

BRITISH ASSOCIATION for the STUDY OF RELIGIONS



BULLETIN No 103 November 2004

Cover: Steven Sutcliffe launches his new anthology *Religion: Empirical Studies* at the BASR Anniversary Conference. See page 37. (Photograph: George Chryssides)

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The BASR COMMITTEE

Dr James L. Cox cox@div.ed.ac.uk	President and Chair	Work: 0131 650 8900
Dr Graham Harvey G.Harvey@open.ac.uk	Secretary	Work: 01908 654033
Dr Helen Waterhouse h.j.waterhouse@open.ac.uk	Hon Treasurer	Work: 01908 659028
Dr George D. Chryssides G.D.Chryssides@wlv.ac.uk	Bulletin Editor	Work: 01902 323523
Dr Marion Bowman m.i.bowman@open.ac.uk	Conference Organiser	Work: 01908 659381
Dr Mathew Guest m.j.guest@durham.ac.uk	Occasional Papers Editor	Work: 0191 374 3937

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

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

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

Editorial: Looking back at looking back

The BASR has now almost completed its fiftieth anniversary celebrations. The Fiftieth Anniversary Conference has come and gone, and is fully reported in this edition of the Bulletin. Peggy Morgan's series 'Looking Forward to Looking Back' has now come to an end, and this is the last Bulletin in the immediate future that will be bound with jubilee-gold covers: in February 2005 we shall revert to the more traditional BASR green.

Looking back at fifty years of the Association's life and at the study of religion over that period has been a useful and interesting exercise, greatly assisted by the Annual Conference, where the theme of 'Mapping the Field' highlighted significant landmarks in the study of religion, in the various religions themselves, in political institutions and in the subject's pedagogy.

Now that we are looking back at looking back, we look forward to looking forward. In all probability only a few of our current BASR members will have the privilege of attending whatever centenary celebrations there may be in the year 2054, we can expect to see many substantial changes in the Study of Religion long before then. Within the next ten years we can expect some 50 per cent of school leavers to be entering higher education; we shall be even more dependent on technology, with more technology-based teaching and research, enabling developments in distance learning. In response to the present government's penchant for work-based learning, some colleagues are already facilitating student placements in religious communities, where the study of religion can be combined with acquiring transferable skills that will enhance students' employability.

Looking to the future, the BASR aims to be much more than a forum for scholars and researchers to sharpen their research skills, and its annual conferences have typically encouraged papers and presentations that enhance pedagogy as well as scholarship. The Bulletin, likewise, seeks to combine a promotion of scholarship with dissemination of information that relates the various strands of Religious Studies to pedagogy and to the world of work. The Bulletin therefore aims to be not only a vehicle for disseminating information about scholarship, but about a variety of facets relating to our subject area — educational, political, institutional and societal.

Members can help to achieve these aims most obviously by sending in details of publications and research interests. We also welcome brief contributions not only on research topics, but about interesting developments in those other aspects of the subject. While the Editor tries to be pro-active in identifying interesting developments and commissioning appropriate material for the journal, members are strongly encouraged to take the initiative in disseminating examples of good practice, innovation and creativity through the Bulletin.

As we look forward to the next fifty years of BASR, we hope that the Bulletin will continue to serve as a means of taking Religious Studies into the future.

George Chryssides

A message from the treasurer

BASR subscriptions for 2004/2005 were due for payment on 1 October 2004. If you pay your subscription by cheque and have not already sent it, it is now due. Subscription rates remain at £15.00 per waged member and £8.00 for students and the unwaged.

I will be happy to receive your cheques at the following address:

Dr Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

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

BASR OCCASIONAL PAPERS (order from Kim Knott)

- 1 Miranda Green, *Women and Goddesses in the Celtic World*, 1991
- 2 Christine Trevett, *The Quaker Margaret Fell: Religion and Gender in a C17th Dissenting Group*, 1991
- 3 Ann Bancroft, *Hildegard of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead*, 1991
- 4 Julia Leslie, *Religion, Gender and Dharma: The Case of the Widow Ascetic*, 1991
- 5 Peter Antes, *How to study religious experience in the traditions*, 1992
- 6 Marion Bowman, *Phenomenology, fieldwork and folk religion*, 1992
- 7 George Chryssides, *Unificationism: A study in religious syncretism*, 1993
- 8 Michael Pye, *Syncretism versus synthesis*, 1993
- 9 Ria Kloppenber, *A Buddhist-Christian encounter in Sri Lanka: Pandura Vada*, 1994
- 10 Peter Donovan, *Maori rituals add magic to contemporary civic life*, 1995
- 11 Ninian Smart, *Sacred nationalism*, 1995
- 12 W. S. F. Pickering, *Locating the sacred: Durkheim and Otto*, 1995
- 13 Terence Thomas, *'The sacred' as a viable concept in the contemporary study of religions*, 1995 (bound together with 12)
- 14 Margaret Chatterjee, *Do we need authority in religious life?*, 1996
- 15 Chris Arthur, *Media, meaning, and method in the study of religion*, 1996
- 16 Gerrie ter Haar, *Chosen people: The concept of diaspora in the modern world*, 1996
- 17 Richard Gombrich, *Religious experience in early Buddhism*, 1997
- 18 James Cox, *Alterity as identity: Innovation in the Academic Study of Religions*, 1998
- 19 Elizabeth Amoah, *African spirituality and religious innovation*, 1998
- 20 Ian Reader, *Religion, conflict and the sacred mission: On understanding the violence of Aum Shinrikyo*, 1999
- 21 Brian Bocking, *Religious Studies: The New Queen of the Sciences*, 2000
- 22 Kim Knott, *The Sense and Nonsense of 'Community': A Consideration of Contemporary Debates about Community and Culture by a Scholar of Religion*, 2002
- 23 Armin Geertz, *Religion and Community in Indigenous Contexts*, 2002
- 24 Guilia Sfameni Gasparro, *Religion and Community in the Ancient World*, 2002
- 25 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State*, 2002
- 26 Rosalind Hackett, *The Response of Scholars of Religion to Global Religious Violence*, 2003

I. BASR NEWS

CONFERENCE REPORTS

BASR 50th Anniversary Conference: 'The Study of Religions: Mapping the Field'; Harris Manchester College, Oxford; 13-16 September 2004.

The 50th anniversary conference of the BASR was hosted by Harris Manchester College, Oxford, and was entitled 'The Study of Religions: Mapping the Field'. The conference opened with a number of introductions to the four (Hebrew and Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist) Oxford Centres for the Study of Religions. Two main plenary papers were delivered as part of the first day's proceedings. Kindly stepping in for Frank Whaling, James Cox delivered a paper engaging aspects of the academic study of religion in light of fieldwork in Africa. After dinner, Denise Cush's paper engaged the study of religion through a number of methodological reflections upon learning and teaching religious studies. Each paper's respective problematisation of the academic study of religion provoked a range of questions and responses indicative both of their stimulating content and the desire of conference delegates to wrestle with these issues.

Panel 1 of the 4 taking place on the first full day (Tuesday) of the conference concerned 'South Asian Studies'. Twelve papers in all were delivered. A number of papers reflected the theme of the conference itself and comprised attempts at 'mapping' the South Asian religious field through general approaches (e.g. 'South Asian Muslims' and 'Hinduism') and particular case studies (e.g. Baul communities and the 'Benghali Dharma Cult'). Papers relating to authority, iconography, pilgrimage, text, gender, and dance were also presented; some with reference to geographical context (e.g. London, Leicester and South India), others by way of overarching themes (e.g. literary theory, religious truth and myth). Panel 2 concerned 'Religions and Laws' and was treated to seven different papers and a round table discussion that ended the day. The issue of religious freedom and discrimination appeared in a number of papers that addressed European (e.g. EU enlargement) and North American (e.g. constitutional exceptions) contexts. Likewise, religious toleration in respect of 'minority' faiths (e.g. modes of dress) burned brightly as a hot topic of discussion. Entitled 'Sociological and Related Studies', Panel 3 enjoyed a wide range of methodological approaches to a variety of topics and contexts. Sociological critiques offered reflections upon religious change in general and actual organisations (e.g. 'Unification Church' and 'Gnostic Church of Brazil') and movements (e.g. Taiwanese receptions of 'The Course in Light') in particular. Phenomenological approaches to university evangelical groups and airport chapels were also presented, along with anthropological and philosophical discussions of inner speech and identity, religious belonging and

secular religion. An overview of contemporary research in the domain of science and religion opened Panel 4a 'Science and Religion'. A comparison of contemporary scientific and Vaishnava Hindi views of divine – world relations was then followed by a historical survey of Judaism and science. Panel 4b concerned 'Jewish Studies' and comprised two papers reviewing the last fifty years of study of Judaism in relation to late antiquity and the Holocaust. The panel was rounded off with a comparative analysis of 'Jewish Ethnic and Religious Revival in Israel'. 'Jaina Studies' was the theme of Panel 4c in which Peter Flugel reviewed its last fifty years and Josephine Reynell engaged the place of gender in past and future developments.

With whistles still wet from the 4.00pm tea break, conference delegates had opportunity to partake of the BASR AGM. This meeting gave way to the second of three fine dinners in the Arlosh Hall. Appropriately fortified, delegates were then treated to Ursula King's personal, yet highly informative, retrospective taking in many of the key moments of the last fifty years of British scholarship in religious studies.

Eleven papers in all were delivered in Panel 1 'Buddhist Studies' on the second day (Wednesday) of the conference. China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, and the United Kingdom were some of the contexts through which Buddhist studies were engaged. In addition to papers mapping the field over the last fifty years, the issues of gender, mind, diversity, and identity served to refract treatments of a contemporary and historical nature. Entitled 'Rethinking "New Age" Studies', Panel 2a included papers treating authority and healing within and nomenclature about alternative/new age movement(s). From snowboarding to shamans, astrology to alternative soteriology, and psychoanalysis to ensouling, Panel 2b offered nine papers mapping, revising and reviewing 'Studies in Spirituality and Experience' from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Each treating aspects of the study and nature of religions in/of Africa, Panels 3a & b engaged curricula content in South African and British academic contexts, as well as looking at the religio-spiritual dimensions of land problems in Zimbabwe and neo-traditional practices in Zambia. Three papers engaging 'Sikh Studies' through (non)violence, Diaspora identity and Afghanistan – U.K. communities made up Panel 3c. A mixture of the old and the new, Wednesday's Panel 4 concerned 'Methodological Issues and Some Key Figures'. Phenomenology, critical religious studies, the sociology of knowledge, and post-colonial approaches each made an 'guest' methodology appearance. Likewise, familiar figures such as Smart, Mueller, and James were complemented by Latour, Bakhtin, W. Jones, and Said. The day closed with the BASR 50th anniversary dinner which was smoothly and humorously compered by Brian Bocking. In addition to the recharging of physical and mental batteries, the dinner offered opportunity to celebrate and congratulate those who have made and continue to make valuable contributions over the half-century of the BASR's existence.

With bellies full and minds befogged (for some, at least), the final day of the conference opened with a familiar four stands from which to choose. Panel 1, 'Islamic Studies', included two papers mapping Muslim communities in Britain, thematic discussions of the 'Changing Role of Imams in Britain' and 'Political Islam', and specific case studies of Muslim – Christian 'Joint Community Projects' and the 'Nurcu and Fetullah Gulen Movements in Turkish Islam'. 'Gender and Religions' was the theme of Panel 2. Here, gender and religion was engaged through the issue-specific lenses of bioethics, biblical studies and ministry, as well as broader themes of Christianity in Africa and the Study of Religions. Two papers engaging the academic implications of gendered subjectivity offered opportunity for explicitly self-critical reflections. Entitled 'The Study of Religions in European Contexts', Panel 3 comprised four papers treating Scottish, Danish, Spanish, and Swedish contexts. Panel 4 rounded off events by engaging 'Thematic Alternative Mappings' through four papers treating issues from initiation through millenarian violence to conversion in contexts as diverse as Tibet, Papua New Guinea, Turkey, and Iran.

Good maps convey accurately the terrain they chart and bad maps do not. Both good and bad maps, though, tell us something of the cartographers behind them. As with most maps down the ages, the field projected by the conference map has its Mercator-like distortions and 'here be dragons' zones. Irrespective of context or tradition, however, the diversity of thematic and issue-based approaches exhibited by conference papers indicates the healthily broad range of disciplinary and methodological tools called upon by BASR scholars to map the religious field. From healthy acorns do healthy oaks grow.

Andrew Dawson
University College Chester

BASR Conference September 2004

The Study of Religions: Mapping the Field

Almost 150 scholars gathered together at Harris Manchester College in Oxford to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association and to demonstrate that the field of study of religions is creative and vibrant with academic endeavour, enthusiasm and erudition. The anniversary was marked by the publication of some of the BASR Occasional Papers collected together and edited by Steven Sutcliffe. The book launch, the AGM and the conference banquet punctuated the academic proceedings and offered opportunities to acknowledge some members who could not be present including Julia Leslie and Frank Whaling; and to endorse the lifetime's work of six eminent scholars who were elected as lifetime members of BASR, including Ursula King who gave the annual lecture on Tuesday evening, and Peggy Morgan who hosted the conference.

