

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BRILL DICTIONARY OF RELIGION (4 vols.). Edited by Kocku von Stuckrad. Leiden: Brill, 2006. xxxvi + 2,100 pp. + colored plates. \$599.00 cloth; \$199.00 paper.

This four-volume reference work on religion constitutes a revised translation of the *Metzler Lexikon Religion*, edited by Christoph Auffarth, Jutta Bernard, and Hubert Mohr (1999–2002). Kocku von Stuckrad, the editor of the English version, is currently Assistant Professor for the History of Western Esotericism at the University of Amsterdam and has a particular interest in European history of religion as well as in method and theory in the study of religion. He is the current president of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture.

In at least two notable respects this work embodies what Johnston (1998) describes as “the post modern revolution in reference books” (p. 13). In German, as Johnston notes, what is called a lexicon is not equivalent to a dictionary; rather, it is a work tending toward an encyclopedia, often in one volume, with signed articles and appended bibliography (p. 32). Thus, reincarnated as an English-language “dictionary,” this four-volume set illustrates the post-modern blurring of genres.

More significantly, this work is postmodern in both its intent and its content. In his brief introduction, Stuckrad points out that, in the last several decades, as older models of interpretation have been stretched to account for the unexpected revival of religion and the roles it is playing in the world today, scholars of religion have developed new interpretive strategies that, in their reflexivity, often call into question the assumptions and concepts of the older models. Rather than treating religion as *sui generis*, as an irreducible composite of fixed beliefs and sanctified traditions, scholars today view it as one of the major currents in the stream of public discourse, a conversation to which they themselves have been contributing. The new understanding of historical and social factors opened up by scholarly self-reflection, Stuckrad continues, has transformed “religion” into an everyday phenomenon that helps individuals and groups to situate themselves meaningfully within time and space. This understanding also invites interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, the collaboration of many disciplines within the humanities and the social and natural sciences.

The Brill Dictionary of Religion (BDR), Stuckrad emphasizes, is explicitly intended to reflect these changes in the academic study of religion. Among the entries are terms employed in the new cultural discourse, including Modernity, Disenchantment/Re-enchantment, Secularization, Identity, and Terrorism and Violence. Fur-

thermore, to address “the public and communicative aspects of religion” (p. viii), entries such as Media, Collective Representations, and Everyday Life have been added, along with a large number of striking illustrations that depict everyday religious expressions, often outside of formal religious settings. But the historical dimension remains crucially important for understanding contemporary religious discourses, and thus historical overviews of both concepts and religious traditions have also been incorporated.

The Introduction to the *Metzler Lexikon Religion*—which, in the English version, is replaced with a detailed overview of the history of the study of religion written by Auffarth and Mohr—provides a more expansive discussion of this perspective. Intended as a means of making complex scholarly research accessible to the interested public and hence to be as readable and free of jargon as possible, the *Lexikon* was designed to merge the factuality of a lexicon with a comprehensible problematizing of its subject matter.

Several themes are underscored. Religion is recognized, first of all, as *dynamic* or in tension, subject to the conflicting forces of social integration and of subversion and renewal. Thus the religious traditions are presented not as fixed, ideal types but as often-contradictory and elusive elements of the lived reality of believers. The religious traditions are understood, accordingly, as dynamic processes subject to change, with systematic fault lines and repudiations and occasions of explosive conflict.

Religion is *human*, an integral part of human beings, society, and culture. It is made by humans for humans, and reflects the curiosity, longings, needs, bodily existence, and life-course of human beings in their social contexts. Thus, God or the Holy comes into discussion in the *Lexikon* only as a dimension of human experience, just as the religious traditions are understood to be integral aspects of societies and cultures. Recent social-psychological, psychohistorical, psychoanalytic, and cognitive-historical research raises questions about collectively shared imaginings, themes, prejudices, and images of the foreign and the enemy; about societal or group-specific models of thought, behavior, and orientation; about the history of dreams and of human propensities (p. vii).

Religion is *multifarious*, a pluralistic object that may be viewed from a plurality of perspectives. Whether by chance on the street or through mass media, world travel, or an ever-growing number of books, persons today are confronted almost daily by new varieties of the religious and of religious groups. Courses or workshops on new techniques of relaxation, meditation, and trance are widely offered to seekers. The “market of possibilities” constituted by the great variety of everyday religious practices, private mythologies, mixed transcultural forms, and reaffirmed or modernized worldviews makes the description of both historical and contemporary

religious practices a difficult yet essential undertaking. Such requires one to be aware of the tension between dogmatic or theological systems and the practical living out of everyday religiosity; of the tension between widely shared forms of a tradition and the forms taken on in the context of local circumstances; and of the mobility of certain groups or individuals who come to live elsewhere for political, social, or economic reasons.

Religion is *perceptible*, for beyond making sense of the world, it provides sensory experiences to those who give themselves over to it. Here, the editors have in mind the full range of human bodily movements and every sensory modality. Examples include the incense-laden atmosphere of a Catholic Mass, the difficult night journeys of pilgrims, ecstatic dancing to exhaustion, and ceremonies facilitated with entheogens. Certain exceptional or even forbidden experiences may also be occasioned in religious settings, “under the social cloak of religiosity” (p. viii). Thus, the *Lexikon* grants a special place to the phenomenal realms of sensory perception, of the corporeal, and of the aesthetically attuned.

Religion is mediated by the *media* in the various technologically sophisticated forms that it takes today. The mass media, the electronic storage of information, and audiovisual animation of images and multimedia events together make depictions of the myriad of tangible aspects of the religious traditions easily available to ordinary persons. Thus, the *Lexikon* gives special attention to both theoretical and practical aspects of the communicative dimension of religion, with the recognition that it is itself engaged in such communication—through charts, maps, chronologies and schemata, and the rich selection of photographs with detailed explanations.

