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FEATURE STORY:

Table and café churches serve up new options for mainline and evangelical Protestants

Mainline and evangelical Protestants, both in the U.S. and abroad, are responding to the challenges of decline, institutionalism, and political conflict by creating new structures often based around intimate community and sharing a meal. Mainline churches have long experimented with alternative forms of ministry to stem their dramatic declines in members, but one such alternative showing increasing popularity are dinner and “café” churches that take an entrepreneurial approach to supporting their ministries. The *Faith and Leadership* blog (June 13) reports that United Methodist congregations have formed a new network, known as Simple Church, whose services are based around shared meals with communion included, as well as conversation replacing the sermon. The idea of a supper-based church is not exactly new, but it has caught on in mainline circles starting with New York’s St. Lydia’s Kitchen, a Lutheran-Episcopal church plant in the early 2000s. The original Simple Church is a United Methodist congregation in North Grafton, Massachusetts, that is what is often called a “re-plant”—a struggling congregation reorganized by the denomination. More uniquely, the church pioneered a revenue model that “puts less strain on parishioners by generating income from a trade—in this case, bread baking.”

The Simple Church format has spread to other states and Canada, with 11 affiliate congregations practicing table-centered worship, often relying on trade-based enterprises for revenue. The Simple Church in North Grafton, which has grown from zero to 70 members in three years, is planting its first daughter congregation nearby in central Massachusetts later this year. While Simple Church’s “folksy hymns and simple prayers” hark back to traditional Methodism, it does not have any statement of faith and is similar to other dinner churches that are at the progressive end of the spectrum. It stresses inclusivity, which involves inviting all participants—often Christian and non-Christian—to take communion as well as accepting the LGBTQ community. The article reports that several of the participants also attend conventional services on Sunday morning. Unlike the mainline alternative churches that seek renewal and growth in declining denominations, evangelical alternative congregations often are reacting against the influence of megachurches and

evangelical conservative political involvement— a sentiment that has driven much of the “emerging” church movement in North America, Europe, and Australia.

This frustration with evangelical church institutionalism seems to be driving the trend of “café churches” in South Korea, according to *The Atlantic* (May 8). Jason Strother reports on “tens of thousands of small Protestant chapels across the country that are trying to lure believers away from South Korea’s megachurches.” Some of these new church plants, like Jesus Coffee in central Seoul, are creating such an alternative by “satisfying the longing for a close-knit religious community as well as the craving for cappuccino.” Churches and cafes “have the hardest time surviving in Korea. Combining the two is mutually beneficial,” says pastor and barista Ahn Min-ho. The model of the combined café and church has grown in Korea in recent years as a counterpoint not only to the massive and hierarchical megachurches but also to prosperity teachings and associated cases of church corruption, such as when the founder of the world’s largest megachurch was convicted of embezzling \$112 million in church money in 2014. Younger Korean Christians filling these alternative churches often are frustrated with the link between older Christians and the anti-communist political right, particularly Park Geun Hyne, who was impeached for corruption.

(*Faith & Leadership*, <https://www.faithandleadership.com/simple-church-blends-dinner-worship-and-enterprise-create-new-model>; *The Atlantic*, <http://www.theatlantic.com>)



ARTICLES:

Charismatics eye First Nations as the new missionary vanguard

American Indians have long had the attention of missionaries and evangelists, but more recently they have become the protagonists of numerous prophecies by charismatic Christians that the First Nation tribes and their reservations are the harbingers of revival in America, according to *Charisma* magazine (June). In 1975, Billy Graham prophesied that Native Americans hold the key to Christian revival—a prediction that evangelists have repeated since then. Apostolic revivalist Ryan LeStrange claimed to receive a revelation two years ago showing him that reservations will become revival zones with prayer houses sending forth American Indian missionaries and evangelists. Greg Miller portrayed this idea that American Indians will be instrumental in revival in the Christian film *Awakened: The Spiritual Destiny of the First Americans*. But the *Charisma* report finds there have only been “pockets of awakening” taking place since the 1970s, with such a ministry as Ranch Camp in the Navajo Nation organizing a Gathering of Tribal Nations in 2017. There are also instances of Christian upsurge outside of the Navajo Nation among the Lakota people and in Alaskan tribes through a movement called AKONEDAY. American Indian Christian leaders are also “pressing in hard” among the Mandan, Cherokee, Apache, Muckleshoot, and Mohawk tribes.