The evening of the first day was devoted to a paper from Dr James Cox which was a methodological discussion of the contentious term religion; and a lecture by Professor Denise Cush on religious studies education both in schools and higher education, with a plea for religious studies to be engaged. In our complex world we need to understand our neighbours, and that implies literacy in religious forms of thinking and behaving. Theology has advantages over religious studies in having demonstrable links to action; but religious studies could do well to develop into areas of ethical concerns for today's world such as poverty and wealth, human rights, peace and conflict and the natural environment.

The Annual Lecture given by Prof. Ursula King was a witty and intimate portrait of BASR's past 50 years, which also gave a glimpse into the potential future of religious studies. She observed that postmodernist and constructionist approaches fracturing the certainties of the past made mapping, or even unmapping, the field of religious studies difficult. Disciplinary boundaries were much more fluid than they had been in the past and religious studies had been transformed as a discipline and in a philosophical sense by sociological and other perspectives. Moving on to the present she noted the rise of diversity and pluralism and the impact of critiques from postcolonial and critical gender theorists. She spoke of the considerable growth of a discipline over the years despite current challenges from resource constraints. At the end of her lecture, she urged her audience to "Never give up! Passion keeps the world and Religious Studies going."

Tuesday and Wednesday both had full day sessions with four concurrent panels. It is not possible to do justice to the richness and variety of all the papers presented and this report is biased towards those sessions where one or other of the postgraduate bursary holders attended.

The South Asia panel started with a challenge from Jacqueline Suthren Hirst who commented on the presence of separate panels for Islam, Buddhist, Sikh

and Jaina studies, but Hindu studies had been elided with South Asian studies. The first five papers all took an integrated approach to South Asian religions, led by Jacqueline Suthren Hirst who critiqued the 'big six' model of world religions which distorts students' experiences and makes value judgements about popular religious phenomena such as shrines and superstitions. Julia Leslie's paper was read for her by Simon Brodbeck and was warmly received in her absence. Simon later gave a paper on his own account reporting on the work in progress of a project on 'Epic constructions: gender, myth and society in the *Mahabharata*.'

Excellent papers by a variety of speakers were presented at the panel on Religions and Law. The recurring themes from the papers were the categories and classifications of the interaction between law and religion; religious diversity in public spaces such as state schools; and the disjunction between legal language and religious argumentation.

The audience at the panel on sociological and related studies were treated to a range topics and research environments. Kim Knott and Myfanwy Franks have been researching in public sector organisations in health and education; while Marion Bowman reported that the chapels, prayer rooms and 'offices of moral counsellors' offer refuge to people of all faiths or none at Heathrow, Amsterdam and Brussels airports. Douglas Davies reminded us not to use the term 'methodology' when really we meant 'method'. He went on to describe the beginnings of his exploration of self-discourse, talking to oneself. This sent all the audience into self-conscious mode, reflecting on the embarrassing situations they had found themselves in when their self-discourse was not silent enough for comfort, but Douglas kept us disciplined with the complex issues raised about normality and pathology. Abby Day presented her research findings on contemporary beliefs outside the framework of institutional religion in a northern UK town, and found that relationships are all important to people's understanding of believing and belonging.

John Brooke introduced the session on science and religion with reflections on the importance of research in this domain, the need to expose the mythological aspects of prevalent master narratives and promising signs of sophisticated work embracing traditions other than the Christian West. Jonathan Edelmann compared the treatment of a 'struggle for existence' in Darwinian evolutionary theory with that in the *Bhagavata Purana*; and Norman Solomon addressed the question of whether there were organic links between Jewish culture and scientific enquiry that might explain the high proportion of Jews among Nobel Laureates. The overall mood of each paper was a critical approach to the 'mythologies' (to use the words of John Brooke) that have been supported by both scientists and religionists regarding the relationship of science and religion. There was a desire to understand the theological significance for the religions involved, with great attention to historical, social and philosophical issues. It

was an encouraging and illuminating panel for a student working in the field of science and religion.

The United Kingdom Association for Buddhist Studies organised a day-long panel. This was a fascinating set of presentations revealing the exciting diversity in Buddhist Studies in the UK, ranging from considerations of the historical Buddha, through politics and Buddhism in Sri Lanka, to sociological studies of multiculturalism in Western *sanghas*. This journey travelled through discussions of mind, psychology, gender, liturgy and language. Six of the eleven papers were by research students, interleaved with talks by established scholars in a mixture that was very stimulating.

The panel on methodological issues provided some challenging discussions on phenomenology as the basis of epistemology in the study of religions. The phenomenological tradition owes a great debt to the work of Ninian Smart, but John Shepherd suggested that Smart's phenomenology of religion might preclude critical and evaluative skills and practices; while Seth Kunin, speaking as a structuralist, suggested that phenomenology as adopted as a methodology in the study of religion was flawed, as it contained a theological or experiential essentialism at its heart. Lieve Orye discussed Ninian Smart's sociology of knowledge and used Bruno Latour's anthropology of science to consider, challenge and evaluate Smart's logic of religion and his approach to its study. She drew on comparisons between religion and science which made an interesting contrast to Hilary Bagshaw's paper on Mikhail Bakhtin where she drew on comparisons between religion and art. Other key figures examined were Edward Said by Ralph Bates, William Jones by Sharada Sugitheraajah, Max Muller by Mark Edwards and E. O. James by Bill Pickering. Bill Pickering's talk rounded off the panel and gave us a sense of continuity between generations of scholars in the field.

Sian Hawthorne described the aim of the panel as to provide a thematic and contextualised assessment of the growth of gender and religion as a field of study and to identify possible future directions. The study of religions had been slower than other fields to incorporate the insights of contemporary feminist and gender discourses, but over the last fifty years feminist and gender studies have offered epistemological tools and insisted on the need for a conceptual transformation. The other papers took up issues of religion and gender in specific contexts including nursing and domestic violence. Ursula King rounded off the panel with a discussion of her work on the revision of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion* originally edited by Mircea Eliade. She has edited an entry on gender studies and religion which will be approximately 80,000 words in length, in addition to other amendments and new entries. She made a plea for more women scholars to be involved in the production of reference works.

There were many other panels which space will not permit us to include; but as one student wrote: "The complaint I heard most frequently was that it was impossible for delegates to attend all the sessions they wanted to – surely a

happy fault.” The range at least however must be mentioned: *The Study of Religions in European Contexts, Jewish Studies, Jaina Studies, Rethinking ‘New Age’ Studies, Studies in Spirituality and Experience, Africa; The Study of Religion, Africa: The Nature of Religions, Sikh Studies, and Islamic Studies.*

The postgraduate students who received bursaries to attend the conference from BASR would like to express their gratitude to BASR for enabling us to attend, to feel welcome, and to be fully participating members of this community of scholars. The postgraduate students are the novitiate for the community and we demonstrated a broad range of interests, nationalities, and ages. We hope to contribute to the study of religions over the next fifty years.

Report author: **Hilary Bagshaw**

Report Contributors: Shin Ahn, Shu-Chuan Chen, Abby Day, Jonathan Edelman, Fabrizio Ferrari, Margaret Gouin, and Sharon Smith.

British Association for the Study of Religions
Registered Charity Number 801567 (Affiliated to the IAHR and EASR)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 4:00p.m. on 14 September 2004 in Harris Manchester College, Oxford

1. Welcome. The President, Jim Cox, declared the meeting open by welcoming the members, thanking them for coming and introducing the other members of the committee.

2. Apologies. Apologies were received from the following members: Frank Whaling, Michael Pye, Julia Leslie, Andrew Walls.

3. Minutes. The Minutes of the AGM held on 16 September 2003 at the University College Chester and which had been published in the BASR Bulletin 100, were approved and signed by the President.

4. President's Address. The Honorary President, Jim Cox, addressed the Meeting.

The full text of the address is found at the conclusion of these Minutes.

5. Secretary's Report. The Honorary Secretary, Graham Harvey, reported that the current mailing list contains 238 names, which is a small increase on last year's 235 but is actually contains different names due to the removal of lapsed members and the addition of new names.

The Secretary noted that the Executive Committee had met three times since the last AGM; 5 November, 3 March and 11 May, all in Wolverhampton. The overriding themes of the meetings had focused on four main areas: 1) planning towards the 50th Anniversary Conference in 2004; 2) the membership forms and list; 3) the RAE; and 4) insurance cover.

On the first point, clearly the current event demonstrates the effectiveness of the committee's work over the last couple of years in preparing for this conference.

On the second point, we have been approached by a number of publishers requesting permission to make use of the membership list for advertising purposes. Since the Data Protection Act prohibits unauthorised access to the list, we are requesting, by means of a leaflet to be distributed with the November Bulletin, members' permission to allow third parties such as publishers to make use of some version of contact information. Meanwhile, the membership list itself is now being maintained by the Honorary Secretary.

On the third point, we have been among the groups approached by the RAE2008 planning bodies for nominations to various positions with the main and relevant sub-panel. In conversation with AUDTRS, we have approached a number of individuals (in the UK and internationally) and nominated those who agreed.

On the fourth point, we have taken out a Charity Connect insurance Policy with Ansvar that covers us against relevant risks. The policy is lodged with BASR's official papers held by the Secretary.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Honorary Treasurer, Helen Waterhouse, presented her annual report in which showed the accumulated balances in the General and Conferences funds at £18,000.

The full text of the Treasurer's Report appears at the conclusion of these Minutes.

Peggy Morgan proposed that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. It was seconded by Brian Bocking and approved by the members.

7. Bulletin Editor's Report

The BASR Bulletin Editor, George Chryssides, reported that this year's Bulletins have all been presented in gold (canary yellow) covers in celebration of BASR's 50th anniversary year. It has also contained an invaluable series called 'Looking forward to looking back', written and edited by Peggy Morgan. He requested that members should offer ideas for new features while continuing to submit research reports and 'turning points'. He distributed a leaflet to aid in updating notice of members' research interests. While acknowledging the financial value of including publishers' fliers in the Bulletin he stressed the hope that these would be of interest to members. A problem in getting the Bulletin to other international associations due to addresses becoming out of date led him to request help from members who know the current relevant contact information.

The Honorary President thanked the Bulletin Editor for all the work undertaken in producing the Bulletin

8. Report of the Conference Organiser

The Conference Organiser, Marion Bowman, acknowledged that the success of the current conference is due to the hard work of Peggy Morgan, local organiser, and Helen Waterhouse, Honorary Treasurer, in realising their vision for the 50th anniversary conference.

As the IAHR's quinquennial congress will be held in Tokyo next year, the BASR annual conference will be a one day event in London, to include the AGM.

The venue for the 2006 conference is still being considered.

The Conference Organiser also initiated a discussion, to be continued through the Bulletin and website, about the timing of future conferences given the early start date of the academic year for many institutions. The question of cost and length of future conferences will also be discussed.

She concluded that it has been good to see so many members at this year's conference.

8. Report of the Editor of the Occasional Papers

The Editor of the BASR Occasional Papers (Mathew Guest) noted that there have been two new Occasional Papers this year: No. 21 by Brian Bocking and No. 22 by Rosalind Hackett.

All new Occasional Papers will have ISBNs and copies will be held by all six national copyright libraries. Copies are also held in the BASR archive in the Bodleian.

This is a special year as some Occasional Papers have been reprinted in S. Sutcliffe (ed.) 2004. *Religion: Empirical Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate).

He noted that while sales of the Occasional Papers have been excellent during the conference, it would be good to sell more through the year.

He thanked Kim Knott for her involvement in getting the papers printed, and the committee for their guidance.

10. LTSN Report

Simon Smith, Manager of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, offered the following report on the LTSN:

With effect from 1 May, the LTSN merged with the Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILTHE) to become the Higher Education Academy. As a result of this the PRS-LTSN is being renamed "the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies" (the Subject Centre). Despite this change there is little to suggest that the basic role of the Subject Centre will alter in the foreseeable future. It is anticipated, therefore, that the Subject Centre will continue to have a strong subject focus and seek to support and promote the subject communities that it covers. Furthermore, over the next few months the Centre will be increasing its staffing on the Religious Studies side with the (part-time) appointment of Dr Emma Tomalin as a researcher. The Centre is also appointing a full-time Co-ordinator to cover the areas of Theology, Biblical Studies, and Church History; and this will enable existing Religious Studies staff (Dr Gary Bunt and Dr Simon Smith) to concentrate more closely on their areas of interest. We continue to be most appreciative of the support that we receive from the BASR.

The Honorary President, Jim Cox, thanked LTSN for sponsoring a lecture this year, and Denise Cush for giving it.