Religion so readily lends itself to representation in the media because, to a large degree, it consists of *visible* conduct among human beings. Thus it is accessible to endless photographing and filming, either for a tradition’s own archives and self-understanding or as a way of representing the tradition, sometimes tendentiously, to others. The visible face of religion may also be caricatured and represented in comics. But the visible aspects of the millennia-old religious traditions are hardly unproblematic; hence the *Lexikon* seeks to foster a critical understanding of visual sources in its own use of them. Photographs are drawn from the present, in order to document the religious traditions and various faith groups and their members in action. Furthermore, rather than being presented as exhibits in a museum, the photographs are carefully situated in their contexts, to make evident the use or social function of what is pictured. The illustrations, moreover, are understood as complex semiotic texts, as summations of meanings, systems of signs, symbols, and incentives to action, which the legends seek to clarify.

Religion has its *place*, just as places have religions. The main emphasis here is on the gradual changes that religious traditions undergo when

they find themselves in new locations, usually next door to other, well-established traditions. As the editors remark by way of illustration, “Latin-American Christianity probably has more in common with the contemporary, nearby Indio-religions than with the ‘Jesus Movement’ in Palestine” (p. xi). In contrast stand the Latter-Day Saints, whose isolation in Salt Lake City made possible a singularly consequential religious experiment. The *Lexikon* offers systematic examination of the role of place in articles on major regions of the earth, from Africa to South Asia, demonstrating how the intimate association of religious traditions can work for good as well as ill. Sacred places, such as Jerusalem and Kyoto, are also thematic in this work.

The *Lexikon’s* Introduction, I note finally, underscores its adoption of the principle of reflexivity. According to this perspective, “facts” are recognized as socially and situationally conditioned, and they are frequently contested in political and religious disputes; hence they always remain in need of clarification. Faithful to this principle, the editors underscore the Eurocentric character of their work—not because it is centered on the implications for European history, but because Europe is the place from which the phenomena are viewed and in which the texts have been read and the articles written. Furthermore, they wish to acknowledge the conditions and limitations of the texts and of the expressed views, and the inevitable shaping of the articles to accord with the needs and interests of both authors and potential readers. The editors call it a “reflective Eurocentrism,” which combines with its outlook on religious history a recognition that thinking about religious facts will inevitably be bound up with one’s own point of view. Such a perspective, they add, would eschew any superficial and sweeping claims about the religious traditions and their histories.

Concerned about the *Lexikon’s* Eurocentrism in a more literal sense while yet subscribing to the work’s underlying rationale, Stuckrad sought in the English version “to remove the focus on Europe in general and on Germany in particular” (p. x). This he did by deleting some entries or asking new authors to rewrite them and by adding others; entries that seemed superfluous or not up to international scholarly standards were simply omitted. Changes in the reference lists, mainly by adding citations of the relevant English literature, were requested of each author when edited translations were sent out for approval; but only a minority obliged Stuckrad in this regard, forcing him to take on this difficult task himself. Readers should not be surprised, therefore, to find discontinuities between some entries and their appended references; and scholars in particular, especially those with facility in the German language, may wish to consult the original reference lists in the *Lexikon* where it is available.

How successful were the editors of *The Brill Dictionary* in assembling entries that forward their postmodern agenda? And how does this lexicon

compare, in this respect and others, with one of its leading contemporaries, the recently revised and even more encyclopedic reference work, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (*ER*; Jones 2005)? With hundreds of authors contributing to each of these works, it is exceedingly difficult to generalize about them and then to compare them with each other. In the end, many readers will want to consult both on their particular topics, for the articles vary considerably in each set of volumes and thus any generalizations one might risk making about these encyclopedic works in their totality will not reliably extend to any particular subject matter.

To illustrate, let us consider the respective entries for “Angel.” The entry in the *BDR*, authored by Professor of Religious Studies Gregor Ahn at the University of Heidelberg, extends over three pages and begins—appropriately enough, given the *BDR*’s emphasis on religion today—by describing the contemporary situation with paragraphs entitled “Rush of Angels Today” and “Angels in Films.” But as a student of the history of religion, theology, philosophy, and old Iranian philology, Ahn is equally well prepared to proceed with a brief overview of the Christian and pre-Christian history of angels and—most significantly in the light of the *BDR*’s postmodern agenda—with a critical and broadly grounded discussion of “the language game ‘angel’” (p. 64). He concludes by remarking that:

Angels, then, insofar as they fulfill the function of messengers and intermediaries, form a kind of subspecies of a descriptive category that would be called something like “religious border-crossers”—a category calling for more precision in terms of the history of culture, and, indeed, standing in need of a more appropriate description. (p. 65)

Then follows a list of seven recommended readings, one in German—a 1997 book on angels and demons co-edited by Ahn—and six in English.

The *ER*’s entry on angels, authored by Andreas Pirot, a specialist in Indology and Iranian Studies at the University of Bologna, covers nearly six pages and offers a far more detailed accounting of the term’s historical and religious context. Beginning with the classical world, Pirot proceeds to examine angelological ideas in Zoroastrianism, Mesopotamia, Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism and Manichaeism. A final section, on “Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary Ideas,” brings the discussion into the 20th century—but just barely: today’s popular cult of angels is alluded to only in the final two sentences. The bibliography that follows contains 15 references, five in English (including a scholarly website in Finland), seven in French, and three in Italian (the encyclopedia entry itself was translated from Italian). There is no overlap with the references accompanying Ahn’s entry in the *BDR*.

Readers will not always find such a complementary contrast in these reference works, but the trend is clear: the *ER* provides lengthier, more classically

historical overviews of its subject matter whereas the *BDR* offers more compact and present-oriented accounts of beliefs, practices, institutions, and so on, with occasional reflections on the discursive and constructive character of the language involved. As noted above, the *BDR* also offers a rich array of illustrations and other graphics, including lengthy time charts and lists of festivals for various of the world’s religious or esoteric traditions and regions of the world. But this difference in emphasis should not be overdrawn, for the *ER* is in many respects also attuned to the present, just as the *BDR* provides entries that are largely or wholly historical.

