

Téma: *Interpretace náboženské skutečnosti*

In 1984/85 *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities and Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Social Sciences* were published in hardback. The combined price of the two books was high but they were well-received, and eventually they sold out. Demand for them continued, and the decision has been made to publish the main chapters from both books in a one-volume paperback edition. It is this edition that you have before you now.

In selecting which chapters to include in this work, balance, length and merit have been taken into account. For example my own original chapter on 'Comparative Approaches to the Study of Religion' in the Humanities volume was reviewed as being a creative piece of work, but its length of 132 pages made it too long for this shortened edition. In the nature of things it also included material that was sometimes alluded to elsewhere but treated it from another angle. Thus, while chapters such as this one have been left out for reasons of space, the overall balance of the original two volumes has been maintained. Moreover, the separation between the Humanities and the Social Sciences no longer applies in the combined work, and approaches taken from the two areas are brought together in a single paperback. Treatment is given to the psychological, sociological, social and cultural anthropological, and historical and phenomenological approaches to the study of religion; there are also chapters on the scientific study of religion in its plurality, and the study of religion in a global context. An overall consideration is therefore afforded to the main approaches and themes that are of weight in the general study of religion.

This work was seen, and is still seen, as a sequel to Jacques Waardenburg's *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion* (1973). Indeed his book is also being brought out later this year in a paperback edition. There is a sense in which his book traces the early and classical period in the study of religion up to World War II. There is a sense also in which we are coming to another watershed at the end of this millennium. The fifty years from World War II until now can be seen as a second period in the study of religion. By the year 2000 a third era will be dawning. As we read and ponder this page now we look forward to the twenty-first century and what it will bring.

Later in this introduction I will consider reflectively some of the currents that are developing out of the chapters that are already part of this book and which anticipate future developments. However, the epoch dating from the Second World War to the end of the century is a discrete period covered in principle within the covers of this work. And we anticipate that in its cheaper and more accessible form this book will have an important part to play not only in summarising and analysing what has gone before but also in paving the way for what is to come. When supplemented by Jacques Waardenburg's *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion* it will give an overview of the development of theories, approaches and methods within the modern study of religion.

2. The Difference between the Classical and Contemporary Periods in the Study of Religion: The General Background

What then are the contrasts between the classical and contemporary approaches to the study of religion? These can conveniently be divided into two sections: the general cultural background within which religion is studied, and the particular approaches to the study of religion arising out of the general cultural background. World War II was a watershed in both respects. What happened before it culturally and in the study of religion received a jolt as a result of the trauma of World War II. Although there are continuities be straddling the pre- and post-Second World War situations, the contrasts are more marked. They are such as to make 1945 a significant symbolic date. What then were the main factors in the aftermath of World War II that affected in a new way the background in which the study of religion and the living of religion moved and had its being?

(a) The first main factor was the disappearance of a number of European empires. The passing of colonies and suzerainties of various kinds was a symbol of the passing of western political dominance. A by-product was that Christian missionaries, who had been helped by the fact of empire, were less able to go abroad and engage in proselytisation. Leadership and mission passed into the hands of local Christians in Africa, India, China, and so on. The centre of gravity of world Christianity began to move inexorably from the West to the non-western parts of the world church. This had consequences for the study of religion. Alongside this the coming to independence of former imperial territories often signalled a renaissance in the religious traditions of those areas. Since 1945, due to a number of factors, including the gaining of independence by various Muslim countries and the economic influence of OPEC as well as more obviously religious causes, there has been a striking renewal of self-confidence within the world of Islam that is of major importance for the study and living of religion. The same is true of the renewal of the Hindu tradition in India, the revival of the Buddhist tradition in South-East Asia, the efflorescence of Japanese religious traditions and their study after the fall of the Shinto state in 1945, and the emergence of a national and educational homeland for the Jews after the setting up of the state of Israel in 1948.

(b) A second factor was the rapid spread of Marxism after World War II out of the USSR into China, Cuba, Asian countries such as North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and into areas of Africa and Europe. What had been a Russian preserve seemed to become a universal possibility in spite of differences between Russia and China, and Russia and Eastern Europe. Marxist studies of religions grew, and the notion of Marxism, or Maoism in China, as 'secular religions' also emerged. The recent apparent decline of Marxism has further consequences for the study of religion and of atheism by scholars of religion and by Marxists.

