children (see Gen. 12–50) who “were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land [of Egypt] was filled with them” (Exod. 1:7). Though they were populous enough to be a na-

tion, they needed to have their own land, culture, and leadership to become a lasting, viable nation (see Exodus through Joshua). God led them to the land of Canaan through Moses and established them in the Promised Land through a faithful and courageous leader: Joshua [whose name means “The Lord Delivers” and in Greek is the name Jesus]. Though warned of the consequences, the children of Israel rebelled against the Lord and his prophets and were sent into exile. In God’s wonderful grace they were miraculously returned from exile into their own land, rebuilt their temple, and awaited the coming of the Promised One (see Judges through Malachi).

When the time was perfect “God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law” (Gal. 4:4a). He was the reality toward which all the Old Testament animal sacrifices symbolically pointed. So upon seeing him, John declared, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Jesus was “the Lamb slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). It was he who revealed his future coming to Abraham (John 8:56), to Moses (Deut. 18:15; Heb. 11:26), to the wandering Israelites (Heb. 4:2), to David (Acts 2:25–31), and to many others. Jesus taught that the Old Testament pointed to him (Luke 24:25–27, 44) and it was not until his followers understood this that they could understand the [OT] Scriptures (Luke 24:45) because “these are the Scriptures that testify about me,” he claimed (John 5:39).

An angel told Joseph to name Mary’s son “Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). To accomplish salvation Jesus had to live perfectly under God’s law as a human and then willingly substitute his own life as a payment for the penalty that sin demands (Heb. 2:14–15; 2 Cor. 5:21). So, Jesus lived perfectly under the law—without ever sinning (Heb. 4:15; 1 John 3:5). He alone could look at his enemies and say, “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” (John 8:46). And at the end of his perfect life, in the most amazing expression of love ever shown, he subjected himself to the wrath and curse of God on the cross, dying in the place of sinners (Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:12–14; Matt. 27:45–46).

It was only through a perfect God-Man, substituting himself and paying the debt that sin demands from God’s justice, that human sinners could be saved. There is no other possible way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:19–26; Gal. 2:21; 3:21). All that Jesus did, he did “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Following Jesus’ substitutionary death, God raised him from the dead, proving to all that he accepted his Son’s life and sacrifice, and forever establishing the truthfulness of all of Christ’s claims (Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:22–24; Phil. 2:5–11). After appearing to hundreds of disciples over a period of several weeks, Jesus physically as-

cended into heaven. The apostles who saw all of these things were transformed by the Spirit into courageous witnesses who traveled throughout the world proclaiming the good news of salvation through Jesus and making disciples. They taught the disciples to do the same until the return of Jesus (Acts 1:1–11; 1 Cor. 15:1–8; Acts 2–4; 8:1–4; 14:21–23; 1 Cor. 10:31–11:1; Phil. 4:9; Matt. 24:14). As the Son of Man, Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God’s throne where he sovereignly directs the affairs of all creation and represents his children until his return (Matt. 28:16–20; Heb. 7:22–26; 1 John 2:1; 1 Thess. 4:13–18).

This brief summary of the Old and New Testament story is given to show that the Bible is primarily a Book that reveals the history of salvation. Scripture is the story of God’s saving love. It primarily depicts how God prepared the world for the First Coming of his Son and what he has done and is doing to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Missiological Application. The term “salvation” in the Scriptures is a complex concept, not used solely of the conversion of individuals. Salvation in its broad scriptural use is something that has a past, present, and future sense. God’s children have been saved (Rom. 8:24; Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5), are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15), and shall be saved (Rom. 5:9–10; 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:8; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 1:4, 5). Western evangelicalism strangely stresses the past tense with almost no emphasis on the present and future. Missionaries and missiologists should question how significantly Western culture has influenced today’s quick-and-easy, low commitment presentations of the gospel.

Scripture also speaks of salvation as impacting one’s entire being forever. God’s children have been, are being, and shall be saved from sin, self, and Satan. The process of salvation, then, is lifelong and consummated only when believers are perfected in the likeness of the Savior at the resurrection. This challenges the emphasis of some who equate salvation with merely “making a decision for Christ.” It is far more than a simple decision to not want to go to hell sometime in the future. While it involves a personal choice, a true commitment to Christ is not merely a momentary, spiritual issue regarding one’s eternal destiny and having little to do with here and now. True conversion will affect all of life. Its many implications should be articulated by the witness and understood by the hearer before a call for commitment is ever made.

Paul was concerned with some who misrepresented Jesus because the preaching of another Jesus also produced another gospel—one that could not save (see 2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6–9). Missiology must be greatly concerned with how Jesus is proclaimed today since it is only through him

that salvation can occur. Jesus declared that the correct perception of him and his saving work was as the Messiah promised by God (Matt. 16:13–17).

According to the Old Testament, the promised Messiah would save his people by fulfilling three functions: he would be a divine Prophet (Deut. 18:15), Priest (Ps. 110:4; Isa. 53:4–12; Zech. 6:13) and King (Ps. 2; 2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:3–4). The apostles used the messianic Old Testament passages to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and to describe the salvation that was offered through him (see Acts 2:29–31, 36; 3:17–18, 22–23; 4:25–27). Instead of saying, “Accept Jesus as your personal Savior,” the apostles proclaimed that the multitudes should accept Jesus as their divine Prophet, Priest and King.

Is this an insignificant difference from the way evangelism is often done today? Not so if today’s presentation carves away Christ’s role as Prophet and King over his children. Many might gladly accept him as their sin-bearing Savior who might not be so quick to accept him as their Guide and submit to him as their King! Missionaries and missiologists should take a close look at who the Jesus is that is being proclaimed and what level of commitment is being made by those who are responding.

The GREAT COMMISSION involves salvation and is a command to make disciples (Matt. 28:18–20). In the early church every believer was expected to quickly become a disciple (Acts 6:1; 14:21–23). Summarizing how disciples are made, Jesus mentioned the importance of BAPTISM. Though it does not suit today’s evangelical custom, the New Testament very closely relates conversion and baptism as linked together in the normal process of salvation (see Acts 8:12; 18:8; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; 1 Peter 3:21). When asked by a crowd what they should do to be saved, Peter responded, “Repent and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Did Peter understand how to evangelize? The Holy Spirit thought he did and saved 3,000 people! Why did Peter combine baptism with repenting? Perhaps he was seeking to fulfill the Great Commission as he had been taught. Baptism in the New Testament, though not an *essential* component for salvation (see John 3:16, 36, etc.), was an *important* element of the process of true conversion and was normative in the early church. Missionaries and missiologists should explore much more fully the place of baptism, public confession, and church commitment as important elements of New Testament discipling. They should continually warn the church of the consequences of exporting Western styles of evangelism that do not follow apostolic patterns.

EDWARD N. GROSS

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Satanist, Satanism. The medieval church equated all forms of witchcraft and paganism with satanism and resorted to witchcraft trials to suppress such practices. During the twentieth century, a new form of revitalized paganism sought to differentiate between pagans, who worship the Mother Goddess, and satanists, who worship the Christian devil or at least the ideas that he represents.

Practices associated with satanism include celebration of the black Mass, the desecration of sacred objects, animal sacrifices, black magic, malevolent sorcery, and the reputed murder, mutilation, or rape of human victims. These rituals draw on the power of Satan to realize a worshiper's pragmatic and hedonistic purposes.

Followers of satanism fall into three categories. First are those who want to explore the realities of the so-called black arts, or those social rebels who want to shock others by embracing the forbidden world of Satan. The second consists of individuals who want to do evil and who draw on the metaphors and practices associated with malevolent sorcery and evil power. Such individuals usually act alone or in secret groups bent upon criminal or destructive activities. A third group are those who openly worship Satan and are members of a satanic church such as the Church of Satan founded by Anton LaVey or the Temple of Set.

Since the 1970s there has been widespread fear over the existence of a coordinated network of evil satanic cults that are rumored to engage in sexual orgies, cannibalism, blasphemy, and ritual murders of infants, some of which have been especially bred for this purpose. Members of this cult are alleged to be prominent citizens and well-placed leaders of the community who are involved in a nationally and internationally coordinated conspiracy dedicated to the subversion of society. They are believed to be responsible for the ritual deaths of tens of thousands of persons per year, but law enforcement agencies have never been able to uncover any credible evidence to support the existence of such an organization or their practices.

DOUGLAS J. HAYWARD

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Secularist, Secularism. A secularist is a person who has been secularized or who embraces secularism as a WORLDVIEW. The term “secular” is from the Latin *saeculum*, meaning “generation” or “age,” signifying “belonging to this age or the world” rather than to a transcendent religious order. Secularism is a worldview which finds little if any place for the supernatural and the transcendent. It is often linked with philosophical naturalism, which holds that this world of matter and energy is all that exists. Secularism as a worldview must be distinguished from SECULARIZATION as an historical process in which religious beliefs, values, and institutions are increasingly marginalized and lose their plausibility and power. Secularization may result in the elimination of religion entirely, as in atheistic and agnostic societies. Or it may simply transform the nature and place of religion within society, resulting in “this worldly” secularized forms of religion. Secularization is often linked to modernization, so that as societies become increasingly modernized they also tend to become secularized.

In the West secularism has become identified with movement and ideology of secular humanism. The ideology of secular humanism is expressed in the “Secular Humanist Declaration” (1981), which affirms ten points: free inquiry, separation of church and state, freedom, critical intelligence, moral education, religious skepticism, knowledge through reason, science and technology, evolution, and education. Underlying these points is a commitment to an agenda which will reduce the influence of religion in society and elevate the authority of a rationalism based upon reason and science.

As the world increasingly is influenced by modernization and secularization, missionaries in both the West and non-Western cultures will need to deal with secularists who have little interest in religion. Effective ministry will involve not only proclamation of the gospel but also exposing the inadequacies of secularism as a worldview.

WILLIAM H. BAKER

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Shaman, Shamanism. Shamans are part-time religious specialists who serve as intermediaries between humans and the supernatural, and who seek spiritual remedies to individual problems. As such, they are said to live in the middle zone between humans and the supernatural. The word “shaman” comes from the Tungus, also called the Evenki, most of whom live in Russia, China, and Mongolia.

Shamans often invite spirits to possess their bodies in order to receive spiritual power, espe-

Shi'ite, Shi'ism

cially for curing. They are purported to be possessed by spirits in trances, also termed altered states of consciousness, which they enter through use of drugs (e.g., Yanomani shamans in southern Venezuela and northern Brazil), rapid drum beats (e.g., devotees during Hindu religious festivals in Malaysia), light flashes, and music. During trance they are either possessed by a spirit or their souls leave their bodies to ascend to the realm of the spirits (*see also* POSSESSION PHENOMENA).

The spirits, also termed “familiar” or “intermediaries,” may be animal spirits (e.g., among some of the indigenous people of Siberia and the Yanomani, whose shamans are indwelt by the Jaguar spirit, among others). One Yanomami shaman stated,

I'm a man of the spirit world, “shamans” we are called. The shaman is almost always the leader of his village. If he is a good shaman—I mean that if he can avoid the bad spirits and get the good ones—he can lead his village to good hunting, tell them when and where to plant, who to make war with—all the things that will make them into a great village (Ritchie, 1996, 18).

Shamans are clairvoyant, in that they can “see” in the spiritual realm. They claim to have perception, knowledge, or information about individuals that is received from a spiritual source, such that they are often aware of what is happening in their communities without having been told by another person. As one Yanomami shaman stated, “I just knew.” One Bajju former shaman in Nigeria alleged that her ability to perceive in the spiritual realm came from “medicine” of special leaves in water with which she washed her face each morning.

Means of becoming a shaman include a visit by a spirit, a dream or vision, often following an illness, inheritance, an accident or unusual event, or a spontaneous call. People may recognize a change in behavior of a prospective shaman, such as hysteria, having prophetic visions or attacks that leave him or her unconscious. Such an individual then apprentices himself or herself to an established shaman to learn about shamanistic beliefs and practices, names and functions of spirits, techniques, and perhaps a special language. There are both men and women shamans, though gender is culture-specific.

The duties and religious obligations of shamans vary from culture to culture. However, their primary function is to cure illness by using the supernatural for the benefit of individuals and the community. Some treat illness by blowing smoke over patients. Others purportedly extract objects; others do cupping, placing animal horns or other containers over places on a patient's skin

in order to bring heat to that part and perhaps to purportedly extract an object from it. Most shamans prescribe herbal medicines. The use of trance behavior, often accompanied by spirit possession, is common.

Since Western medicine rarely deals with spiritual causes of disease, shamanistic activities continue to be important to people in non-Western countries in the contemporary world. The services offered by shamans deal with a missing component of treatment. In Africa, a frequent diagnosis by shamans is that an individual has offended an ancestor, often one's deceased parents or grandparents, and thus is sick. In that case the usual prescribed remedy is sacrifice to the ancestor (*see* ANCESTRAL PRACTICES).

Some have referred to shamans as “witchdoctors,” a derogatory term that fails to recognize the spiritual world to which these religious practitioners relate. Missionary and church teaching that their activities and beliefs are superstition begs the question of the reality of the spirit world, antagonizes those who know it is real, and serves to drive the activities of shamans underground. Shamans' motives often overlap with those of missionaries, local Christians, and health professionals—to bring healing and well-being to their people. Recognizing their important role in the religious structure of a society should encourage missionaries to befriend them, share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them, and pray for them. Relating to shamans often involves SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

Shamans are distinct from priests, full-time religious specialists who are often organized and part of a sacred tradition. The term “diviner” refers to part-time religious specialists who deal with the spiritual realm with some divination involved. While diviners overlap with shamans in their activities, their use of divination to ascertain why people are ill, die, or suffer misfortune sets them apart (*see also* DIVINATION, DIVINER). Shamans also contrast with magicians, who use specific rituals to produce a specific result, and sorcerers, who use their powers for evil.