Jennifer LeClaire writes that most of these prophecies about the leading role of American Indians in revival acknowledge that Christianity’s associations with injustices and atrocities committed against these peoples have tainted it. But they stress the spiritual authority that Native American Christians hold in their own lands. Some American Indian and non-native evangelicals and charismatics even see reservations as places of refuge for traditional Christians and Jews as well as zones where conservative Christian values are upheld even as they are diminishing in the U.S. as a whole. LeClaire reports that Navajos, as a sovereign nation, are able to ignore federal rulings on their lands, and thus the tribe’s Christian president and vice-president have tried to uphold “biblical values,” including opposing same-sex marriage. Many tribes also maintained official ties

with Israel in spite of the Obama administration's lack of support. Miller says that native Christian leaders saw more possibility of reservations serving as refuge places before the Trump presidency, but this belief may be rekindled if they see secular pressures grow again.

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

Current Research

● **Even though it has been considered a conservative religious rallying cry, a Public Religion Research Institute survey finds that 61 percent of Americans oppose allowing businesses to deny services to gays and lesbians.** The issue became headline news when the Supreme Court considered taking the case of a Colorado baker who refuses on religious grounds to make cakes for same-sex couples. But the new survey of 40,000 found not a single major U.S. religious group where a majority of members support denying service to same-sex couples. Fifty percent of white evangelical Protestants supported such service denial, but the numbers drop from there: 42 percent of Mormons, 34 percent of Hispanic Protestants, 25 percent of black Protestants, and 25 percent of Jehovah's Witnesses believe businesses should be allowed to deny services to same-sex couples. *USA Today* (June 21) reports that the finding is part of a major shift in views of same-sex marriage across the country, where support for same-sex marriage is growing, especially among younger people of all faiths. While 61 percent of white evangelical Protestants still oppose gay marriage, even that group is split by age, with 51 percent of evangelicals under the age of 30 saying they support gay marriage.



● While “spiritual but not religious” individuals are usually identified by their eschewing religious affiliation and holding non-institutional beliefs, their strong disavowal of monotheism tends to be their defining characteristic, writes Paul McClure of Baylor University in the journal *Poetics* (62). McClure analyzes the Baylor Religion Survey (Wave 4, 2014) and finds that those who identify as “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR) are more numerous than previous studies have shown, representing about 27 percent of the American population. He found that SBNRs are more likely to hold that all religions are true but reject monotheistic beliefs, which they view as too exclusive. They tend to understand God as a higher power, interpret the Bible as an ancient book of history and legends, and adhere to an individualistic ethic. McClure links these beliefs to the demographic profile of SBNRs—they are younger, more urban, white, and highly educated. He concludes that SBNR status “accompanies practically a wholesale rejection of traditional religious practices and monotheistic beliefs” and in a sense, can be as exclusive as monotheism.



(*Poetics*, <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/poetics/>)

● Viewing pornography among American young adults is associated with lower rates of congregational attendance, prayer frequency, feelings of closeness to God, and the importance of religion in their lives, according to a study by Samuel Perry and George Hayward in the journal *Social Forces* (June). The secularizing effect of viewing pornography was found among both men and women and is strongest for teens from 13–17. The researchers, who analyzed the first three waves of the National Study of Youth and Religion, found that while the effects of viewing pornography weaken after age 18, it still negatively affects the two measures of attendance and frequency of prayer. Perry and Hayward theorize that teens living under the moral authority of their parents experience



more internalized guilt and cognitive dissonance associated with their pornography use. Although they acknowledge several factors behind what they see as a secularization of youth, pornography use, like involvement in drinking, drug use, and premarital sex, weakens adolescent attachment to religion.

(*Social Forces*, <https://academic.oup.com/sf/issue>)

● **While Muslims appreciate the freedom that they enjoy in the United Kingdom, they feel that a strict practice of Islam does not always fit with the lifestyle of the local society and consider the lack of a unified representation of Muslims as a weakness in comparison to established religious bodies.** That was the main finding of Turkish migration studies scholar Onur Unutulmaz (Ankara University) in a paper presented at a conference on the religious and ethnic future of Europe, organized by the Donner Institute and the Migration Institute of Finland in Turku (Finland), that **RW** attended. According to the 2011 census, the UK has a Muslim population of 2.7 million (up from 1.55 million ten years earlier), making up 5 percent of the total population. The researcher finds that 68 percent of UK Muslims are of Asian background, and 47 percent are UK-born. Thirty-three percent of Muslims are 15 years old or younger (compared with 19 percent of the general population). Freedom of speech, rule of law, social and welfare rights, and ability to practice their religion are some of the advantages Muslims in the UK enjoy.