(c) A third factor was the rise of new nation states in the aftermath of empire. They were motivated by varied factors, one of which was nationalism. Without experience of nationalism which had arisen as a European phenomenon, the new nations had to cope with the pressures of independence in the light of their own culture. Nationalism and religion often intermingled, or nationalism and Marxism often intermingled, in the working out of independent nationhood. Religious traditions were often important in promoting, sustaining, or even challenging the nation states that evolved. Nationalism itself, like Marxism, often developed functionally as a kind of 'secular religion' with its own civil religion or capacity for evoking faith. Recently events in places like Bosnia, Rwanda and Chechnya have revealed the latent power of ethnic nationalism-or rather ethnic 'groupism'. Basic questions were raised for the study of religion: what is the relationship between religion and society, between religion and nationalism; in what sense

should the study of religion include the study of 'secular religions' such as Marxism and nationalism; is civil religion a meaningful concept, and if so in what way?

(d) A fourth factor was the application of models of economic development and modernisation in most countries whereby services such as education, medicine, social welfare, and economic affairs came more under the aegis of the state, whether the state system was Marxist, capitalist, or mixed. According to some secularisation theorists, this moving of control of religiously run matters into the hands of the state presaged the decline of religion. This hinges however on whether religion is defined institutionally or functionally. Moreover it is to equate modernisation with a certain form of western secularisation. Other states and cultures can modernise in their own way without acquiescence in a rigid western model. Nevertheless there is little doubt that the process of modernisation, however defined, has influenced religion itself and the study of religion. The Shah of Iran's mistake was to modernise in too western a fashion. Nations and cultures are coming to terms with the modern world in their own way. With the end of the Cold War and the seeming superiority of the capitalist economic world-view, nations and religious traditions are having to decide whether and in what way they wish to pursue the capitalist path. Professor Huntington of Harvard has recently suggested that the next substantial opponent of the West may be the Islamic world, partly because of its opposition to the materialistic side of western capitalism. This theory begs a number of questions but it is clear that the relationship between religion and economic development and modernisation is an important matter in the study of religion.

(e) A fifth factor is the ongoing debate between the proponents of science and of religion. At the pragmatic level the natural and allied sciences developed rapidly in the post-war world due in part to the stimulus to scientific invention given by World War n. The development of nuclear power, the human achievement in reaching the moon, the technological revolution, the computer revolution and the revolution in genetics are symbols of the roaring success of modern science as an instrument in changing the world. The self-confidence of modern science in view of its pragmatic success, and its positivist and empirical assumptions that scientific knowledge is proven knowledge of the world as it is, seemed to have given scientific thought and achievement the edge over religious thought and achievement. However, since about 1975 there has been a growing awareness of the problems engendered by science through the escalation of nuclear weapons, the growth of world population, the ecological crisis, and growing extremes of wealth and poverty. Philosophers of science have questioned the simplistic scientism of former days; there has been the soul-searching agonising among eminent scientists of the calibre of Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr and Polanyi; and there has been a dawning sense, enhanced by the failure of secular scientific regimes to stamp out religion, that science has no answer to the basic religious questions of meaning, awe, purpose, transcendence, value, love and inwardness.

Discussions about the relationship between science and religion, such as whether they are complementary or opposed, have spilled over into the study of religion. Is it a 'science', and if so what sort of a science is it? At one extreme scholars such as Huston Smith (1992) would argue that we have moved into a post-modern situation wherein scientific objectivity in the sense that what the western world has taken for granted is now at an end. It is therefore futile for the study of religion to follow canons of scientific objectivity that science itself is questioning. In any case scientific truth, such as it is, operates at an inherently more superficial level than the truth of metaphysical religious spirituality. At the other extreme scholars such as Segal and Wiebe would argue that there is no irreducibly religious factor which justifies the study of religion as religion and they would wish to reduce the study of religion to a facet of the social sciences or to a series of area studies. In other words, for them religious studies is not a science; it is not a discipline in its own right with its own subject matter and its own methods.