CAROL V. MCKINNEY

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Shi'ite, Shi'ism. The Shi'ite branch of Islam comprises about 10 percent of all Muslims and is subdivided into three principal groups: the Zaydis (primarily in Yemen), the Isma'ilis (in Asia, Syria, and East Africa), and the Twelve-Imam Shi'ites or Twelvers. The Twelvers are by far the largest group, comprising most of the population of Iran, 50 percent of Iraq, and scattered communities in Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and the

Gulf states. Shi'ism has been the official religion of Iran since the sixteenth century.

The term "Shi'ite" comes from the Arabic *shi'at Ali*, "party of Ali." The roots of Shi'ism go back to Muhammad's death and the ensuing leadership struggle. Shi'ites claim that Ali, as closest relative to Muhammad and husband to the Prophet's daughter Fatimah, was the rightful successor to Muhammad. Ali eventually became Caliph but was assassinated. His son, Husayn, raised a revolt and was killed at Kerbala in 680. This is the central event of Twelver Shi'ism.

The Shi'ites understand Muhammad and Ali to have possessed special status with God that gave them an absolute right to rule the Muslim community. This status was passed down through the descendants of Ali the Imams, who have both spiritual and political preeminence. They are said to possess secret knowledge, spiritual powers, and special favor with God. The Imams function as intermediaries between humankind and God and are necessary for the salvation of believers. Sunni Muslims, by contrast, have generally seen the claim of the Imams to all spiritual and temporal authority as an extension of the Persian "priest-king" paradigm and have rejected it.

In 873 the twelfth Imam, Muhammad, disappeared as a young boy. Until 940 he was represented by *wakils*, who claimed to be in communication with him. Since that time, Shi'ites have awaited his return as the Mahdi (or "guided one"). They believe he hears prayers and intercedes in human affairs. However, this situation left a considerable void in both political and religious leadership and authority.

Aside from the Imammate, Twelver Shi'ite theology and ritual do not differ greatly from the Sunni tradition. There are distinct shrines and pilgrimage sites associated with the Imams. Perhaps the greatest difference lies in the highly charged emotional climate of Shi'ite religiosity.

The major distinctive of Shi'ism is its understanding of religious leadership. For the past two hundred years, Shi'ite *mujtahids* (leading clerics) have gradually enhanced the level of their authority. They are much more tightly organized with a much more clearly defined hierarchy than their Sunni counterparts. All Shi'ites must identify with and then adhere personally to the superior authority of a *mujtahid*. Today, the top level of the Shi'ite Ulema, the *Ayatollahs*, function as the representatives of the Twelfth Imam on earth. This gradual rise to power culminated in the Iranian Revolution, in which the *Ayatollahs* seized both religious and temporal power in the name of the Hidden Imam. The hostility and tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, which had been on the wane for much of the twentieth century, has again heated up due to the efforts of

Iran to export its brand of Islamic revolution to other Muslim states.

The other divisions of Shi'ites play a significant role in some areas of the Islamic world. The Zaydis reject the doctrine of the Hidden Imam and hold that any adult male descendant of Ali can lead the community. They survive only in Yemen, where the Imams held political control until 1962. Doctrinally, the Zaydis are the closest Shi'ite branch to Sunni orthodoxy and have experienced far less tension with the Sunni majority.

Isma'ilism is essentially Islamic Gnosticism, holding that the Qur'an contains secret, hidden meanings. This superior, allegorical insight was secretly transmitted to Ali and down through the line of Imams. Only through initiation and graded secret teaching can one have access to this divine Truth, which is not accessible to other religions or the mass of Muslims.

JAMES DARRELL CHANCELLOR

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Shinto. The term "Shinto" covers a broad range of religious activities in Japan, from various types of FOLK RELIGION to the private rituals of the imperial family. Prior to World War II Shrine Shinto was officially the state religion. However, the new postwar Constitution clearly mandated the separation of religion and state, although the interpretation and implementation of this principle continues to be controversial. On a popular level, Shinto continues to be influential as folk religion, with many Japanese worshipping Shinto deities. As folk religion, Shinto includes various ritual festivals and ceremonies as well as ancestor worship organized along the lines of family or clan (see ANCESTRAL PRACTICES). The earliest archaeological and historical records indicate the presence of Shinto beliefs and practice. The traditions of Shinto, sometimes in a more pure form and other times more syncretistic, have been maintained continually until the present.

Of particular significance for Shinto are the *Kojiki* (Book of Ancient Traditions) from A.D. 712 and the *Nihonshoki* (Chronicles of Japan) from A.D. 720, the oldest literary works in the Japanese language. These ancient texts, along with their recensions, commentaries, and writings of scholars such as Kamono Mabuchi (d. 1769), Motoori Norinaga (d. 1801), and Hirata Atsutane (d. 1843), who worked for the revival of a purified Shinto, provide our primary sources on Shinto. The *Kojiki* is written in an entirely Japanese style, in terms of both language and content. The *Nihonshoki*, by contrast, includes many Chinese modes of expression and philosophical concepts. Both texts, however,

present the same Japanese view of creation. "Creation" occurs without any Creator or first cause; matter appears before mind and deity has no existence apart from matter. The creation myths portray a process of evolution that continues until the gods themselves evolve into their final form.

According to the creation myths, the highest deity is the goddess Amaterasu, whose grandson Ninigi descended from heaven to earth. Ninigi's grandson, whose mother was a dragon in the form of a woman, was Jimmu, whom the myths present as the first emperor of Japan. The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*, which form the foundation for all subsequent works of Shinto, depict Japan as the center of the earth and the Japanese emperor as the first of men and vicar of the gods.

Central to Shinto is reverence for the *kami* or gods. Shinto is explicitly polytheistic. Awe-inspiring or extraordinary things such as thunder, rocks, mountains, animals, certain human beings, departed ancestors, and the emperor all can be regarded as *kami*. Shinto contains no explicit moral codes. One's duty is to live in fear and reverence for the memory of the dead and to imitate noble examples of the gods and illustrious ancestors. All "sin" is viewed as a kind of pollution. Thus purification rites, in the form of ritual offerings, prayers for cleansing, and lustrations, are prominent in Shinto.

Shinto became influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism, which were introduced into Japan from China. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Shinto scholars attempted to purge Shinto of foreign influences and to restore a purified Japanese Shinto. Included in this restoration was the tendency to view the military rulers of Japan (*shogun*) as political usurpers and the emperor as the sole legitimate ruler. A revitalized Shinto promoted reverence for the emperor, which soon grew into a zealous determination to restore the emperor to political rule and to eliminate foreign influences from Japan, including the "alien" religion of Buddhism. The Meiji Restoration of 1868 resulted in the restoration of the emperor to political rule. The nineteenth-century purificationists and restorationists thus set Japan on a course leading ultimately to World War II. Christians who refused to participate in Shinto rituals—not only in Japan but also in Korea, which Japan ruled as a colony—were often severely persecuted. The particular point of controversy usually concerned the worship of the emperor in state-sponsored Shinto shrines.

The postwar democratic Constitution of Japan has deprived Shinto of its special status, but it has also guaranteed it, along with all religious institutions, freedom of religion. Beginning in the 1960s, however, many politically conservative Japanese have pushed the government to

support officially the Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto shrine in which the spirits of soldiers who died in Japan's modern wars are worshiped. Despite widespread opposition from other religious groups due to the clear violation of the constitutional prohibition of such action, the government supported certain Shinto rites as part of the recent enthronement ceremony of Akihito, the current emperor. Thus both on the popular level of folk religion and in the public sector Shinto continues to exert considerable influence in Japan.

HISAKAZU INAGAKI

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Sikh, Sikhism. Sikhism is a syncretistic religion combining the salient features of HINDUISM and ISLAM. The word "Sikh" is derived from its Pali origin "Sikka" or the Sanskrit word *Sishya*, meaning disciple. All Sikhs are the disciple of ten venerated "gurus" or teachers whose lives and teachings became the foundation of the doctrines and practices of Sikhism (see also GURU).

Beginnings and Growth. Sikhism had a two-fold origin, one in the Hindu Bhakti (devotion) Movement, and the other in Sufi mysticism of Islam. Guru Nanak (1469–1539) the founder, lived in northwest India. Influenced by mysticism of both religions, he taught that there is only one God and he created all people equal. He rejected elaborate religious rituals, and the Brahmins' monopoly and authority in religious matters. After his time there were nine more great gurus.

Because of increasing Muslim opposition to the Sikhs, they grew into a militant sect and a political power. The tenth guru, Govind Singh, baptized five men from five different castes forming them into a fraternity called *Khalsa*. He gave them and himself the common surname Singh ("lion"), a surname used widely today. Women were given equal rights with men in worship and all affairs. Ranjit Singh united all Sikhs and established a kingdom as the Mogul power weakened.

Presently Punjab State has mostly a Sikh population. The Sikhs play a prominent role in agriculture, dairy industry, many business enterprises, and the military. One extremist segment of the Sikhs seeks autonomy and independence for their state through acts of violence.

Religious Teachings and Practices. A popular morning prayer of the Sikhs describes God as "The One, the Truth, the Creator, Immortal and Omnipresent." The belief in one God is strong. Many names of God taken from Hinduism and Islam are recited for the inner cleansing of the

worshippers. Representation of God in images and idols is prohibited.

The Hindu cyclical theory of reincarnation and karma is upheld. If one lives faithfully in devotion and selfless service, after many births he/she will become one with God or achieve *moksha* or salvation. Though there are three broad ethnic groupings among the Sikhs, the CASTE system which is integral to the Hindu theory of transmigration of souls is clearly rejected. The most authoritative and the only canonical scripture is *Adi Granth*, the first book containing about 6,000 hymns. The scripture is often viewed as representing the deity.

Where there are five baptized Sikhs there is a *khalsa* or a "community of the pure" and regular reading of the scripture. Boys and girls are initiated into *khalsa* at the age of puberty. There is no professional priesthood. The place of worship is called *gurdwara*, or the gateway to the guru. The Sikhs observe several of the Hindu festivals and the birthdays of the main gurus.

In the communication of the gospel to the Sikhs, one main link is their strong belief in one God who is actively present in the world and who may be approached by personal devotion. In recent years, a significant member of Sikhs in the West have been open to the gospel of Christ.

SAPHIR ATHYAL

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Sociology of Religion. The study of religion has been attempted through the research paradigms and methodologies of the academic disciplines of theology, psychology, history, philosophy, and the twin disciplines of the social sciences—anthropology and sociology. While methodologically diverse a social science approach to the study of religion has traditionally been threefold: to identify, to describe, and to explain the diversity of practices and beliefs associated with human understandings regarding the nature and purpose of their existence, which generally includes their relationship to and understanding of the numinous. Social scientists have never been able to offer a universally agreeable definition for religion and those that have been proposed range from the parsimonious definition offered by E. B. Tylor, "the belief in spiritual beings," to the cumbersome definition of C. Geertz, "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that

the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."

While Geertz manages to avoid the use of such terms as supernatural, sacred, or spiritual, social scientists acknowledge that in spite of the inadequacies of language the sociological study of religion attempts to identify human understandings and responses to such phenomena. As such, the sociology of religion has encompassed such religiously associated topics as RITUAL AND CEREMONY, COSMOLOGY, social organization, MYTH and RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES, religious practitioners, and any other associated beliefs, practices, or experiences (see also BELIEF SYSTEMS). At times social scientists have coined terminology to identify religious phenomena (such as ANIMISM, or the many terms that classify various divination techniques; see DIVINER, DIVINATION). At other times they have borrowed foreign terms from cultures under investigation (such as TOTEM, TABOO, and mana). One of the major challenges to the social sciences in respect to the task of identification of religious phenomena is the problem of similarity versus diversity. The broad diversity of religious beliefs and practices required careful ethnographic analysis of particular cultural practices prior to making cross-cultural comparisons or concluding that a given phenomenon is present in that culture.

With respect to the descriptive task of the social sciences, sociologists and anthropologists have discovered that some religious concepts are universal, that religious ideas and practices are intricately interwoven with other cultural concepts and institutions, that religious institutions reflect a culture's other social institutions, that religious sentiments constitute an important aspect of the social and cultural identity of a group, and that religion acts as a powerful motivation for behavior. They have further adopted what has come to be known as "an insider" or *emic* approach and "an outsider" or *etic* approach to describing cultural concepts.

In their attempts to explain religious beliefs and behavior social scientists do not have a unifying theory of religion on which they can agree, nor do they have a shared set of methodological tools by which to approach the study of religion in culture. At the heart of the problem associated with explanations of religious behavior is the issue of research bias, in which the theoretical or ideological presuppositions of the researcher influence the end results of the research.

Early sociological research sought to demonstrate that religion is the product of evolutionary development and forced a considerable amount of selected cultural data into their system until the whole theory collapsed under the weight of contrary data. Later functionalist and psychopathological theories sought to explain religious sentiments and practices as the product of ignorance,

Soteriology in World Religions

neurosis, false consciousness, or outright manipulation. Most such attempts to portray religion as irrational have not fared well and have in some instances reached ignominious dead ends.

In more recent years new and competing theories of religion have emerged that have sought to acknowledge a degree of legitimacy for religious beliefs and practices. While most social scientists continue to be skeptical or even hostile toward the subject matter of religion they have sought to record its implications in society. This has led them to inquire into such matters as the costs and benefits of religious behaviors, and the ecological and cultural consequences of any set of religious practices. The purpose of such studies has been to apply empirical testing, formulate falsifiable propositions, and demonstrate meaningful correlations between beliefs and social practices without at the same time becoming involved in the task of falsifying the doctrines or teachings of a given religious system. Critics of this approach to the study of religion accuse social scientists of confusing the benefits and sociocultural consequences of religion with the source or primal cause for the emergence and continuance of a religious system.