In spite of the fact that the *ER* is a much larger work, the *BDR* contains a number of relatively substantial articles that do not have their equivalents in the *ER*. Among these are: Anarchism; California; Capitalism; Capital Punishment; Channeling; Collective Representations; Communication; Crisis; Disenchantment/Re-enchantment of the World; Economy; Electricity; Emotions/Feelings; Esalen Institute; Ethnicity; Euthanasia; Everyday Life; Fairytale; Fantasy/Imagination; Friendship; Genetic Engineering; Ghetto/Ghettoization; Handicapped; Kitsch, Religious; Life Cycle; Love; Luck/Happiness; Machine; Mao, Cult of; Meaning/Significance; Memory; Minorities; Monument/Memorial Places; National Socialism; Nihilism; Olympic Games; Parapsychology; Perception/Sensory Systems; Political Religion; Post-modernity; Poverty; Private Religion; Progress; Projection; Proskynesis (a gesture of humility); Prostitution; Protest; Psyche; Psychopathology; Publicity; Race/Racism; Religious Contact; Rhythm; Road/Path/Journey; Science Fiction; Secrecy; Security; Social Myths and Fantasy Images; Socialism; Socialization; Spiritism; Televangelism; Television; Terrorism; Teutons; Theater; Tolerance; Trance; Translation; Values; Vegetarianism; Veil; Wholeness/Holism; Work; and Writing. Together these terms bring home the *BDR*’s emphasis on how intimately religion is woven into everyday life and experience as well as the reference work’s focus on living religion today, including various controversial issues in which it has become embroiled.

I do not wish to suggest, however, that the *BDR*’s value lies mainly in the gaps it fills. It has many well-crafted entries on topics also featured in the *ER* but that here provide more concise yet still substantial coverage of their subject matter. For a few exemplars I offer the following: Animal; Anti-Semitism; Bioethics; Celibacy; Fundamentalism; Gnosticism; Law; Mysticism; Perception/Sensory Systems; Qur’an; Religion; Ritual; and Shamanism. In some cases and in some respects, the *BDR* version may be clearly superior; the *BDR*’s entries on Mohammad and the Qur’an, for example, achieve a greater degree of scholarly objectivity than the *ER*’s.

On balance, however, I must also acknowledge the presence in the *BDR* of entries that are disappointing in their brevity and lack of references; examples

include Altar, Animism, Apologetics, Architecture, Ecstasy, Enthusiasm, Hermeneutics, and Orthodoxy/Orthopraxis. All of these topics are well addressed in the *ER*. That one of the editors was responsible for most of these examples suggests that some originally intended authors failed to come through with their assigned essays.

With only a few startling exceptions—for example, “gigantic scholars”—the translation of the entries was well carried out; most follow idiomatic English closely and many are eloquently written. The numerous, well-chosen, and well-described photographs—seldom familiar—add significantly to the written text. So also do the various maps, charts, and tables. This reference work, in sum, deserves to be consulted regularly by students and scholars alike, both as a way of deepening their understanding of the place of religion in the public sphere today and as a guide to reflecting on the contemporary discourse of religious studies.

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RELIGIONS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY. By Peter Beyer. New York: Routledge, 2006. 327 pp. \$45.95 cloth.

Peter Beyer's *Religions in a Global Society* is a very readable, insightful, theoretical account of global religion. Clearly, much intellectual blood and tears went into its writing. A core insight is that we need to understand religion in contemporary global society as one of several differentiated function systems. Beyer is well aware of debates about “religion” as a social scientific or imperialist construct. These disagreements arise, he says, because we use inadequate tools to understand how people classified and studied religion in the past compared to how we classify and study it today. We need new tools that can sort through the panoply of analytic meanings applied to religion in different societies, at different historical moments. The variable and contested ways we understand religion today are conditioned by the historical emergence of different social struc-

tures, and institutional domains, which constitute the religious system of global society. The development of this religious system has produced a new model of religion, which allows and encourages difference in new and peculiar ways.

So like Weber, Beyer is trying to define religion, not assume what it means before he makes his argument. He wants to explore the extent to which religion has been composed and is being performed as a particular kind of social system in modern and, by now, global society. He is also arguing that the debate over whether only insiders or outsiders can study religion is really a manifestation of the tension between two differentiated functional systems—the religious and the scientific. He wants us to observe religion as communication. To the degree that religion is a social phenomenon, it will construct itself as communication and not as something else like experience or consciousness, let alone mystical insight.

Religion can serve as a pivotal resource in today's world for mutual, sometimes antagonistic, group identification. It combines power and vagueness, incontrovertible reality, and seemingly elusive ambiguity. Nationalization or communalization of religion is both probable and problematic. The central question then becomes one about the distinction between religion and nonreligion or how the religious field is delimited and thus created. Another concern is how religions compare to each other.

The religious system is characterized by unique features and by a combination of features that are also found in one or more of the other globalizing function systems. It constitutes itself through a series of mutually identified religions. These religions are not so much variations on a common model of what religion looks like as they are diverse expressions of a single idea that they help to constitute together. Like nations or cultures, religions represent powerful and socially consequential abstractions, which manifest themselves in particular, identifiable forms such as religious organizations or religious movements. Beyer is also concerned about the relative power of the religious system compared to other systems, such as the economy, politics, or science. He explores three ways that secularization and privatization affect religion, including the internal structures of the religious system, the relationship of religions to one another, and the relation of the religious system to other functional systems.

Finally, Beyer argues that issues of both religious structure and religious power bear a close relation to concerns about form. Communication tends to concentrate in particular forms, which are instrumental in rendering the system visible. Above all, they control the structure of communication that counts as religion. In a global world, these traditional forms are no longer adequate.

Thus, Beyer analyzes modernization in terms of a shift to the dominance of functional differentiation of societal systems, and globalization, at least in part as a function of the global expansion of those

systems. But what are these systems supposed to be? The economy, politics, the law, and science have long been recognized. Now, Beyer argues, we must recognize religion. Although differentiated religion is a relatively recent invention, it is thoroughly implicated in the historical developments that precipitated today's global society, "warts and all."

