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FEATURE STORY:

Researchers putting the sex in secularization

While we hear much about how religious decline and secularization tend to lower birth rates and lead to liberalized sexual practices and ideas, is it also the case that sexual liberalization decreases religious vitality? Mary Eberstadt's 2013 book *How the West Really Lost God* (see May 2013 **RW** for review) put forth that controversial position. Without providing much in the way of empirical findings, Eberstadt argued that changed sexual practices, starting with the approval of contraception, have weakened religious institutions and beliefs, using Europe as her main case-in-point. More recently, social scientists have conducted research that provides more substance for Eberstadt's argument, if not necessarily proving her point. For instance, University of Texas professor Mark Regnerus writes in the *Washington Post* (September 5) that the uncertainties posed by the modern mating market are putting increasing pressure on churches as they try to retain their younger members and reach out to the unchurched. Regnerus cites several recent studies showing that Christians are tracking with unchurched Americans' declining marriage rates and other behavior and attitudes that would have been frowned upon two decades ago. "Whereas only 37 percent of the least religious never-married adults in the 2014 Relationships in America survey said they would prefer instead to be married, 56 percent of the most religious never-married adults said the same. But 56 is a far cry from 80 or 90 percent. Something is going on," the sociologist writes.

Unlike Orthodox Jewish and Mormon youth who have eschewed the wider dating market, young Christians' narratives of dating are not very different than nonreligious Americans; while they may wait longer, single Christians are also engaging in pre-marital sex. Younger evangelicals (below 30) are more permissive than older ones on a range of issues including pornography and are postponing marriage (and thereby postponing its conservatizing effect). Among Christians of all ages, there are rising uncertainty levels, if not support, about all kinds of unconventional sexuality: 23 percent are uncertain about cohabitation, 25 percent are unsure if viewing pornography is okay, and 17 percent don't know if consensual polyamorous unions are permissible. Regnerus writes, "One can interpret those on the fence as movable—open to being convinced. But if trends in sexual

norms hold, most who once claimed neutrality eventually drift toward the more permissive position.” What this trend means is that churches can no longer count on young adults returning to the fold once they establish families, since delayed marriage is slowing such returns.

But these mating market dynamics may reinforce how “long-standing Christian sexual ethics are making less and less sense to the unchurched—a key market for evangelicals. ... ‘Meeting people where they’re at’ becomes challenging. Congregations are coming face to face with questions of just how central sexual ethics are to their religious life and message.” He points to how the new Nashville Statement on marriage and sexuality illustrates how “live and poignant the tension is.” Regnerus concludes that there has been too little reflection on how cohabitation and other mating market trends erode religious belief: “We overestimate how effectively scientific arguments secularize people. It’s not science that’s secularizing Americans—it’s sex.”

Meanwhile, the new book *Demography, Culture, and the Decline of America’s Christian Denominations* (Lexington Books, \$95) by George Hawley presents a wealth of data on the demographic makeups of the major church bodies, arguing that the future of organized Christianity seems to be one of decline. Using General Social Survey, Pew, and denominational data, Hawley makes the familiar argument that lower rates of affiliation and religiosity relate to lower birth rates but also advances Eberstadt’s thesis that having fewer children and trends such as increased cohabitation also dampen religious vitality. Hawley looks at specific denominations and seeks to explain why some are declining and others are growing. While he agrees that conservative churches are growing more than liberal ones, he writes that most often high fertility more than strict beliefs and practices and evangelistic fervor are the best predictors of a denomination’s health. But even here he is cautious not to draw a straight line between high fertility and denominational vitality—the conservative Southern Baptists have lower fertility and have been showing less growth than the moderate-to-liberal American Baptists.



Hawley looks at the case of the conservative yet declining Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) to see how fertility dynamics play out in one denomination. He finds that in geographic districts of the LCMS where there were higher birthrates of its core, non-Hispanic members, there was less membership decline. He finds that while losses to other denominations and to secularism may be a factor in the LCMS decline, the greatest losses are in these low fertility areas; the low fertility New Jersey Synod experienced a 30 percent membership decline in just 13 years. Hawley finds that aside from high fertility, regions with ethnic diversity and high commitment from members show more vitality. Concluding chapters focus on the demographic and growth prospects of specific major denominations, with Hawley finding that Mormons remain the most “pro-family,” although they are losing members due to apostasy.