But they are concerned about the kind of image Muslims have in the country, with wrong people assumed to represent Muslims in the media and an obvious lack of unity. Respondents hope to have a common governing structure, such as a Grand Mufti, although they are aware that the divisions within the community would make it difficult to select one and might end up only in creating more divisions. The prominence of first-generation migrants in religious institutions is perceived as part of the problem, and the need for building up more competence is emphasized. Unutulmaz's presentation also offered the opportunity to introduce a new research project



launched under the auspices of the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), a subsidiary organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Mostly confined to economic topics until now, SESRIC enters the field of social sciences with its Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project, now in its initial stage with fieldwork starting in the UK and continuing in France and Germany. In addition to country reports, the long-term goal is the production of an interactive GMD atlas.

● **The majority of migrants coming to Norway are keeping their religion, with the exception of people of Iranian descent, of whom only one out of ten states that religion is important.**

Anette Walstad Enes (of Statistics Norway) reported these findings of newly released research at the conference on the religious and ethnic future of Europe that took place in Turku, Finland, on June 12–13 attended by **RW**. The research was conducted on a sample of 4,200 immigrants from 12 countries (350 per country) as well 1,000 people born in Norway to immigrant parents. The response rate was 54 percent. The countries of origin were Vietnam, Poland, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Iran, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia.

The level of religious affiliation is 80 percent and above for all groups except for people from Iran (less than 50 percent) and from Bosnia-Herzegovina (below 70 percent). In a strong majority of cases, people report still belonging to the same religion as the one in which they were raised—



except for people of Iranian background, of whom only 52 percent persevere in the religion of their childhood. The percentage is 83 percent for people from Poland, 84 percent for people from Bosnia-Herzegovina, 88 percent for people from Vietnam, 89 percent for people from Iraq and Kosovo, while all the other national origins are above 90 percent. Seventy percent or more of the respondents (depending on the country of origin) find it very easy or easy to practice their religion in Norway, while only a small

percentage for each religion sees it as difficult or very difficult.

(The website of *Statistic Norway* makes this material on migrants and religion as well as on various other relevant topics available in English at: <https://www.ssb.no/en/innvandring-og-innvandrere/nokkeltall/immigration-and-immigrants>)

● **More Australians do not identify with a religion than with any single religion, a first for a country that had been predominantly Catholic, according to new data from the nation's census. Nearly 30 percent reported "no religion," compared to 23 percent Catholic and 13 percent Anglican.** Despite the rise in the unaffiliated, who represented 0.8 percent of Australia's population in 1966, the growth of pluralism was also evident. Fifty years ago, census data showed that more than 88 percent of the country was Christian. Christians now comprise just over 52 percent. Since the last census in 2011, the country's Muslim and Hindu populations each added more than 100,000 people, but they still represent only 2.6 percent and 1.9 percent of the population, respectively. There are still more Buddhists than Hindus. The survey had a 95 percent response rate, reports *CNN* (June 27).



● **Despite shrinking church attendance in Sweden, there has been a revival of religious interest that suggests younger generations of Swedes may replace older more secular ones, according to a study in the *Review of Religious Research* (online in June).** Political scientist Magnus Hagevi analyzes longitudinal data on religious affiliation and pluralism, comparing it to



data on religious interest among different generations in Sweden. The research finds that while the pre-war generation tended to value salvation the most, such interest dropped considerably for baby boomers. But starting with Generation X and then intensifying with millennials, the valuing of salvation exceeds that of the baby boomers. In contrast to traditional ideas of an ongoing secularization, Hagevi argues that there has been a de-regulation of the religious market that Swedish young people are only now beginning to feel due to a time lag.

He adds that it was only when compulsory religious practices — such as formal teaching on religion in the schools—lost ground in 1970s Sweden that the religious market began to develop. Baby boomers who were forced to participate in such rituals tended to show high rates of religious disinterest. But generations X and Y (the millennials) were raised in this deregulated religious market and therefore may not have developed negative views of religion. The researchers controlled for immigrants, who have higher religious interests, and found that the higher religious interests of the younger generations, especially millennials, remained.

(*Review of Religious Research*, <https://link.springer.com/journal/13644>)

● **Survey researchers have often ignored Bangladesh, but a new study suggests that the troubled country shows a growing tendency to support religious conflict and violence.** The study, published in the journal *Politics and Religion* (online in June) and conducted by C. Christine Fair, Ali Hamza, and Rebecca Heller of Georgetown University, is based on the recent Pew data on a country that has been underrepresented by large-scale surveys and overlooked by the security studies community. The researchers find that fairly strong support for extremism accompanies two decades of conflict in Bangladesh between those supporting secularism and Islamic militancy, punctuated by 100 terrorist attacks. “Variables that strongly predict support for suicide bombings...have significant support,” they add. There is also popular support for Islamic leaders providing dispute resolution, with 70 percent of respondents embracing it: “While education seems to mitigate support for violence, higher perceived economic standing exacerbates it.”