One of the important contributions of this book is to make Luhmanian theories more accessible to a broader readership. Another is to pose a compelling way out of the seemingly intractable debate about the genealogies of religion. Another is to answer one of Luhman's basic questions, namely, not what defines religion but rather what its basic codes are—the particular ways that religion interprets or selectively processes the world and thereby differentiates itself.

Having said this, I would like to have learned more about how the religious system compares to other function systems. What do systemic differences reveal about religion's unique properties? It would also help empirically minded readers if there were more real-world examples connected to the theoretical argument. That's not to fault Beyer for his excellent command of history. But I, for one, would have very much appreciated more concrete illustrations of the ways in which these theories shed new and different light on the contemporary problems we face. What do we see that we would not have seen when we theorize about the world in this way? In short, what does this all have to do with headscarves?

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IMMIGRANT FAITHS: TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS LIFE IN AMERICA. Edited by Karen L. Leonard, Alex Stepick, Manuel A. Vásquez, and Jennifer Holdaway. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005. 259 pp. \$59.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

That religion remains important in the lives of contemporary migrants, transforming the sacred and secular spaces of their new homelands, has become abundantly clear. Researchers have been playing catch-up for over a decade to remedy the dearth of scholarship concerning the religious beliefs and practices of the "new," post-1965 immigrants to the United States. *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America* represents a valuable addition to the emerging canon on this topic, joining volumes by Warner and Wittner (1998) and Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000, 2002) on religious organizations and networks, as well as overviews by specific ethnicity and/or religion by Haddad, Smith, and Esposito (2003) and Min and Kim (2002).

Now it is time for another leap forward, an epistemological one. Not only manifestly Eurocentric perspectives but also the most well-intentioned and reflexive orientations continue to rely predominantly

on Western analytical constructs—in this case, the category of "religion" as such. Scholars are increasingly rethinking conventional theories and definitions of religion that evolved within social scientific disciplines born in service to nation-state building and (largely Protestant) "civilizing" missions of colonial empires. Even if we take a "postcolonial turn," however, we cannot simply vanquish such influences within the span of a career, a lifetime, or even a generation. The problem is that the practices and processes of meaning-making in the religious lives of contemporary migrants (and nonmigrants, for that matter) don't always fit neatly into existing conceptual categories—yet, sometimes they do. *Immigrant Faiths* takes on this conundrum and succeeds admirably.

In her introduction, Leonard elaborates four themes that set this volume apart. First, it integrates research by established and new scholars from different disciplines (history, sociology, anthropology, religious studies), covering a variety of forms (Protestant and Catholic Christianity, voodoo, Hinduism, Buddhism, Japanese spirit worship, and Confucian ancestor veneration). The overarching goal is to place the study of religion and the study of migration in conversation with one another.

Stepick opens the dialogue with a comprehensive yet concise overview of recent literature, showing how studies of religious life inform migration research. After outlining the broad contours of "the known" (religion is important to immigrants; it diversifies the U.S. landscape; it may be transnational) and sketching out the "the emergent" and "the unknown" (the relationship of religion to identity, cultural continuity, changing gender roles, generational differences, social capital, and civic engagement), he charts a direction for future research. In the following chapter, Derek Chang's study of the American Baptist Home Missions provides an exemplar in taking up Stepick's suggestions, offering a historically rich analysis of the blurred boundaries between the religious and the civic in a tension-laden organization that, ultimately, allowed African Americans and Chinese immigrants to challenge the racial hierarchies that prevented their full inclusion.

The book's conclusion is the flip side of Stepick's piece. Vásquez discusses how taking migration seriously informs the study of religion, pointing researchers away from a singular focus on texts and an "excessive phenomenological and hermeneutical slant," and toward the "material, embodied and place-making dimensions of religion" (p. 224). Further, he argues, it has been integral in dismantling the secularization paradigm. Finally, he draws the sword on the concept of "religion" and "congregation," addressing the volume's second theme—"the questioning of conventional Western or European definitions."

Vásquez is painstakingly frank and delivers some hard-hitting blows, even toward co-contributors. At the same time, he resists throwing

the (Western) baby out with the (Eurocentric) bathwater, instead offering nuanced alternatives to existing epistemologies. Ronald Nakasone and Susan Sered's chapter on Okinawan immigrants thoroughly unpacks the ways in which "religion" is inadequate for capturing the "the Okinawan spirit" that is intertwined with everyday life and culture. Yet Vásquez provocatively argues against their use of the term "spirituality" as a reasonable substitute because it "runs the risk of re-inscribing the Protestant 'subjectivist' bias in religious studies" (p. 237). Instead, he proposes religion as a heuristic category, which as contemporary migrants demonstrate, is necessarily contingent, forcing us "to historicize the notion. . . , construct a genealogy of its descent, show its limitations . . . and detach it from its current hegemonic uses" (p. 238).

The chapters by Stepick and Vásquez should be required reading for any scholar of migration or U.S. religious life. But as an ethnographer and field researcher, I adhere to the mantra, "Show, don't tell." The remaining six case studies contribute in varying degrees to Vásquez's clarion call and Leonard's remaining two claims to the volume's uniqueness, namely, "a focus on transnational religious networks and the creative interplay between immigrant and homeland beliefs and practices" (p. 5) and "address[ing] the changing relationships among the nation-state, religion, immigrants and civic life over time" (p. 3).

A cogent argument by Danielle Brune Sigler about "Daddy Grace," whose Holiness/Pentecostal-based ministry challenged prevailing racial categories, fulfills the latter but is thin on qualitative evidence to back her compelling narrative. Thomas J. Douglas unravels a complex web of "religious" hybridity among Cambodian immigrants in Long Beach and Seattle, in which they embrace elements of Buddhism and Christianity as well as a "refugee identity." Both the Korean Protestants and Indian Hindus in Pyong Gap Min's study maintain and transmit ethnic identities using religion but through very different mechanisms, the former through active congregational participation and the latter through family and small group rituals at home.