ARTICLES:

Amish, Hasidic Jews wrestle with taming or disdaining Internet

The growth of computers and cell phone use in Amish communities is causing divisions among members and raising new questions about the relation of faith and work and the future of the group’s renowned work ethic, reports the *New York Times* (September 17). The use of new technology has created a wave of prosperity among the Amish as they have moved from work in the crafts and agriculture. The prosperity is accompanied by the steady growth of Amish communities, showing 150 percent growth in 25 years. In the Lancaster area alone, there are a reported 2,000 Amish businesses, some of which are multi-million dollar enterprises. Most Amish draw a “very bright line between what is allowed at work—smart phones, Internet access—and what remains forbidden at home.” But such divisions are getting fuzzier, especially with the portable nature of the cell phone. The nature of the Internet cuts against the stress that Amish make about the importance of agreed-upon limits, but the Amish also voice more mundane concerns about the use of pornography and the formation of social networks in dating non-Amish members or leaving the community altogether among the young. Aside from the individualism promoted by communications technology, there is the fear that the availability of work through the Internet discourages manual labor and may steer the young away from the crafts and trades and the Amish work



ethic. The young members interviewed tended to argue that these concerns are overblown and that they try to establish limits to their technological involvement, even as they are more pragmatic than their elders.

The Hasidic Jews are undergoing a similar dilemma in their use of the Internet, although they are moving more in the direction of censorship. In a paper presented at the August meeting of the Association for the Sociology of Religion in Montreal, Gabi Abramac of New York University looked at how Hasidism increasingly view the Internet as a major threat. She points to the Belz sect of the Hasidim banning the Internet in 2015, especially blaming the WhatsApp social media application for disrupting Jewish family life. Abramac posits that there are several strategies that Hasidic leaders have used to negotiate the changes wrought by the Internet. These approaches include prohibition, restrictions such as using the Internet for work but not in the home, and legitimization, which uses the new media to spread the Hasidic message. On the latter approach, the Baal Teshuvah-Kiruv movement of converts to Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox Judaism promotes its message through sophisticated social media programs. Hasidic groups have also increasingly filtered the Internet and in some cases have distributed questionnaires about Internet use to children where they can report on their parents' use of the medium. Abramac said that parents who violate these restrictions can be expelled from the group or find themselves losing status in their communities. At the same time, using the Internet can lead members to live double lives or provide assistance for moving off the Hasidic path altogether.

“Cyber-vigilantism” or just a free-for-all for religions on the Internet?

There have been mounting reports on the growth of “religious cyber-bullying,” or in the words of journalist Mark Silk, “religious cyber-vigilantism,” and often such charges are aimed at the religious right. Silk’s blog *Spiritual Politics* (September 25) finds something akin to a religious “alt-right” in the recent Internet campaign against Jesuit James Martin surrounding his speaking and writing on LGBT issues in Catholic venues. In one much-reported case, Martin was disinvited from speaking at the Catholic University of America after such Catholic right websites as Church Militant and Father Z issued a stream of criticism against Martin and his views. Silk adds that there is a “family resemblance” between such activism and the Internet campaign waged by conservative activists against Russell Moore, the Southern Baptist official who was critical of the campaign of Donald Trump. Silk extends his critique to the Jewish world, citing attacks by “alt-right Jewish vigilantes” against the appointment of historian David Myers to the presidency of the Center of Jewish History because of his alleged left-wing views on Israel.

But in the Catholic case, at least, the growth of religious Internet conflict may not be just a matter of conservative intransigence. In the *New York Times* (September 20), Ross Douthat writes that institutional actors, starting with Pope Francis, have set much of the conflict in the Catholic Church

in motion. He writes that the “conflicting inquisitions, liberal and conservative, are the all-but-inevitable result of the pope’s decisions to stir the church tensions into civil war again, and then to fight for the liberal side using ambiguous statements and unofficial interventions rather than the explicit powers of his office.” The pope has decentralized authority informally “while retaining all the formal powers of his office and encouraged theological envelope-pushing without changing the official boundaries of what counts as Catholic teaching and what does not.”