Postmodern social scientists have embraced a blend of humanist and interpretive approaches to conclude that the goal of a sociological study of religion ought to be that of recording and interpreting the meaning of religion in the lives of its believers. Such an approach rejects the notion that the sociological study of religious behavior can properly ascertain an objective and scientific description of cause and effect in religion because the supernatural cannot be subjected to such testing methods. Social scientists, they claim, should focus on the evocation and description of religious phenomena, and then, rather than trying to explain such behavior based on a secularist or ethnocentric theory, to interpret its meaning as perceived by the participants. This approach has sparked a lively debate within the discipline by those who see no logical guidelines to prevent researchers from flights of fantasy in their interpretive descriptions of religious experiences. In order to gain greater acceptance in the discipline this particular approach to the study of religion will have to ascertain commonly agreed hermeneutical guidelines for the legitimate interpretation of religious behaviors.

There has been a long history of antagonism between theology and the social sciences primarily because of the secularizing influences and critical scrutiny of the scientific community that has denied the epistemological validity of faith, revelation, and intuition. On the other hand scientists also recognize that science is not the per-

fect approach to truth and that all knowledge is at best tentative.

DOUGLAS J. HAYWARD

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Soteriology in World Religions. Religions generally assume that human beings are in some kind of undesirable condition and that a much better state can be attained, either through one's own efforts or through the intervention of some other power. Although generally used of salvation in Christian theology, soteriology (from Greek *soteria*, deliverance, salvation) can also refer to the common religious theme of deliverance from a present predicament. However, strikingly different views on the nature of and means for achieving the soteriological goal are found among the various religious traditions.

The Soteriological Goal. The soteriological goal of a particular tradition must be understood with reference to the tradition's diagnosis of the problem and its views on the nature of the religious ultimate.

Although they differ on particular issues, monotheistic religions generally understand the human predicament as the result of moral failure to live in accordance with God's righteous ways (sin). Accordingly, the soteriological goal is the restoration of a proper relationship with God and living eternally in the presence of God in heaven or paradise. Christianity, which emphasizes the radical corruption of human nature and its complete inability to save itself, views salvation as including not only eternal life with God in the future but also the possession of new life in Christ in the present.

Religious traditions from the Indian subcontinent view the human predicament in terms of *samsara*, the ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which suffering is inevitable. The religious goal thus is *moksha*, or liberation from the entire cycle of rebirths through overcoming the chains of *karma*, the principle regulating rebirths.

Both monistic and theistic traditions within Hinduism hold that BRAHMAN is the one ultimate reality, but they have rather different views on what liberation from *samsara* means. Theistic traditions claim liberation results in a blissful state of union with Brahman in which liberated souls retain distinct identities and consciousness. Monistic traditions understand liberation as the lifting of the veil of ignorance that prevents one from realizing the essential identity of the self with Brahman.

BUDDHISM originally identified the religious ultimate and the soteriological goal in nontheistic

terms as *nirvana*, the paradoxical state characterized by release from the cycle of rebirths and elimination of passion and craving. As Buddhism moved into China and Japan, the religious goal tended to focus upon “enlightenment” or “awakening” in the present more than liberation from the cycle of rebirths. The ideal became harmony within the social and cosmic order, which is achieved through a penetrating insight into the true nature of things. There is also a strong theistic strain in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, exemplified in the Pure Land traditions that view the Amida Buddha in theistic terms and anticipate future rebirth in the paradise of the Pure Land. On a folk level, many Hindus and Buddhists recognize that complete liberation from *samsara* is impossible in this life and thus they are content with working toward a somewhat improved state in the next life.

Animistic and shamanistic traditions tend to identify salvation with deliverance from forces and powers causing suffering and misfortune in this life. Religious TAOISM is concerned not only with prosperity and well-being in this life, but also with achieving immortality beyond this life.

Means for Achieving the Goal. Religious traditions can be divided broadly into two classes: those that regard the soteriological goal as attainable solely through one’s own efforts and those that hold that it is the result of assistance from some other power or being. Among monotheistic traditions, Protestant Christianity unequivocally maintains that salvation is entirely a gift of God’s grace and rests upon the substitutionary and atoning death of Jesus Christ upon the cross (see ATONEMENT). Salvation is appropriated by an act of faith in which Jesus Christ is recognized as one’s Lord and Savior. ISLAM, however, rejects the idea of substitutionary atonement. There is no need for a savior; each person is solely responsible for his or her own sins and will be judged impartially by Allah on the basis of faithfulness to Allah’s precepts. Admittance to paradise is based upon an impartial weighing of one’s conduct in this life.

The notion of salvation/liberation as a gift of grace is also found in theistic forms of Hinduism and Buddhism. The *bhakti* (devotion) tradition in Hinduism emphasizes passionate devotion and love to a particular deity (Shiva, Vishnu) in recognition of aid granted or anticipated. Similarly, the Pure Land sects of Buddhism stress that rebirth in the Pure Land is entirely the gift of the grace of Amida Buddha.

Other traditions explicitly link attainment of the soteriological goal with proper actions or insights that are cultivated through strict discipline. Thus, THERAVADA BUDDHISM holds that *nirvana* is attained solely through one’s own efforts in carefully following the Noble Eightfold Path, and ZEN BUDDHISM, rejecting dependence upon

the grace of another, maintains that enlightenment is gained through rigorous self-discipline. Similarly, Hinduism recognizes not only the way of devotion but also the way of works (proper compliance with one’s duties as defined by one’s position and stage in life) and the way of knowledge (proper insight attained through careful study of the sacred texts and rigorous discipline of the psychic/physical faculties) as effective paths to liberation. The eclecticism of Hinduism is reflected in the attitude that there are many different ways to approach the divine; there is no one way that is right for all people at all times.

Animistic and shamanistic traditions stress observing proper RITUAL so as to appease the spirits and forces that influence conditions in both this life and the afterlife. Religious Taoism seeks immortality through restored harmony with the Tao by means of moral conduct, alchemical techniques, and hygienic, dietary, and respiratory disciplines.

Significantly, most traditions emphasize that what one believes about reality directly affects whether one will attain the soteriological goal. This raises the inescapable question of truth: What is the cause of our present predicament and what is the proper cure for this problem? Scripture maintains that the root cause of all suffering and evil is sin, the deliberate rejection of a holy God and his righteous ways. The heart of the Christian gospel is the announcement that salvation—forgiveness for sin, new life in Christ, and a restored relationship with God both now and forever—is possible through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

HAROLD A. NETLAND

Bibliography. S. G. F. Brandon, *Man and His Destiny in the Great Religions*; J. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*; H. Netland, *Dissonant Voices*; E. J. Sharpe and J. R. Hinnells, eds., *Man and His Salvation*.

Sufi, Sufism. Sufism is the mystical dimension of Islam. The term most likely comes from the Arabic *suf* (wool): the early Sufis wore plain woolen clothing to symbolize their commitment to poverty and simplicity. Sufism is the Islamic expression of the broad religious movement that seeks direct knowledge of God; it is the inward path to union with God that complements the outward, formal religious tradition. Sufism derives its doctrines and methods from the Qu’ran and Islamic traditions, though it reflects influences of Greek and Persian philosophy, Christianity, and even Hinduism.

The ultimate goal of the Sufi is to experience the oneness or unity of God. The movement toward this goal is termed the Way or the Path. The Path is subdivided into three basic steps: *makhafah*, the way of purification; *mahabbath*, the way of love; and *ma’rifah*, the way of knowl-

Sunni, Sunnism

edge. Aspects of the Sufi way include the disciplines of poverty, servanthood, subjugation of the self, and above all the remembrance of God. The remembrance of God is enhanced through meditation, sacred dance, and the constant repetition of the divine name. The final goal of the Sufi quest is *fana*, best translated as annihilation or extinction. Through annihilation first in the *shayk*, or religious leader then in the Prophet, and finally in Allah, one is able to die to self and this world and to exist in God alone.

In the early centuries of Islam, Sufism was a "movement without a name," a diverse spiritual movement within the broader tradition. In time, distinct brotherhoods or orders formed around particular teachers or saints, *shayks*, all of whom traced their spiritual lineage back to the Prophet. These brotherhoods came to dominate the religious landscape of many parts of the Islamic world. They also functioned as the principal missionary arm of Islam in Africa, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

The twelfth through the fourteenth centuries were the golden age of Sufism. Sufi masters such as Suhrawardi, Ibn 'Arabi, Jalal ar-Rumi, and al-Ghazali were known throughout the Islamic world for their poetry and religious insight. However, as the Orders increased in fame, influence, power, and wealth they fell prey to many of the temptations that accompany power and wealth. They were also subject to political manipulation. In some places, hundreds of thousands of persons found their primary religious identity in a local *shayk* or brotherhood. This gave rise to popular devotional Sufism, with an emphasis on psychic phenomena, communication with the spirit world, magic, and extraordinary physical feats as demonstration of spiritual power. In the past two hundred years, organized Sufism has been in marked decline throughout the Islamic world, with the possible exception of some parts of Africa and Asia. Modernists have tended to make Sufism the scapegoat for the technological lag of Muslim nations. Orthodox Muslims, both traditionalists and fundamentalists, have generally viewed Sufism as a threat to the purity of Islam and the establishment of a genuine Islamic society. The Orders were legally suppressed in modern Turkey and today they play little role in the religious life of most Muslims.

JAMES DARRELL CHANCELLOR

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Sunni, Sunnism. The Islamic world is divided into two broad traditions, the Sunni and the Shi'ite. The Sunni tradition stretches from West

Africa and Central Europe to East Asia. Approximately 85 percent to 90 percent of all Muslims are Sunni. The Sunni tradition accommodates a wide range of cultural expressions and intensity of religious commitment, but remains centered on a set of core beliefs and practices.

The full name of the Sunnis is *ahl as-sunnah wa-l-ijma*, "the People of the *Sunnah* and the Consensus." This fuller term for the Sunnis points to the centrality of the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad and primary role of the community of faith. The term "Sunni" comes from the Arabic *Sunnah*, the "custom of the Prophet." Sunnis often refer to themselves as "the orthodox." They recognize the validity of the first four Caliphs (the Righteous Caliphs), after Muhammad, as the founding figures of the Islamic community. The caliphs are said to have succeeded to Muhammad's authority as head of the community, but not to his function as prophet "Messenger of Allah." In this recognition, they at once affirm that ultimate authority in Islam rests with the *umma*, or Islamic community, and deny any unique or special religious or political authority to the physical descendants of Muhammad or Ali, his cousin and son-in-law. The Sunni tradition holds strongly to Muhammad as model human, the Qur'an and Hadith as normative scripture, the Five Pillars as normative for religious practice, and the Law of God as complete guide for all human endeavors.

There are four schools of law among the Sunnis: the Hanbali, Maliki, Hanafi, and Shafi'i. These schools emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries and over time each came to dominate general geographic regions. The Maliki school is found primarily in Africa and the Arab West; the Hanafi school dominates most areas formerly part of the Ottoman Empire. The Hanbali school is found in the Gulf region, and the Shafi'i school is observed in East Asia. While Sunnis regard each school as "orthodox," each individual Muslim is expected to adhere to one school.

For Sunni Islam, the center point of the faith is the Community of Believers. A few observations about the Ulema, the professional class of religious leaders, will bring this in focus. The Ulema are the custodians of knowledge about the QUR'AN, the Prophet, and the *Shari'ah*. They serve as teachers, prayer leaders, and preachers in mosques, Qur'an reciters, and professors of religion and sacred law in universities. They are very loosely organized in any institutional sense and draw their authority only from their ability to reach consensus themselves and bring that consensus to bear on the larger community. They do not constitute a priesthood, and in small or rural communities most of the functions of the Ulema are performed by lay Muslims.

JAMES DARRELL CHANCELLOR

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Symbol, Symbolism. A symbol is something used to stand for something, such as an olive branch representing peace. Recent studies in human cognition have demonstrated that when we categorize objects in a taxonomy, there is one level that is more basic than the others. This “basic level” is the most abstract level at which we can form images. We can form an image of a *dog* or a *cat*, but not of the more abstract concept of an *animal*. The basic level is also the level at which we experience life. We interact with our pets as *dogs* and *cats*, not as *animals*. That we experience life at the basic level underlies our need to use the imagery of symbols to express more abstract concepts.

This need to use symbols for abstract concepts also makes us prone to IDOLATRY. We have a propensity to visualize the object of our worship, to create images of our gods. It is quite possible, therefore, that when God responded to Moses’ request for a name to give to the idolatrous Egyptians, he gave Moses “I AM” so as to preclude them from representing him by an image (Rom. 1:23). Therefore, we need to keep in mind that the symbols we use to represent gospel truths have the potential of replacing those truths.

When people create a symbol to represent an object, the symbol usually bears a resemblance to that object. When a symbol closely resembles an object, however, it is a small step to the belief that the symbol mirrors the real world, that it exists apart from human creativity, and that it has inherent meaning.

The belief that symbols have inherent meanings that must be discovered underlies the practice of magic, divination, numerology, and astrology. It may also underlie the behavior of those who forbid others to use certain symbols because they regard those symbols as inherently evil. A recent example in the United States is the public pressure put on Procter and Gamble to drop their logo of the woman and the stars.

Many people regard symbols as having assigned meanings agreed on by a given society. The fact that the meanings are assigned by a given community not only allows a symbol to serve in communication within a society but also militates against the casual use of symbols for INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION. In one case, the introduction of baptismal names to symbolize new life in Christ was reinterpreted as a ruse to elude Satan, because Satan recognized people only by their prebaptismal names, but their new, baptismal names were the secret ones written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 2:17; 3:5). There-

fore, we need to exercise care in using symbols to communicate gospel truths interculturally.