The remaining three chapters employ a stronger transnational lens, detailing the many ways religion connects immigrants to home, including performative practices and material exchanges. Kenneth J. Guest writes about the rituals and networks that create "alternative patterns of citizenship" among Fuzhouese immigrants in New York City's Chinatown, while Karen Richman describes the cassette tapes and the dollars that Haitian immigrants send home from Florida to "feed" their *lwa* (inherited familial spirits) as well as their this-worldly relatives. A brilliant chapter by Marie Friedmann Marquardt details the structural and cultural hybridity of two Mexican immigrant churches and the ways in which they represent nodes within members' transnational

circuits as well as ties that shape participation with the wider U.S. mainstream—one through resistance and the other as a "safe haven."

The editors of *Immigrant Faiths* are sensitive to the book's weaknesses. Leonard laments the lack of clarity with regard to patterns of civic engagement or nonengagement, and Stepick suggests that "[a]nalysis of transnational religious ties has barely begun" (p. 27). Beyond these self-identified lacunae, the volume would have benefited from a stronger focus on cultural structures and processes, especially with regard to boundary construction and maintenance. Notwithstanding, it is an excellent contribution to the literature and a useful text for any topical seminar in a sociology, anthropology, religion, or area studies department.

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A MATTER OF FAITH: RELIGION IN THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. Edited by David E. Campbell. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007. Vii + 308 pp. \$62.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.

A Matter of Faith is a collection of empirical studies documenting the different roles played by religion in the presidential election of 2004. An impressive array of contributors has documented the complex, and occasionally counterintuitive, manner in which vote choices were affected (or, in some cases unaffected) by religious belief, adherence, and affiliation.

Following an introductory essay by editor David Campbell, the book is divided into five parts. Part I, entitled "The Big Picture" contains studies by John C. Green, Lyman A. Kellstedt, Corwin E. Smidt, and James L. Guth, and by John C.

Green and John S. Jackson. The first provides an overview of the electoral choices of a variety of religious groups. This study, which demonstrates the utility of distinguishing “traditionalists” from “modernists,” shows the diversity of responses to the Bush and Kerry campaigns based on religious affiliation, race, self-identification, and religious practice. The Green/Jackson study focuses on political elites (specifically, delegates to national nominating conventions) and shows increasing ideological and religious polarization between the parties, and increasing aggregate and individual constraint within the delegates to the Republican and Democratic Conventions.

In Part II, “The Moral Values Election,” the contributors start from the exit poll finding in 2004 that nearly a quarter of voters chose “moral values” as “the most important issue.” D. Sunshine Hillygus shows that, for the electorate as a whole, “moral values” were less important than considerations of Social Security and foreign policy. However, Scott Keeter shows that evangelicals were more likely to support Bush in 2004 than in 2000, and that this change may be attributable to Bush’s stance on issues such as abortion or gay marriage.

The theme of mobilization is continued in Part III, “Mobilizing the Faithful.” J. Quin Monson and J. Baxter Oliphant suggest that moral values were an important component in the “microtargeting” of evangelicals by the Republican Party, and that such “ground war” may have been crucial to Bush’s narrow victory. Indeed, the Monson/Oliphant study points to the importance of differences in turnout among politically important religious groups in affecting election outcomes. David E. Campbell and J. Quin Monson show that initiatives banning gay marriage may have mobilized religious conservatives in key states such as Ohio. By contrast, Barbara and Jan Norrander’s study of the impact of stem cell research on presidential vote choice indicates that the effect of this issue was quite limited.

The longest section of the book, “Religious Constituencies,” comprises Part IV. In a very insightful study, J. Matthew Wilson compares the bases of Catholic support for the “two JFKs”: co-religionists John F. Kennedy in 1960 and John F. Kerry in 2004. Wilson finds that Catholic support for Kennedy in 1960 was based primarily on group identification, whereas Catholic support for (or opposition to) Kerry was based primarily on issue positions. Thus, Kennedy’s Catholic connection was based primarily on “belonging,” while Kerry’s more complex relationship with his fellow Catholics had a stronger basis in “believing.” Geoffrey C. Layman and Laura S. Hussey show that George W. Bush increased his support among less religiously committed evangelicals between 2000 and 2004, and that this increase was largely based on issues of foreign policy and social welfare, rather than those of personal morality. In a detailed study of Hispanics, David S. Leal demonstrates that denominational affiliation was an important predictor of presidential vote choice in 2004,

with Spanish-surnamed evangelicals disproportionately likely to support Bush, with their Catholic and mainline Protestant counterparts more likely to cast votes for John Kerry. By contrast, Eric McDaniel reports considerable stability in the voting patterns of African Americans, with Bush making very limited inroads even among doctrinally and socially conservative blacks. Finally, Kellstedt, Smidt, Green, and Guth estimate several potential constituencies for a “religious left.” These subgroups, based on both religious and political ideology, seem generally fragmented on most political issues.

Section V consists of a concluding essay by David C. Legee, who notes with satisfaction the multiple data sources that are now available for those seeking to understand the connection between faith and politics, as well as the progress in our understanding of religious politics illustrated by the studies in this volume. Legee notes the complexity of the electoral connection between religion and politics, and cautions that “no master theory” will account for the numerous and subtle relationships between the sacred and the political.

This volume is an unequivocal success, and is highly recommended for anyone interested in understanding the various roles of religion in contemporary American electoral politics. Individually, the studies are of a uniformly high quality, and are both substantively and methodologically quite sophisticated. Taken together, these chapters indicate that the roles of religion in political behavior are complex and subtle, and stand as a rebuke to more parsimonious characterizations of political religion, such as the “culture wars” thesis.

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THE OTHER PHILADELPHIA STORY: HOW LOCAL CONGREGATIONS SUPPORT QUALITY OF LIFE IN URBAN AMERICA. By Ram A. Cnaan with Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew, and Jennifer J. Kang. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. 334 pp. + xvii. \$69.96 cloth.