We will come back to these matters. However it is clear that the engagement between science and religion is an important backdrop to a consideration of the study of religion. Is science in some sense a 'secular religion'; is religion a 'science'; how do they relate; and how do the study of religion and the study of science fit together in the totality of knowledge?

(f) A sixth factor operating in the post-war situation is the acceleration of the process of industrialisation. In many parts of the world there has been a shift of the population from villages into towns or cities. Mao's China was a partial exception to this but in general there has been the rapid growth of cities to cater for the demands of industry. As people have moved into cities they have been faced with a change of work, a change of environment, a change of life-style, and in effect a change of world-view. For some this has been liberating. For others it was not, and the capacity to undergo a new experience and to live through it creatively was sometimes provided by a religious tradition or a new religious movement. For some primal societies the experience has been very traumatic indeed. Increasingly, scholars of religion, and especially social scientists, have become interested in the social and religious implications of rapid change. The impulse so to become involved has arisen from the experience inherent in our modern world of industrialisation and sudden change.

(g) A seventh factor was the accelerating domination of nature by human beings that has come to light in the last 20 years. This has immediate consequences for primal peoples in places such as Central Africa and the Amazon. We are coming to realise that the long-term consequences of global warming, pollution, the using up of finite energy resources, the puncturing of the ozone layer, the growth of world population, the rise of deserts, the diminution of jungles, and the disappearance of natural species will have an effect upon all human life as well as on the environment. A rapidly increasing interest in the ecology of religion is to be welcomed and anticipated.

(h) An eighth factor was the increasing movement of people and information around the world. Not only did persons move from villages to cities in their own land, they also moved to different lands. Sometimes this movement was enforced as had been the case with Jews in Nazi Germany or Poland (where the pre-war population of four million is down to a few thousand today). Elsewhere the Dalai Lama's flight from Tibet took the Tibetan Buddhist tradition into other lands, the migrations of Ugandan and other African Asians brought Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to the West, the Vietnam War led to migrations from South-East Asia especially into the West, and the Palestinian exodus has had increasing repercussions for Muslims, Jews and others in the Middle East and beyond.

Voluntary migration has also been important. Religious movements have accompanied the movement of various groups of people from the Indian sub-continent so that, for example, there are nearly two million Muslims in Great Britain, which makes them the second-largest religious group in the land. In addition to the movement of various branches of religious traditions to other lands by migration there has also been the steady conversion of others, including westerners, to those religions. There has also been the spread of new religious movements into different parts of the world. The result is that most religions are now world religions in the sense that there are small numbers of believers in various parts of the world. And much more is known about different religious traditions by people around the world.

All this movement and religious inter-change is exacerbated by the tremendous growth in airline travel, television, computer services, international communications and the possibility of almost immediate travel to or informing oneself about virtually any group or tradition on the face of the earth. The impact of the growing movement of people and information around the globe is considerable for both the practice and study of religion.

(i) A ninth factor was the rise of new cultural/religious blocks around the world. We assume that within these religious blocks nationalism and secular world-views were present in differing degrees. One such block remained the modern West which was however not as dominant as it had been before World War II. It included North America and Europe and had offshoots in Australasia. In spite of the demise of Christendom, and the minority presence of other religions in it, this block remained largely Christian, white and democratic. Although some state churches still remain, the growing tendency, despite the work of movements such as the Moral Majority, is towards effective separation of church and state.

A second, now much depleted, block was the Marxist one with its former heartlands in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Remaining only in places such as China, Cuba, and North Korea, the Marxist tradition exercised state control over religion but was unable to subdue it.

A third block centred upon Islam. Its original heartlands in North Africa and the Middle East remained crucial and it had offshoots out to Malaysia and Indonesia and beyond. Despite tensions between Shi'ite Islam centred upon Iran and Islam in Sunni areas, and between liberal and more fundamentalist strains of Islam, this period has seen a remarkable renewal of confidence within the Islamic world, which has led Huntington to suggest that it has replaced Marxism as a threat to the West.

A fourth block centred upon the Hindu tradition in India. Although India became a secular state in 1948, although offshoots of the Hindu tradition have sprung up in new areas of the world, and although the Hindu caste system is now outside the civil law of India, the heart of that tradition remains in India and has its own ethos.