11. AUDTRS Report

Denise Cush, BASR representative to the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS), reported that although there had been no AUDTRS meeting this year, they have been consulted about the RAE process and have submitted nominations to the

relevant panels. She noted that since AUDTRS was founded in a time of crisis, it was now necessary to consider its continuing purpose.

12. EASR Report

Kim Knott reported to the AGM as General Secretary Elect of the EASR. She and the Honorary Treasurer had just returned from the Fourth annual EASR conference in Santander (following previous conferences in Cambridge, Paris and Bergen). This was a very successful event, combining EASR and the Spanish Association's conference, attracting lots of delegates including five from the UK/BASR.

EASR now has 19 national associations, covering most of Europe. Turkey is the most recent association to join the EASR. Most associations have paid their dues to EASR but not (yet) to IAHR.

The question of bursaries for attendance at the conference was put on the agenda by BASR. Following discussions about a trust fund and charitable status for the body, guidelines have now been presented for further discussion. 1500 Euro supported four postgraduates to participate in Santander. Next year 2000 Euro will be available. National associations are asked to provide further support.

Teacher exchanges were discussed and information will be available on the website.

A book arising from the Paris conference is forthcoming, and Bergen may follow suit.

Future conferences of the EASR are planned as follows: Turku 2005 (17-21 August), Budapest 2006, somewhere in Germany 2007.

Kim Knott reminded members of the EASR's discussion lists: dolmen and others (see www.easr.de).

Discussion of whether BASR could afford to provide bursaries for both BASR and EASR conferences followed. It was noted that EASR had requested voluntary donations from member associations and that we have not yet contributed. Partial rather than full bursaries might stretch the funds further. However, the Honorary Treasurer noted that BASR subscriptions may go up next year to cover extra costs of IAHR, EASR and insurance costs.

13. IAHR report

Peter Antes, President of IAHR, expressed his thanks for the invitation to address BASR, and for the fact that he did not need to remind BASR to pay dues. He also thanked Peggy Morgan for insisting on his coming to Oxford for the conference

He referred members to the IAHR's website (www.iahr.dk) for information about the conference and other meetings.

Noting that the IAHR is the sole worldwide umbrella / linking / networking organisation for our discipline, with 35 national associations in membership,

Peter Antes stressed the importance of getting in touch with each other on a European and global level, especially at conferences. He encouraged BASR to send not only Professors but also research students to international conferences.

The Honorary President, Jim Cox, thanked Peter Antes.

14. Election of Honorary Life Members

The Honorary President, Jim Cox, announced the names of BASR members who have made substantial contributions both to BASR and to our discipline, and proposed that they be elected as Honorary Life Members. He listed the following:

Andrew Walls
Frank Whaling
Michael Pye
Peggy Morgan
Terry Thomas
Ursula King

The meeting unanimously approved. This result will be announced in the Bulletin and the Honorary President will write to each of the new Honorary Life Members.

15. President's Word of Thanks

James Cox, Honorary President, acknowledged the presence of the Secretary of the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa (now celebrating its 25th anniversary), Michel Clasquin, who offered his association's congratulations to BASR on its 50th anniversary.

The Honorary President thanked the executive committee members for their hard work over the year. He also thanked Peggy Morgan for meeting and working with the committee, and for mentoring him in his first year in office.

He thanked all BASR members for the gratification of having received such support from members and affiliate members, which has made his first year extremely rewarding.

16. Any Other Business

In response to a request for more opportunities for post-graduate students to offer 'work in progress' reports, the Conference Organiser noted that this year had been an exception but several post-grads had offered full papers.

There was no further business.

The President closed the meeting at 6 pm and announced that the next AGM of the BASR will be held during the 2005 annual conference in London (precise date and venue to be announced in the Bulletin and website).

Submitted by Graham Harvey, Honorary Secretary, 5 November 2004.

Report of the Honorary President to the Annual General Meeting of the British Association for the Study of Religions, 14 September 2004

Much of the work of the Executive Committee during the past year has been focused on preparations for the 50th Anniversary Conference. In this regard, I want to thank specifically those most involved in its organisation: Marion Bowman, the BASR Conference Organiser, Peggy Morgan, the local organiser in Oxford and Helen Waterhouse, the BASR Treasurer. Communication among the Executive Members has been facilitated by Graham Harvey, the BASR Honorary Secretary. Much hard work has gone into the organisation of the conference as is evidenced by the wide national and international participation, including representatives from the International Association for the History of Religions, the European Association for the Study of Religions, the African Association for the Study of Religions and the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern Africa. We are also extremely pleased to welcome the academic contributions to the Conference by members of the United Kingdom Association for Buddhist Studies and the Sociology of Religion Study Group of the British Sociological Association. Many others have contributed to the success of the 50th Anniversary Conference, whom I have not mentioned, but the close co-ordination between the Marion Bowman, Peggy Morgan and Helen Waterhouse has made it all come together in such a splendid fashion.

At this important moment in the history of the Association, I want to offer some brief reflections on the purpose of our organisation. I have listed these under the following points:

(1) International involvement. During the years I have served on the Executive Committee, I have seen the BASR become increasingly engaged with the academic study of religions in global settings. Since the founding of the EASR, the first conference of which was held in Cambridge in 2001 in concert with the

BASR annual conference, the involvement of the BASR in Europe has grown significantly.

(2) British connections. In addition, the association has become increasingly engaged with other associations in the UK, which have an interest in the study of religions, chiefly the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS) and the Higher Education Academy Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre (formerly LTSN), which for the first time sponsored a lecture at this Conference, delivered so admirably on Monday night by Denise Cush. Contact with specific study centres has also increased, as evidenced again during this conference which at its outset heard presentations from Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Islamic Study Centres located in Oxford.

(3) Teaching and Research in Religious Studies. The BASR has also been in dialogue to a limited degree with official agencies that monitor excellence in research and teaching in our subject area, chiefly through our cooperation with AUDTRS and the Higher Education Academy Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre.

(4) Promoting scholarship in the study of religions. This pivotal aim of the Association is met chiefly through our conferences, bulletin and occasional papers series. The fact that the BASR Bulletin, now under the excellent editorship of George Chryssides, so successfully blends news items and announcements with matters of academic substance has made this a model on which other associations have based their publications, such as the Newsletter of the African Association for the Study of Religions, which has now changed its name to a Bulletin and follows a format similar to the BASR Bulletin. The Occasional Papers also stand out as important records of the thinking of our Annual Lecturers and to others who make important contributions to the BASR conferences. For the past few years, these have been edited faithfully by Mathew Guest. The publication this year by Ashgate of selected Occasional Papers under the title *Religion: Empirical Studies*, edited by Steven Sutcliffe, testifies to the academic excellence of the BASR Occasional Papers series. We have also encouraged the development of younger scholars over the years by providing bursaries and slots on conference programmes for works in progress.

(5) The archive of the BAHHR/BASR. The collected materials of the BASR (formerly British Association for the History of Religions) will be deposited this autumn in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. These will include past Bulletins, Occasional Papers, Minutes of Executive and Annual meetings, correspondence and related material. The BASR archive provides a rich deposit of information on the development of the study of religions in Britain over the past fifty years, and should be of interest to those studying the history of our field.

In these and many other ways, the BASR has sought to promote scholarly research and interest in the academic study of religions in the United Kingdom. We have encouraged a broad and generally inclusive approach, which reflects the wide research interests of our members. At the same time, we have kept a

clear eye on methodological issues, particularly what criteria define the parameters within which we work, by promoting a non-theological, non-confessional approach to the study of religions.

Finally, I want to suggest that over the past year, and from time to time in previous years, the Executive Committee has rejected the suggestion that we promote particular causes or specific interests on behalf of the Association. Thus, we have refused to engage, for example, in inter-religious dialogue, to offer advice on Religious Education, or to counsel dietary staff on specific religious regulations of differing communities. We have maintained that members of the BASR individually possess expertise in many of these areas. Nevertheless, we are aware that the issue of academic responsibility has become particularly acute in a day when religion defines an extremely contentious force in national and international contexts, as Rosalind Hackett, our 2003 Annual Lecturer, has reminded us. The Executive Committee has resisted speaking collectively on such matters arguing that it falls beyond the remit of the Association as a whole to do so, whilst fully encouraging its members, including those on the Executive Committee, to engage responsibly in the public domain.

James L Cox
14 September 2004

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

affiliated to

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 801567

INLAND REVENUE REF: XN79047

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 16 AUGUST 2003 TO 15 AUGUST 2004

INCOME

EXPENDITURE

General Fund

Balance at 16 August 2003	7426	Internet charges	68
Transfer from conference fund	7	Printing and postage Bulletin	1020
Subscriptions for 2002/2003	2536	Printing and postage Occ Papers	109
Bulletin insert fees	450	Committee expenses	914
Occasional papers	18	EASR/IAHR 2004	402
Bank int	<u>128</u>	Bank charges	7
	10565	Balance in hand 15 August 2004	<u>8045</u>
			10565

Conference Fund

Balance at 16 August 2003	5577	Transfer to general fund	7
2003 conference fees	3321	2003 Conference expenses	3418
2004 conference fees	<u>4701</u>	2004 Conference expenses	220
	13599	Balance in hand 15 August 2004	<u>9954</u>
			13599

FINANCIAL YEAR 16 AUGUST 2003 TO 15 AUGUST 2004

Balance at 16 August 2003		13003
Total Income	11161	
Total Expenditure	(6164)	
Balance at 15 August 2004		18000

Held as: Current account	7850
Cash	33
Cafcash deposit	10117

Accounts prepared by: Dr Helen Waterhouse, Hon. Treasurer, 23 August 2004

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of my audit. I have examined the balance sheet and annexed receipts and payments accounts which are in agreement with the Association's records. In my opinion and to the best of my information, and according to the explanations given to me, the balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the Association's affairs at 15 August 2004, and the receipts and payments account shows properly the transactions for the year expired on that date.

Signed: Dr Dominic Corryright, Oxford Brookes University, September 2004

TREASURER'S REPORT

General Fund Income comes from:

- subs
- a fee to publishers for inserts in the Bulletin
- sale of occasional papers
- Modest bank interest on an account opened this year with the Charities Aid Foundation, following a suggestion made at the last AGM

Our expenses this year have been:

- Internet charge – the web pages are maintained at the Open University but we pay to use the basr.org.uk address
- The Bulletin
- Printing of occasional papers where stocks have run low
- Committee expenses which are relatively high because widely spread committee
- EASR/IAHR subs

We pay to EASR 2 Euros per full fee paying member and 1 Euro for each unwaged member.

We pay to IAHR 1 US dollar per full fee paying member and 0.5 for each unwaged member.

For various historical reasons our payments to IAHR were suspended; they have now been reinstated

Conference fund

Figures for the conference fund are always misleading at this time of year because incoming deposits are not balanced by costs incurred. Costs for the 2003 conference were very nearly covered by income.

We have always known that this year's conference would be expensive and because we have built up funds in the conference account we are subsidising it quite heavily. Delegates' attendance has been charged at cost. This means that all the conference expenses, apart from food and accommodation, are coming from our reserves.

We awarded an unprecedented 8 bursaries to postgraduates this year from a field of applications of about twice that size. Bursary holders do not pay towards their costs to attend the conference, apart from their travel.

Actual and anticipated additional expenses for the financial year, 2004/2005.

We have made a £1000 donation to the designated IAHR fund, to help delegates from poorer countries attend the congress in Tokyo next year. We will be sending two representatives to the congress: James Cox, our president, and Graham Harvey, our secretary. Unless they can acquire sufficient funding from elsewhere, their costs will be met from our reserves.

I would like to record formal thanks to David Briggs for auditing the accounts for the previous three financial years and to Dominic Corrywright for taking on that role this year.*

*An additional note from the treasurer. Charity Commission rules about whether a suscription paying member of BASR can legitimately audit our accounts are ambiguous. In order to avoid any compromise, although we have decided to allow the 2004 audit to stand, we will appoint a new auditor from 2004/2005.

Honorary Life Members

To mark the BASR's fiftieth anniversary, the Executive Committee thought it appropriate to award a number of senior BASR members honorary life membership. The Anniversary Conference was the most obvious and appropriate place to award this honour, and it was given to Ursula King, Peggy Morgan, Michael Pye, Terry Thomas, Andrew Walls, and Frank Whaling. All of these scholars have made impressive contributions to teaching and scholarship in their respective fields, and have made an outstanding contribution to the Association.

Ursula King is Professor Emerita in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol, and Professorial Research Associate in the Centre for Gender and Religions Research, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She is well known for her work on Christian mystics, gender and feminism, and Teilhard de Chardin. She first joined the BASR Executive in 1976 as a co-opted member, and became Bulletin Editor from 1977 to 1981. In 1981 she was elected as Secretary — an office which she held for six years. She was President from 1991 until 1994. A scholar of international repute, she edited the Proceedings of the 17th Quinquennial Conference of the IAHR, which was held in Mexico City in 1995. She gave the BASR's Annual Lecture at the 2004 Anniversary Conference in Oxford. Since the conference's theme was 'Religious Studies: Mapping the Field', it is perhaps particularly appropriate to mention her edited volume, *Turning Points in Religious Studies* (T. & T. Clarke, 1990), an invaluable guide to key developments in the subject, referring to political and educational landmarks as well as scholarly ones. The volume was dedicated to Professor Geoffrey Parrinder, a founding member of the Association.