This analysis of Philadelphia congregations is the closest any city has come to having a fully enumerated and close examination of its church-based social service activities. Over the course of three years of data collection within the city borders, Ram Cnaan and his co-authors, Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew, and Jennifer J. Kang, identified 2,120 religious congregations of all faiths using a painstaking process of comparing multiple lists with block-by-block canvassing. The final count of the Philadelphia Census of Congregations (PCC) depended on an accurate fit with their carefully developed seven-dimension operational definition of congregation (pp. 14–15). While multiple methods of data collection were used to generate the PCC,

most of the analysis in this book is based on three-hour, face-to-face interviews with a clergyperson or lay leader of 1,392 congregations. This is a strong representation of Philadelphia congregations as a whole.

The 14 chapters cover a range of issues: an overview of types of religious groups in Philadelphia; characteristics of congregations with special emphases on black and Latino congregations; examination of informal care and formal social service work by congregations; participation by women in congregations; several types of collaborative efforts and umbrella organizations in the provision of social services; and a chapter on experiences of and challenges to clergy in congregations.

Some important descriptive findings of congregational life in Philadelphia include the following. Nine out of 10 congregations (89.2 percent) report that three-quarters or more of the members are from a single ethnic group, and the majority (51.7 percent) of congregations are black (p. 47). The homophily principle has created majority Hispanic, Asian, and white congregations as well. About half the congregations have fewer than 90 adult members (p. 45). Just over 65 percent of members are women (p. 187). The majority of congregational members are moderate-to-low income, that is, 75.4 percent of the studied congregations report that three-quarters or more of members come from households earning under \$50,000. Approximately 59 percent of congregations report annual budgets of less than \$100,000. More than one-third report having no full-time clergy. Compared to one national survey, Philadelphia congregations report a greater share (27.1 percent) in financial decline (p. 49).

The focus of the book, however, is the anti-poverty work performed by Philadelphia congregations, examining both informal care and formal programs provided by congregations. Cnaan's thesis is that, based on Philadelphia (and some other more selective surveys), and generalizing to the population of American congregations, congregations perform more ameliorative social service work than some groups acknowledge. This leads to the book's policy position regarding one aspect of religion's public role, namely, due to the unique positive effects of religiously grounded aid to impoverished peoples in Philadelphia, governmental funding to congregations and religious nonprofits through Charitable Choice should be expanded.

Cnaan is impassioned in his praise of congregations' voluntary and generous outreach to the impoverished, and much of his passion is directed toward his perception that most (liberal) scholars fail to appreciate this. Cnaan appears most distressed at the attention paid to the National Congregations Study's finding that while most congregations do some form of social service outreach (typically food, clothing, and homelessness services), it is small scale and of short duration. Compared to NCS's 57 percent (Chaves 1999), Cnaan found that in Philadelphia

92.3 percent of congregations report providing at least one social service (p. 79). Cnaan suggests that the disparate findings may result from a different way of asking the question about social services, namely, providing a list from which respondents can choose rather than asking them to recall their congregation's activities. There is a possible second methodological difference, in that PCC researchers collected data in which the congregation provides "at least one social service program that benefits people in the community *who are members or nonmembers* of the congregation" (emphasis mine). This may account for the fact that while both instruments identified food as the most frequently offered service, the PCC found programs for children and youth to be the second, a more typically member-focused activity. The comparable question in the NCS asks about social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects without reference to membership status.

Central to Cnaan's claim for recognizing the importance of congregational outreach work is the diminished condition of Philadelphia's population. One table (p. 36) provides several vulnerability indicators but they are presented for correlations with congregations' perceived list of social problems in their immediate environment. It is not clear what the sources of the social data are, whether they adequately describe the conditions of social life in the city, or how they compare to other cities of similar size. A clearer picture of Philadelphia would help the arguments regarding the state of, as well as generalizability of, Philadelphia's urban congregations.

The authors state that "[i]f it were not for the impressive collective effort of some 2,120 some (sic) local religious congregations, life in Philadelphia would have become extremely harsh" (p. 291). Despite this claim, the authors offer no outcome measures of congregational social service impact or effectiveness.

Cnaan argues that American congregations inhabit a normative expectation regarding provision of social services, a position that evolved from America's Puritan and individualistic heritage. My view is that the mission field is, indeed, an outlet for expressing the virtue of charity central to Christian theology. It is also widely, though not universally, argued that government's retrenchment from broader forms of state-based welfare (compared to Western Europe and Canada) and devolution to local levels of aid since 1996 has further burdened the poorest and least skilled populations in the United States. Yet Cnaan argues that "when public sentiments are anti-welfare and the government wants to wash itself of any welfare program that does not cater to middle-class voters, faith-based voluntary social care is the only approach left" (p. 282). That congregations do provide a significant amount of helping activities in light of government's increasing withdrawal of the public social safety net may indeed strengthen aspects of civil society. Yet recommending a public policy position that transforms religious volunteering into

a substitute for a poorly enacted state civic responsibility seems to me without grounds. Cnaan further argues that “there is no liberal-secular parallel to the role of congregations in America” (p. 284). With one stroke, he dismisses the work of secular nonprofits. From a policy viewpoint this is puzzling, in that secular nonprofits are major users of public funds for welfare-related work.

Furthermore, given the range of congregational types chronicled in this study, it is unclear how Cnaan anticipates this diversity to be written into public policy. As he states, congregational missions vary “based on geographical location, local needs, ethnic culture and heritage, and available human and material resources. It is the role of policymakers to understand these dynamics and help congregations fulfill their unique missions rather than try to make them all to do work without regard to their natural propensities and interests” (p. 290). Most scholars have approached the question of congregational skills or organizational infrastructure to carry out large-scale social service activity with reasonable caution, given the consistent finding that most work is done intermittently and with small numbers of volunteers. Nonetheless, Cnaan boldly concludes that “it is evident that the capacity for enhanced social service production is there and the know-how can be easily obtained” (p. 292).