That the swastika arouses strong emotions points out that symbols are powerful because they are interpreted holistically as a gestalt. The sight of a swastika by a victim of the Holocaust transcends anti-Semitism to invoke the gestalt of the Holocaust with all the experiences and emotions of the perpetrators, the victims, and the complacent third parties. The viewers’ emotional responses are grounded in the associations the symbol brings to their minds. Therefore, we need to keep in mind that simple symbols can represent very complex gestalts.

KENNETH A. McELHANON

Bibliography. J. Heisig, *ER*, 13:198–208; P. G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*; G. Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*.

Syncretism. Blending of one idea, practice, or attitude with another. Traditionally among Christians it has been used of the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements. Examples range from Western materialism to Asian and African animistic beliefs incorporated into the church. Syncretism of some form has been seen everywhere the church has existed. We are naive to think that eliminating the negatives of syncretism is easily accomplished.

To examine practices for syncretistic tendencies, we must first use a phenomenological approach in which we simply uncover what is actually happening or being taught. Built on that, we use theological and cultural analysis to understand what is happening. Finally, we evaluate what we have discovered in light of biblical truth. As a replacement of essential elements of the gospel with alternative religious practices or understanding, syncretism must be exposed and challenged. The means by which this is done are critical, and must be culturally informed.

Biblical Discussion. Case studies of syncretism are found throughout the Bible. Israel, forsaking the command to love God alone (Deut. 5:1–6:5), borrowed from the Canaanites ideas such as idolatry (Judg. 2:19; Ps. 106:35–39), shrine prostitution (1 Kings 14:24), and witchcraft (2 Kings 17:16–17). The attitude of syncretism is captured in 2 Kings 17:41: “Even while these people were worshipping the LORD, they were serving their idols.” Old Testament exemplars who fought syncretism include the prophets as well as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, and Ezra.

At the time of the New Testament, the domination of Rome intensified the possibilities of syncretism. Perhaps the most significant issue dealt with in the early church was that of the nature of

Taboo

Gentile inclusion in the Christian community (Acts 15; Gal. 2). The author of Hebrews wrote to Christians who were tempted to return to the Law (Heb. 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39). We also see warnings against syncretistic tendencies throughout the Epistles (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 11:13–15; Gal. 1:6–9; 3:1–6; Col. 2:8–23; 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1–6).

Throughout the centuries since the New Testament era, the church has constantly wrestled over the issues of culture in relationship to Christian commitment (Visser 't Hooft).

Modern Discussion. Many scholars today challenge the need to define syncretism in its negative traditional sense. The meaning of the term has broadened to a more neutral concept of interpenetration of two or more paradigms. In this sense, since all churches are culture-based, every church is syncretistic. Such a broad definition, however, results in a term that loses useful analytic meaning.

A second significant issue is that the person or people who define syncretism are those who are in power. Practices which are threatening may be labeled syncretistic simply because they threaten the established order. This highlights the need for hermeneutical communities comprised of people of various cultures who together examine the contemporary phenomena under question in light of the biblical worldview.

A final issue is that all churches *are* in some sense syncretistic. The human heart regularly manufactures idols which find homes in the churches of the people who generate them. No church in any culture is free of the accretions of culture, and none of us is as objective in seeing syncretism within our own culture as we would like to think we are.

Suggested Guidelines. While “syncretism” does not appear in the Bible, it expresses a biblical concept. The broadening of discussion on syncretism in scholarly discussion has resulted in some observing that the Bible itself is syncretistic. Such use of the term masks the biblical concept of gospel truth relevant to all cultures being normative for all Christians at all times.

Biblically speaking, syncretistic ideas and practices are wrong because they violate the first commandment. In saying this we are not ignoring the complexities raised by recent hermeneutical discussions. There are convoluted interpretive issues which the worldwide church must tackle, but we cannot do so if we turn from the normative nature of the Bible as the cornerstone for discussion of the faith.

Because of the convoluted nature of culture, the declaration of syncretism in a particular setting cannot be simply left in the hands of expatriate missionaries. The local community must be empowered to biblically evaluate their own practices and teachings. Missionaries must learn

to trust that indigenous peoples are able to discern God's leading and trust God to develop and maintain biblically founded and culturally relevant FAITH and PRAXIS in each local context. Finally, Christians of every culture must engage in genuine partnership with Christians of other cultures, since often the outsider's help is needed to enable local believers, blinded by culture and familiarity, to see that which contravenes scriptural adherence to the first commandment.

A. SCOTT MOREAU

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Taboo. The word “taboo” is of Tongan origin (*tabu*) and designates a person, thing, or action that is forbidden due to its sacred or supernatural character. The primary function of the category of taboo is that of protection, and this usually occurs on three levels: social, economic, and religious. Taboos possess functional purpose rather than moral value.

On the social level, chiefs and rulers, along with their property, are designated taboo to protect the monolithic social structure of the tribe or group. Economically, certain animals are designated taboo to protect them from misuse by the people (conservation). For instance, the Maori of New Zealand declared digging up sweet potatoes before they were ready to be cooked and eaten a taboo to counter greed and waste. On the other hand, certain foods (pork and shellfish) have been declared taboo to protect people from disease through improper preparation of the foods.

Religiously, taboos have often been created to accommodate fear of the unknown, such as the birth of twins in animistic settings (namely, only animals have multiple offspring). A dualistic worldview is often characteristic of a taboo-oriented belief system. Thus, taboo is not so much concerned with what is morally right or wrong but rather with what functions to keep away offense. Such worldviews are often related to ancestor or spirit worship, and the offense associated with the taboo can extend to the non-physical spirit world as well. While unquestioning loyalty with respect to the taboo is required of the tribal members, great responsibility rests with the SHAMAN or religious leader not to lead the group into error that might result in the negative effects of the offense upon the group. “Salvation” then consists in maintaining a healthy balance (tension) between “good” and “bad” taboos.

It is essential that missionaries working in cultures in which taboos are prominent understand

the nature and function of the taboos. Such understanding and sensitivity will not only prevent unnecessary offense, but it will provide valuable insights into the basic values and fears of the culture. Biblical answers to the fears underlying taboos can then be suggested.

CLINT AKINS

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Taoist, Taoism. Taoism, along with Confucianism and Buddhism, is one of the three major philosophical and religious systems in China. Although his historicity has been questioned, Lao-tze, a sixth-century B.C. contemporary of Confucius, is regarded as the founder of Taoism. Lao-tze had no interest in Confucian teachings on social conventions and ethical principles, advocating instead a return to the primitive simplicity of nature.

The *Tao-te-ching*, the key text of Taoism and traditionally said to be authored by Lao-tze, presents the Tao as the ultimate principle and source of all things. The Tao is utterly transcendent and defies all linguistic description, for "the Tao that can be described is not the eternal Tao" (*Tao-te-ching*, ch. 1). It is formless and impersonal, yet eternal and present everywhere. Immaterial, it is nevertheless the fountainhead of all material things. "The Tao engenders the one, the one engenders the two, the two engenders the three, the three engenders the myriad things" (ch. 42). All things flow from the Tao and return ultimately to the Tao. The Tao is both one and many, transcendent and immanent, being and nonbeing, action and nonaction, strong and weak. All opposites and contrasts are harmonized in the Tao.

Epistemologically, philosophical Taoism stresses inner intuitive enlightenment more than discursive reasoning. Thus a person with deep understanding can fathom the entire universe without leaving home. When one is in tune with the Tao, one sees that becoming and change happen only within the phenomenal world. Ultimately all differentiation between the universe and the individual disappears as the two are essentially one. This leads to the search for a mystical union with nature characteristic of religious Taoism.

Taoism emphasizes a return to a state of primitive simplicity and spontaneity, an original state of innocence. It assumes a latent goodness inherent in human nature [*te*]. What is, is good. Chuang-tse, a fourth-century B.C. Taoist, advocated following the heart's natural inclination since it reflects an originally good nature. The heart is to be one's teacher. Since one is born with a good nature, there is no need to strive to be good—the moment one consciously strives to be good, one deviates from the Tao. "It is only when one has lost the Tao that he would settle for virtue, it is only when one has lost virtue that he would set-

tle for humanity [*jen*], it is only when one has lost humanity that he would settle for righteousness [*yi*], it is only when he has lost righteousness that he would settle for propriety [*li*]" (ch. 58). Rejecting common social principles and conventions, Lao-tze advocated nonstriving, contentment, meekness, modesty, and simplicity as ethical ideals.

Taoism called for an extreme laissez-faire approach to government, stressing noninterference. The analogy with water was used. Although water is gentle and passive, it is the strongest and most resilient force in nature, opening passages in the hardest rock and accomplishing difficult tasks without brute force. Similarly, the best government is that which rules through noninterference, just "letting it be." For it is by following natural inclinations that original goodness is achieved.

Although philosophical Taoism had influenced Chinese culture for centuries, it was not until the second century that religious Taoism became an institutional religion. A blend of Taoist philosophy, ying-yang, and folk religion, religious Taoism emphasizes mysticism, personal freedom, and the yearning for immortality. Adherents seek freedom from all restraints—whether physical, social, or mental—culminating in an immortality that transcends life and death. Chang Tao-ling (2nd cent.), credited as the founder of religious Taoism, claimed for himself the title "Heavenly Master." He held that there is a supreme god ruling over the pantheon of deities, a heavenly system somewhat similar to the earthly governmental bureaucracy.

The immediate objective of Taoist religion is to obtain health, longevity, and well-being in this life, whereas the ultimate goal is to become one with nature, living as the immortals. The immortals are said to be beings who have obtained total freedom from all restraints of the physical world. Free from even the law of gravity, they float in the air like feathers, wandering among scenic mountains and streams without a care in the world.

The basic means for attaining immortality is through internal and external alchemy along with other occult practices. Internal alchemy regulates the vital forces [*ch'i*] through yoga and breathing exercises so that harmony is achieved between the individual and the universe. External alchemy involves taking elixirs such as pure cinnabar. On a popular level, religious Taoism involves elaborate ceremonial rituals, exorcism, seances, *feng-sue* (lit. wind and water, and attempt to harmonize with nature), fortune telling, astrology, and belief in deities who can bring good fortune or inflict harm, depending on their treatment.

As an institutional religion Taoism has today lost much of its status due to corruption within the priesthood as well as the impact of modernization. But one should not conclude that it is no

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longer significant in Chinese culture. Its influence has permeated many aspects of daily life, and in recent years there appears to be a resurgence of religious Taoism, especially among the educated classes in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia.

JOHN D. L. HSU

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Theology of Religions. The wide range of Christian theological response to the existence of other world faiths has, for convenience if not total adequacy, been classified into three broad positions: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.

Exclusivism. The word is not being used in a personal, attitudinal, or social sense, that is, pride, superiority, and a desire to exclude others. Rather the word is theologically concerned only with the matter of where truth and salvation are to be found. It is the view that, if Jesus Christ is uniquely the truth, and the only way of salvation for humanity, then that excludes the possibility of other faiths being true in the same way, or being ways of salvation.

Exclusivism affirms that there is one living God, the Creator, who, in response to the radical fall of humanity, has taken action to reveal himself and to save his creation through the particular historical events recorded in the Bible, namely, the history of Israel and the Gospel story of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was the unique and final incarnation of God in a single historical human life. He both completed God's self-revelation and achieved God's work of salvation on the cross. Through his resurrection and ascension God vindicated him as Lord and so he is rightly to be worshiped as such. Salvation is therefore to be found only in and through Jesus Christ. Adherents of other faiths, in common with all human beings, are made in the image of God and share in the benefits of GENERAL REVELATION in CONSCIENCE and nature. But other faiths as such cannot be ways of salvation, for that is only in Christ. There is therefore a radical discontinuity between the revelation and salvation of God in Christ and the tenets and claims of other religions. Exclusivism maintains that the central claims of Christianity are true, and that where the claims of Christianity conflict with those of other religions the latter are to be rejected as false. Salvation is not to be found in the structures of other religious traditions (*see also* UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST).

Though clearly identified with the evangelical theological tradition, exclusivism has a variety of

views within it and questions to face. One major divide relates to the fate of the unevangelized—those who never in their lifetimes hear of Jesus Christ. Granted that salvation is only in Christ (the *ontological* necessity of Christ for salvation), is salvation also restricted to those who come to know him explicitly (the *epistemological* necessity of Christ)? Those who affirm that it is so restricted (labeled “restrictivists” by others) point to key texts such as John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Others (nonrestrictivist exclusivists) are cautiously optimistic that God will save some who, while unreached by Christian evangelism, turn in some way from sin to God in repentance and faith. They point to the fact that Old Testament believers were saved but had no knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its New Testament form. Still others (advocates of “the wider hope”) affirm that through Christ God will save multitudes who had no earthly opportunity to know and trust him. They point to the “pagan saints” of the Old Testament (non-Israelites who became believers) as examples of a wide phenomenon, not exceptions, and to texts such as Revelation 7:9 as implying a very wide optimism of salvation (*see* THE UNEVANGELIZED).

Exclusivism also has to wrestle with the extent to which it recognizes general revelation in other religions, and with the phenomenon of the actual worship of their adherents. In what sense is the living God active in the context of another faith if it includes some elements of truth that would be biblically valid, and what is the spiritual status of the prayers and devotion of human beings who have no knowledge of Christ?

Inclusivism. The one all-important point that exclusivism and inclusivism have in common is their commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ. They are in agreement that Christ is the supreme and final revelation of God and that he is the one through whom ultimately people can and will be saved. However, whereas the exclusivist says that if Christ alone is the truth and the Savior, then that excludes all other faiths as vehicles of truth or salvation, the inclusivist argues that ultimately all truth is God's truth, wherever it is found. So Christ, who is the Truth, must therefore include all that is true in other faiths, elements of truth which must ultimately be from and through Christ. Christ is thus in some way present and active within other faiths, though in hidden ways, but is clearly and fully known only within the Christian faith. Inclusivism speaks, therefore, of continuity (rather than the exclusivist's discontinuity) between other faiths and Christianity, or it sees Christianity as the fulfillment of what is looked for, or hidden, or being prepared for, in other faiths.