Peggy Morgan has served the BASR in many official capacities, most recently as Honorary President from 2000 to 2003 and as Honorary Secretary from 1997 to 2000, prior to which for many years she was the BASR Conference Organiser. Currently, she is a member of the Faculty of Theology, University of Oxford and Lecturer in World Religions, Mansfield College, Oxford. From 1996 to 2003, she directed the Religious Experience Research Centre, which is now located in Lampeter. She held the post of Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies and Theology at Westminster College, Oxford until 2001, where she first began as a tutor in 1976. Peggy has contributed to the study of religions in numerous other capacities, including serving as Chair of the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education from 1997 to 1999 and currently as Convener of the seminar series on the interdisciplinary study of religions for the University of Oxford. She has been a Trustee and Chair of the International Interfaith Centre in Oxford and has acted as a Consultant for the Inter-faith Network at the University of Derby. Peggy studied her M.A. in Religious Studies in

Lancaster with Ninian Smart, a degree she earned in 1969 with distinction. Her publications include *Six Religions in the Twenty-First Century* (with W. O. Cole), *Testing the Global Ethic* (co-edited with Marcus Braybrooke), and the widely read *Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions* (edited with C. Lawton).

Michael Pye lived in Japan for five years, after which he taught at the Universities of Lancaster, Leeds, and finally Marburg. He joined Philipps-Universität Marburg in 1982, becoming Professor of the Study of the Study of Religion. He has the distinction of being the BASR's first Bulletin Editor, a task which he undertook from 1972 until 1977, while simultaneously serving as Secretary (1972-1981). He served as General Secretary of the IAHR from 1985 until 1995, when he became President. When his period as President expired in 2000, he was given an Honorary Life Membership of the IAHR at the Durban Conference in that year. In 1995, Michael attended the inaugural meeting of the EASR in Krakow, Poland in 1995, where he was elected to the post of Internet Officer. He continues to moderate six European e-lists. Although best known his work on Japanese religion, Michael Pye has written extensively on issues relating to religion and society more widely. He was recently honoured by the compilation of a *Festschrift* edited by Christoph Kleine, Monika Schrimpf and Katja Triplett, *New Paths in the Study of Religions: Festschrift in Honour of Michael Pye on his 65th Birthday*. (München: Biblion Verlag, 2004). Peggy Morgan is one of the contributors.

Terry Thomas returned from India to Britain in the late 1970s to take up one of the first Religious Studies posts at the Open University. His work was pioneering in several ways: the Open University was a new type of institution, offering new modes of study for new types of student. The substantial immigration of the 1960s afforded new opportunities to carry out field work within Britain, and Terry did much to encourage field work as part of Open University study on *Man's Religious Quest* (later *The Religious Quest*). In particular, Terry helped to further the study of Sikhism, and he had a particular interest in Paul Tillich's views on Christianity and other world religions. Terry was BASR Secretary from 1987 to 1993, after which he became the first editor of the BASR's *Occasional Papers* series. He did much to strengthen the Association in the early 1990s, helping to achieve a remarkable increase in membership and support for the Annual Conference.

Frank Whaling has recently retired from his post as Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Edinburgh. His interests were wide and, as well as being an authoritative commentator on John and Charles Wesley and the Methodist tradition, he is equally well-known for his work on methodology in the study of religion, Confucianism and its relationship with Christianity, and the Hindu tradition, especially the somewhat under-

researched new religious movement, the Brahma Kumaris. He authored *Religion in Today's World* (T. & T. Clark, 1987) edited the two-volume *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Moulton, 1983-1985) and *Theory and Method in Religious Studies* (1995), and he was Consultant Editor for the *Larousse Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions* (1994). A loyal supporter of BASR, Frank assumed the onerous task of Conference Organiser throughout the period 1980-1984.

Andrew Walls taught in Sierre Leone and Nigeria before founding the Religious Studies Department at the University of Aberdeen in 1970, where he set up the Scottish Institute for Missionary Studies. His main interest has been Christianity in Africa, and he set up the Centre for Christianity in the Non-Western World at New College, Edinburgh, in 1987. He was founder-editor of the *Journal of Religion in Africa*. The *Gospel and Culture* web site describes Andrew Walls as 'the greatest living historian of the missionary dimension of Christianity', and he was awarded an O.B.E. for his work in 1987. Dr Walls was co-opted on to the BASR Executive Committee in 1976, and served as President during the period 1977-1980.

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OFFICERS OF THE BASR 1954–2004

President	Secretary	Bulletin Editor
1954–1972 E. O. James	1954–1972 Geoffrey Parrinder	
1972–1977 Geoffrey Parrinder	1972–1981 Michael Pye	1972–1977 Michael Pye
1977–1980 Andrew Walls		1977–1981 Ursula King
1980–1981 Trevor O.Ling		1981–1984 Alistair Mason
1981–1985 Ninian Smart	1981–1987 Ursula King	1984–1992 Kim Knott
1985–1988 Cyril Williams	1987-1993 Terry Thomas	
1988–1991 Peter McKenzie		
1991–1994 Ursula King	1993–1996 Kim Knott 1996-1997 President Elect	1992–1994 Julia Leslie
1994–1997 Brian Bocking		1994–1997 Ian Harris
1997–2000 Kim Knott	1996–2000 Peggy Morgan 1999-2000 President Elect	1997–2000 James L. Cox
2000–2003 Peggy Morgan	2000–2003 James L. Cox 2002-2004 President Elect	2000–2002 Steven Sutcliffe

Treasurer	Conference Organiser
1976–1985 Ian Calvert	1977–1980 Fred Morgan
1985–1997 Alan Rogers	1980–1984 Frank Whaling
1997–2000 R. S. Exon	1984–1993 Peter Moore
	1993–1996 Peggy Morgan
2000– Helen Waterhouse	2000– Marion Bowman
BASR Occasional Paper Series Editor	Listed as co-opted Committee members:
Terry Thomas 1993–1996	Ursula King 1976–1977
Judith Coney-Fox 1996–2002	Andrew Walls 1976–1977
Mathew Guest 2002–	Michael Pye 1981–1982
	Julia Leslie 1994–1995
	Brian Bocking 1986–1989
	(Development Officer)
	John Shepherd 1992–1995

Life Members

Geoffrey Parrinder; W. Montgomery Watt; W. S. F. Pickering

Dorothy Emmet (dec.); K. D. D. Henderson (dec.); H. D. Lewis (dec.); Eric Pyle (dec.); Ninian Smart (dec.)

Newly elected in 2003

Peter McKenzie; Alan Rogers; Cyril Williams (dec.)

Newly elected in 2004

Ursula King; Peggy Morgan; Michael Pye; Terry Thomas; Andrew Walls; Frank Whaling

(Compiled by Ursula King)

**European Association for the Study of Religions, 4th Conference,
Santander, Spain, 8-11 September 2004**

The 4th Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), which was held in conjunction with the 6th Conference of the Spanish Society of the Sciences of Religions and also served as a special conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, was held in Santander, Spain from 8 to 11 September 2004 under the theme, 'Religious Tolerance and Intolerance'. The President of the Spanish Association, Professor Ramón Teja, opened the conference by quoting the words of Symmachus, a noted Roman senator of the 4th century C.E.: 'Not by one avenue only can we arrive at so tremendous a secret'. Professor Teja indicated that the Spanish Association had chosen this as the theme of the conference to illustrate how historically two different religious systems competed with one another, the Graeco-Roman and the Christian, 'one to stay alive, the other to impose its hegemony and dominance'. In the contemporary world, he noted, many different systems are competing with one another, but he challenged the conference to consider how tolerance could emerge out of such competition. He then welcomed all delegates to 'this multi-cultural and multi-religious conference' which, he hoped, would 'contribute in some way to promoting Tolerance, the new name for Peace'.

Over the next four days, over one hundred papers were presented on the theme under a wide variety of topics in three simultaneous strands, many drawing from studies of antiquity and others exploring contemporary themes. An example of a paper based on historical analysis was given by Mar Marcos, the local conference organiser from the University of Cantabria, who discussed, 'The Idol-Breaker: A Model of Sanctity in Late Antique Hagiography'. In this paper, Dr Marcos examined how the process of christianisation in the ancient world demanded the suppression of pre-existent religious systems, sometimes using violent methods. After Constantine, the Christian apologist, Firmicus Maternus, called for imperial intervention to exterminate idolaters. An example of a paper given on a contemporary European theme was provided by Christian Moe of the University of Oslo, in which he analysed idealised patterns of tolerance as advocated by Bosnian Muslims. A paper examining the crossroads between Europe and Asia was delivered by Michiaki Okuyama of Nanzan University in Japan, whose paper was entitled: 'European Islam in Japanese Scholarship: Reviewing Current Discussions'. Dr Okuyama argued that the number of Muslims in Japan, although now very tiny, is expected to increase dramatically. He asked if models drawn from Islam in Europe might inform ways in which Japanese society should react to the growth of Muslim communities in his own country. Another paper drawn from the history of religions was presented by Elena Muniz Grijalvo, of the

University Pablo de Olavide in Seville, who explored the topic, 'Strategies of Repression of Prophetical Charisma in Ancient Christianity'. Dr Grijalvo argued that although in its earliest days Christianity regarded prophecy as a sign of authority, by the third century, 'gifted people' had become a source of conflict and 'were progressively elbowed out of the way of Christian orthodoxy'.

Members of the British Association for the Study of Religions attending the conference were Kim Knott, James Cox, Rosalind Hackett, Michael Pye and Myfanwy Franks, each of whom delivered papers. Kim Knott analysed the role of the right and left hands as tools for understanding religion. Based on research she is conducting for her current book on 'right' and 'left', Professor Knott noted that the 'hands offer us means to think about both hierarchical and egalitarian social relations, and tolerance and intolerance'. James Cox offered tentative conclusions following his fieldwork conducted in Zimbabwe during July and August 2004 on religious dimensions within the land resettlement programme currently being promulgated by a coalition of members of Robert Mugabe's ruling party, war veterans and mediums who claim to be possessed by spirits of those killed during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle in the 1970s. Rosalind Hackett referred to her research on the relation between the media and religious conflict in Nigeria and Uganda. She argued that the media represents a significant new interface for negotiating the power relations between religious groups, and between religious groups and the state. Michael Pye presented a paper that demonstrated through a creative use of photography the Chinese concept of 'three teachings' and its current application in south-east Asia. Myfanwy Francks of the University of Leeds discussed the *hijab* as a focus of tolerance and intolerance before and after September 11.

At its business meetings, the EASR committee considered various topics, including bursaries for academics from poorer countries and for postgraduate students, the production of brochures for the EASR, the role of the Internet Officer and nominations for EASR officers to begin in 2005. On this latter point, the Secretary, Tim Jensen, reported that a call for nominations had been issued according to the constitution on 1 June 2004. At the General Assembly held on Saturday, 11 September, the following officers for the next term were elected: President, Guilia Sfameni Gasparro; Secretary, Kim Knott; Treasurer, Willem Hofstee; Internet Officer, Michael Pye. It was also announced that the next EASR Conference will be held from 17-20 August 2005 in Turku, Finland under the theme: 'Exercising Power: the Role of Religions in Concord and Conflict'. Further details of this conference will be forthcoming. At the conclusion of the General Assembly, the delegates to the conference warmly thanked the Spanish Society for the Sciences of Religions, and in particular the local organiser,

Mar Marcos, for organising a stimulating conference and for providing such generous hospitality.

The conference culminated with a most interesting and delightful excursion to the caves at Altamira and to the village of Santillana del Mar.

James Cox

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

CESNUR (Centre for the Study of New Religions)

'Religious Movements, Conflict and Democracy: International Perspectives' Baylor University, Waco, Texas; 17-20 June 2004

CESNUR's 2004 annual conference was held at Waco, the scene of 1993 siege of David Koresh's Branch Davidians. There were about eighty participants, and the conference included many well-known academics who have made the study of new religious movements (NRMs) their specialism.

The themes of conflict and democracy were interpreted in a somewhat liberal way, as tends to happen at such gatherings, spanning almost anything that was potentially controversial, such as Satanists in Estonia, secularism, and televangelist faith healers. One recurring issue was that the study of new religions itself could bring the researcher into conflict, for example with university authorities, who often marginalised or discouraged academic involvement in the field: this appears to be the case in the U.S.A. and in some parts of Europe, although happily not in Britain. Some presentations were trenchantly analytical and meticulously researched, whereas others — particularly some on specific religious groups — seemed to amount to little more than news updates, although arguably such information has its value.