There are a number of important and intriguing findings that would benefit from further analysis and discussion. I suggest here two. In the case study of an interfaith coalition called the Northwest Interfaith Movement that serves youth and elderly, the authors point out that NIM has been unable to attract African-American congregations into active collaboration with the white congregations that lead this project. They suggest that “minority or ethnic congregations have a more narrow range of interests and beliefs” than apparently an umbrella organization operating across several neighborhoods has. I propose that this case study is an opportunity to identify and examine those “narrow interests.” I suspect they would include conflicts over power and control between white and black leaders as well as different cultural assumptions about accountability and communication. The authors lament the lack of in-depth scholarly examinations of collaborative faith-based organizations (p. 198) but may wish to consider the work of Mark Warren (2001, on IAF in Texas) and Richard Wood (2002, on PICO in California).

Another area that is ripe for in-depth analysis is the social boundary that quickly arises between those being served and the servers. Rather than see this, as the authors do, as a positive example of nonproselytizing on the part of congregations using public funds (p. 286), I see this as a window into persistent social divisions. There is little written on this but what has been noticed is that few people who receive social services from a congregation actually join that congregation later. Farnsley and his co-authors found

this in Indianapolis (2004), as did Livezey and Laudarji (2000) in Chicago. In both cases, class barriers appeared to be insurmountable, but the extensive data from the PCC may provide the opportunity to help sociologists understand the mechanisms that create as well as potentially dismantle these barriers.

I found the methodological appendix lacking. Researchers working on intensive examinations of congregational life would benefit from seeing the PCC interview questions accompanied by a broader discussion of methodological obstacles encountered and overcome. In addition, a statistical overview of the PCC’s core findings would help researchers compare and evaluate findings with other national studies so that questions of generalizability can be adequately addressed.

The strength of this book lies in its detailed examination of Philadelphia’s congregational activities. PCC will continue to yield much new knowledge of urban congregations in the United States and I look forward to further analyses from it.

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SANTERIA: CORRECTING THE MYTHS AND UNCOVERING THE REALITIES OF A GROWING RELIGION. By Mary Ann Clark. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2007. viii + 186 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

In *Santeria*, Mary Ann Clark examines a fast-growing but little-understood religious complex in America: the constellation of faiths that fall within the rubric of “Orisha religions.” These include a diverse spectrum of expressions, such as Regla de Ocha, Lucumi, Ifa, Palo Monte, Santerismo, and

other African-derived practices that have attracted thousands of adherents throughout the United States. Because these religions and their practitioners have gained greater public visibility in recent years, there is a clear need for nonspecialized texts that examine the traditions and the issues surrounding their emergence in contemporary American society. Clark, a scholar of religious studies and an initiated practitioner, offers an historical background for newcomers to Orisha religions. As a sympathetically written introduction to these “secretive and hierarchical” (p. 9) religions, the book serves an important function in providing credible information and resources for further research for those seeking to pursue a deeper personal involvement in Orisha religious communities. However, for the general reader, the book’s dizzying compendium of historical facts and unfamiliar terminology may obscure rather than clarify the realities of the contemporary practice of these traditions in the United States.

Although the roots of Orisha religions reach back to ancient Africa, the traditions are fairly recent to American society, with some of the first practitioners arriving in the United States in the mid 20th century. Clark provides a history of key developments, including Santeria’s West African origins, the transfer of Yoruba cultures under slavery, and the institutionalization of Afro-Cuban religions. Other sections of the book cover the specifics of theology, mythology, and ritual, with an emphasis on the “central focus” of the religion, the deities or forces that are known as *Orisha*.

Orisha, according to Clark, embody a universal energy called *ashe*, even as they are also exemplified as “multi-dimensional beings that represent the forces of nature, act as archetypes, and function as sacred patrons or ‘guardian angels’ for devotees” (p. 34). Neither strictly polytheistic nor monotheistic, Orisha religions provide multiple cosmological models that have sometimes led to contrasting and/or ambiguous interpretations of the relationships between divinities. One wonders in what ways American practitioners have been influenced in their thinking on these matters, particularly as these ideas pertain to the questions of power, health, and theodicy that Clark discusses in the same fascinating chapter.

Clark organizes her book to appeal both to “seekers” who might be accepting of Santeria as a personal religious option as well as to uninformed outsiders with little or no familiarity with these religions. Even with the author’s careful efforts to present these misunderstood and maligned spiritual traditions in a favorable light, she does not shy away from discussing some of the controversial aspects of their practice—including animal sacrifice, spirit possession, and gender inequality within communities. Nevertheless, while her text meticulously recapitulates much of the best scholarship on African-based religions in a format that is densely informative, it does not provide the reader with an understanding

of Santeria in its everyday articulations. That is to say, in this, as with any idealized portrayal of religious life, it is exceedingly difficult to capture the organic phenomenon of spiritual experience within its social contexts. While Clark makes valuable reference to two of the most well-known Orisha communities in the United States—the Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye (Florida) and Oyotunji Village (South Carolina)—the practical realities of lived experience for most American Santeria practitioners remain shrouded and speculative. Methodologically speaking, this may be entirely appropriate given that Clark’s text is not ethnographic and does not purport to be a case study of Santeria communities. Still, one longs for further insight into what is apparently a thriving religious subculture here in the United States.

The most interesting acknowledgment of Santeria’s significance as a facet of America’s religious pluralism can be found in a section called “Basic Etiquette for Newcomers,” which gives advice on what one might anticipate, from behavior and attire to gift-giving and food, when entering an Orisha ritual. A listing of “dos” and “don’ts” is something that first-time visitors might find useful on receiving an invitation to any new religious service, such as a Christian ordination ceremony or a Jewish *bar mitzvah*. Clark’s practical guidelines, along with her supplementary notes, bibliography, and annotated list of online references, make for instructive material. Readers who are interested in recent accommodations and innovations should turn to the final chapter, “Orisha Religion Today and Tomorrow.” Here Clark draws a picture of the current state of Orisha practice, the concerns that engage devotees and communities of practitioners in the contemporary United States, such as syncretism, gender roles, and organizational structure. Students of emerging religious movements will recognize familiar themes here: issues of institutionalization and hierarchy, traditions without centralized structures or governing bodies, and the dearth of written authorities that define orthodoxy and normative doctrine. We look to future studies to fill out the picture of the development of African-based religions in America, but Clark’s *Santeria* is a fine start.