(*Politics and Religion*, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-religion>)



ARTICLES:

Finland's Lutheran legacy meets rising religious diversity, non-affiliation

Not unlike other Western countries, Finland has seen a decline of membership in mainline denominations along with a growth of unaffiliated people and religious diversification, Tuomas Martikainen (Migration Institute of Finland) reported at a conference on the religious and ethnic future of Europe in Turku on June 12–13, which **RW** attended. For historical reasons, there are two national churches in Finland, the Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church, but the second one only included 1.1 percent of the Finnish population in 2016. The Lutheran Church counted 95.1 percent in 1950, 85.1 percent in 2000, and 72 percent in 2016. Due to its still central and massive place, the future of religion in Finland remains very much linked to the future of the Lutheran Church.

Other registered religious communities make only 1.6 percent of the total population, with the most numerous groups being the Evangelical Free Church (0.3 percent) and Muslims (0.26 percent), followed by the Catholic Church and Pentecostal churches. The rise of the non-affiliated has been rapid and most significant, reaching 25.3 percent of the population by 2016. Religion is not central for most people, Martikainen notes, with only 15 percent reporting religion to be important in their lives, but it remains appreciated as a cultural heritage.

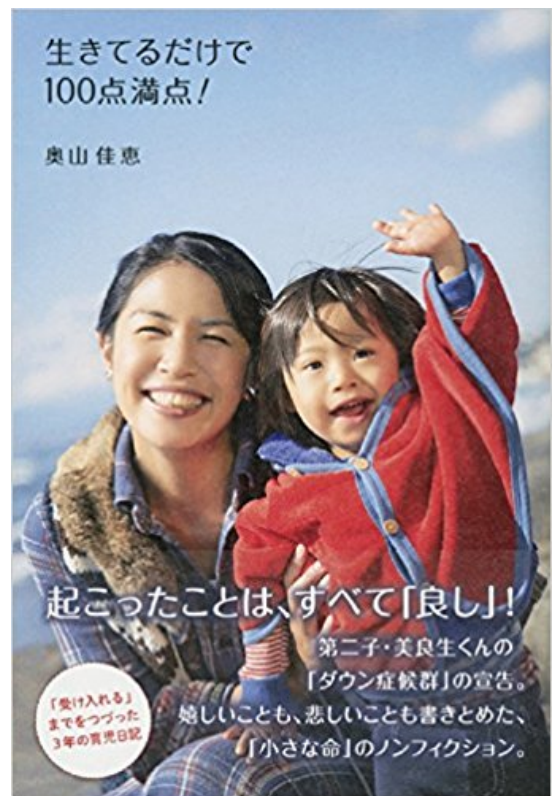
Besides numerical shifts, other developments worth noticing have taken place over the past 15 years. Internal diversity increases within historical churches. Facing secularization, the Lutheran Church increasingly sees itself as a voice for civil society on social and other issues. Moreover,



cooperation among Christian denominations has also developed, with boundaries becoming less strong and denominational identities weakening. Martikainen considers an increase in religious diversity as the most likely scenario for Finland as a result of both immigration and interest for new ideas and groups within the native population. What is uncertain about the future is how many more members the Lutheran Church will lose, with the pace of disaffiliation having accelerated since the beginning of this century, and how much immigration might increase.

Japan's fledgling pro-life movement finds secular and religious inspiration

Japan's rapidly dropping birth rate, relatively high abortion rate, and low adoption rate have generated a small but growing pro-life movement in the country, receiving more support from evangelical Protestants rather than Catholics, writes Jason Morgan in the social science journal *Society* (June/July). Japan's government has encouraged couples to have more children as the birth rate has fallen far below replacement level. Among other celebrities popular actress Okuyama Yoshie has publicized prolife values as she announced the birth of a child with Down syndrome, celebrating the lives of children with that condition (although she refuses to judge those who choose to abort children diagnosed in utero with Down syndrome). Japan's abortion rate has fallen since 2004 to about 15 percent in 2013. Buddhist influence has been minimal on Japanese attitudes toward abortion, even though the ritual of exorcism from the influence of spirits of aborted and miscarried children (which includes providing for their proper burial) is still carried out in many Buddhist temples. Most of the discourse in the nominally Buddhist nation tends to fall along the secular lines of the positive aspects of giving birth to children with congenital birth defects.