Particular attention was given to the Unification Church (now the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) and the Church of Scientology, both of which celebrate their half-centenary this year; both groups had their own specially designated plenary sessions, with contributions from academics and NRM leaders. Typically, there was a significant attendance from NRM members. The ISKCON Revival Movement had a slot: this is a campaigning movement within the Hare Krishna organisation who is dissatisfied with recent trends in ISKCON's structure. The Family (formerly Children of God) were present, although non-contributing, but they had organised an extra-curricular clandestine meeting with their president, to which a privileged few were invited, and who heard him speak about organisational changes within the group.

The highlight of the conference was a field trip to the Mount Carmel site, where the 1993 siege occurred. The Branch Davidians' small chapel has been rebuilt, but nothing else, and a small group of survivors remain. Three of them were available to speak to delegates, as well as David Koresh's mother, who now lives nearby. Two academic presentations — by Catherine Wessinger, and Bill Pitts of Baylor University — were given as an introduction to this meeting.

The Baylor University campus, on which the conference was held, has the distinction of having a bear-pit in the middle, where two live bears are homed, sponsored by benefactors: the Baylor bears are the university's mascot. I returned home, wondering if the University of Wolverhampton might do something similar with wolves!

Many of the conference papers are to be found on the CESNUR web site, and those who want to read the cyber-proceedings should go to: http://www.cesnur.org/2004/waco_cp.htm

George Chryssides
University of Wolverhampton

The Third Conference of the Korean Association of Buddhist Professors and The First International Conference of Buddhist Professors Baegdam Temple, Soraksan, Republic of Korea; 17-19 August 2004

Korean Association of Buddhist Professors (KABP) is an organisation of Korean academics which, besides promoting research into and teaching of Buddhism and its culture, aims at promoting its message of peace in today's turbulent world. It holds conferences every other year and the aim of this year's was to initiate the founding of a worldwide association. The organiser, Professor Yong-pyo Kim, belongs to the Department of Buddhist Studies, Dongguk University, Seoul, but the President of KABP is Professor Yeun Kee-Young from the University's School of Law. Baegdam Temple (or Paekdamsa), located in Sorak National Park in the north-east of South Korea, not far from the border with North Korea, was founded in 647 and destroyed several times during foreign invasions, the last time by communist forces during the Korean war in 1950. Its restoration in the ancient style, with a few new buildings (including a museum), was finished only recently. It is now listed, in governmental records, as 'Traditional Temple No. 24' and its wooden Amit'a Buddha carved in 1748 as 'National Treasure No. 1182'. Its latest addition, a new conference centre in the nearby village of Manhae named after its famous Son (Zen) master (1879-1944), was the venue of the conference.

The theme of the conference was announced as: 'A World of Harmony and Sharing: Asian Cultures and Religions in the Age of Dialogue', with sections on 'World Peace and Religion', 'Dialogue among Religious Civilizations' and 'Korean Religions and Buddhism'. The invitation (expenses paid) with a request for a paper on 'Buddhism and Peace' came to me at short notice, but was difficult to resist despite the prospect of the usual summer temperatures in Korea being around 30-35 degrees. When I was leaving London, however, it was sweltering in 33 degrees and Seoul was a pleasant 25 degrees because of an approaching typhoon which hit the south coast with force, but reached the conference centre a bit weakened a few days later.

The requested theme seemed to invite a laudatory approach, but I decided to subtitle my paper 'The Theory and the Reality in Historical Perspective' and survey in it the failures of Buddhism to pacify this war-torn world. After all Buddhism, despite its message of peace, always suffered from strife, largely because it spread mainly through royal patronage which attracted career seekers and brought in political intrigues. There were, for example, executions of monks or even murders within monasteries (Sri Lanka), many wars between Buddhist kingdoms (Burma), replacement of peaceful Buddhist rulers by empire builders (Mauryas by ungas; Sukhothai by Ayutthaya) and destruction of Buddhist kingdoms in SE Asia in the process of Islamisation. In Japan and Tibet monasteries maintained armies and fought for political and economic power, while in Korea monks took arms albeit only against Japanese invaders. True, in contrast to theistic religions Buddhism never engaged in religious wars, but it has no power to pacify the world; its message points to peace in transcendence. Mankind might achieve peace only if secular democratic governments with courage and powers to control religious excesses could ever be established throughout the world. My initial apprehension as to my paper's acceptability under the conference theme were groundless. It was included in the first section of the programme as the first of three 'keynote speeches'. The second one was on 'Forms and Significance of Political Participation by Buddhists in Japan' by Tsuyoshi Nakano, professor of Soka University, Japan, and the third was 'Cross-cultural Consensus Between Buddhist Reality and Modern Science' by Lee Joon, professor emeritus, the Kon Kuk University, Seoul, which stressed the cosmological affinity between the two systems. In the second section Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf of the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, Bangkok, spoke on 'Dialogue Between Islam and Buddhism Through the Concepts of *Tathagata* and *Nur Muhammadi*', trying to open the outlook on the possibility of developing a "new humanism" with emphasis on the "moral dimension of coexistence". Shin Jae-kyung, professor of Kyoto Sosei University, spoke on 'Shinto and Buddhism in

Japan', and Kuo-wei Lu of the Department of Religious Studies, Fo Guang University, Taiwan, outlined 'Development of Tibetan Buddhism in Taiwan'. It was followed by 'A Brief History of Buddhism in Mongolia' delivered by Bataa Mishigish, Dashichoiling Buddhist College, Ulaanbaatar.

The third section brought the contribution 'The Way of Sangsaeng (Living Together) in Buddhism and Christianity' by Micah, Eun-Kyu Kim (Sunghoe University, Seoul), who, although himself an ordained Anglican priest, highlighted the still occurring aggression of Christianity towards Buddhism in Korea whose root he found in the Old Testament's 'prohibition of idolatry', but he outlined ways of developing a "mature religious mind" which would make *sangsaeng* for different traditions possible. Pankaj Mohan (University of Sydney, Australia) explored the symbiosis of Buddhism and Shamanism in Queen Sondok's time. Other comparative papers were: 'Geomancy and Buddhism' by Choi Won Suk (Gyongsang National University), 'Religious Pluralism and Buddhism' by Yoon Yong-bok (Seoul National University), 'Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism' by Yoo Heun-woo (Dongguk University) and 'Divination and Buddhism' by Cho-Young-heun (Wongwang University).

Several parallel discussion groups, covering a variety of fascinating topics, were also running. Their chairmen reported on them to the plenary session on the last day of the conference. (One topic caught my attention: 'The spread of Buddhist culture and the protection of intellectual property rights' presented by Zhan Ping from the Law School of Peking University.) Official languages of the conference were Korean and English; summaries in English of Korean contributions and vice versa were provided.

The organisation was well-nigh perfect. Participants met before the conference in Seoul from where a chartered bus provided transport to the conference centre and back after it, as well as from Manhae village to the Paekdam Temple. An evening performance included a sequence of Buddhist temple drumming, a ritual dance by female shamans (*mudang*), the famous cymbal dance by monks and a concert of Korean music. Interested participants could attend chanting sessions, a Son (Zen) practice class and Dharma talks. Catering was vegetarian and adequate. Proceedings with papers whose authors met the early deadline were handed out before the conference started. Other, and some included but revised, contributions will appear in future issues of the *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* which is published by Dongguk University, Seoul.

There was also an inaugural meeting of the 'World Association of Buddhist Professors' (WABP) which offers membership to teachers and researchers of all subjects and on all levels who are Buddhists, to those who are engaged in teaching or research in Buddhist studies whether they regard themselves as Buddhists or not and to outstanding individuals in

different walks of life whose activities and aims are in sympathy with those of WABP. (Precise formulations will be given in the statutes which are in preparation.) So far representatives for Japan, Thailand and Australia have been named. I have agreed to explore whether there would be interest in this country for collaboration with the WABP or even in forming a British branch. (Those interested may contact me at my address given in the BASR membership list or by e-mail at: <yaksayorae@lycos.co.uk>) The next conference is envisaged in 2006.

Karel Werner
SOAS, University of London

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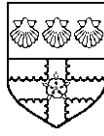
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III. RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Personalisation and Meaning in Contemporary Wedding Ceremonies in England and Wales*

There is much debate concerning secularisation in Britain, particularly as to whether it has resulted in a *loss* of religiosity or a *transfer* of religiosity to forms other than belonging to a religious institution. Davie (1994) makes a substantial case for 'believing without belonging'; Bruce (2002) makes a substantial case for secularisation as a loss of belief. Wilson (1992) underpins both with a definition of secularisation that encompasses the loss of influence of religious institutions during the modern period. The 'religious economies' perspective, developed through the work of Rodney Stark and others, suggests that 'sudden shifts do occur in our religious economy, but these involve the rising and falling of religious firms, not the rise and fall of religion *per se*' (Stark, 1994).

Having previously studied Implicit Religion under the supervision of Professor Edward Bailey, I was interested to pursue research in the field of religion outside the religious institutions, and thus to make some contribution to the secularisation debate. This presents the immediate problem of how to identify and locate 'religion' in the secular sphere, and

whether such 'religion' can be categorised under various headings, such as personal spirituality, New Age religion, para-religion, implicit religion, and so on. The wedding ceremony appeared to me to offer good opportunities in this field. By its nature it is required to be conducted in public, and is usually planned long in advance, giving the participants ample opportunity to consider their options and reflect on their approach to such an important rite of passage. It is a point where couples have to make a choice between a religious ceremony and a completely secular ceremony, with some latitude for personal preferences within either option. Also, couples are usually willing to talk about their ceremony – often at length! The wedding ceremony was therefore adopted as the focus of the research project for my Ph.D.

Because the research could not be undertaken on a scale large enough to uncover details from a broad and representative sample of the population, it was necessary to work on a small sample but in some depth. In any case, I considered that more would be gained from an in-depth study of what lay behind the choices of individuals if anything meaningful was to be learned about their religious ideas. This suggested qualitative rather than quantitative methodology. Qualitative methods have the advantage that a number of different instruments can be used to study a subject and then their data interrelated to form a pattern. However, they have the disadvantage that it is almost impossible to take a small sample from a very large cohort and claim that it is representative of the whole. This inevitably affects the aims of the research, particularly insofar as how ambitious those aims can be. But provided care is taken to ensure that the sample is sufficiently varied to cover most of the main options, it is at least possible to avoid idiosyncratic results. Of primary importance is the fact that it allows the subjects to speak for themselves.

The various instruments I used focused on the wedding ceremony and its meaning, and were designed to discover something of the complex relationship of the individual with religion and spirituality in a secularised society. At the heart of the research are questions about individual choices in the creation of a meaningful ritual. How do couples where one partner is affiliated to a religion and one is agnostic negotiate this important life cycle ritual? Are secular themes introduced into religious ceremonies, and implicitly religious ones introduced into civil ceremonies? Is there any sense of sacredness about the ritual? Has the meaning of the ceremony changed under the pressure of individualisation of belief? What *is* the spiritual meaning of a wedding ceremony today?

Although the questions of how religious institutions fare and how individuals function spiritually in a secular society has been the subject of considerable study, I am unaware of any other study that examines the wedding ceremony to assist in the search for answers. The wedding

ceremony itself has not been much studied by academics in recent years, and when it has the purpose has been to shed light on what it reveals about its social background rather than its spiritual and religious content (see for example Edwards, 1989; Ingraham, 1999). As a rite of passage it has been studied by anthropologists, and as evidence of social mores it has been studied by historians. This gives some idea of the theoretical context in which this research is taking place; while primarily grounded in the study of religion and the sociology of religion, it also draws on perspectives from anthropology (especially the study of ritual and rites of passage, and their relationship with performance theory), theories of popular and contemporary culture, and historical studies. Clearly the western wedding ceremony has long (through much of Christian history) had elements of law, theology, and social legitimation intertwined in it; however, its religious dimension is perhaps the least studied element of the three. I do not claim that my thesis will rectify that situation, or solve the riddle of secularisation, but it may at least provide some indicators in the complex area of human religiosity in contemporary Britain.

*The reasons for the restriction to England and Wales were (a) to ensure consistent legal requirements for marriage, and (b) my own ability to travel to interview appropriate couples. No disrespect to Scotland and Northern Ireland is intended.

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Kay Millard
Bath Spa University College

IV. RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE U.K.

Religions in Wolverhampton Website

Religious Studies has a strong focus on religion in its local environment. Since our move to the city campus in Wolverhampton we have been building up links with local religious communities and taking students on field visits to local places of worship.

The website *Religions in Wolverhampton* was set up at the end of last year, as a result of a week long technology retreat. During this week I was able to work with Ria Frate, an e-materials developer in the Centre for Learning and Teaching, who set up a range of templates for the presentation of information, which I could then fill with content.

The project has been contributed to by staff and students as part of studies on religion in the local area. At present it is used by students but dissemination is taking place to ensure that it is accessed by local school pupils, local historians, the wider public, and following this article perhaps students in other institutions.