A fifth area of importance (perhaps too minute to be called a block) is Israel as the homeland of contemporary Judaism. Although Jews reside in other parts of the world, notably in the United States, the new nation of Israel represents the emotional heartland of the Jews and of the Jewish tradition.

A sixth block centres upon the Buddhist heartlands of South-East Asia.

Although the Buddhist tradition has undergone traumatic experiences in the Marxist area in and around China, in the exciting religious melange of the new Japan and South Korea, and in the Theravada nations of Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand, it remains an important influence in the area whether it has political power or not.

A seventh potential block is the Far Eastern Confucian complex covering China, Japan and the 'four dragons' of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. Although diverging politically they are moving along a similar economic journey and they share culturally the three ways of the Taoist, Mahayana Buddhist and Confucian traditions. The rise of contemporary New Confucianism is especially significant, centred as it is upon the work of thinkers such as Wei-Ming Tu who has been asked to advise countries such as Singapore on Confucian educational values and who brings a faith perspective to bear in his Confucian thought.

A final and more amorphous block covers a swathe of societies in the southern hemisphere, including Black Africa, Latin America and the Pacific peoples of Polynesia and Melanesia. They have a background in primal religion but have assimilated some of their primal religious expressions into independent churches and other Christian forms.

Such a picture contrasts strikingly with the picture at the beginning of the century when the classical approaches to the study of religion were emerging. Europe had still been the fulcrum of world civilisation: a Christian continent, the purveyor of empire and mission, ruled by monarchs and class values, and intellectually supreme. During this century Christian Europe has fomented two world wars, its empires and missions have diminished or gone, its monarchs and class values have been transformed or replaced, the notion of Christendom has gone for ever, and the very concept of Europe-as it has split into East and West and then ended the split-is under intense debate. Needless to say, the

new and developing situation has deeply influenced the study of religion since World War II.

A tenth factor is the emergence since 1970 of a sense of living in a global world. This sense arose partly as a result of the cumulative effect of the nine factors mentioned above. There have been changes in the human condition since the dawn of human history but in the post-World War II period there has developed a rising curve of ever-increasing change that has swept us into a new global situation. The fact of change is a constant in human affairs. It is the breadth, depth, variety and all-encompassing nature of contemporary change that makes our age so different and that has made us aware as never before that we are living in a new global age.

Since the original Club of Rome study of 1972 the global threat and opportunity has been analysed at three levels. The first level, alluded to in *The Limits of Growth* (1974), was that of potential ecological crisis wherein the fate of the earth would be linked to the fate of the people living on the earth. At the humane and social level there was the increasing poverty gap between rich and poor nations, the rapid growth of world population, anxiety about whether food could always be provided for this increasing population, concern about racial and sexual discrimination, political tension between East and West, and economic tension between North and South. At the moral and spiritual level there was a concern for the future development of space and the sea which belong in principle to the human race, a concern about the global use of electronics and genetics which affect everyone, a sense that the perennial search for meaning and wholeness was the spiritual birthright of humankind, and a sense that there needed to be peace among the religions in order for global peace to be made possible. In short, there was a sense in which the nations, peoples and religions of the world were in it together in a way that had never been true before; there was a need for global dialogue in which religions would have an important part to play; and although the global threat was real, so were the global resources at the natural, human and spiritual levels.

The conceptual and practical consequences of globalism for the study of religion have been working themselves out for the last 20 years, alongside the seemingly opposite thrusts in the direction of regional religious blocks and local ethnic nationalisms.

It is clear from analysing the above ten factors in their cumulative effect that we live in a different world from that of pre-1945. The study of religion since 1945 has changed in radical ways and stands in contrast with the study of religion before 1945. We turn now to investigate how it has changed in the post-World War II period and what its contemporary themes are. We could only do that after looking at the wider changes in culture and religion which form the background for the changing story of religion.