Mainline Protestant inclusivism tends to give a high value to the existence of general revelation within other faiths, but to stop short of allowing

that other religions can be salvifically effective. Roman Catholic inclusivism, however, since the work of Karl Rahner, and especially Vatican II, has been willing to affirm that the grace of God operates salvifically in other religions, but that it is grace in Christ. Those who genuinely respond to God's grace as experienced in another religion are implicitly responding to Christ and may therefore be called "anonymous Christians." They will be saved by Christ, but through the "sacraments" of their own religion, unless and until they are confronted with the gospel. So Christ remains definitive and normative, but salvation is somehow available through other faiths. Those who advocate inclusivism obviously want to steer between the rocks of narrowly dogmatic exclusivism (especially restrictivism), and the whirlpool of relativism and pluralism, which they equally strongly reject. They want to hold on to the uniqueness of Christ, and yet to find legitimate theological space within an understanding of God's sovereignty for the existence of non-Christian religions.

Inclusivists wrestle with the question as to whether other religions can be means of salvation, even if ultimately salvation depends on the work of Christ. But actually, the very question itself, "Is there salvation in other religions?" is strange, when considered from a biblical point of view. It seems to take for granted, as the premise on which the question rests, that salvation is something you get through a religion. But the radical biblical affirmation is that there is salvation in no religion. Religion does not save anybody. God does. And the Bible tells the story of what God has done in history to save his whole creation, including humanity. Salvation is the achievement of God on our behalf, not the end result of religious activity on our part. It is this fundamental fact about the Christian gospel—that it is the declaration of historical events by which God has intervened in Christ to save us from our sin—which exposes the inadequacy of all other religions. There is no salvation in them, not because they have nothing in common with Christianity in their beliefs (some do), but because they do not recount these events and therefore do not put people in touch with what God has already done to save them.

Pluralism. It is important to distinguish between pluralism as an ideological or theological stance and the simple fact of the social plurality of religions in many countries. It is one thing to respond to the latter with respect, love, and tolerance; it is quite another to accept the relativist philosophy that underlies theological religious PLURALISM.

Both exclusivism and inclusivism wish to be "Christocentric"—to preserve the centrality of Christ himself, whether in exclusive or inclusive

terms. Christ is the center and the standard (norm) for all other faiths. Pluralists advocate a "theocentric" theology of religions, which places God (*theos*) at the center of the religious universe, not Christ or Christianity. All human religions (including Christianity) can then be understood as valid but different culturally and historically conditioned human responses to this one "Ultimate Divine Reality." Each response is partial and incomplete, but has its own element of truth and saving validity for those who follow it. Salvation is thus to be found in any or all faiths, including, but not confined to, Christianity. Christ and Christianity, instead of being the center of the saving and revealing work of God, "go into orbit" along with other faiths, as just one among many planetary responses to the gravitational pull of the sun of "transcendent reality" (another pluralist term) at the center. Or, to change the metaphor, the different religious names for the divine, are like the masks worn by classical actors. Each "face" may look very different, but the reality behind is single. The religious "ultimates" of the world faiths are the *personae*, or *impersonae* of the truly ultimate, which actually transcends all their partial (and mutually contradictory) insights and is "itself" beyond our knowledge (see also RELIGIOUS ULTIMACY).

Among the criticisms of the pluralist agenda in the theology of religions the following seem particularly serious. First, pluralism conceals an epistemological arrogance. It relativizes all the truth claims of the world faiths (not just those of Christianity) to a penultimate status while absolutizing its own stance as arbitrator. It fails to justify the epistemological grounds on which it claims sure knowledge about something ("the real") of which all religions have no ultimate knowledge. Second, it is subject to the self-destructive weakness of all radical relativisms, in claiming absolute truth for its own claim that all truth claims are relative. Third, it renders "God" abstract and impersonal, since "he/she/it" cannot be named, defined, or characterized in terms of any of the great religious traditions. The real, as it is in itself, is not to be identified with Yahweh, Allah, Jesus, Brahman, or any other. The rich biblical personal characterization of God is thus discounted as a mask, with no ultimate truth attaching to it. Fourth, it relativizes and diminishes Jesus, rejecting the classical incarnational Christology of the church as being only confessional or functional language with no ontological referential value. Thus, fifth, it requires a mythical reading of the New Testament in order to retain a semblance of using Christian vocabulary, but without historical realism. And finally, it renders Christian worship idolatrous and Christian mission invalid, inasmuch as pluralism requires that Christians, although they may continue to revere Jesus as their own saving point of contact

Theravada Buddhism

with God, must surrender any claim to his absolute deity, Lordship, or claim on all people.

For these reasons, although pluralists tend to preserve the vocabulary and concepts of the Christian tradition, it is highly questionable whether pluralism can be regarded as a valid option for Christian theology of religions.

CHRISTOPHER J. H. WRIGHT

Bibliography. D. Carson, *The Gaggling of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*; J. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*; P. Knitter, *No Other Name: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Towards the World Religions*; H. Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*.

Theravada Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism is one of the three main branches of Buddhism, along with Mahayana and Vajrayana. Unlike Vajrayana, the relatively homogeneous branch of Buddhism centered in Tibet (see TIBETAN BUDDHISM), Theravada is a relatively diverse collection of traditions connected as much by geography and culture as teachings. Theravada is the main tradition of the southeast Asian countries of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. MAHAYANA is the Buddhism of China, Japan, and Korea.

The name Theravada is the movement's self-chosen designation, meaning "the way of the elders (*theras*)."⁹ It has been called other things. In the first and second centuries A.D., when Mahayana Buddhism was growing in India and later China, Mahayanists called Theravadins Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle. Mahayana, of course, means Greater Vehicle and this little bit of name-calling was the Mahayanists' way of claiming greater depth and profundity for their teaching.

Both Theravadins and Mahayanists trace their roots back to the sixth century B.C. and the life and teachings of a man named Siddharta Gautama (566–486 B.C.) who came to be known as the Buddha or the Enlightened One. It is almost impossible to tell whether Theravada or Mahayana is prior. The best reconstruction of Theravada history begins about 110 years after the Buddha's death when a major schism took place over the rules of discipline which the Buddha left to guide the monastic community, the *Sangha*. One group, the Sthaviravadins (the Sanskrit variant of the Pali Theravada) favored keeping the rules of discipline static while the Mahasamgikas favored change as cultural conditions warranted. Through numerous other splits (eighteen eventual sects is the usual number given), this traditional group, the Sthaviravada, seemed to maintain an identity, and when an early Indian king Asoka (272–236 B.C.) decided to send missionaries to carry the Buddha's teachings to neighboring countries, Theravada was the variant that

stuck in southeast Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and Burma.

Despite its variety, we might identify seven distinctives of Theravada Buddhism:

1. Theravadins tend to emphasize the monastic life and the *arahat* ideal. *Arahats* are mostly monks, spiritually accomplished and on the way to Enlightenment, the goal of Buddhism.
2. Theravadins use Pali as their liturgical and philosophical language. Pali was probably the language of the Buddha.
3. Theravadins, more than other schools of Buddhism, emphasize the historical life events of Gautama Buddha. Like other Buddhists, they recognize that there have been many other Buddhas, but for Theravadins, Gautama, especially his life in India, is central.
4. Theravada Buddhism is located geographically in southeast Asia.
5. Theravada is distinguished by its emphasis on Pali commentaries (*atthakathas*) written to elucidate the many volumes of the Pali canon, the main scriptural books of the Theravada Buddhists. The commentaries were put in their final written form in Sri Lanka in the fifth century A.D. by Buddhaghosa, Theravada Buddhism's greatest scholar and intellect.
6. Although most of the sections of the Theravada Pali canon have similar books in other Buddhist traditions, one section, the scholastic Abhidhamma Pitaka, is unique, emphasizing the signature doctrines of Theravada Buddhism, *anatta* (no-self) and *anicca* (impermanence).
7. Throughout history, most Theravada Buddhist cultures have had a distinctive symbiotic relationship between monastery and monarchy. In general, southeast Asian Buddhist kings have seen themselves as supporters, protectors, and, upon occasion, purifiers of the order of the monks, the *Sangha*. The monks, in turn, have tended to see themselves as spiritual and sometimes political advisors to the kings.

In many ways, Theravada Buddhism occupies a similar place in the overall scheme of Buddhism as evangelical Christianity does in Christianity. Both place a heavy emphasis on a specific scriptural tradition, although their concepts of the authority of those scriptures differ. Both place a heavy emphasis on the historicity of their founders, Gautama and Jesus. Both are missions oriented, with similar "Great Commission" charges

from their founders to go and preach the *dhamma* gospel. Both have a vision of each individual being on a spiritual journey to escape the shortcomings of this life in anticipation of a better state to come, and that a life of moral purity is an important foundation for taking that journey.

It is this last point, however, that most clearly illustrates some of the sharpest differences between the two paths. Theravada Buddhists do not see a god or gods as being central figures in helping the spiritual seeker. Theravada Buddhism has sometimes been called a non-theistic religion because of its insistence on the ultimate aloneness of each of us. Although the Buddha did not deny that the gods of the Hindu pantheon are helpful at certain lower levels of the journey, he was adamant that when it comes to final Enlightenment each of us must “come and see” (*ehi passako*) for him or herself. And in the end it is an ironic journey, because the “self” that successfully “comes and sees” turns out to be an illusion, swallowed up in the oneness of Nirvana.

TERRY C. MUCK

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Totem, Totemism. Totemism is a culturally constructed system of identifying kin groups by postulating a special relationship between human beings and nature, whereby each kin group in a society takes the name of an animal or plant species. Such an identification may lead to sympathetic relationships between human beings and their corresponding totems, which may mean that human beings are prohibited from killing or eating an animal or plant that bears their own name.

Totemic representations serve, among other things, to legitimate social groupings, explain certain behavioral patterns, support exogamous marriage practices, and establish an orderly system for classifying humanity and nature. The term “totem” is derived from the North American Ojibwa word *ototeman*, which was used to designate the various clans including Eagle, Reindeer, Otter, Bear, Buffalo, Beaver, and Catfish. The practice of naming kinship groups in this manner has been recorded in North American cultures, among the Australian Aborigines, and globally, where it may be found in various adaptations.

Totemism has been one of the most abused cultural concepts in anthropology. Anthropologists in the nineteenth century interpreted totemism from a cultural evolutionary perspective and identified the concept of totemism as an

early stage in the evolution of religious belief. Durkheim, who has become famous for his argument that God and religion are the product of culture, made totemism a key element in his argument, focusing particularly on the totemic practices of the Australian Aborigines, who it was believed “had the most primitive and simple religion which it is possible to find.”

Sigmund Freud added to the confusion regarding the true nature of totemism by fantasizing that the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father and that morality, religion, and family concepts find their origins in this primitive concept. All this, in spite of dubious data and the lack of historical evidence.

Studies in totemism continue to attract the interest of anthropologists from various theoretical perspectives, including structuralists following the lead of Levi-Strauss, and cultural materialists following Marvin Harris, as they seek to both interpret the cultural significance of totemism and to reinforce their own theoretical perspectives.

Inasmuch as totemism has social, epistemological, ecological, and religious implications, sensitive missiologists need to be aware of the role totemism plays in forming the self-identity, social structure, and perceptions of the world of a given people.

DOUGLAS J. HAYWARD

Bibliography. F. Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*; E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion*; R. Firth, *Tikopia Ritual and Belief*; S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*; A. Hultkrantz, *The Religions of the American Indians*; A. Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society*.

Truth. In common use truth refers to that which is correct, actually exists, or has occurred. Philosophers investigate the nature of truth itself in the areas of knowledge, beauty, and morals. From the ENLIGHTENMENT (early eighteenth century) onward they have sought a truth which can be verified by science with accuracy. Immanuel Kant (1724–1802) raised the question of whether truth in itself is knowable or only as the knower perceives it. He opened the way to extensive questioning of even the existence of truth. Relativists may deny its existence in any objective, absolute sense in favor of a “truth” which is dependent upon knower and circumstances. Existentialists and their successors argue that truth emerges from experience. Post-modernists hold to a PLURALISM of many different “truths,” whatever is true for a particular person or group is correct for them, even if it contradicts the truths held by others.

Throughout the Bible one can detect different nuances concerning truth. The common connotations of correctness and accuracy are assumed. The Old Testament frequently stresses faithful-

Universalism

ness, reliability, and morality whereas in the New the emphasis is more upon true statements and teachings and attitudes and actions consistent with God's nature and will.

In both Testaments truth is a quality of God, at times almost becoming a personification of him. Speaking of God both the psalmist (119:160) and Jesus (John 17:17) affirm, "Your word is truth." The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; cf. 1 John 5: 7). Hence, God's communication of truth is in complete harmony with his nature (he does not lie, Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29); God's revelation of his person, works, and will are accurate and trustworthy. Ultimately, Jesus Christ himself is truth. "I," he said, "am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14: 6). He himself is the embodiment of truth—truth that is both personal and absolute, eternal and relational, objective and experiential. What philosophers, kings, sages, scientists, common people, priests, prophets, shamans, and diviners seek is found in him. In Jesus all things find their form, function, relation, and meaning. As the truth itself, Jesus reveals the truth about God, the universe, and their relationship. He is also the only way to the reestablishment of a right, accepting relationship with God.

God's servants and representatives are to be people of truth. They are to reflect and point to the truth which is Jesus Christ. They are to report, to bear testimony to the Truth. The facts and implications they report must be accurate, even when they might be threatening or irritating, or bring hostility. In their own lives and activities they are to tell the truth and be characterized by faithfulness and dependability as they live the truth.