The developments are supported by four aims:

(1) to identify the geographical setting of communities

John Gay introduced us to the notion of 'The Geography of Religion' in 1971 and his overview explored the link between geography and denomination distribution. Other studies have stressed the importance of explorations of the local environment. Hastings in the lectures *Religion in Leeds* which celebrated Leeds' centenary in 1993, drew attention to the benefits of exploring a small pond in which the fish seem bigger! In addition local religious history is likely to have shaped the reception and development of religious communities. Wolverhampton had a significant Roman Catholic community from the seventeenth century and the acceptance of another form of religion in the area for several hundred years may have made the city more receptive to other forms of religion.

Wolverhampton's particular legacy in recent history is likely to be identified as Enoch Powell's anti immigration 'rivers of blood' speech. But the local response to Powell was the setting up of Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group, which celebrates 30 years this November (2004).

The geographical element is seen in the use of maps to show the location of places of worship for each faith or denomination. The practical use of maps has been developed with Multimaps links which will show the exact location of each place of worship.

(2) to collate information on local religious communities

Our approach to the study of religion is to ground study in encounters with religious communities, close to what Jackson refers to as a 'conversational' approach. Fieldwork provides the means by which to

gather information about religion which can then be used to explore theoretical issues. Most of our students arrive at university without any real knowledge of religion, in any specific or general sense. We tend to get students who are interested in religion rather than active believers; they enjoyed active approaches to learning in secondary RE and this has influenced their choice of subject. The majority aim to pursue a career in education, either as a primary generalist or as a secondary RE specialist. About half of our students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but this tends to give them a knowledge of faith incidentals rather than an in-depth insider task on essential of belief and practice. Thus, visits to faith communities are important within the first year of study, as a means of building a knowledge base and developing their interpretive skills.

(3) to explore the realities of religious belonging

Staff involvement in local inter-faith groups in Walsall, Birmingham and Wolverhampton led to an early realisation that some local religious groups did not mesh with neat compartmentalisation into the six world religions. Where should we place the Baba Balak Nath Temple which was just down the road from the Walsall campus? Or Ek Niwas in Wolverhampton?

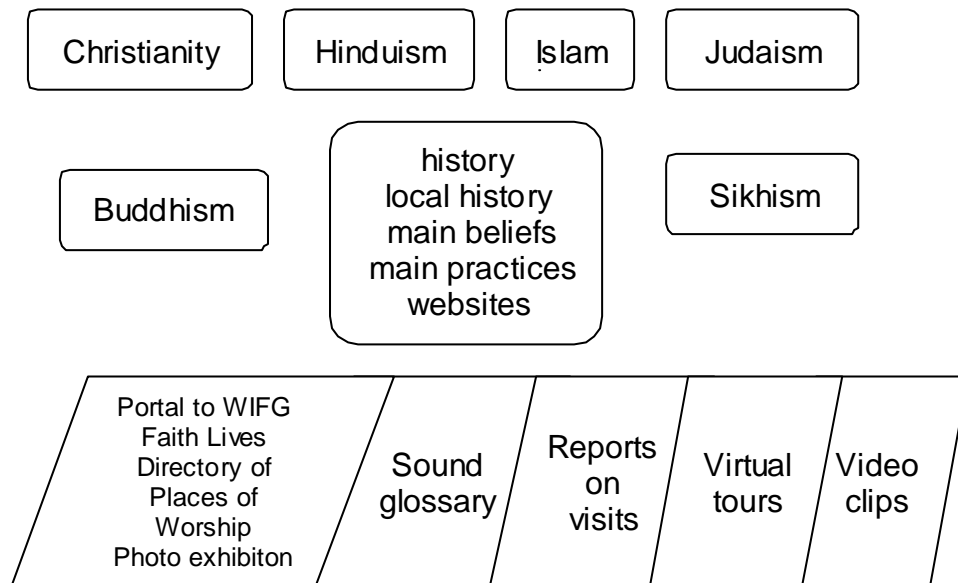
Research by colleagues within sub-continent forms of religions brought out the inappropriate matching of Western concepts of religion to many forms of religion originating in the Indian sub-continent. Thus, we were aware of the need to introduce students to the wide diversity of religions and the resources to do this were on our doorstep.

(4) to engage in knowledge transfer from the University to the local area

Part of the University's mission as a local university is to be involved in the region, we are already one of the largest employers in the region and our graduates tend to work locally. However, there is a need for academic subjects to look outside their own parameters and make links with the local community. In basic terms this knowledge transfer involves the transmitting of the fruits of research to the wider community.

The website initiative makes it possible for local schools to draw on materials to support the teaching of Religious Education. My involvement as a co-opted member of Wolverhampton SACRE will allow for closer links to develop between the University and local schools. We also worked with English Heritage to share the work on the website with the local public for the Heritage Open Days in September.

Figure 1: Overview of Religions in Wolverhampton



Direct access to website:

<http://asp2.wlv.ac.uk/hlss/Religion%20in%20Wolverhampton/index.html>

If this does not work the long route is as follows:

<http://www.wlv.ac.uk> <academic departments> <Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences> <Subject Information> <Religious Studies>

Deirdre Burke, University of Wolverhampton

V. BOOK REVIEWS

Ahmed, Durre S.(ed.) (2002) *Gendering the Spirit. Women, Religion and the Post-Colonial Response*. London and New York: Zed Books. ISBN 1-84277-026-8 (hb); 1-84277-027 (pb).

This book is a real treasure trove of unusually challenging, cross-cultural reflections on feminism and spirituality. The editor, based in Lahore but with wide international experience, is a specialist in Jungian psychology and communications. She is also closely involved with the annual Women and Religion Symposium sponsored by the South Asia office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and it is at these symposia that the very different chapters of this book were first presented. Durre's four contributions, which range over theoretical, historical and contemporary concerns, outnumber most of the others and give the book its overall framework and direction. She is particularly interested in the underlying psychodynamics that shape the formation of all knowledge, social relations and self-

understanding, as well as cultural and academic politics. The mutual embeddedness and interdependence of women and religion are signalled as a field that represents 'postcoloniality's final frontier'. In marked contrast to, but also in some continuity with European and American women scholars in religion, here are critical and challenging voices of women from the South. They come from highly trained, socially engaged scholars committed to work as both cultural activists and cultural critics. Durre explains that 'the South' is used in its widest meaning as 'constituting "developing nations, the Third World".' She quotes with approval the sociologist Daniel Bell who wrote 'that the "cultural wars" of the twenty-first century will be fought over gender and interpretation' (p. 214), and this interpretation also has to take into account the immense significance of the relationship between women and religion. What does the idea and image of 'woman' represent symbolically as distinct from that of 'man', and as different from social and personal embodiment? And how does the 'feminine' relate to the 'masculine' at both the human and divine level?

Anyone interested in these theoretical questions, backed by much historical and comparative detail from South and South East Asia, will find many new resources in the unusual mix of this book. The chapters are grouped into three parts, of which the first deals with 'Women and Religion: Alternative Perspectives' (four chapters), the second, longest part discusses 'The Hidden Woman and the Feminine' (five chapters), and the third examines 'Perspectives on Violence' (three chapters). The most substantial contributions after that of the editor come from Madhu Khanna, specialist of Hindu Shakta Tantra and founder member of the Tantra Foundation in New Delhi. Her three chapters present first a detailed examination of the Goddess-woman equation in Shakta Tantras, then a case study of a fascinating twentieth-century woman Tantric saint, *Madhobi Ma*, and finally a perceptive discussion of the inseparable dyad of righteous violence and non-violence in Hinduism. and the wrathful energy of the Goddess.

Only one chapter relates to Buddhism wherein the Sri Lankan scholar and activist Hema Goonatilake examines the early Sri Lankan chronicles on the introduction of the nuns' order. She describes especially the *Dipavamsa* (4th century C.E.) as a unique early example of 'feminist historiography' and includes interesting details on the nuns' *Vinaya* and their contribution to the propagation of Buddhism in foreign countries, thus making visible forgotten aspects of 'her story' that have been marginalized and little discussed so far.

South Asian Christianity is represented by two writers from the Philippines. Sister Mary John Mananzan has contributed one brief chapter on contemporary women religious in the Catholic Church, and another one on violence against women and the need for a spirituality of life. A third

chapter by her is a fascinating case study of *Suprema Isabel Suarez*, a contemporary woman leader of *Ciudad Mistica de Dios*, a new religious group already founded in 1876 (by a woman). Another unusual case of a new form of Filipino spirituality is presented by Grace Odal's work on *Mother Victoria Vera Piedad* in whose cult many pre-Hispanic and pan-Filipino elements are mixed with legendary material and religious practices of different periods and origin. Odal sees in this Mother the embodiment of an archetypal figure, the *mutya motif* of pre-Hispanic times which combines aspects of the ancient mother goddess with those of a trickster figure, but is also a source of spiritual communication involved with terrestrial and cosmic affairs. Many elements in these two different cults bear resemblance to spiritualities of new religious movements in the West, while also documenting the spiritual power of female religious leaders.

Besides two theoretical chapters Durre Ahmed has contributed two fascinating essays dealing with different historical and contemporary examples that involve aspects of Islam. In a nuanced discussion she weighs up divergent scholarly interpretations of the fourteenth century Kashmiri saint Lal Ded, also known as Lalita or Lalishvara. She reads her controversial biographical data, her literary and spiritual heritage as embodying archetypal ideas about paradise, monotheism, polytheism, and the great value assigned to asceticism, while at the same time reflecting a merging of Muslim and Hindu religious views and practices in the Indian subcontinent. Her contemporary example deals with 'Violence and the Feminine in Islam: A Case Study of the Zikris', a small Muslim group founded about 500 years ago in Gujerat that belongs to the larger context of Sufism. For Ahmed, the egalitarian ideas about gender in Zikri rituals and doctrine acknowledge the power of the feminine, but it is precisely this which has attracted violent opposition by other Muslim groups.

The rich content of this book provides superb resources for researchers and students interested in gender and religion, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity in South East Asia, and in theories about the feminine and masculine drawn from religion, psychology, mythology and symbolism. The essays are meticulously annotated and cross-referenced, although I miss a critical analysis of 'gender' and the 'gendering' of the title. It is indicative that these two concepts are not included in the index, although there are long entries on feminism, fundamentalism, religion, culture, and each of the religious traditions covered.

Ursula King

LESLIE, JULIA (2003). *Authority and Meaning in Indian Religions: Hinduism and the Case of Valmiki* Aldershot: Ashgate in 2003. ISBN 0-7546-3431-0

For those scholars such as myself who remain concerned about the tensions between a text-based ‘top-downwards’ approach to the study of religion and a more ‘bottom-upwards’ ethnographic approach, Julia Leslie’s book is essential reading. The debate is framed within a situation that took place in Birmingham in 2000 when the South Asian broadcaster Vikram Gill inadvertently offended the British devotees of Valmiki by referring to the well-known myth that the author of the Ramayana was a low-caste dacoit ‘saved’ by the transforming grace of God. The broadcaster used the example in response to a letter from a listener and could be presumed to feel on safe ground as the legend is not only well-known in popular culture, appearing in films and comics, but is also recorded in various texts held sacred by Sikhs and Hindus.

However, the Valmikis, a North Indian sect, composed primarily of members of the *dalit* castes, regard Valmiki to be more than the writer of the original *Ramayana* but hold him in veneration as their esteemed Guru and primal ancestor, moreover worship him as an incarnation of the ultimate reality. In addition to the significant sociological questions around the attempts by ‘low-caste’ communities to establish authentic discourses that are self-defined rather than constructions of other elites, the situation that arose between the broadcaster and the Valmikis raised fascinating methodological questions concerning the relationship between sacred text and religious meaning. The author, a skilled scholar of ancient Sanskrit texts was obliged to ask herself the question as to whether such texts can ‘validate or invalidate’ contemporary beliefs (p.1).

The main body of the book is dedicated to the resulting journey made by the author through a number of sacred texts, primarily Sanskrit, where Valmiki is mentioned. The scholarship in this part of the book is excellent, not only in its in-depth recovery of a little-known but significant figure in both classical and contemporary Hindu discourses, but also in its ability to show the reader with remarkable clarity the processes of layering that go into the construction of both sacred text and self-understandings of Hindu religious identity. In a journey that takes us from the earliest extant textual mention of the sage in the *Taittiriya Patisakhya*, through to his role in various versions of the *Ramayana*, the *Puranas* and even in the Sikh *Adi Granth*, we are introduced to the evolution of Valmiki from a figure linked to schools of Sanskrit pronunciation, to a Brahmin ascetic famed for his tapasya, the poet who wrote the epic life of Rama, to a compassionate and enlightened sage, and finally to a figure who represents the ultimate saving grace of God, the classic transformation of sinner to saint so common in the

bhakti traditions of mediaeval India. In analysing these transformations, the author takes on the process whereby Hinduism itself is formed and reformed.