Douthat points to Francis’s uncertain position on remarried divorced Catholics receiving communion and the Vatican’s acceptance of different interpretations of the church’s teaching on suicide, particularly assisted suicide: “In this environment, anyone who wishes to know what the pope really thinks is better off ignoring official Vatican offices and instead listening to the coterie of papal advisors who take to Twitter to snipe against his critics.” To remedy the often “toxic rhetoric” evident on both sides of these conflicts, Douthat recommends that Catholic liberals and conservatives acknowledge their differences and fully debate them, preferably offline.

(*Spiritual Politics*, <http://religionnews.com>)

The end of Christian-Buddhist dialogue or charting a different future?

The “structural establishment” of both Christian and Buddhist traditions shows little interest in reviving what was once a vibrant dialogue, writes James W. Heisig (Nanzan Institute) in the latest issue of the *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* (Issue 41, 2017), noticing a dwindling of dialogue events, publications, and participants. While the dialogue has probably reached its natural end, the time might be ripe “to welcome back cross-religious believers like the Christian-Buddhist mestizos, and that means finding ways to welcome access, for believing Christians who are so inclined, to the intellectual, scriptural, ethical, and ritual resources of other religions as an enhancement to their own faith,” he adds.

Paying special attention to Roman Catholic dialogue with Buddhism, which started in the final decades of the 20th century, Heisig remarks that there was always reluctance within the church establishment, while believers “at the fringes” were more eager. But more than resistance by

church bureaucracy and fears of compromise, Heisig claims that “it was the expropriation of the dialogue by the weary grind of scholarly culture that crushed the life out of it.” Dialogue turning into a “field” of study for academics in the West became much less appealing to Buddhist partners. And while well-intentioned Christians allayed suspicions of a “hidden missionary agenda,” Heisig writes that the theological stamp on the meetings was “indelible,” with Buddhists unable to propose alternative models—hence the author’s choice to speak of “Christian-Buddhist” instead of “Buddhist-Christian dialogue.” Moreover, what organized religion is looking for in such a dialogue rather looks like “a cessation of hostilities,” hence church-sponsored interreligious encounters leading merely to “basic civility and mutual tolerance.”

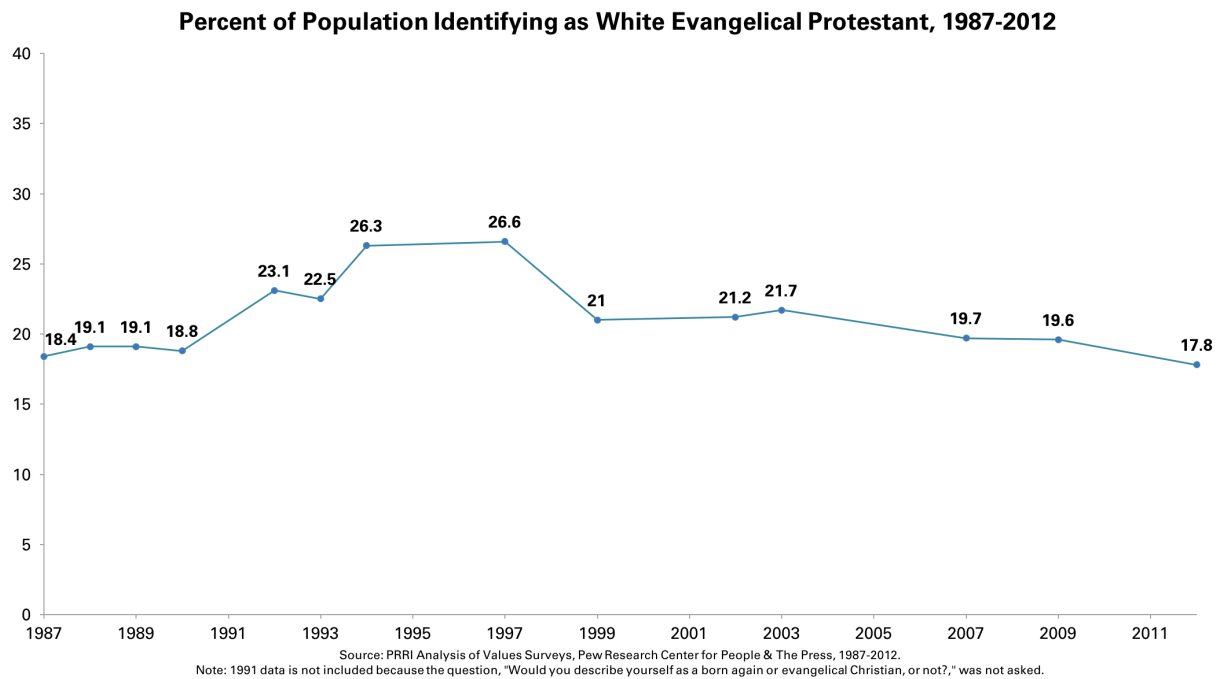
Thus Heisig suggests putting an emphasis on “religious mestizaje,” which means not just the selection of what one likes but “supplementing the resources of one’s own tradition with those of another.” Such an approach welcomes religious diversity as an opportunity to transform the nature of dialogue. There are Christians of all sorts among Buddhist-Christian mestizos, writes Heisig, including monks, “theologians and even church leaders.” This approach also means bringing dialogue back to the spiritual motivation that inspired it in the first place. The author is aware that such a proposal potentially involves radical shifts but contends that there is no other way in a religiously plural world. Heisig does not rule out a new stage of formal dialogue with Buddhists in the future, but “it is probably better left to the initiative of the Buddhists.”