This is the background and presupposition for "truth and missions." Missions and missionaries must be committed to truth and be characterized by it. They must proclaim the pure truth of the gospel. God's truth, which is sure (Titus 1:9), absolute, changeless, and "committed once and for all to the saints" (Jude 3) may come in cultural dress and cannot be separated from the persons who proclaim it. Nevertheless, it transcends culture, time, and messenger. One must be careful neither to add to nor subtract from God's truth, nor to diminish his requirements or expectations. It is often difficult to distinguish between preference stemming from the missionary's culture and background and that which is a genuine part of God's saving message—its implications, and manners of life that comport with it. It usually requires conscious effort. It was in a cross-cultural situation that Paul employed the phrase "truth of the gospel" in a way which seems to equate the gospel and truth (Gal. 2:4, 14; 4:16; 5:7). For him to add, subtract, or act contrary to "the truth of the gospel" was to deny that the

death of Christ and justification by faith produced their intended results (Gal. 2: 16–21).

Missions and missionaries struggle with truth in other ways. How information and attitudes are communicated differ from culture to culture. What seems to be correct, proper, or honest may be related or interpreted differently by different groups and raise questions about truthfulness. The missionary must never regard as inferior the persons or traditions of another group which do not impinge upon the content or the demands of God's message or of his will. Furthermore, God's cross-border, cross-cultural servants must neither glamorize nor exaggerate the successes, difficulties, or hardships of their tasks.

Truth is not only the believers' lives but our mission. It is our proclamation, life-style, operating principle, objective, and love. For God is truth, his word and revelation is truth, his standard is truth, his intent is truth, and he relates to and calls people to and in truth.

J. JULIUS SCOTT JR.

Universalism. Universalism proposes that salvation is universal in its nature and scope; salvation is not only available to all, it is applicable to all and ultimately will be realized by all. Thus, universalism does not divide the human race into two groups, the saved and the lost. Instead, in various ways it maintains that all will be actually saved. Among the advocates of universalism there are great differences both in their conceptualization of the doctrine and in the degree of their dogmatism. The common denominator shared by all universalists is the belief that in the end all humans will be saved. This premise is based primarily on the goodness and sovereignty of God's love. Universalists, following the logic of God's omnipotent love, argue that since God is love, he saves people, and since God is omnipotent love, he will necessarily save all people.

The history of universalism is complex because it is interconnected with other theological issues such as the nature of God, the relationship between his love and justice, the deity of Christ, the nature of the atonement, the authority of the Bible, eternal punishment, and predestination and free will.

In the early church, universalism appeared in the Greek East. The most influential proponent of *apokatastasis* (universalism) was Origen. With his Platonic logic and allegorical hermeneutical method, he maintained that all intelligent beings (humans, angels, and devils) were created good and equal and with a free will. Those who sinned were restored to God by a process of discipline and punishment that could continue after death. To Origen, punishment was remedial; given unlimited time, it would result in all souls being united to God, including Satan and the devils.

Origen's universalism was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 543. While advocates of universalism are found throughout church history, it was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the doctrine found wide acceptance and popularity among liberal and neo-orthodox theologians. During the nineteenth century Darwinian evolution provided the worldview for some universalists to envision the soul's upward progress toward God.

The nineteenth-century German theologian F. D. E. Schleiermacher constructed his universalism on predestination and the all-determining will of God. In contrast to double predestination (some humans elected to salvation and others to lostness), Schleiermacher asserted that all people are elected to salvation in Christ and that the purposes and omnipotence of God cannot fail. In nineteenth-century England a less dogmatic universalism appeared with an uneasiness about HELL, a conditional mortality, and a "wider hope" for universal salvation.

A more dogmatic universalism took root during the twentieth century. C. H. Dodd constructed his universalism from the Bible based on the idea of development in the thought of Paul in Scripture. He concluded that the mercy of God will be as universally effective as sin has been. John A. T. Robinson asserted that hell is the existential reality of humans challenged by the gospel (judgment is the only way in which sinful persons can hear grace) and that universal salvation is the reality which God wills. For Robinson universalism was a necessity because of God's omnipotent love. Any final judgment would be a frustration of God's purposes and love. Robinson overcame the difficulty of human freedom with a paradigm of freedom being freely overcome and constrained by divine love.

Since the 1970s, the locus of universalism has been the plurality of religions. Advocated by such theologians as John Hick and Paul Knitter, PLURALISM denies the exclusiveness or even the superiority of Christianity over other religions. The pluralist insists, on the basis of historical relativism, that the various religions are attempts to conceptualize the Mystery. Thus, God reveals himself to some degree and provides salvation through the different religions of the world.

There are several important missiological implications of universalism and its alternative views of ANNIHILATION, conditional immortality, postmortem salvation, pluralism, and inclusivism. First, universalism redefines the meaning of missions. If all ultimately will be saved and lostness is merely an existential situation, then the only purpose of missions is to better the lives of people in this world and not to affect their destiny in the world to come. In contrast, the impetus of evangelical missions is rooted in the belief

in life after death, the judgment of all people, and the eternity of heaven and hell.

Second, universalism alters the message of missions. In the universalist construct all exclusive language, in which truth claims are asserted about the UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST or the soteriological necessity of faith in Christ, is regarded as arrogant and divisive in relationship to other faiths. In place of the proclamation of the normativeness and finality of Christ, universalism promotes DIALOGUE with other faiths that both acknowledges their legitimacy and affirms that love embraces all peoples of all times. While acknowledging the place of dialogue and respect, evangelical missions insists on a biblically rooted CHRISTOLOGY and the attendant confession of the supremacy of Christ in salvation.

Third, universalism strikes at the heart of the urgency of missions. If explicit knowledge about the person and work of Christ and personal faith in Christ as a definitive decision in this life are not necessary for salvation, then the pressing motivation to take the gospel to all the world is eliminated. Evangelical missions, however, maintains that the proclamation of the unique gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means whereby people can be saved.

Fourth, universalism begs the question of the unreached multitudes of the world. If all will be saved then there is no imperative to take the gospel to those who have never heard the Good News. In contradistinction, evangelical missions is compelled by the conviction that the only hope of the UNEVANGELIZED is through a viable witness of the gospel.

DONALD R. DUNAVANT

Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism. Introduced to Tibet from India in the eighth century, MAHAYANA BUDDHISM of the Vajrayana (Tantric) tradition, in combination with Bon, the indigenous religious tradition of Tibet which was highly animistic and shamanistic, has exerted great influence upon subsequent Tibetan life and culture.

In common with other forms of Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism seeks release from the suffering inherent in the ongoing cycle of rebirths (*samsara*). Liberation from rebirth—*nirvana*—is to be found in a confluence of proper insight into the nature of ultimate reality, emptiness (*sunyata*). This comes only through rigorous discipline of the psychic faculties, and reliance upon the compassion of *bodhisattvas*, who although themselves liberated from rebirth have delayed *nirvana* so as to assist others. The influence of Tantrism can be seen in its adoption of sexual imagery as symbolic of metaphysical truths (including the notion that sexual union can be a way of experiencing the non-duality of ultimate reality, or Emptiness) and the use of esoteric magical formulas for releasing unusual

Vedanta Hinduism

powers. Tibetan Buddhism also provides one of the most intellectually sophisticated philosophical and psychological traditions in Buddhism.

There are four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism—the Nyingmapa, the Kargyupa, the Sakyapa, and the Gelugpa. Special monks, or lamas (“one who is superior”), provide leadership within the monastic community and are regarded as reincarnations of previous lamas. The Dalai Lama (currently Tenzin Gyatso) is traditionally the head of the Gelugpa school, and was originally regarded as an incarnation of the *bodhisattva* of compassion, Avalokita. Whereas prior to Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1951 there were about six thousand monasteries and a monkhood comprising one-fifth of the male population, after 1959 virtually all of Tibet’s monasteries were destroyed and the monks exiled or executed. The Dalai Lama was forced into exile in India. Religious activity in Tibet remains under strict control by the Chinese authorities.

Although the primary significance of Tibetan Buddhism lies in its cultural and religious impact upon the Tibetan people, many of whom are now in exile in India and Nepal, it is significant that Tibetan Buddhism has attracted a considerable following among artists and intellectuals in the West. This is due not simply to its sophisticated metaphysics but also to the enormously attractive personality of the Dalai Lama, who has become a highly visible symbol of peace and tolerance in a world of deep divisions. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

HAROLD A. NETLAND

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Vedanta Hinduism. The term “Vedanta Hinduism” (literally “end of the Vedas”) refers to several related systems of Hindu philosophy that can also be classified as theology, for they are based on exegesis of the Upanishads (sacred scriptures also known as Vedanta because they conclude the Vedas). Vedanta is sometimes called *Uttara Mimamsa* (“Further Enquiry”) because it was linked to and succeeded Mimamsa, another of the six classical schools of thought. The formative text is the Brahmasutra of Badarayana, who in the second century B.C. attempted a synthesis of Upanishadic theologies by investigating the nature of Brahman as the source of creation, the goal of enquiry, and the focus of worship. His ideas were further developed by Bhartrhari, who saw Brahman as the first principle embodied in the Divine Word (*Om*). All things have being because of their being named by God, a belief also found in Platonic philoso-

phy and the medieval Christian theology of nominalism. This teaching led to Vedantism.

The most important Vedantic traditions are Advaita (“nondualist”) Vedanta, first expounded in about the fifth century A.D. by Gaudapada, from whom the greatest Indian philosopher, Sankara, derived his inspiration; the Visistadvaita (“qualified nondualist”) Vedanta of Ramanuja (d. 1137); and the Dvaita (“dualist”) Vedanta of Madhva (thirteenth century A.D.).

Sankara (c. 788–820), a Nambudiri Brahman from Kerala, who composed popular devotional songs in Sanskrit, not only provided the intellectual framework for a rebuttal of Buddhism by his teaching, but also created the first Hindu order of monks. He taught absolute MONISM—there is only one reality, Brahman (God); thus all distinctions and subject-object divisions are illusory. Utterly transcendent and beyond all worlds, Brahman, the Supreme Being, is nevertheless the ground of all being because the Atman (“breath”) in human beings, and indeed in all transient beings, is identical with him. Hence the many are in fact One. The individual self (*jiva*) is a combination of Atman, which is based on pure consciousness, and transient individuality. When, like a dreamer awaking from sleep, one realizes one’s essential identity with Brahman (the Upanishadic cry “Thou art That!”), one attains the experience of *satchitananda* (“existence, knowledge, bliss”) and hence liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Yet the phenomenological world is real enough for those still asleep. While Brahman is essentially without attributes (*nirguna*), in the world of conventional limited reality he is a personal Creator, like a potter making pots, and therefore has attributes (*saguna*).

Ramanuja felt that Sankara was too selective with the texts and that there were serious philosophical flaws in his system as well. Despite the nonduality in the Upanishads—the Oneness of God, the atmans, and the world—the multiplicity of the world is nevertheless real; it is not, as Sankara maintained, an illusion superimposed on the true order of things. The world is real because nature and souls are evolved from Brahman, who is the “soul” of the world, his “body.” The world is a mode of God, who is in no way affected by its imperfections. The human spirit comes into the world as a consequence of turning away from God. Ramanuja also criticized the Advaita view of illusion and ignorance, which are not identical at all. And because Brahman has attributes (*saguna*), Ramanuja could develop a meaningful theism as the basis of *bhakti marga*, liberation by way of loving devotion through the grace of God. Madhva taught a dualist system closer to Christian THEISM.

Significantly, these systems of thought inspired the movement known as neo-Hinduism or neo-Vedantism and the philosophy of modern

leaders such as Vivekananda (1863–1902), founder of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vedanta Society of the West; Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), who attempted to reconcile religion and science; and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), educator and president of the Republic of India.

A number of Christian thinkers such as Abhishiktananda, Bede Griffiths, John Hick, Raimundo Panikkar, and Keith Ward have explored points of congruence between Vedanta philosophy and Christian theism. In spite of some similarities, for example, with Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, there are also important differences between Vedanta philosophy and Christian theism, especially with regard to the ontological relationship of God and creation, human history and the future destiny of the individual soul, and the nature of divine intervention in a wayward creation. Yet Ramanuja's exposition of the love of God, derived from the concluding chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*, provides a bridge to the Christian understanding of God's love and grace as well as human unworthiness and failure.

E. M. JACKSON

Bibliography. Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*; J. Carman, *Theology of Ramanuja*; N. K. Devarajah, *Hinduism and the Modern Age*; P. T. Raju, *The Philosophical Traditions of India*.

Wicca, Wiccan. A highly diversified group of worshippers of the Mother Goddess. They are followers of ideas popularized by Gerald Gardner, who, inspired by the arguments of Margaret Murray, taught that before Christianity there was an old religion that focused on issues of fertility and magical control over nature. Gardner blended selected elements of this supposed old fertility religion with the spiritualism and magic of Aleister Crowley to create a new nature-oriented faith.

Followers may refer to themselves as “witches” (depending on the group and, in some cases, only among themselves). They worship the Great Mother Goddess, sometimes identified as Diana, Isis, or Demeter, and celebrate the natural cycle of the seasons. Professing to do no evil, they claim to practice magic solely for good. They believe the effects of magic return threefold on the person who works it, including evil for those who depart from their creed. They have a deep love for nature and natural things and therefore a parallel interest in ecology, natural foods, and alternative healing practices.

While Wiccans worship in small “covens” they may choose to associate with a larger national organization such as the Church of Circle Wicca, the Covenant of the Goddess, the Georgian

Church, Feminist Wicca, or one of the Gardnerian Wiccans.

DOUGLAS J. HAYWARD

Bibliography. G. Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*; S. Leek, *The Complete Art of Witchcraft*; M. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*.

Witchcraft and Sorcery. Most of the peoples of the world assume that spiritual power can be directed toward others with the express aim of harming them. We label such concepts witchcraft and sorcery. Though technically sorcery is conscious and deliberate, while witchcraft is considered to be unconscious, the term “witchcraft” is commonly used to cover both conscious and unconscious malevolent spiritual activity done by specialists.