Julia Leslie understands only too well that her exploration of the Birmingham incident is about more than textual analysis and historic accuracy – but rather is concerned with religious authority, authenticity, truth claims and the important issue of meaning is constructed by religious communities. In this regard two questions came to mind. The first was concerned with why the earliest constructions of Valmiki could be deemed to be more authentic than later Bhakti versions. If this is so, it assumes that the original versions were somehow more likely to be ‘truthful’ or ‘factual’ accounts rather than constructions that reflected the cultural and religious values of the time. My other question is concerned with why the dalits that belong to the Valmiki sect find their identity orientation within the Brahmin worldview, for I would have thought the *bhakti* narrative of Valmiki as the ‘saved’ dacoit offered more potential for asserting either equality or even superiority through merit as opposed to birth. By choosing the sage Valmiki as an object of worship, the community maintains and upholds the Brahmin meta-narrative that justifies the high-caste or Sanskritic traditions of India.

This is an important addition to scholarship and a book that I know I will be using on many occasions in my teaching, not only in courses on South Asian religion but also in more methodological introductions to the study of religions. This is a book that tells us much about authenticity, narrative construction, truth-claims and identity formation. As the author informs us, ‘the multiple meanings invested in the figure of Valmiki by South Asian communities lie not so much in their sacred texts as in the minds of those who read or hear them’ (p.192). Writing this review in the week that Jacques Derrida died it is important to reflect on how powerful these meanings can be. The author probably does not resolve her difficulties that arise from the two ‘rocks’ of her research, that is text-historical study and contemporary religious belief but she has provided her readers with a number of questions around the old topic of academic neutrality and presented an important addition to the dialogical approach to the study of religions.

Ron Geaves
University College Chester

VI. TURNING POINT

by Denise Cush

In 1975 I underwent a conversion experience. Not from one religious tradition to another, but from Theology to the Study of Religions. This occurred during my P.G.C.E. course at Westminster College, Oxford (now Oxford Brookes University), during which I became familiar with the work of Ninian Smart. This was a truly liberating experience — my field of study became all of the religious traditions of the world, plus ideologies that played a similar function in people's lives, plus any contexts within which questions of value and meaning were central, rather than the Christian tradition only. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, was the non-confessional approach. I was no longer expected to decide for myself or teach to students whether the various claims of religious traditions were true or false, rather we were off on a journey of exploration with the goal of understanding. The question following a conversion experience is 'what must I do to be saved?'. In my case, I wrote to Ninian Smart asking him the academic equivalent, and the answer came back that it might be an idea to study for an M.A. at Lancaster. So instead of going straight into teaching I did just that, ending up concentrating on Buddhism and Hinduism. I have not really looked back since, spending nine years teaching sixthformers, and eighteen in Higher Education, teaching mostly Religious Education, Buddhism, some Hinduism, dabbling in contemporary spiritualities, and occasionally reaching back into my Theological background and later fieldwork when there is some Christianity to teach.

Many converts (including many contemporary Pagans) talk about their experience as a 'coming home'. It is not that someone has introduced them to ideas and values that had never crossed their mind, but that someone has articulated and labelled what they were already struggling with. Similarly, Robert Jackson speaks of Smart's work 'responding to' a condition already being experienced by RE professionals. In my case, I had already tried to broaden my study of religions by choosing 'Comparative Religion' as my only optional course (how times have changed!) in my degree. Sadly, our tutor R. C. Zaehner died suddenly in week two of our course, so I swapped to the safer 'Hebrew'. Reading Ninian Smart was a case of 'Yes! That's exactly what I think!'

The idea of a 'Turning Point' was originally to identify a single book that has been most influential on one's academic development. For decades, I have been waving my tattered secondhand 1971 Fontana paperback copy of *The Religious Experience of Mankind* and claiming that 'this book changed my life'. However, when, as happens with other sacred texts, I came to actually read it last week rather than just wave it about, I found that of the

half a dozen quotations from the Smartian Canon by which I have lived my academic life, only two of them came from this book, the others coming from three other books by Ninian, and (shockingly) that one of them I had made up - not a direct quotation, but my own summary, which I tracked down to a 1975 essay. So rather than being a simple descriptive exercise, this has been an interesting example of how we construct the narratives by which we live (cf. Dominic Corrywright's 'Turning Point'; *Bulletin* 101 March 2004).

We all grow up and away from our parents and gurus, and in the last few decades we have seen the need to critique or at least supplement the 'phenomenological' approach to studying religions. We have seen the importance of ethnography and fieldwork, looked at religions from feminist and other liberationist perspectives and seen different things, become very suspicious of any claim to finding essences, and have worried about the phenomenological approach to religious education being interpreted by some as reducing RE to factual information about sundry religions ('learning about'). But none of this has fundamentally shaken my Smartian faith. From my collection of sacred texts, I treasure the teachings that religious education 'must transcend the informative' and 'enter into dialogue with the parahistorical claims of religions and anti-religious outlooks' (1968:105-6); and that 'the intention is not to speak on behalf of one faith or to argue for the truth of one or all religions or of none. Our first need is to understand. [we will then] be in a better position to judge wisely about religious truth' (1971, p.12).

Another important turning point in my life brought about indirectly by Ninian Smart is that I first met my partner at a SHAP conference, but that's a whole other narrative.

So, to conclude, what was going to be the account of how a book changed my life has turned into one about how we construct our life stories, and about a very special person. One of my favourite quotations, which does turn out to be from (1971), is 'The study of religions is a science, then, that requires a sensitive and artistic heart'. His certainly was, and his influence on the study of religions and religious education is incalculable.

Turning Point — June 2004

Robert Segal's 'Turning Point' in the last BASR Bulletin provoked the following response from Paul-François Tremlett.

I do not intend to quibble with Robert A. Segal's interpretation of Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (Bulletin No. 102, June 2004), nor argue the relative merits of Freud — or Eliade — in the teaching of approaches to the study of religions. Moreover, I am in agreement with Segal as to the importance of teaching Freud on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. What I wish to remark upon — and these comments engage both with Segal's recent essay and the discussion with Frank Whaling in Bulletin No. 100, November 2003 — is the failure to situate so-called reductionist and *sui generis* approaches to the study of religions. Rather than arguing the relative merits of particular authors or methods, one ought to begin historically. Only by analysing the historical constitution of 'religion' as a category for analysis may it be asked, 'under what conditions has knowledge about religion been possible since the mid-nineteenth century onwards?' I would suggest that the category religion in modernity is really a cipher for thinking about 'the' past and its relation to the present, and reductionist and *sui generis* approaches merely inscribe in attenuated form particular positions vis-à-vis the advent of modernity.

A detailed reading of reductionist studies of religions suggests that the category of religion performs a specific function: to signify a pre-modern past, a certain kind of subjectivity, mentality, identity and society. Religion equals, in crude terms, a non-individuated and collective identity, it cements cultures producing inter-subjectivity and is marked by a mode of thought that works by analogy, classifying the world into sacred and profane realms in societies typically low in technical sophistication.

Reductionist studies of religions are decidedly interventionist: erroneous religious beliefs are to be 'corrected'. They are 'orientalist', perpetuating a hierarchy of contrasts, opposing a rational, secular West and a non-rational, mystic East. They assert that religious world-views mystify social relationships and produce empirically false knowledge. They are also importantly critical of practices justified in terms of religio-philosophical systems that are contrary to modern conceptions of human rights.

Orientalist tropes operate differently in *sui generis* studies of religion. The usual oppositions are inverted, such that the mystical and the non-rational are privileged, as are intuition and empathy. The latter have even been claimed as a methodology. However, such qualities or skills have little to do with evidence-based research, and more to do with the Western romantic critique of modernity.

This romantic critique suggests that modernity augurs a radical loss of authenticity. It articulates nostalgia for old certainties and for allegedly

traditional ways of life. For Eliade, the purpose of religious ritual is precisely to re-connect human beings to that which is authentic and primordial. Religion is studied as a means of spiritualising modernity, but in treating religion as a *sui generis* realm it is severed from economic, cultural, kinship and political practices such that critique masquerades as (allegedly) neutral description.

Theory in the study of religions is not simply a choice between reductionist or *sui generis* approaches or between Freud and Eliade. The study of religions is an historical field of inquiry, and the category religion acquired quite specific meanings during the early modern period which remain hegemonic today — meanings which are critical to understanding the functions of the category religion in modernity. Only by situating the likes of Freud and Eliade in such a context do their works make sense. Only by recognising that the category religion occupies a critical space in meditations upon the advent of modernity can theory in religious studies connect with social theory generally.

Paul-François Tremlett

Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies, London

Robert Segal responds:

As the song from the movie ‘Love Story’ says, Where do I begin? Mr Tremlett’s response epitomizes the postmodern approach to religion. Consequently, it is wrong on every count.

First, reductionistic theories are not distinctively modern. They go back to the ancients and continue unabated thereafter. When, in *The Natural History of Religion*, Hume argued that religion arose out of fear, he was waxing unabashedly reductionistic — this in 1757. Therefore Tremlett’s causal linkage of reductionism to modernity — ‘reductionist and *sui generis* approaches merely inscribe in attenuated form particular positions *vis-à-vis* the advent of modernity’—is wrong.

Second, reductionistic theories do not usually consider the issue of the truth of religion. Most focus on only the origin and function of religion. As Hume himself declares of religion, the question of ‘its origin in human nature’ is distinct from the question of ‘its foundation in reason.’ Therefore Tremlett’s characterization of reductionistic theories as committed to the ‘correction’ of ‘erroneous religious beliefs’ is wrong. Indeed, what fascinates most reductionists is the power that beliefs so conspicuously erroneous hold. To answer that question, they turn to noncognitive factors, such as fear for Hume. Some modern reductionists, such as Tylor, Frazer, Marx, and Freud, do pronounce religion false, but others, such as Jung and nearly all other twentieth-century theorists, staunchly refuse to do so.

Third, reductionistic theories, as theories of religion per se, do not pit the West against the East. They seek to account for religion wherever it is

found. If theorists are directing themselves to a single religion, it is almost invariably to Christianity. Therefore Tremlett's contention that theorists set a 'rational, secular West' against a 'non-rational, mystic East' is wrong.

Fourth, reductionistic theories do not always dislike religion. Freud, Marx, and Frazer dislike religion because of the functions it serves or fails to serve, but Jung, Durkheim, and Weber like it for the functions it serves. They bemoan the demise of religion and yearn for substitutes for it. Therefore Tremlett's claim that reductionistic theories are uniformly 'critical' of religion is wrong.

Fifth, reductionistic theories are not suspect because they originate in a specific time and place. What idea does not? Even divine revelation, we are always told, is geared to the times. What Tremlett, in standard postmodern fashion, proposes is invoking the origin of a theory to challenge its truth. In so doing, he commits the genetic fallacy. He collapses discovery into invention. Reductionistic theories can be true, no matter what their origin. Likewise they can be true, no matter what their use or function. Tremlett, again in postmodern fashion, wants to invoke the effect of a theory—how it 'operates'—to challenge its truth. In so doing, he commits what I have dubbed the functionalist fallacy. The truth of a theory is in fact to be determined by an assessment of its tenets and of its applicability. Jung's theory is true if the collective unconscious exists and if the assumption of it elucidates the phenomena to which it is applied.

Sixth, what is true of reductionistic theories of religion is true of the category 'religion' itself. Tremlett informs us that 'the category religion in modernity is really a cipher for thinking about 'the' past and its relation to the present.' Even if the category serves as a 'cipher' for thinking about the age, it serves more fundamentally to account for religion itself. Reductionistic theories are theories of religion, not just of vague abstractions like tradition and modernity.

Seventh, Tremlett's insistence on 'beginning historically' is ironic. His 'detailed reading of reductionistic studies of religion' yields only the sketchiest generalities. For him, all reductionistic theories are virtually the same. I would have innocently assumed that a historical approach to, again, Hume would have focused on his reaction to the Deists, for whom religion originated in the recognition of the design of the world and therefore of the necessity of a creator. I would have assumed that Hume's pioneering differentiation of the questions of origin and function from the question of truth was intended to sever the deistic linkage of explanation to justification. I would have assumed that a historical approach to any reductionist would have required knowledge of exactly the 'context,' to use the phrase so bandied by postmodernists. The more one does so, the more one finds particularities as well as similarities. As practiced by the finest

intellectual historians, such as Quentin Skinner, the issues facing one theorist are different from those facing others.

Finally, while Tremlett seeks to delimit *sui generis* theories no less rigidly than reductionistic ones, I was writing to argue that *sui generis* theories are not theories. I therefore leave to others, such as the external examiner for my course on Theories of Religion, the defence of Eliade, Schleiermacher, Otto, W. C. Smith, and company.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Religion: Empirical Studies*, edited by Steven J. Sutcliffe**

Religion: Empirical Studies was launched at the BASR Anniversary Conference at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, in September. The book is an edited collection of several past BASR Occasional Papers, with an editor's introduction. It is sub-titled 'A Collection to mark the 50th Anniversary of the British Association for the Study of Religions', and we hope to carry a review in the next edition of the *BASR Bulletin*.