(*Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture*, 18 Yamazato-chō, Shōwa-ku Nagoya 466-8673, Japan - <http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp>.)



CURRENT RESEARCH

● A recent study by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) reports a significant decline in whites claiming an evangelical identity—and also shows how difficult it is to measure such identity. The PRRI survey, based on 101,000 interviews, finds that there has been a six-point drop in those claiming a white evangelical identity since 2006 (down to 17 percent). Without much delay, the *Religion in Public* blog questioned the PRRI findings. Political scientists Andrew Lewis and Ryan Burge combine two different approaches to measuring evangelicals—affiliation with specific denominations and self-identification with evangelicalism (which PRRI used). “The clear finding is that there are only slight differences in the estimates of the evangelical population, no matter how you classify them, over the ten-year period. There is no evidence of a 6 percentage point drop,” they conclude.

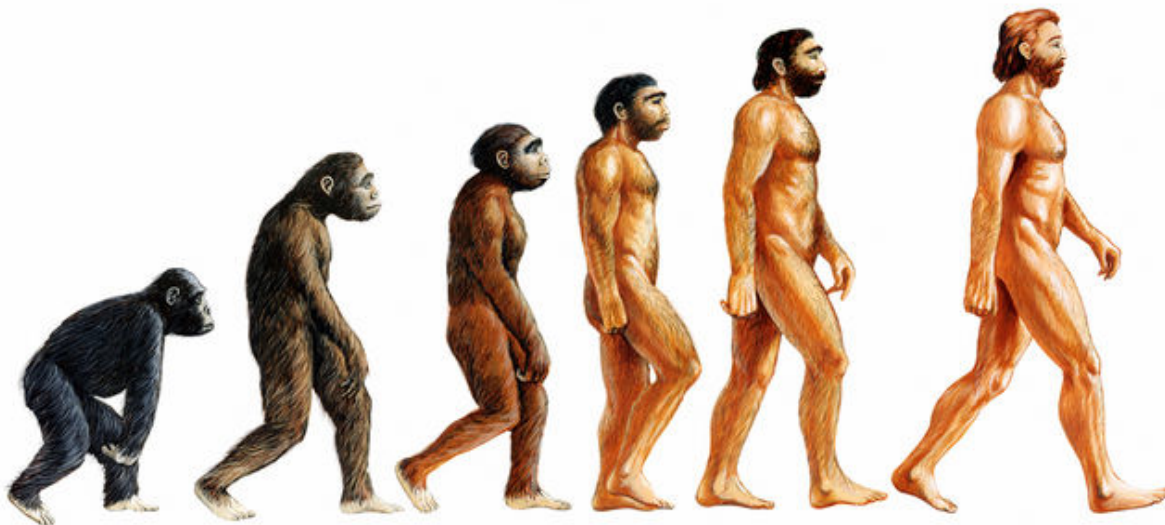


In a follow up article by PRRI researchers featured on the *Religion in Public* blog, Daniel Cox and Robert Jones argue that their finding of decreasing evangelical identity is confirmed by previous surveys, such as Pew studies, which found the percentage dropping from a high point of 27 percent in the 1990s down to 18 percent in 2012 (the most recent Pew data on evangelical identity). Cox and Jones cite other data on the declining membership of the Southern Baptist Convention and previous PRRI data on the underrepresentation of evangelical young people to support their thesis on evangelical decline. In citing the recent PRRI data on evangelical youth in his blog *Spiritual Politics* (September 9), Mark Silk sees mainline millennials as possibly having a brighter future than evangelical and Catholic youth. While evangelical and Catholic youth constitute 11 percent of their respective traditions, mainline millennials came in at 14 percent. Silk adds that among all