3. The Difference between the Classical and Contemporary Periods in the Study of Religion: The Detail

(a) Waardenburg, in his *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, gives a succinct account of the development of the study of religion from the time of Max Muller to about 1945, and then he includes an anthology of extracts on theory and method from the work of over 40 scholars who were pioneers in the field of the study of religion. It was possible to describe the classical period in this way because specialisation and diversification were less 'rampant than they are today, scholarly disciplines and academic knowledge generally were less developed, and the world itself was a less complex place. Today, as we shall see, there is an extraordinary ramification within the study of religion, a vast growth of academic knowledge of all kinds, a springing up of new sets within the field, and a complexification and globalisation of the context within which religion is

studied that made easy generalisations, reliance upon a select anthology, and a one person treatment difficult if not impossible. This book, therefore, is not an anthology and it is not by one person. It is the work of a team who aim to summarise, insofar as they can in the covers of one work, the contemporary approaches to the study of religion. This summary is not a compilation of select passages of key authors (the bibliographies contain well over a thousand entries); it does not attempt to impose a particular viewpoint (the authors were born in different countries and work in different universities in three different continents): it is a narrative of the main developments and discussions since World War n in the fields of history and phenomenology of religion, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, the scientific study of religion in its plurality, and the study of religion in a global context.

However, although an account is given of a vast body of material gathered from varied parts of this complex area of study-a more ambitious account than has been attempted before-an endeavour is also made to give an overview of the whole field. Indeed it was hoped that it would be possible so to summarise the mass of developments since 1945 that an integral and acceptable way forward would be opened up for the whole study of religion. Such a grandiose aim has not been fully realised. Nevertheless, in the course of this work, a number of suggestions. are made as to how, on the basis of past research and present directions, future programmes may proceed. And at the end of this Introduction I hope to present an implicit way forward arising out of what is mentioned in this work.

Before we focus more fully on the differences between the contemporary period and the classical period dealt with by Waardenburg, there are three brief points that need to be made. Firstly there is some continuity between this volume and that of Waardenburg. There are no rigid breaks in the web of history and even a dramatic date such as 1945 must be to some extent arbitrary. Nevertheless periodisations, however arbitrary, are useful, and in the case of this book the basic cut-off point is 1945 and the limits set by Waardenburg's work.

Our second point is that, like Waardenburg, we do not aim to cover all aspects of the study of religion. Our purpose is not to summarise the content of the various religious traditions of the world. This is done with reasonable accuracy by bibliographical reference volumes such as Charles Adams' *A Reader's Guide to the Great Religions* (1977) and Mircea Eliade's *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (1987) as well as specialised encyclopaedic volumes in different disciplines and fields of study. In this book there will be some reference to content, for method and content never can (or should) be fully separated, but our main concern is for methods and theory rather than for content per se. We will deal with contemporary approaches to the study of religion rather than with the contemporary content of the study of religion which is generally taken as read.

Our third point is that, insofar as this work is written in English, the references and quotations from books in other languages are mostly given in English, and reference to the original works is made elsewhere, usually in the bibliographies at the end of the chapters. This does not detract from the international coverage. As we have stated before, this book is written by an authentically international team and our only regret is that it has not been possible to include a non-western member in the team.

(b) **Increasing Diversification in Contemporary Approaches.** Before 1945 the study of religion was mainly concentrated around a relatively small number of scholars in the great universities of Europe. Only a few posts were available and a coterie of scholars was working in the field. The scene was dominated by the history of religions and comparative religion. Studies were focussed on texts, on the religions of classical antiquity, and on what were then called 'primitive religions'. European philosophical and theological assumptions underlay a good deal of work in the study of religion. It operated within a particular culture looking beyond its geographical and spiritual boundaries in a somewhat condescending way.

Today things are vastly different. At the Mexico Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions that will meet in the summer of 1995 around 5000 people will come together from many parts of the world and from many religious traditions (or from none). The history of religions, comparative religion, textual studies, the religions of classical antiquity, primal religions, and the philosophy and theology of religion will form a small part of their enquiry. As well as general sections the congress will include more specialised sections on a plethora of topics ranging from women in religion to Mithraism, from the major religions to new religious movements, from religion in Africa to religion in other geographical areas, and from the phenomenology of religion to the psychology of religion. It will mirror the complexity within the study of religion at this juncture.