Shamans, diviners, and other purveyors of spiritual power are regularly sought by people who feel they have been wronged to conduct rituals designed to harm those against whom they wish to take revenge. In addition, the spirits of witches are believed to leave their bodies at night to go to other people and places to cause harm, often to the innocent.

In many societies it is assumed that illness, accident, and death are never natural occurrences. Commonly, then, it is assumed that when a person dies, becomes ill, or has an accident it is the result of witchcraft (including sorcery). It is then the task of a diviner or a “witch doctor” to ascertain who has caused the death and why. Various forms of divination and ordeal are used to identify the culprit. People often wear charms to protect themselves against witchcraft.

The fear of witchcraft is a major factor in most societies and an important concern of many churches and witch-finding organizations. Since witches are supposed to harm people unconsciously, those accused by such groups are often quite unaware of their supposed guilt.

A common form of witchcraft is the evil eye. This is the belief that some people, whether consciously or unconsciously, can direct evil power toward others, especially children, simply by looking at them. Looks plus compliments directed toward children are considered especially dangerous. Parents will, therefore, make their children less attractive to avoid drawing attention from those believed to have the evil eye.

Missionaries who ignore or summarily dismiss witchcraft and sorcery beliefs and practices often drive them underground. The practices and beliefs do not change; they are only removed from public scrutiny. Missionaries must find sensitive ways to understand and deal not only with the beliefs and practices, but with the functions such beliefs and practices serve within the societies in which they are found.

CHARLES H. KRAFT

Witness

Bibliography. D. Burnett, *Unearthly Powers*; A. C. Lehmann and J. E. Myers, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*; A. S. Moreau, *The World of the Spirits*; P. Steyne, *Gods of Power*.

Witness. A witness is one who bears testimony about a person, place, or event. While the modern term frequently is associated with seeing (e.g., an eyewitness), the underlying Hebrew and Greek terms focus more on testifying than on observing. Throughout the Bible the term is used in forensic contexts to indicate one who is able to explain what has happened due to personal experience of an event or issues related to the event being investigated. The purpose of such testimony is to establish truth so that appropriate judgment may be determined. To do so, however, two or more independent witnesses were necessary to establish accusations against the accused (Deut. 19:15). Bearing false witness against someone was forbidden (Exod. 20:16), and punishable by giving the false witness the punishment due the accused (Deut. 19:16–21).

In addition to the legal concept, a witness may authenticate accounts of an event or meaning outside of legal proceedings. Paul, for example, calls God himself as a witness of Paul's commitment to pray for the Christians in Rome (Rom. 1:9). The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit that we belong to God (Rom. 8:16).

The term also develops a nonlegal but technical sense of bearing testimony about Christ. John the Baptist bore such a testimony (John 1:7, 15). The word signifies lifestyle and verbal testimony about Christ before non-Christians in the hope of persuading them to respond to the gospel. (Acts 1:8). Jesus promised the power of the Spirit for such witness and in Acts 4:33 the apostles showed the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. In Paul's vision, Jesus encouraged Paul that he would bear witness of Christ in Rome just as he already had in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11).

Contemporary Issues. In many evangelical circles, *witnessing* refers to the act of evangelism. Typically it is used of verbal proclamation of the gospel and may be divorced from lifestyle.

Lifestyle witness (see also LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM) refers more specifically to our testimony to the truth through the concrete way we live. If detached from some type of truth proclamation (verbal, written, etc.), however, lifestyle witness will inevitably be read through the WORLDVIEW of the observer (see also PRESENCE EVANGELISM). In cross-cultural settings, the observers' worldviews may have little or no Christian orientation, and the lifestyle they see will be interpreted in categories that make sense to the observers rather than to the witness. While it is true that our lives bear witness for good or ill, lifestyles without corresponding sensitive and appropriate expla-

nation to the receptor will always be read in light of the receptor's categories.

In ecumenical circles, witness refers to "the total evangelizing presence and manifestation of the church" (Bria, 1067), and is all that the church is and does. *Common witness* was popularized in ecumenical circles from the 1970s, and refers to the joint witness of the universal church in all of its efforts. It was built on the theological reflection that no single church fully manifests Christ to the world; it takes a universal effort to achieve such global witness. Particular attention in this understanding is given to cooperative efforts which display UNITY in mission, however imperfect they may be. Such efforts stand as a witness before the world of our unity in Christ and God's love for humankind. Common witness is broader than just cooperative efforts, however. It is also reflected when we live lives which honor our Christian commitments and display an accepting, ecumenical attitude toward Christians who are from different ecclesiological backgrounds.

A. SCOTT MOREAU

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World Religions. It is a remarkable fact of human history that cultures worldwide have characteristically included a religious dimension. With the emergence of the modern era, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, significant numbers of people began to identify themselves explicitly as nonreligious or atheistic (see ATHEISM, SECULARIZATION, and SECULARISM); but even so the vast majority of peoples continue today to adhere to religious traditions of one kind or another. But people in various cultures have not all been religious in the same ways. As far back as recorded history takes us, our world has been characterized by diversity in religious beliefs and practices.

Categorizing Religious Traditions. In order to understand the many diverse ways in which people are religious it is helpful to group together traditions which have significant characteristics in common. In this way we come to have broad categories of traditions which are linked together under labels such as HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, and so on. It is best to think of each of these not simply as a single homogenous religious tradition but as a broad family of distinctive traditions which nevertheless share certain essential elements. Thus, Hinduism, for example, is not one clearly defined tradition but rather an enormous family of sometimes remarkably different traditions. But in spite of the great variety among Hindu traditions, there are

certain commonalities which bind them together, such as recognition of the authority of the Vedas and belief in REINCARNATION.

In the modern era, with the beginnings of the disciplines of cultural ANTHROPOLOGY and COMPARATIVE RELIGION, it became common to think in terms of several major religious traditions which were identified as “world religions.” It is helpful here to distinguish various kinds of religions. Terry Muck has distinguished among indigenous religions, world religions, and modern religions. *Indigenous religions* are the religions of the tribes and nations that occupied most lands before the impact of modern nationalism. Native American religious traditions and AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS are examples of this category.

World religions are those religions, many of which arose sometime around the fifth century B.C., which emphasize the individual’s or group’s standing before the gods or the transcendent, and which focus upon attainment of a better set of conditions beyond this present world. World religions are also generally those broad families of traditions which have established themselves through their acceptance by large numbers of people over a long period of time in a variety of geographical areas. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity thus are clearly world religions. Somewhat more problematic are religions such as JUDAISM or SHINTO, which although clearly meeting some of the above criteria nevertheless are closely linked to a particular people (the Jews and the Japanese respectively) and thus are not widely accepted by different ethnic and cultural groups. Or we might think of world religions as those religions which have spread worldwide through deliberate and aggressive missionary endeavors. On this criterion Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam are clearly world religions but Hinduism, which traditionally has not had an aggressive missionary agenda, might not be. Generally, however, world religions do make at least implicit claims to universal validity, so that Buddhism, for example, does not regard itself as simply one religious perspective among others but holds that in a significant sense it is “privileged” or normative in its understanding of the human predicament and the path to liberation from this predicament.

Finally, there are the *modern religions*, or those religions which emerged in times of particular social and intellectual upheaval during the past several centuries. BAHÁ’I, Theosophy, Christian Science, the NEW AGE MOVEMENT, and the many NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS are examples of such modern religions. Although many of these movements and traditions are having a significant impact upon people worldwide, they have not yet established themselves in the above sense as genuinely world religions. The one modern religion

which is perhaps closest to being recognized as a world religion is Mormonism (see MORMONS).

There are other ways in which religions can be classified as well. We might distinguish between those religions which include belief in an eternal sovereign Creator who has created everything else that exists (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and those which do not (Buddhism); or between those which base their religious claims upon the authority of a divine revelation (Islam, Christianity) and those which do not (Buddhism). Another useful distinction is that between “high religion” and FOLK RELIGION. High or formal religion refers to the religious beliefs, practices, and institutions of the “orthodox” tradition, the religious elite or intellectuals, the authority figures within the particular religion. Folk religion, by contrast, refers to the set of beliefs, practices, and values of the common people, most of whom have little knowledge of the specialized doctrines and history of their own traditions. On the folk level one often encounters practices and beliefs which are inconsistent with the official teachings of the formal religion, but which have become widely accepted on the popular level. Folk religious practices are often highly syncretistic, combining elements from several distinct religious traditions (see SYNCRETISM).

Finally, mention must be made of the problem of definition in studying religion (see RELIGION). It has been notoriously difficult to provide a single definition of religion which adequately encompasses all of the relevant phenomena. Sometimes it is difficult to know just what is religious and what is not. SECULAR HUMANISM and MARXISM, for example, share many features of the world religions although they are explicitly atheistic and claim not to be religious. But belief in God by itself cannot be a criterion for being religious since some major traditions in Buddhism, Hinduism, and JAINISM are also atheistic. Nevertheless, secular humanism and Marxism are generally not included among the religions.

The Study of World Religions. Given the intimate relationship between religion and culture, if we are to understand the various peoples and cultures of the world we must have some grasp of major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Shinto, and Judaism. The student today has unprecedented access to the basic tools for the study of religions. The past century has seen the development of several distinct disciplines—such as the PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION, ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION, COMPARATIVE RELIGION, SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION, and PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION—which can be very helpful in understanding other religions. Most of the sacred scriptures of the major religions are available in European languages. Most universities have departments which offer programs of study focusing upon one or more of the religions.

Worldview

It is tempting for Christians studying other religions to concentrate solely upon the doctrines or beliefs of the religions. While this clearly is a significant element, it is by no means the only aspect of religion. A more adequate understanding of the nature of religion and its impact upon culture and individuals is obtained by considering religion as a multidimensional set of phenomena. Ninian Smart, for example, has suggested seven distinct dimensions for understanding religion. First is the *ritual dimension*, which includes the many rites, ceremonies, and institutions which are used in a carefully prescribed manner by the believers. Religious services, prayers, sacrifices, and baptisms can be examples of this dimension. The *experiential dimension* refers to that aspect of the religious tradition in which the believer actively participates in the various rites and appropriates for oneself the relationship with the divine or transcendent. The *narrative dimension* includes the prominent place that sacred stories and narratives play within a tradition. The *doctrinal or philosophical dimension* involves the attempts by intellectuals within a tradition to clarify, integrate, and systematize central beliefs of that tradition. The *ethical dimension* addresses the moral values and precepts which are to guide the religious community in its relationship with the transcendent realm, while the social or *institutional dimension* goes beyond the ethical to include the broader expectations which guide social relationships as well as the structures and institutions for the community. The social or institutional dimension tends to express itself in certain visible forms in the *material dimension*, as for example, in certain buildings (temples, mosques, churches) works of art, and icons.

A Theology of Religion. The Christian missionary of course should not be content merely with studying and understanding other religions on a phenomenological level. It is essential that one have an adequate THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS which is shaped by the teachings of Scripture. While elements of truth and value in other traditions can be affirmed, a biblical perspective will also insist that God's special revelation of himself is not available equally through all religions but is to be found exclusively in the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, Scripture does not allow for the perspective that the major religions are all equally legitimate alternative paths to God but rather insists that there is only one sovereign God and that all persons are to repent and come into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone (see RELIGIOUS PLURALISM and UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST). In faithful obedience to their Lord, Christians are to share the gospel of salvation through Christ with devout adherents of other religions.

It is significant that in spite of centuries of missionary effort, with a few notable exceptions, the Christian church has experienced little growth in cultures dominated by Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. Peoples shaped by the WORLDVIEWS of these three religions have proven to be remarkable resistant to the gospel. Perhaps part of what is needed in the coming decades is a much more serious engagement with the sophisticated worldviews underlying these religious traditions and more creative ways of expressing the gospel in these very challenging contexts.

HAROLD A. NETLAND

Bibliography. T. Muck, *The Mysterious Beyond: A Basic Guide to Studying Religion*; S. Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*; D. Noss and J. Noss, *A History of the World's Religions*, 9th ed., N. Smart, *The World's Religions*; idem, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, 2nd ed.

Worldview. In popular usage the expression "worldview" often refers to nothing more than a particular point of view, a way of looking at something. But a worldview represents much more; it represents a whole constellation of assumptions and beliefs about what is real, how things fit together, and how things happen. Before considering a definition, however, it is useful to recognize two traditions in our understanding of worldview: the philosophical/theological and the cultural/societal.

The expression "worldview" (from *Weltanschauung*) has its origins in eighteenth-century German philosophy in the sense of ideology or system of thought, and this is the sense in which contemporary theologians use it. For most evangelical theologians a worldview constitutes a systematic approach to theology. Their focus is on the fundamental beliefs about the nature of God as Creator and Redeemer and the nature of humanity in its fallen state in need of a redeemer. They regard the Christian (biblical) worldview as in opposition to such ideologies as empiricism, humanism, naturalism, positivism, scientism, and secularism, as well as world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. The religions of technologically primitive societies are often regarded collectively under labels such as ANIMISM or PRIMAL RELIGIONS.

In contrast, those who study the world's cultures use worldview to refer to how the peoples of different cultures conceive of the world, how they categorize the things in the world and structure their knowledge, and how they interpret life experience so as to live fulfilling lives.

No one cultural group can claim to have the correct worldview; rather, each group's worldview stands on its own. Consequently, we can only speak of particular worldviews such as those of the Amish, Navaho, Sioux, or Maasai societies.

A definition that satisfies both of these approaches is that of Nash (1992): "A worldview, then, is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality." Nevertheless, the philosophical/theological and cultural/societal traditions differ substantially in what they include in the concept of worldview and in how they apply it.