millennials, eight percent are white mainliners, eight percent are evangelicals, and six percent are white Catholics. Among Americans 50 and older, white evangelicals outnumber both white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. “Bottom-line: While mainline Protestantism continues to shed white adherents, it is doing a better job of keeping and/or attracting young white adults than either evangelicalism or Catholicism,” Silk concludes.

(*Religion in Public*, <https://religioninpublicblog.com>)

● A recent survey by YouGov, commissioned by Newman University in Birmingham, has found a wide gap of understanding between Britain’s religious and growing non-religious populations on religion and science. The survey found that 72 percent of atheists polled believe that someone who is religious would not accept evolutionary science. In fact, only 19 percent of religious respondents in the poll rejected Darwinian thinking in favor of a literal reading of the book of Genesis. The research finds that nearly two-thirds of British—as well as nearly three-quarters of atheists—think Christians have to accept the assertion in Genesis that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Only 16 percent of believers accept the creation myth holding that “humans and other living things were created by God and have always existed in their current form.” Of all British, only 9 percent reject evolutionary theory. “In a society that is increasingly non-religious, this mismatch in perception could be seen as a form of prejudice towards religious or spiritual groups,” said Fern Elsdon Baker, who led the research, and that may be one of the contributing factors in the widely popular view that there is a conflict between science and religion.



● **Recent surveys suggest a hardening of attitudes toward Muslims in Europe, partly due to the actions of terrorism in these countries.** *The Economist* (September 4) reports on a series of surveys in the UK, Germany, France, Austria, and Switzerland, focusing more on native-born Muslims rather than refugees. But still, negative attitudes toward these Muslims have increased or held steady, while tolerance in other areas has expanded. In a study by Germany's Bertelsman Foundation of these northern European countries, 20 percent of respondents said they would not want a Muslim as a neighbor. The latest study published by Hope Not Hate, an anti-extremist lobby group, found that half of the population of the UK thought that "Islam posed a threat to Western Civilization," while a quarter regarded Islam as a "dangerous" religion because of its capacity to generate violence. In Germany, a poll last year found that half of the population held that Islam does not belong in their country. But in these studies, attitudes were less stringent toward Muslim people than Islam as a religion. For instance, a clear majority said that it is wrong to blame an entire religion for a few extremists. Nevertheless, the *Economist* article adds that these hardening attitudes may be fulfilling the hopes of extremists who seek to create divisions in Western society through their attacks.



● **Having children significantly increases the likelihood of women wearing the head veil in Turkey, according to a study in the journal *Sociological Science* (September).** Sociologist Ozan Aksoy of University College London analyzed Turkey's Demographic and Health Survey (2013) and finds that among married women, those having a single child as opposed to no children are more likely to wear a veil by five percentage points. The researcher also found that having a son rather than a daughter increases the likelihood of Islamic veiling by 2.2 percentage points. The

article finds that neither having a child nor the sex of the child had similar effects on religiosity and holding traditional values. Aksoy argues that veiling serves a “signaling” function that enhances their family reputation as mothers. This kind of linking of piety and family in Turkey likely increased with the nation’s recent Muslim resurgence.

(*Sociological Science*, <http://www.sociologicalscience.com>)



● **A qualitative study of Christian, Muslim, and traditional religion believers in five African countries finds that they share a belief and practice in divination while holding to a strong work ethic informed by their spirituality.** The unique study is based on content analysis of sermons and religious media, in-depth interviews with 80 clergy (though only four imams and traditional religious leaders), and 250 members of these religions in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Ethiopia, by a team of African Christian researchers. Among the findings in this study, which produced 7,750 pieces of data, was the prevalence of divination, with 43.6 percent saying they had consulted diviners and 87 percent knowing of someone who consults such spiritualists. The percentage of those practicing divination “is remarkably high, considering that the majority of respondents came from the two major monotheistic religions in Africa,” writes Anthony Balcomb in the *International Bulletin of Mission Research* (online September). When asked how they would succeed in business, at the top of the list was prayer, followed by hard work, putting God first, respect, and discipline. Researchers explored environmental concern through questions about the value of cutting down a tree considered sacred on their property. As might be

expected, all of the adherents of traditional religion said they would not cut down the tree. Only 16 of the 40 Muslims would cut down the tree, but the majority of Christians would do so, although accompanied by prayer.