For we live at a time of increasing diversification. Not only has the mass of accumulated religious data multiplied, so has the variety of methodological reflection upon those data. It is not merely the case that the number of methodological approaches with a serious interest in religious data has increased, there has also been an intensification of discussion about religion in each approach. Growing specialisation within each approach has resulted in a growing ramification of discussions about religion and, in addition to this, new 'seeds' have sprung up ranging from the ecology of religion to the academic dialogue of religions. The pity of it is that some of this discussion is virtually unknown. The temptation is for scholars of one nationality or language group to know only each other's work, or for scholars of one discipline to be acquainted solely with the research in their own area. This book is an attempt to gather together and to put into some sort of order the diverse discussions about method and theory since 1945. At the same time it is an attempt to overcome the fragmentation that is inevitably occurring in the field.

Within each chapter certain basic questions are addressed, either implicitly or explicitly, to focus the discussion. In each approach the basic method is described, and questions are raised as to what the method is attempting to do in the study of religion, whether it is complementary to other methods, and whether it is centred inside or outside the basic study of religion. The basic position implied within the approach concerned is also investigated: Is it one of neutrality or are truth claims implied? And if so, are those truth claims related to a particular discipline, to religion in general, or to a particular religion? The question of definition is also raised: What definition, if any, is implied in the approach concerned? A further area of interest relates to the scope and nature of the data used in a particular approach: are they first or second hand; do they arise out of primal religion, historical religions, or the major religions; are they concentrated upon the study of one religion and if so which one? The main part of each section focuses upon a description and discussion of the major trends within the area concerned. Attention is also given to future prospects for the approach concerned.

Clearly the above concerns-method, standpoint, definition, nature of the data, and future prospects-are interrelated. We will deal with some of the implications later in the Introduction. We are content at the moment with pointing out the complex nature of the discussion of theory and method within each of the above-mentioned approaches, and with outlining the criteria whereby we have sought to bring order to each section and integration to the whole.

It is our hope that scholars with particular interests in history and phenomenology of religion, anthropology of religion, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, the scientific study of religion in its plurality, and the global context of the study of religion will, after they have read the chapter on their own area, read the other chapters so that they can obtain an overview of the wider discussion. Although our work is significant in that it brings together and orders a vast amount of material within each approach, its more important function is to summarise the general field of method and theory in the

study of religion in a way that has never been so fully attempted before. There is an urgent need for scholars of religion to supplement their areas of specialisation to gain a total view of the field as a whole, and a major aim of this book is to contribute to this end.

(c) Greater Research Involvement if Social and Humane Sciences. Another major difference between the classical and contemporary approaches to the study of religion is the increasingly complex relationship between the humane and social sciences and this sphere of research. Durkheim, Weber, Freud, Jung, and James may have departed from the scene, but it is possible to submit that, in the contemporary situation, any theory or method of investigation in any of the humane or social sciences is or may be applied to the study of specific sets of religious data.

In the overall planning of this volume, a balance has been struck between the chapters related to the social sciences that concentrate upon the methodological findings of particular disciplines, and the chapters related more implicitly to the humanities where the treatment is geared as much to themes as to disciplines. It is our hope that this way of dealing with the material illustrates the sheer variety of contemporary approaches, the complexity of treatment within and between different approaches, and a balance between the minutiae of detail and wider connecting themes.

(d) Importance if Improved Communications for the Study of Religion. Another factor that played a minor role in the period of classical approaches but is more important in contemporary studies is the fact of quicker communication. A new prophet arising in Africa, a new religious movement arising in some part of the West, a new indigenous expression of religion in the developing world can now be investigated on the spot by anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, or historians taking a plane out of Kennedy or Heathrow or going by train or car to the area concerned. The present-day scholar has access not only to books written by travellers or scholars but also to tape-recordings, films and so on, which record in sight and sound the formerly barely accessible data of various religious groups ranging from nomads to peasants to syncretistic sects. The rapid development of the technical and other devices of the communications media has made religious data available in a way undreamt of by scholars before World War II. It is causing the flavour of the study of religion to change.