Christians have been the main groups who have moved into the work of adoptions and fighting abortions. “Unlike the United States, Protestants and not Catholics, have led these pro-life efforts. Significantly, the only national prolife organization was founded by a Protestant pastor. The Catholic Church has no pro-life apostolate in Japan, a situation which does not appear likely to change in the foreseeable future,” Morgan writes. A lone priest in the Japanese pro-life movement told him that the Catholic Church in Japan considers the movement too political and has deliberately chosen not to participate as a body in pro-life activities. Leading prolife activism in

Japan is Dr. Kikuta Noboru, a doctor who was a prolific abortionist but later converted to Christianity and became an adoption advocate (helping to normalize the practice in the country) and anti-abortion crusader. Japan's first pro-life march in 2015 drew only 35 participants, although last year's event attracted nearly 100.

(*Society*, <https://link.springer.com/journal/12115>)

Foreign Buddhist movements spread and change under pressure in China

As new Buddhist movements and groups, many from other Asian countries, spread throughout China, they are facing changes to their teachings and practices, even as they exert considerable change in Chinese society, according to a report in the *New York Times* (June 25). The newspaper focuses on the Taiwanese-based group Fo Guang Shan, which arrived in China over a decade ago and has grown to a movement of millions. Appealing to Chinese disenchanted with what they see as a moral vacuum left by government corruption and the dislocations of capitalist growth, the movement, led by 89-year-old Venerable Master Hsing Yun, has sought to change society through “personal piety and by working with the government instead of against it,” writes Ian Johnson. The group has set up cultural centers and libraries in major Chinese cities and published millions of volumes through the state-controlled press.

In carrying out such work, Fo Guang Shun has had to compromise its religious mission and be careful not to mix religion and politics (like an outlawed group such as Falun Gong), leading the movement to play down its message of social change and focus instead on promoting traditional Chinese cultural values and knowledge. This approach has won Fo Guang Shun strong support from the government, including from President Xi Jinping. In an interview with Johnson, Hsing Yun stressed he does not want to promote Buddhism but only to “promote Chinese culture to cleanse humanity.” The way in which Fo Guang Shun promotes Buddhism, even if it does not call it that, can be seen in its plans to build the massive Temple of Great Awakening at a cost of \$150 million. The temple will tell

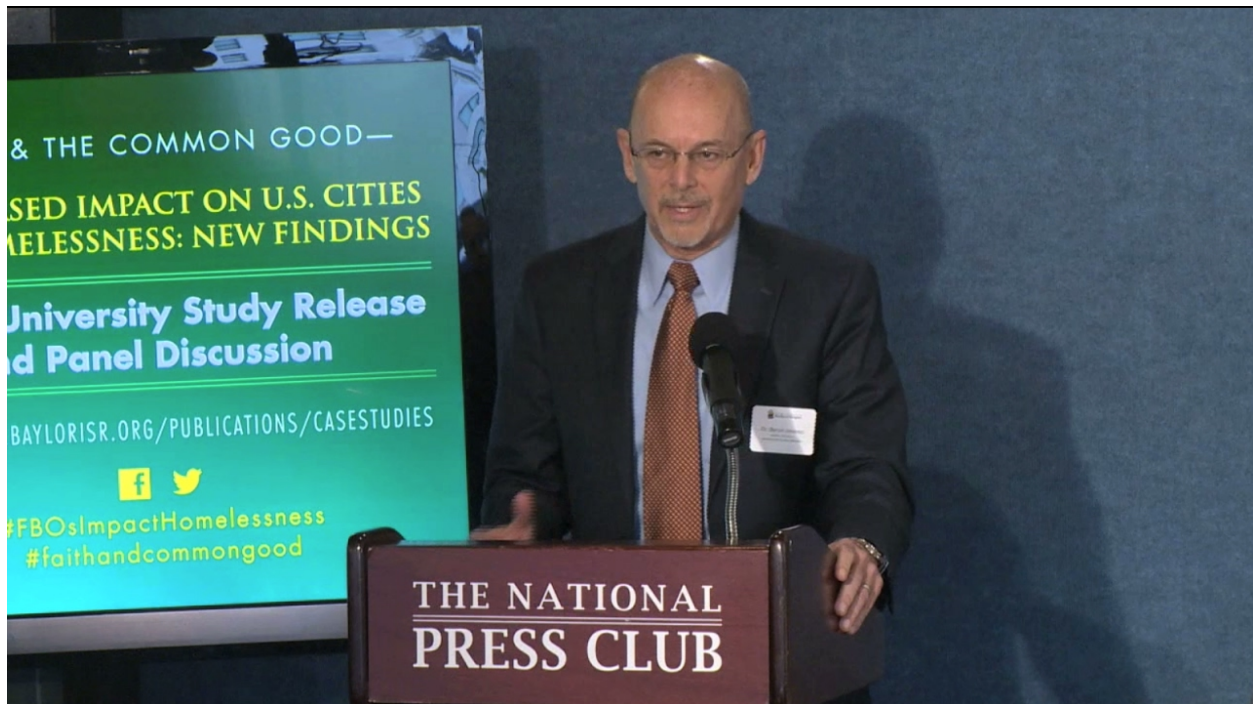


the story of the Buddha through giant friezes and a three-dimensional hologram of the goddess of mercy Guanyin as well as 15-story pagoda and a 16,000-square-foot worship hall.