(International Bulletin of Missionary Research, <http://www.omsc.org/ibmr>)



ARTICLES:

The urbanization of Nigeria's megachurches

Camps based around megachurches in Nigeria are slowly evolving into self-contained cities, providing services to members once reserved for the government, writes Ruth Maclean in *The Guardian* (September 11). The Redeemed Christian Church of God, a global Pentecostal denomination, has been especially active in its native Nigeria. The church's headquarters set up "Redemption Camp" on the outskirts of Lagos for monthly and annual gatherings, but more recently it has become a permanent home for many of its members who live in 5,000 private homes. For years, members have owned houses to stay over conventions and monthly services, but increasingly families wanted to live full-time with people that shared their values in a place run by people who share those same values. Banks and other businesses have followed these settlers, leading to a "knock-on effect on surrounding areas: in some cases the price of land near Redeemed Camp has increased tenfold over the past decade," Maclean writes. While residents have to be members of the church, there is no such requirement for doing businesses. Religious organizations are tax-exempt in Nigeria, but it is difficult to say where the income generating arms of these groups turn into profit-making enterprises.

The influx of business and the extension of voluntary groups into the camp include education ranging from nursery school to university level and a health center. Fast food restaurants and a

supermarket line its Holiness Avenue. Banks are drawn to the infrastructure and revenue of the RCC, which draws on support from five million members throughout Nigeria and branches in 198 other countries. With a power plant, police station, and sewage system built by the church, it is not unusual for the government to send technicians to the camp to learn how such services are carried out. The camp is run by Enoch Adeboye, known as Daddy GO, a pastor who as a former mathematics lecturer constantly introduces new enterprises and teaches a version of the “prosperity gospel” where tithing is seen as leading to material blessings. Other churches are beginning to replicate the camp’s comprehensive ministry approach. Winner’s Chapel in the Ota region of southern Nigeria has started Canaanland, which consists of homes on manicured lawns along with banks, businesses, a university, and a petrol station.



Apostasy and Islam: many hurdles on the way towards tolerance

While there are Muslim authors putting forward arguments supporting a tolerant social order regarding Muslims who apostatize, the dominant view remains restrictive and represents a major challenge when it comes to religious freedom in Muslim countries, writes historian and political scientist Johannes Kandel (Berlin) in his analysis of a book in German by Islamic Studies expert Christine Schirrmacher in the journal *Materialdienst der EZW* (September). In the early times of Islam, apostasy was considered a severe sin. This view inspires contemporary Muslim authors who plead for the death penalty for apostates and equate apostasy with treason—the argument also sometimes used for putting opponents into a difficult position. The accusation of apostasy may even come to target an entire community seen as departing from its Islamic roots, such as members of the Ahmadiyya Movement or of the Bahá'í faith. There are eight Muslim countries where law allows for death penalty for apostates: Afghanistan, Iran, Malaysia, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.



The famous Egyptian-born preacher Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who has lived in Qatar since 1961 and pays special attention to finding practical ways of living a Muslim life in various environments, including non-Muslim ones, does not deny the principle of the death penalty against apostates. He does, however, attempt to mitigate it with a number of requirements, thus allowing him to spare it for those who do not express apostasy publicly and thus leave a way open for repentance. But this concession remains far from an acknowledgement of human autonomy and religious freedom as understood from a human rights perspective. On the other hand, Abdullah Saeed, an academic who was born in the Maldives and now teaches at the University of Melbourne, Australia, pleads for rejecting the traditional approach towards apostasy, arguing from the Quran that punishment, if it is to be applied, is to take place in the afterlife, and not by the hands of men. This interpretation goes along with an understanding of Islam compatible with contemporary principles of religious freedom as well as recognition of the private sphere of individuals. But his views, while well

known in academic circles (one of his books was reviewed in **RW** in August 2005), still fail to get wide support among the Muslim masses.