These communication issues have a subtle influence upon three questions referred to in this volume. In the first place there is a discernible shift of attention in the study of religion away from an obvious involvement in the history of past religions to a greater interest in present developments. Thus the focus of all the chapters in this book, although not neglectful of the past, is geared more obviously to present religious developments than would have been the case before 1945. Secondly, the social scientific approaches, for example the chapter by David Wulff, bring out the increasing use of quantificatory data in religious research. The balanced presentation of Wulff and his colleagues masks the extent to which statistics and quantificatory data are becoming dominant in some of the social scientific investigations of religion. This leads us to our third point. Insofar as the silicon chip is already affecting scholarship, and computers have become part of the apparatus for research, there is the need for reflection upon the consequences of this trend for the study of religion. What kind of data can computers store? According to what criteria should the ordering of these data be organised? Is computer information exhaustive of, or complementary to, other kinds of information?

(e) Implications of the Western Nature of much Religious Research. A further factor that is assuming more importance within the contemporary study of religion in contrast with the situation that pertained at the time of the classical approaches is an increasing concern for the implications of the fact of the western nature of much past research. This book traces in detail the contributions of scholars of different western nationalities to different approaches-and this in itself is salutary because past surveys have tended to proceed along national lines-and yet the wider question that is emerging is

whether the study of religion has not been too dominated by western categories. Although the balance is partly redressed by the highlighting of the work of Mbiti, Radhakrishnan, Coomaraswamy, Buber, S. I-I. Nasr, Wing-tsit Chan, and D. T. Suzuki, the point still remains.

What is the significance of the fact that religions outside the West have been studied in a western way and, to a lesser extent, that religions outside Christianity have been studied in a Christian-centred way? To what extent has this pre-1945 attitude of often unconscious superiority been superseded in the contemporary situation? To what extent have western scholars of religion subsumed the whole spiritual creation of humankind under one interpretation of religion and then absolutised it? To what degree, in spite of the concern for *epoche* and *Einfühlung* fostered by the phenomenological approach, do western scholars feel that it is they who must research and interpret the religion of others for others? Can and should scholars from other cultures study western religions in the West; can and should western and non-western scholars study western and non-western texts together; can and should western anthropologists interpolate the views of the persons in primal tribes into their academic investigations?

It is clear that scholars from independent countries take a deep interest in their own religious and cultural traditions. This may well lead to a rediscovery in terms of their own culture of their own religious heritage, and also to scholarly selections and evaluations which can be explained by reference to the present-day spiritual, psychological and social needs of the traditions concerned. One has only to analyse the work of a phalanx of African scholars from John Mbiti to Kwame Bediako to realise the truth of this. An approach by western scholars based upon dialogue, cooperation, and willingness to learn would appear to be more in order than dialectical tension in defence of western methodologies. It is perhaps no accident that one of the most persuasive exponents of the academic dialogical method, Raimundo Panikkar, was born of an Indian Hindu father and a Spanish Christian mother. Or, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith puts it, 'the truth of all of us is part of the truth of each of us' (Smith 1981: 79)

(f) Greater Involvement of Secular Religions and Inter-religious Dialogue. Related to the last point, a further factor differentiating the contemporary from the classical period is a greater awareness of the involvement of what may loosely be called secular religions and inter-faith dialogue in the contemporary study of religion. Firstly, there have been forthcoming more Marxist studies of religion in relation to ethnographic studies, studies of Africa and Asia, the theory of scientific socialism and dialectical materialism, discussions of institutionalised religion, and searchings for the roots of religion in terms of social conflict, escape, or projection. It will be interesting to see what happens to Marxist studies of religion in the new dispensation that appears to be arising, wherein, as the Chinese would put it, the Mandate of Heaven seems to be slipping away from institutional Marxism; Will this lead to a renewal of theoretical Marxism as seems to be the case with the New Confucian tradition after its institutional demise in China?

Secondly, there has arisen an amount of research into and discussion about the role of secular religions in the study of religion. These include Marxism, secular humanism, nationalism, and also civil religion. Smart's researches (1981) into the 'religious' force and role of nationalism, and Bellah's researches (1975) into the force and role of civil religion have been important landmarks in this area of study. From a functional point of view secular religions have the functional power to evoke faith. In practice they usually lie alongside more formal religions as partners, as opponents, or as enthusiastic helpmates.