(*New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/24/world/asia/china-buddhism-fo-guang-shan.html>)

Findings & Footnotes

■ ISR co-director Byron Johnson, William H. Wubbenhorst, and Alfreda Alvarez recently issued *Assessing the Faith-Based Response to Homelessness in America*. The 146-page report is based on an initial 11-city study on faith-based organization's (FBO) impact on homelessness, measuring the percentage of emergency shelter beds provided by these ministries. The report also includes a 3-year projection of taxpayer savings, specifically looking at homelessness ministries, residential recovery, and job readiness programs. The study finds that FBOs provide almost 60 percent of emergency shelter beds. While these organizations are often at the forefront of program innovation, government-run Housing First policies do not always engage effectively with these ministries. The program outcomes for successful participants from FBO Residential Recovery and Job Readiness programs in these 11 cities generate an estimated \$119 million in taxpayer savings during the three years following program exit. This report can be downloaded at <http://www.baylorisr.org/wp-content/uploads/ISR-Homeless-FINAL-01092017-web.pdf>



■ The ways in which Catholic media mirror the attitudes of American Catholics toward Islam is the subject of *Danger and Dialogue*, a report by Georgetown University’s Bridge Initiative. The initiative, a project of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown, surveyed American Catholics and conducted content analysis of Catholic media outlets and their treatment of Islam. The researchers find that the headlines of Catholic articles (as well as books) dealing with Islam have a “negative sentiment overall, and the primary emotion conveyed is anger.” The 142-page report also found that in prominent Catholic outlets, half of the time the word “Islamic” is used, it is in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group. These findings line up with survey results showing that only 14 percent of Catholics say they have a positive view of Islam, and that three in ten have unfavorable views of the religion, suggesting that Pope Francis’s favorable outlook on Islam has not reached most American Catholics and their media. The researchers also find that a circle of Catholic apologists writing against Islam has had significant impact in a segment of Catholic publications, although the theme of dialogue and learning about other religions is also present in Catholic media. The report can be downloaded at http://bridge.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Bridge_CathReport_Single.pdf



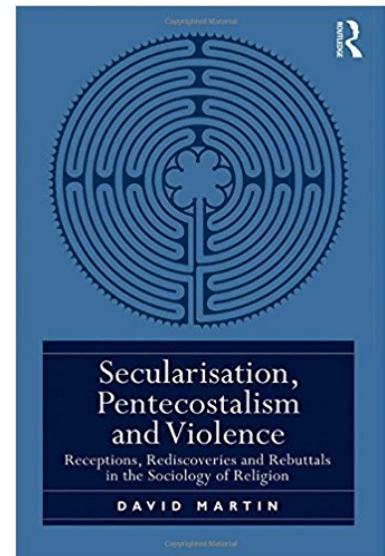
■ *The FBI and Religion* (University of California Press, 29.95), edited by Sylvester Johnson and Steven Weitzman, presents both historical and contemporary case studies that show an ambivalence and, in some cases, hostility and suspicion toward religious actors. The book covers the fraught relationship between the federal agency and religious groups running from the FBI’s beginnings engaging with (but often antagonizing) black churches to fight white supremacist radicalism to its suspicions and investigations of mainline churches during the Cold War to the more recent controversies involving new religious movements and Islam. The editors argue that the bureau has been infused with its own religiosity through its past directors, notably J. Edgar Hoover, its agents (recruiting many Mormons to fill its ranks), and its patriotic and civic faith values. Several of the contributors see the FBI not only as violating the separation of church and state but also engaging in blatant racial and religious discrimination against such groups as the Nation of Islam, the Moorish Science Temple, and even the Church of God in Christ.