More widely received remains the strict position of the late, very influential Pakistani ideologue Abul A'la Maududi (d. 1979), who envisioned an Islamic state and a social model in complete contrast with a secular understanding of human rights and religious freedom, since Islam is understood as a complete system for human life under God's sovereignty. In his views there are no discussions that apostates should be put to death. According to Schirrmacher's assessment, the dominant, classical view is the one represented by Qaradawi that practically reduces religious freedom to internal freedom of conscience.

(*Materialdienst der EZW*, Auguststrasse 80, 10117 Berlin, Germany – www.ezw-berlin.de)

China's missionaries re-tread "back to Jerusalem" on the Silk Road

The new presence of missionaries in nations that are hostile to Christianity is an "unintended and often overlooked by-product of China's aggressive drive to develop new trading routes and carve out influence across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Hundreds and possibly even thousands of the country's growing cadre of Christian missionaries are along for the ride too—even if Beijing doesn't want them there," reports *BBC News* (September). The killing of two Chinese missionaries in Pakistan last June by the Islamic State surprised observers who had not realized China's emerging mission presence. The article notes that a mission movement among Chinese Christians began in the 1940s to spread Christianity westward toward Jerusalem. When Mao Zedong ushered in a repressive era for Christians, the "Back to Jerusalem" movement lay dormant for decades. "In the early 2000s, coinciding with China's emergence onto the global stage as a major power, the



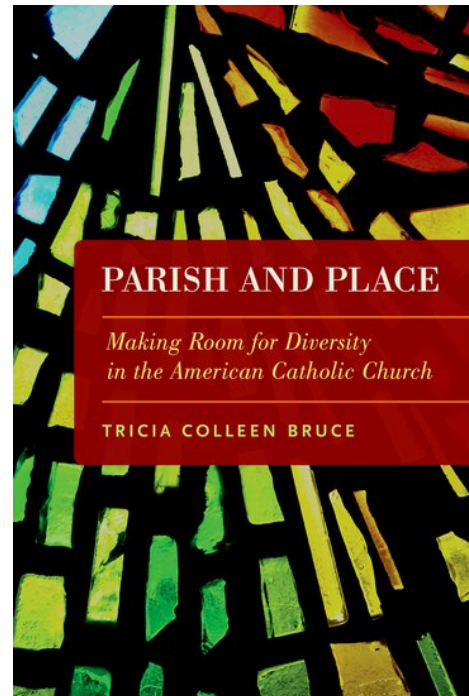
movement revived and Chinese missionaries began travelling out to what some evangelists call the ‘10/40 Window’—a zone between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator that stretches from West Africa to South East Asia and is home to the least-Christian countries.”

This mission zone overlaps significantly with the new Silk Road that China is trying to promote, and in the last few years, as Chinese workers have gone overseas to these countries in droves, hidden among them have been hundreds, perhaps even thousands of missionaries, according to members of the movement. The article notes, “In countries like Iran, Iraq or Pakistan, Chinese missionaries have little trouble getting in. ... ‘They let them straight through. They [sic] last thing they would think [a Chinese person could be] is a missionary,’” said one missionary. The

movement’s goal is eventually to have 100,000 Chinese missionaries serving across 22 countries in the 10/40 zone. Many such missionaries are already serving in countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Burma. The article concludes that the violence these missionaries faced is not likely to put them off: “But Beijing knows that as more and more Chinese missionaries follow the new Silk Road, other cases like this are bound to occur.”