Worldview as a Corrective Concept. Those who adopt theological approaches begin with a single, unifying principle which structures the rest of the worldview. Nash (1992) reduces the principle to a single statement: "Human beings and the universe in which they reside are the creation of the God who has revealed himself in [the Christian] Scripture." Working out a single principle, however, results in a "whole range of systematic theology" (Holmes).

Evangelical theologians generally present the Christian worldview as a systematic theology for the defense of the Christian faith or as an instrument to confront and dismantle opposing worldviews. In so doing they use philosophical and logical argumentation, and their approach is more corrective than interpretive. Those who adopt such an approach regard the CONTEXTUALIZATION of the gospel as a method for discovering the weaknesses of opposing worldviews and convincing their proponents of the superiority of the Christian faith.

Worldview as an Interpretive Concept. On the other hand, many evangelical Christian missionaries who adopt cultural approaches begin with both the Bible and the language and culture of the people they wish to reach. Because a command of the language is the key to understanding a worldview, they learn the language, how the people use the language to categorize the things they regard as important, and how they use it to interpret their life experiences. Thus their approach is more interpretive than corrective. They regard the contextualization of the gospel as an expression of the Christian faith through culturally appropriate concepts which are compatible with biblical truth. Accordingly, they speak of societal worldviews which have a Christian basis: thus American Christian, Navaho Christian, Maasai Christian or Zulu Christian worldviews. When, however, such Christian societal worldviews express biblical truth with categories which are unusual in comparison to those of the European languages, Western theologians often suspect that those categories represent a fusion of Christian and heathen concepts (see SYNCRETISM).

Overview of Worldview. A worldview may be thought of as having four integrated components: words, categories, patterned life experiences (i.e., schemas), and themes. Each of these contributes to the distinctiveness of a worldview

and to how that worldview governs people as they live out their lives.

People generally do not think about their worldview; in fact most assume that peoples of other cultures think and reason in much the same way (see ETHNOCENTRISM). However, when they encounter another worldview with different assumptions and values they become aware of worldview differences.

To illustrate how a worldview integrates various concepts, we will consider some aspects of the worldview of the Selepet people of Papua New Guinea, a worldview which is radically different from those of Western societies, but which is typical of Melanesian societies. The Selepet people use the word *tosa* for a wide range of behavior. If a person steals someone's chicken, she or he acquires a *tosa*, which may be translated as "sin." To become free of the *tosa* requires that she or he give something of equivalent value to the chicken's owner. This item is known as a *matnge* and serves as restitution. A person may also acquire a *tosa* by destroying another person's property or physically abusing a person. The offender may remove the *tosa* with a *matnge* which serves as compensation. Or the offended party may exact their own *matnge* by an act of vengeance or by a demand for retributive punishment. To borrow something also incurs a *tosa*, and the repayment serves as the *matnge*. Finally, the acceptance of a gift incurs a *tosa*, which is best translated as "obligation," because one is obliged to remove the *tosa* by giving a *matnge* in the form of a comparable gift. What unifies all these examples is a dominant Selepet worldview theme that people have to maintain balance and harmony in their interpersonal relationships. Every *tosa* creates an imbalance which has to be rectified by a *matnge*.

Rather than focusing on the typical Western Christian concept of sin as falling short of God's standard or breaking God's law, this typically Melanesian worldview theme supports an equally Christian concept of sin as any action which disrupts a harmonious relationship. Adam and Eve's fundamental sin was to break their relationship with God by transferring their allegiance to Satan; disobedience was the outcome of that change. Therefore, one could regard the Melanesian Christian concept of sin as the more basic of the two.

If Melanesian Christians were to use their concept of sin to evaluate contemporary American culture, they would regard the development of the social security system and individual retirement accounts as fundamentally unchristian remedies for the elderly having to face retirement without family support. Moreover, they would strongly condemn the removal of the elderly from the family to nursing homes.

Many Western theologies emphasize that salvation is attained through repentance and faith (Acts 20:21) and maintained by an ongoing faith (Acts 13:43; Phil. 2:12). In many Melanesian worldviews, however, the concept of repentance is minimized. Rather, the process of salvation is seen to involve the giving of one's allegiance (John 1:12 NEB) which leads to reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20) and adoption (Eph. 1:5), and is maintained by harmonious relationships (Eph. 4:30; Heb. 12:14). It is important to recognize that the Melanesian concept of sin and salvation can be consistent with biblical truth. Giving their allegiance to God results in their being adopted and entails that they stop doing those things which would harm that relationship. Thus, they repent even though they do not acknowledge it as such.

Worldview and Morality. The categories which a society creates are relevant to questions of morality. For example, Americans buy matches and regard them as personal property. Anyone who takes another person's matches is guilty of petty theft. However, in some technologically primitive societies fire belongs to everyone, just like water and air. So members of those societies may feel free to help themselves to an American's matches. Just because technology has captured fire, placed it on the end of a stick, and made it available for marketing does not remove matches from their category of things which belong to everyone, things not subject to being stolen. Rather, anyone who claims exclusive rights by withholding such a basic human resource as fire is regarded as morally deviant and exhibiting unchristian behavior.

In conclusion, it is important to recognize that the worldviews of different cultural groups need not be regarded as in opposition to a Christian worldview; rather they can become vehicles to express biblical truth just as did the classical Hebrew and Greek worldviews.

KEN A. McELHANON

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Yoga. A word derived from the Sanskrit *yuj* ("to control, to yoke") and cognate with the English word "yoke," yoga denotes a religious discipline or disciplines. By restraining one's mind and senses and focusing on a single point within, consciousness can be transformed, impurities such as greed or hate eradicated, and liberation of the soul attained. Adepts are called yogis, and their powers of concentration seem to give them

the ability to defy the laws of nature and to cast spells. Yoga is in fact a very ancient tradition found in HINDUISM, JAINISM, and BUDDHISM, thus clearly antedating the evolution of separate world faiths. Iconographic evidence suggests a possible origin in the Indus Valley civilization of 2500–1500 B.C.

By the time of its classical formulation in the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali (who may be the Sanskrit grammarian of that name), yoga was evolving into one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophical thought. Patanjali, who has been variously placed anywhere from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., describes yoga as the cessation of mental fluctuation, a state of mind to be achieved not only by meditation, but also by a strictly moral life, control of one's bodily appetites, and posture. In his system, popularly known as Raja Yoga ("the best" or "royal" yoga), the pupil is taught to distinguish between ordinary awareness (*Citta*) and consciousness (*Purusha*) so that the latter, the essential self, can be released. The practical implications become clear when one reads the *Bhagavad Gita* ("The Song of the Lord"), where through Krishna's teaching him yoga Arjuna is enabled to resolve his ethical dilemma of pursuing his *dharma* ("religious duty") at the cost of his cousins' lives. It is Shiva, however, who is depicted as a yogi and emulated as such by devotees. The *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit and in translation is enormously popular with all classes of Hindus, since they find in it a practical spirituality for everyday life. Yoga can also be assimilated to the Vedantic concept of a totally abstract divine principle to be sought through meditation.

In the Middle Ages more esoteric forms such as Hatha Yoga and Laya Yoga were developed. In the former the objective is to release *kundalini* ("the coiled one") believed to be a serpent sleeping at the base of the spine. This special force, which then rises through the *cakras* (mystical energy points in the body) to the brain, is sometimes identified with the goddess (*devi*) of Sakti Hinduism, who is said to seek her lord Shiva thus. Laya ("dissolution") techniques aim at the obliteration of individual awareness and personality prior to *samadhi*, the blissful absorption into the divine that all yogis seek.

Since the 1960s, yoga has been immensely popular in the West. This is not surprising because in India it has always been a layperson's self-help spirituality, though a teacher is advisable. Yoga is seen as beneficial to one's health, alleviating not just stress and angst, but heart conditions and hypertension as well, though the secularized Western version is of limited efficacy. Spiritual teachers from Asia have created organizations to propagate their particular disciplines, while some Christian theologians such as P. Chenchiah (1886–1959), a Madras lawyer, ad-

vocate a “Christian yoga” as a means of spiritual growth and authentic expression of Asian Christianity. For others, yoga is so closely identified with Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain assumptions that utilizing its techniques is inherently problematic.

ELEANOR M. JACKSON

Bibliography. T. Bernard, *Hatha Yoga—A Personal Experience*; E. Wood, *Yoga*; G. Flood, *Introduction to Hinduism*.

Zen Buddhism. Zen (Ch’an in Chinese) Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism developed indigenously in China and Japan. It teaches direct and sudden enlightenment (*satori* in Japanese, *dun-wu* in Chinese) through the discipline of meditation called *zazen*.

The idea of sudden awakening was first developed by Seng-chao (384–414) and Tao-sheng (360–434). However, it was Bodhidharma, a missionary from India, who emphasized the discipline of meditation as opposed to discourse on Buddhist scriptures. He did not meet with great success. It was Hui-neng (638–713), the Sixth patriarch, who brought Zen to prominence in China, and the 7th and 8th Century was the Golden Age. The flowering of Zen in Japan was brought about by the great Zen Master Dogen (1200–1253). It was he who made *zazen* (meditation with the right posture, sitting upright with legs crossed) the key to enlightenment.

Zen Buddhists believe that enlightenment does not depend on words and letters (scriptures). It comes when an insight points directly at a person’s own nature. The deepest truth lies in the principle of identity. All *dharmas* have no reality of their own. All find their true nature in their unity and identity with the Absolute, which is Buddha. All differentiations have therefore to be recognized as illusion due to ignorance. All categories associated with differentiation are empty. Thus logic and knowledge built on differentiation and categories are all futile. The distinctions between the self and the world, subject and object are all misconceptions. All these must be transcended. Thus Zen is the art of attaining the wisdom of unknowing.

To achieve this, one has to practice contemplation in such a way as to expose the futility of concepts and thoughts, until one’s mind becomes a clear mirror reflecting nothing but the Absolute. At that moment, not only are objects “melted” into the Void, even one’s personal consciousness loses its own identity as it unifies with the Absolute Mind. The rejection of concepts is total, even the concept of nirvana or the concept of Buddha.

To facilitate illumination, a student of Zen is often confronted with riddles and paradoxical questions (*koans*), until all preconceptions or understandings are cleared, and he or she is able to

concentrate on the really real. By a sudden intuitive grasp, enlightenment can be achieved. In Japan, *zazen* was taught by Dogen as absolutely essential to the attainment of illumination. In *zazen*, one thinks of nonthinking, liberating oneself from all attachment to what seems to have differentiated identities. Then the world would reveal itself as the infinite world of Buddha, including one’s self.

CARVER YU

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Zoroastrian, Zoroastrianism. Around 1300 B.C. a man named Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) is believed to have taught a new religion to the Aryan people settled in what is now Iran. Its doctrines changed over centuries during which the people faced conquest by the Greeks, the spread of Christianity, and later the Arab conquest and Islam. In the ninth century A.D. some Zoroastrians sailed east in search of religious freedom, and settled in Gujarat where they were to become the Parsis. Today there are only a few small communities in Iran that are Zoroastrian (c. 30,000); the main traditions have passed to the influential Parsi communities in India and Pakistan (c. 100,000).

The original teaching of Zarathushtra is found in the *Gathas* (“hymns”) that are attributed to him and preserved in a diverse collection of writings called the *Avesta* (fourth to sixth century A.D.). The primary innovation of Zarathushtra, which set his teaching apart from that of other Indo-European peoples of his time, was his emphasis on MONOTHEISM and a radical DUALISM. Ahura Mazda, the creator of heaven and earth, was good and just, but not all-powerful. He had an adversary, Angra Mainyu (the evil spirit), who was likewise uncreated. Ahura Mazda created the world as a battleground where they could meet. Human beings are therefore at the center of this struggle, and it is their duty to care for the God of creation and fight evil in all its forms. The PROBLEM OF EVIL and suffering is basic to Zoroastrian thought.

Zoroastrian cosmology focuses on three major events: the creation of the world, the revelation of good religion, and the final transfiguration. The ultimate aim of all virtuous striving is to bring about the salvation of the world. The last days will be marked by increasing suffering, and then the world savior will come in glory. A later tradition says that he is to be born of a virgin impregnated by the sperm of Zarathushtra while she bathed in a lake where it had been deposited and miraculously preserved. There will be a great battle between good and evil, ending in victory for the good. The bodies of those who died earlier

Zoroastrian, Zoroastrianism

will be resurrected and united with their souls, and the last judgment will take place. The kingdom of Ahura Mazda will then be established on earth.

A Zoroastrian has the duty to pray five times daily (at dawn, sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight) in the presence of fire. In about 400 B.C. an ever-burning fire seems to have been instituted into the temple cult. There are three grades of fires: *farrbay*, the fire of the priests; *gushnasp*, the fire of the warriors; and *burzen mihr*, the fire of farmers. The symbolic role of fire led to the misconception, especially by Muslims, that the Zoroastrians were fire worshipers.

Boys and girls are initiated into the Zoroastrian community by being invested with a sacred shirt and cord. This usually takes place between the ages of seven and nine among the Parsis, and twelve and fifteen among the Iranians. On that day the young person bathes, drinks a consecrated liquid for inward cleansing, and puts on the sacred shirt. The priest then performs a sim-

ple ceremony, and the relatives dress the initiate in new clothes and give gifts. Ceremonies at death are equally important. The body is given into the charge of professionals, who wrap it in a cotton shroud and carry it on an iron bier to a stone tower. The polluting flesh is quickly eaten by vultures, and the bones bleached in the sun. Prayers are made for the deceased on the fourth day, and regularly during the following year.

Zoroastrians do not proselytize. They favor marriage between cousins, with the result that they form close communities. From the ninth century the community in Iran has been separated from that in India, consequently, the teaching and ritual of the two groups differ. Although small in number, the Parsis have become an influential and wealthy community in India.

DAVID BURNETT

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