The chapters on minority and new religious movements document the missteps the bureau and its agents have taken toward unconventional faiths. Catherine Wessinger re-examines the case of the Branch Davidians and finds that the FBI knew more about the impending raid in Waco than has been subsequently reported while tuning out scholarly advice about David Koresh and his apocalyptic beliefs. The bureau’s

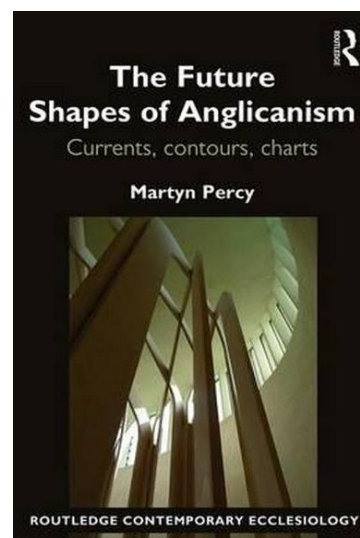
counterterrorism tactics since 9/11 are likewise criticized for ignoring scholars of Islam and listening to self-proclaimed experts who often stress the violent nature of Islam. All this material brings the reader to the concluding chapter that deals with the recurring issue of bridging the gap between the FBI and scholarship on crime enforcement. Scholars have positioned themselves as “worldview translators” as they explain the motivations and beliefs of targeted religious groups to agents, but such a role can too often turn into advocacy, Weitzman writes. Although the bureau still rarely engages the academic study of religion, he adds that there are signs that the bureau has changed, partnering with educational institutions and encouraging counterterrorism agents to study Islam.

■ David Martin’s *Secularisation, Pentecostalism and Violence* (Routledge, \$104.97) retraces the seminal ideas and theories throughout the career of this veteran British sociologist of religion as well as engaging in vigorous argument with critics and colleagues. Along the way in its 194 pages, Martin provides incisive analysis on key trends in contemporary religion that even those who have not kept up with his prolific work can appreciate. Although not quite an intellectual autobiography (he already wrote one in 2013), Martin focuses on several key concepts and fields he has worked on since the 1950s. They include secularization, religion and violence, Pentecostalism in Latin America and other nations, and, less well known, art and music in Western Christianity. Martin’s questioning in the 1960s of the secularization thesis, specifically the idea of a single causal relationship between modernization and the loss of religion (although not secularization itself), shaped subsequent debates on secularization.

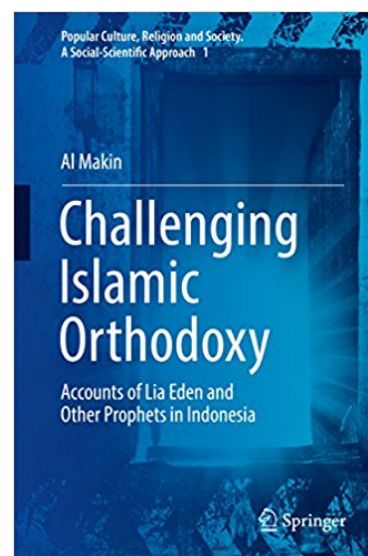


Martin recounts when new debates sidelined his critique in the next following decades in an almost bibliographic manner that highlights the different positions and players on this contentious subject; he finds that it is far from a two-sided debate between pro- and anti-secularization theorists. Martin eschews any universal theory or unidirectional trajectories, so his writings are always densely historical and detailed, but his major themes stand out: the checkerboard nature of national patterns of religious decline and vitality shaped by historical contingency and cultural and political arrangements; the ways in which violence and “secular” nationalism but also peacemaking can mutate from religious roots (something he faults the new atheists for ignoring); and the continuing relevance of Pentecostalism in Latin America’s shift to pluralism and modernity. Martin doesn’t dismiss findings of disaffiliation and corruption in Pentecostal churches, but he notes how “even to pass through the Pentecostal experience might leave a social deposit.”

■ *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism* (Routledge, \$27.97), by Martyn Percy, comes from a definite liberal (or “broad”) Anglican perspective, but the author’s in-depth knowledge of both the Church of England and global Anglicanism and blending of sociology and theology make the book an interesting exploration of this conflicted Christian tradition. Percy engages in a complex kind of mapping of global Anglicanism—statistics tell only part of the story. For instance, Japan has more Anglican colleges and universities than the Church of England, even though it has a small number of Anglicans (35,000). The fragmentation taking place not only between the global South and north but also within national churches also confounds Anglican map-making as more conservative parishes align with like-minded churches in other countries or with the growing alternative or house church movement that overlaps with and overrides traditional parish boundaries. As in previous work, Percy turns to the prevalence of managerialism in Anglicanism, especially the Church of England, as its greatest challenge. He argues that the managerial approach, as spelled out in the church bishops’ Green Report in 2015, has invaded the ranks of clergy, parish, and seminary life, sidelining theology, conversation, and spirituality. Led by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, this transactional style is globalized and applied to relations between Anglican churches. Percy concludes that the charismatic yet standardized model of leadership favoring the evangelical branch is dominating over the liberal and mystical components of the church, even though the latter resonates with secular British, such as the growing spiritual movement based in cathedrals.