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DANCING WISDOM: EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE IN HAITIAN VODOU, CUBAN YORUBA, AND BRAZILIAN CANDOMBLE. By Yvonne Daniel. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005. 348 pp. \$55.00 cloth; \$22.00 paper.

The active, sonorous ritual styles of the popular religions of Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil have long

fascinated tourists, travel writers, performers, and anthropologists. Well-financed public rituals tend to feature drum batteries playing multimeter rhythms, antiphonal singing, and dancing. The spirits, it is said, like to party, and they only like to party to their own musical and dance styles. The spirits are represented as demanding, jealous characters who punish believers for minor slights, such as failing to throw them a sufficiently lavish party, by withdrawing protection and sending affliction. These beliefs assume a porous body over which an individual asserts only partial control. The community, which includes not only the living but also ancestors and spirits, affects the bodies of members. The stated goals of most rituals are to please and placate spirits, to heal afflicted members, to ward off future attacks, and to receive the advice and criticism of prescient spirits who utter truths impermissible in normal social contexts. The knowing body is central to this form of communication. Spirits inhabit persons through possession performance, who—in accordance with culturally mediated aesthetics and morals—touch, eat, drink, bless, ridicule, and, if the party is big enough, dance heartily with the community.

In the introduction to *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Brazilian Candomblé*, Yvonne Daniel proposes to examine three “dancing religions” (p. 1). The selection of the three cases was informed by “personal preference” and because “these three belief systems demonstrate fundamental ideas for understanding the African Diaspora” (p. 48). Daniel’s approach to the study of Haitian, Cuban, and Brazilian ritual performance is “as a dancer first and then as an anthropologist.” Anthropologists are among her expected audience. The concerns of dance theorists and dance ethnologists receive less attention and some may object to Daniel’s dismissive characterization of their field. “Unlike other contemporary choreography, however, the (Haitian, Cuban and Brazilian ritual) performances are not primarily concerned with the entertainment value of the movement behavior” (p. 52).

Daniel writes, “the results of my research are ultimately for my anthropology colleagues and those other eager minds who want to know how and why African religious practices continue in the midst of global technology and contemporary science” (p. 50). In a defensive posture, Daniel again addresses anthropologists in the conclusion of *Dancing Wisdom*. “I am offering my anthropology colleagues my experience as a dancer, since it has been just as fruitful a method of gathering data as any social science training has been, probably more. Dancing is a method of perceiving and understanding the human condition; it permits knowing another cultural value system, and this is what I have been practicing for the past few decades” (p. 269).

Daniel’s belabored defense of embodied knowledge imagines hostile enemies lurking where few

may exist. Embodied knowledge has long and deep roots not only in ethnography but also in cultural anthropological theory, beginning with Emile Durkheim and A. M. Hocart. Renewed interest in mimesis, healing, and shamanism has demonstrated the academic value of thick cultural descriptions of the body in specific social and historical contexts. Unfortunately, neither Haitians’, nor Cubans’, nor Brazilians’ most basic notions of the body or of dance are illuminated in this book. The eight chapters do not answer how Haitians, Cubans, and Brazilians who dance in worship of their spirits understand their bodies, how bodies are organized, how they function, and how they relate to one another in and out of ritual contexts—necessary first steps for understanding their respective embodied knowledge. The voices of Haitian, Cuban, and Brazilian persons explaining how and why they know through their bodies are not heard in this text. Rather, the reader learns much about Daniel’s mode of embodying knowledge, that is, knowledge of herself.

Daniel’s repeated statements in rejection of Western hegemonic epistemology notwithstanding, she stays loyal to its key social and cultural category, the individual, whose primary objective is finding the self, independent of community (Bellah et al. 1985). Her efforts to analyze her experience of Haitian, Cuban, or Brazilian ritual dance bypass the members of those communities on the way to locating her analysis in a universal “human condition.” The perspective oscillates between her interior, self-absorbed world and a nonspecific, decontextualized African Diaspora lacking the voices and knowing bodies of particular believers and dancers.

In the first chapter, Daniel engagingly retells her first experience visiting Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil. By the concluding, eighth chapter, the author has not transcended those first impressions, despite individual chapters devoted to each of the three danced religions. The sixth chapter, “Informal Learning with the Haitian Lwas,” takes Daniel and the reader to three public ceremonies in which she has little familiarity with the ritual or social relations or contexts of the worshippers. She admits as much when she writes “I thought to myself . . . How did Vodouists view the European film crew and other white tourists on the sacred historical ground? (I thought later: What were those singers thinking as it turned out, a few nights before the first coup against Aristide?) And then the crowds and film crew descended, and I decided to leave and let the Haitians celebrate Vodou with one less foreigner” (p. 176).

Given Daniel’s limited curiosity about the lives of the people whose ritual dance aesthetics and moralities she purports to be studying, it is not inconsistent that the text is riddled with inaccuracies, from errors involving unintelligible Haitian (or Creole) to more significant problems. In the final chapter, she writes: “For Haitian, Cuban and Bahian worshippers, music and dance performance is the offering, and

what they receive in return for their offering is embodied knowledge—the remedy for both ritual and social life.” In fact, a Haitian, Cuban, or Brazilian ritual can (and often does) proceed without dance and drumming. Serving the spirits absolutely requires chanted prayer, singing, and, above all, offerings of food and beverage. Understanding these imperatives would require inquiry of a depth that Daniel has not yet undertaken of Haitian, Cuban, and Brazilian ritual dance, an inquiry that she has confounded with an experience of herself.

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