The book was offered at a special 50% discount at the conference. Ashgate, the publisher, has agreed to extend the conference offer to BASR members until 1 December 2004. The price to members will therefore be £25 instead of the normal price of £50. Please contact Ashgate at:

Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Golwer House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3HR — or visit their website at www.ashgate.com

When ordering, please quote 30SC1019.

VIII. TRIBUTES

Cyril Glyndwr Williams

Honorary President of BASR, 1985-1988

Revd Professor Cyril Williams was a leading figure in Welsh national life and a driving force in the development of the academic discipline of Religious Studies, not only in Wales, but internationally. British Association for the Study of Religions members remember Cyril for his calm, open and insightful honorary presidency during the late eighties.

Cyril was a founder member of the Religious Studies wing of the Department of Theology, Religious Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Wales, Lampeter. Convinced that Christian theology could no longer continue to ignore the teachings of other religions, his vision for the study of religion was both global, and deeply rooted in his own Welsh identity and Non-conformist Christianity.

From a mining family in Pontiets in the Gwendraeth Valley, Cyril gave 14 years of service as a Congregationalist minister at Tabernacl Pontycymmer, Radnor Walk, London, and at Eglwys y Priordy in Carmarthen. His academic mentor was Professor Aubrey Johnson at Cardiff. His original doctoral research was later published under the title of *Tongues of the Spirit* in 1978, and remains a much-quoted study of the phenomenon of glossalia, or speaking in tongues. Cyril's first academic post was in the Department of Semitic Languages at Cardiff, from 1958. Here he also taught in the Faculty of Theology, where students intending for the Christian ministry were at least introduced to the beliefs and importance of other religions. He became a Fellow of Cardiff University in 1983.

He served as a Professor of Religions at the Carleton University, Ottawa 1968-1973. On his return to Wales he became Head of the fledgling Department of Religious Studies at University of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he was given a personal chair, and in 1983 he and the Department moved to Lampeter to bring the study of non-Christian religions firmly onto the curriculum. It is largely a tribute to his vision that this Department now boasts a curriculum offering study of an unparalleled range of religious traditions, taught and researched by a team of academics hailing from all corners of the globe.

His work was more controversial than that of his colleague and friend, the late Professor Ninian Smart. Not only did he seek a revolution in the academy, he also desired to open the eyes of the ordinary people of Wales, with whom he worshipped, to the wisdom of the world's religious traditions. This inevitably brought him critics from the churches and chapels of Wales. However, his work in Welsh, *Crefyddau'r Dwyrain* (1968), despite being more than three decades old, remains the most highly regarded attempt to introduce Eastern religions to a Welsh speaking audience. In 1991 his ground breaking translation of the Hindu sacred text *The Bhagavad Gita*, (*Y Fendigaid Gân*) became the first, and so far only, scripture of a non-Abrahamic faith to be translated in its entirety into Welsh. He was a prolific writer in both Welsh and English.

He was Honorary President of the British Association of the Study of Religions (then the British Association for the History of Religions) from 1985-1988, and his professional contribution to religious studies was again recognized by BASR making him an honorary life member in 2003. He was also honoured with a D.D. by the University of Wales in 1993.

His work was not confined to the universities. Along with many key cultural figures of the time, he was a fervent supporter of the Welsh language, and was a committed advocate of Welsh Medium education. He was a broadcaster and a regular contributor to radio in Wales, a regular preacher, and a patriotic rugby supporter.

Those who knew Professor Williams as a minister, teacher and colleague, knew him as a gentle, softly spoken, contemplative man of a poetic disposition, whose demeanor belied both his struggles, and his lasting achievements. BASR remembers him with affection and gratitude, and sends condolences to his family.

The Revd Professor Cyril Glyndwr Williams was born on 1 June 1921. He died on 31 May 2004, aged 82.

Wendy Dossett
University of Wales, Lampeter

Ria Kloppenborg: 8 March 1945 – 4 October 2003

Prof. dr. M.A.G.T. (Ria) Kloppenborg died on 4 October 2003, while Buddhist friends chanted the *vajra guru mantra* ‘to assist her in her journey towards the light’. This is reported in the booklet containing the order of the leave-taking service before her body was cremated. At Ria’s request, that *mantra* was sung again during that liturgy.

Ria was born in a R.C. family in Utrecht briefly before the end of World War II. She entered Utrecht University in 1964 to read Law for two years, and Indian Languages and Cultures with the famous Prof. Jan Gonda for six years, to which she added courses in Religious Studies and Cultural Anthropology in Leiden University. In later life, she fondly remembered seminars in Leiden by Prof. Fokke Sierksma, the rebellious disciple of Van der Leeuw and first post-Christian scholar of religions in Dutch Faculties of Theology, on hair as symbol of sex and gender, and on messianic and apocalyptic movements. She earned her MA-degree in Indian Languages and Cultures in 1970 with a major in Buddhism, Sanskrit and Pali, and minors in Comparative Religion, Ancient Javanese and Tibetan, and an MA-thesis on Suicide in Buddhism, in which she investigated the recent public self-immolations of Buddhist monks in Vietnam in protest against the war.

She was appointed a junior lecturer in Buddhism in the Faculty of Theology of Utrecht University in 1970. Under Gonda’s guidance, she continued to work on ‘the concept of the *Paccekabuddha* in Pali canonical and commentarial literature’, on which she earned her Ph.D. degree in 1974. It dealt with the Buddhist ascetic who is ‘an enlightened one by himself’: he dies without having taught *dhamma* to others. It was her second publication, for in 1973 she had published already a critical edition of *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, the *Sūtra* on the Foundation of the Buddhist Order. She loved this type of philological work but was quite fastidious in it by demanding from herself and her students that translations not only reflect accurately the contents of a text but also its literary qualities. In this vein

she published a translation into Dutch of Sāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* ('The Path of the Bodhisattva') from the Sanskrit in 1980, and, with her students, the *Bhagavadgita* in 1997, also from the Sanskrit, and *Theratherigatha*, 'The Verses of the *Theri*', (enlightened males and females), from the Pali in 1998 and 2000. Two more unfinished translation projects will be completed by one of her former students.

Ria became a Senior Lecturer in the Utrecht Faculty of Theology in 1975, but also taught part time at Tilburg University from 1978 to 1981, and from 1981 to 1984 at the University of Groningen. She became a full professor in Living Religions and the Comparative Study of Religions in 1988 in the Utrecht Faculty, the first woman ever to hold a full professorship in a Dutch faculty of theology. In her inaugural address she discussed the Buddha as 'the teacher of the world and the trainer of humans'. She herself was also an excellent teacher. She knew how to join the Buddhist past and its historical diversity with modern developments in Asia and Europe, e.g. by inviting a Buddhist monk or nun, or a Dutch lay Buddhist, into her classes as examples how Buddhism might permeate a person's life also in modern Western societies. Though many of the Utrecht students were hardly receptive to critical scholarship on religions because of the orthodox Christian theology they espoused, a few were much inspired by it. For them, Ria was much more than merely an inspiring teacher. She invited some into her home for all night discussions, music and dance, and a breakfast in her garden in the early morning. For others she conducted, at their request, travel tours to Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand where she was conducting research. Ria supervised ten PhDs, four of which were awarded a *cum laude*.

In an interview in 1988, Ria stated explicitly that she did not regard herself as a Buddhist. And she never formally became one, even though some Dutch Buddhists honoured her after her death as the 'Mother of Dutch Buddhism'. She remained first of all a scholar of Buddhism, but one who was not averse to put her scholarship also at the service of Buddhists, Dutch and other. She also increasingly turned to Buddhist techniques of meditation, painting female *Bodhisattvas* and androgynous *Shiva Ardhnarishavaras*, to drawing *mandalas*, and to Western psychotherapy for relief from the *dukkha*, suffering, that was a large part of her life: traumatic experiences in her youth, the death at an early age of her severely handicapped son, and divorce. She found a measure of healing and happiness in adopting an orphaned Nepalese baby girl, whom she named Renée and raised as her daughter.

The interface between Western psychotherapy and Buddhist techniques of 'healing' became a major object of her research in the last decade of her life. In 1998, she founded the working group Psychotherapy and Buddhism, in which over fifty Dutch psychologists, psychotherapists and psychiatrists

participated under her direction. It became a foundation briefly before her death and will publish in 2005 the volume of studies on ‘Asian Religions and Psychotherapy’ by members of this working group which Ria was editing in the months before her death.

Apart from this volume, she edited, or co-edited, five more volumes: on rituals in Indian religions in 1983; on religious minorities in The Netherlands in 1986; on female stereotypes in religious traditions in 1995; on the study of (*duplex ordo*) theology in 2001; and on the modernity of religion, also in 2001. She contributed some 25 chapters to these and other volumes and encyclopaedias, as well as nine articles to Dutch and other scholarly journals, and seven to Buddhist periodicals.

Ria herself composed the liturgy of the leave taking ceremony. It was conducted, at her request, by a Dutch Buddhist nun. It was opened with a *metta* meditation composed by Ria herself and concluded with the recitation of a *metta sutta*. The frontispiece of the booklet shows a female *bodhisattva* painted by Ria. She expressed her private, critical appropriation of Buddhism by selecting the following verses from the Heart *sūtra* as the motto of the meeting:

*There is no ignorance
And no cessation of ignorance.
There is no old age and death
And no cessation of old age and death.
There is no suffering,
No cause of suffering,
No cessation of suffering
Nor is there a road to it.
There is no [liberating] insight,
No attainment of it,
And no non-attainment of it.*

Jan G. Platvoet

Julia Leslie

We are very sad to announce the death of Dr I. Julia Leslie, Senior Lecturer in Hindu Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies and co-director of its Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Gender and Religion, on 24 September 2004. The next issue of the Bulletin will carry a full tribute to Julia's great contribution to the study of religion both in the UK and internationally.

A memorial fund has been set up to honour her life and work. If you would like to donate please send your donation to Annette Bullen, Development Office, G9, Russell Square. You can download a giving form from the Development and Fundraising website at www.soas.ac.uk/developmentofficefiles/givingform.pdf. Please make cheques payable to SOAS and if applicable, and to help increase the donation, please tick the gift aid box. If feasible and after consulting with her family it is proposed that the money would go towards either a scholarship, bursary or memorial lecture. All donations, whatever their size, are very gratefully received. A memorial service will be held at SOAS to honour the life and work of Julia on the 24 November 2004 at 4 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Jacqueline Suthren Hirst

Bryan Ronald Wilson (1926-2004)

Bryan R. Wilson died on Saturday October 9, 2004 from a heart attack while dining in a restaurant. One of the most distinguished sociologists of the 20th century, Wilson had been Reader (a senior academic post in the Oxford system) in Sociology at Oxford University, 1962-1992, President of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (SISR), 1971-1975, and its Honorary President, 1991-2004.

Bryan Wilson has exercised a crucial influence on the sociology of religion, not only through his many publications but also through the generations of his graduate students. He has been a staunch proponent of the secularization theory, and since the 1960s became well-known for his claims that secularization was destined to be as prevalent in the United States as he thought it was in Western Europe. His many writings on the topic helped clarifying the issues and distinguishing between quantitative secularization (a decline in religious belief and church attendance) and qualitative secularization (a declining influence of religion on behaviour, culture, and politics). Wilson's work largely defined the agenda and the field where secularization theorists and their opponents crossed swords for more than forty years.

His 1959 “An Analysis of Sect Development” in the *American Sociological Review* and his book *Sects and Society* (Heinemann 1961) - a study of the Elim Churches, the Christadelphians, and Christian Science (based on his doctoral thesis at the London School of Economics) - may be regarded as representing the beginning of contemporary academic study of new religious movements, to which Wilson later contributed its influential *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford University Press 1990). He was also a pioneer of studies of millennialism, many years before this field achieved its present visibility, in *Magic and the Millennium* (Heinemann 1973).

A frequent participant in CESNUR conferences and initiatives, Wilson will also be remembered as one of the most prominent academic champions of religious liberty in the 20th century. He defended new religious movements and other minorities against the various waves of international anti-cult campaigns, for no other personal reason than his passionate love for freedom and justice, since he defined himself as an atheist. Although even some of his closest friends would have preferred that he did not to pick up such a controversial fight, he argued with particular strength, both in academic and legal settings, that an effective defence of religious liberty needed a definition of religion large enough to include non-theistic religions and movements offering religious services on a quid pro quo payment basis, and that such definition should perforce include the Church of Scientology. Even his opponents had to admire the clarity and the elegance of his arguments on this topic; many regarded them as persuasive. That was Bryan at his best, Bryan as we like to remember him: humorous, eloquent, and also brave in the face of an opposition against which, from France to Germany and Russia, in difficult times academic eminence offered no shield.

Massimo Introvigne

(This tribute is taken from the CESNUR web site, at http://www.cesnur.org/2004/mi_wilson.htm It is reproduced by kind permission of Massimo Introvigne, Director of the Center for the Study of New Religions, Turin, Italy.)

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X. GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

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