■ In recent years some research projects have paid attention to alternative religious movements in Muslim countries, for instance the program on “New Religiosities in Turkey” under the aegis of the German Orient Institute in Istanbul, as reported in **RW** (November 2013). Muslim majority countries are not only a place where imported religious movements seek converts, however; some prove to be a fertile soil for indigenous new religions departing significantly from Islam. Such is the case in Indonesia, a country where **RW** had already mentioned the existence of a New Age market, as observed by Australian scholar Julia Day Howell (May 2003 issue). A recent book by Indonesian researcher Al Makin (Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta) shares fresh insights on movements mostly ignored in the West and is based on a case study of a small movement led by a prophetess using the name of Lia Eden. *Challenging Islamic Orthodoxy: Accounts of Lia Eden and Other Prophets in Indonesia* (Springer, \$99.99) explains that hundreds of people have claimed to receive divine messages in Indonesia since the colonial period, and some have founded new religious movements (NRMs). Most Indonesian NRMs have been born in Java Island, a fertile area for syncretism.



Originally a well-known flower arranger, Lia Eden started by defending Islam and criticizing associations with other religions, while developing a gift for healing—not unlike other founders of Indonesian NRMs. She soon became disappointed by Muslim ulemas with whom she was cooperating and experienced frictions with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) due to her claims that she was receiving revelations from Archangel Gabriel, as Muhammad had done. After interviewing her in 1997, the MUI stated that nobody could receive messages from Gabriel after the Prophet of Islam, and the fact that Lia was a woman

did not help. From that point Lia started distancing herself increasingly from Islam, encouraging the integration of practices from other religions and the abandonment of Muslim rituals. In year 2000, an edict from Gabriel proclaimed the group to be a new religion distinct from Islam. By the mid-2000s, Lia claimed to have united with Gabriel and to speak directly in the name of God while issuing other grandiose statements about her own person and mission. Lia also started to exercise absolute authority over followers, expecting complete commitment, and moreover purged a number of them, thus reducing the movement to a very small group. She also kept warning Indonesia about imminent chastisements and spoke about the imminent end of the world.

The group experienced sometimes-violent opposition as well as state prosecution, with Lia being arrested twice and spending several years in prison. Beside the specific case of a tiny movement, Makin's book offers insights on conflicts around NRMs in the Muslim Indonesian context, where reactions—in contrast to those against NRMs in the West—do not focus on the psychological well-being of followers but on heterodox teachings. In 2007, the MUI set up nine criteria in order to determine if a group is heretical or not. Makin also describes a Muslim counter-cult group—not unlike its Christian counterparts in the West—that gathers documentation on local “cults” and cooperates with police. Yet despite her clearly heterodox teachings, Muslim activists fighting for the promotion of pluralism have defended Lia's religious freedom, stating that somebody who has left Islam can no longer be judged on the basis of Islam. Political and social response to such NRMs—an appendix briefly describes various other prophets—can be considered as an indicator of pluralism and tolerance in a society, Makin writes. The contemporary Indonesian prophets are all prosecuted on the basis of the 1965 blasphemy law, thus accusing them of committing blasphemy against Islam in what is supposed to be a pluralist society. As long as the blasphemy law is not reviewed, the government won't respect the fundamental rights of the Indonesian prophets, Makin concludes.

On/File: A Continuing Record of Events, People, Movements and Groups Impacting Religion

The Database of Religious History is an unusual and ambitious project that attempts to collect information systematically on the world's religions that will serve as both a teaching tool as well as a way to understand religious changes through time. Coming from a strongly evolutionary and cognitive science of religion perspective, the database, created by Edward Slingerland of the University of British Columbia and Brenton Sullivan of Colgate University, is a work in progress that uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Although the latter may be hard to collect when dealing with religious history, the researchers have developed a database that draws on previous collections of ethnographies and religious and cultural traits that allows them to code and convert this material into quantitative “big data.” Because of the lack of consensus among scholars about practices and beliefs of religions going from ancient times to 1700—the researchers' time frame—the project surveys such experts, which allows for their differing views within the database itself. So far, the database has coded almost 500 variables of different religions throughout history on questions such as whether a particular religion at a certain place and time proselytizes, practices celibacy, views their scriptures as inspired, or worships a “high God.” This “massive, open-source, constantly updated and standardized encyclopedia of religious history” could ultimately be coordinated with other “geo-referenced data concerning population, local ecological conditions,

economic and political organization, and cultural technologies such as writing, monetary systems, and warfare to raise new questions about the role of religion in the rise and development of large-scale societies.” (Source: *American Academy of Religion*, June)