Findings & Footnotes

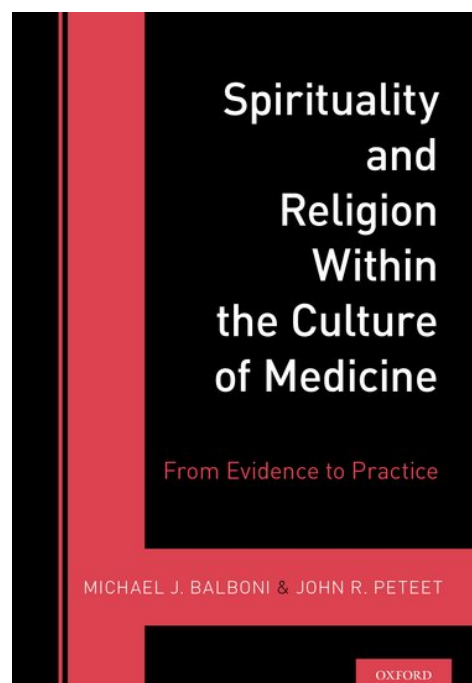
■ *Parish and Place* (Oxford University Press, \$24.95), by Tricia Colleen Bruce, provides an in-depth look at the phenomena of personal parishes in the Catholic Church in the U.S., showing how they mirror Catholic diversity and how the institutional church manages pluralism. The church hierarchy establishes these parishes to serve specific groups that are not being reached by mainstream or “general” parishes. This classification can mean ethnic parishes that minister to such groups as Vietnamese or Hispanic Catholics though retaining language and ethno-religious traditions, or more recently, targeting those with particular theological or liturgical preferences, such as traditionalist Latin and Anglican-use parishes or ones based on a particular social mission. Bruce traces the use of personal parishes from their wide use by the hierarchy during the early waves of European immigration and then later enforcement of more limits out of concern for integrating Catholics into diocesan life. Currently, personal parishes are making a comeback, partly due to the pluralization and fragmentation of American Catholic life, making identity a priority. As Bruce writes, “Personal parishes enable Catholics to choose their world.”



But Bruce stresses that this trend is not largely driven from lay demand and differs from the “cafeteria Catholicism” where individual Catholics cross parish boundaries to attend the church of their choice.

Rather, it results from strategic decisions by the hierarchy to defuse controversy and conflict in the diocese (for example, allowing Latin Mass devotees to be contained within their own parish), preserve diversity, and deliver specialized services to an underserved population. Personal parishes, numbering 1,317 congregations and constituting eight percent of American parishes, are likely to grow in areas where there is decline of territorial parishes. Bruce concludes that geographically bound parishes will increasingly co-exist with personal parishes, even as the latter structures reveal a loosening of attachments of Catholics to neighborhood and place.

■ There is mounting research on the relationship between health and religion, but the new book *Spirituality and Religion within the Culture of Medicine* (Oxford University Press, \$69.95) suggests that much of the medical establishment is just catching on to the implications of this development. Edited by Michael J. Balboni and John R. Peteet, the 410-page book uniquely looks at how the interaction between spirituality and health is playing out in each branch of medicine. As the Introduction notes, the trend is toward a holistic approach that breaks down not only the division between spirituality and religion but also, more importantly, between medical practitioners taking care of the biological end of things while clergy tend to the soul. The editors write that this “division of labor” between these two spheres is difficult to maintain, especially when it is unclear “whose role it is to deal with a patient’s religious beliefs when his or her medical decision is based on them.” The early chapters apply recent health/religion findings to each branch of medicine (from pediatrics to reproduction to geriatrics) and conclude with applications to clinical practice.



The second half of the book is devoted to less practical academic studies of health and religion, bringing in history, anthropology, philosophy, and theology. Sociologist Jonathan Imber’s chapter looks at how spirituality and religion relates to the “social transformation of American medicine” in the way that technology and bureaucracy can increase both the authority of the doctor and the vulnerability of the patient. In such a scenario, the rise of spirituality in health care is a form of protest against such dehumanizing treatment—a resistance movement that doctors themselves are joining.

■ The anthology *Sport and Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Lexington Books, \$46.99), edited by Brad Schultz and Mary Lou Sheffer, brings together journalists, sports studies scholars, and other observers to look at the religious factor in sports on both micro and macro levels. Much of the studies done on sports and religion tend to see the former as a sacralized activity, especially in the U.S., and ignore the actual religious elements and actors in sports. In the first half of this book, several of the contributions take this implicit sacralizing approach—whether it be sports as a new “civil religion” (especially in the Olympic Games), the hero worship and role of martyrdom among sports figures, to even how the controversy over

football player Michael Vick's punishment and rehabilitation for dog fighting was recast as a narrative of redemption.

The book's second half breaks the mold and focuses on religion and sports as two separate spheres that frequently interact. A chapter looks at the future of Southern religion and its close relationship to sports, arguing that the competition for Southern identity between athletics and organized religion is increasing, with the former even supplanting the latter (seen in the more religious functions played at NASCAR races, for instance). Contributions on college sports and religion complements the predominant attention paid to the religiosity of professional teams, with chapters on the important role of religion/spirituality among collegiate athletes and the way that small church-affiliated colleges tend to approach sports differently than their larger and secular counterparts in stressing the moral and spiritual component in sports programs.