Thirdly, there has been the rise of inter-faith dialogue and understanding, especially between Christianity and other religious traditions. This dialogue has had an impact upon the interpretation of present-day religious expressions, and in the light of it encounters of religious attitude and systems are seen to be basically peaceful and

constructive. In very recent times the centenary in 1993 of the 1893 Chicago World Parliament of Religions has given a stimulus to inter-faith dialogue and to academic discussion concerning its role in the study of religion. In practical terms the discussions about the feasibility of setting up an ongoing parliament of world religions involves a number of scholars of religion from different religious traditions as well as religious leaders .

In some quarters the term 'ideology' has been loosely used about both Marxism and the secular religions and about inter-faith dialogue, on the grounds that neither the secular religions nor inter-faith dialogue are impartial, albeit from opposite directions. The word 'ideology', with its emotive overtones, does not perhaps convey the correct resonance to do justice to the contribution that is being made by Marxism and inter-faith dialogue. This is especially the case as the notion is arising in other quarters that western positivistic science can also operate as an 'ideology', and this leads us back to some of the points made in our last section.

However, the question remains as to whether the study of religion is destined to become an arena for competing 'ideologies', whether there is a bedrock and sub-stratum of data and theories to which so-called 'ideologies' can contribute and which they can amend constructively without producing a cacophony, or whether the study of religion itself has an ideology-critical function. This range of issues is addressed in the chapters by Ninian Smart and Frank Whaling.

(g) Truth-claim Phenomenology and Theology. Our next contrast relates to the status of truth claims, phenomenology, and theology in regard to the study of religion, and this debate, of course, goes back to the earlier part of the century although ,it has intensified since 1945.

In the first place it is pointed out in various places that 'truth claims' are not necessarily confined to phenomenology and theology and that much depends upon what we mean by 'truth-claims'-are they methodological or ontological, general or specific, 'first-order' or 'second-order'? It is clear that greater specificity as to the different levels and motivations of truth is required. After all, any respectable discipline, method or approach would hardly disclaim all concern for 'truth' of some kind. Different chapters allude to this matter in their own way.

Secondly, much discussion in the post-World War II period has centred upon the role of phenomenology of religion. Part of the reason for the growing interest in phenomenology of religion in the earlier post-war period that followed on from the work of Kristensen and van der Leeuw was the feeling that the component of 'religion' had been under-emphasised in earlier times. Theology, by its implied value-judgements, had undervalued the religions of others. By means of its concepts of epoche, putting one's convictions into brackets in order to understand another person or tradition, and *Einfühlung*, empathising with the other positively by 'walking in his or her moccasins for a couple of miles' it was possible for phenomenology to avoid theological value-judgements and in some way to allow believers to see the universe through another's eyes.

As far as other disciplines were concerned, such as oriental literatures and languages, history, sociology, psychology and anthropology, the question that was raised by the phenomenologists of religion was twofold. Were these other disciplines, when they studied religion, primarily interested in the study of religion or in the study of their own discipline? And the second question was whether these other disciplines were able to compare religions? The implied answer was no, and so the phenomenologists of religion attempted to compare religious phenomena typologically through their principle of eidetic vision; they attempted to give a greater integration to the study of religion; and they emphasised that 'religion' was at the heart of the study of religion.

In recent times a sharp attack has been made upon the whole *raison d'etre* of phenomenology of religion by Segal (1989) and Wiebe (1985, 1990). They call it

religionism and argue that religionists are committed to the defence of religion, that they uphold the truth of religion against the natural sciences and philosophy, that they defend the religiosity of religion against the social scientists, and that they safeguard the irreducible religious analysis of the origin, function and meaning of religion. Segal and Wiebe argue that scholars such as Eliade and Wilfred Cantwell Smith take with absolute seriousness the believer's viewpoint, and that they also take seriously the believer's focus of faith (as Smart [1973: 62] calls it), the holy (as Otto [1917] puts it), the sacred (as Eliade [1959] puts it). This, it is argued, leads them into theology rather than phenomenology of religion. In short, it is further argued, the need for phenomenology of religion is no longer present because there is no irreducible religious factor that justifies the study of religion as religion in separation from theology or the social sciences. It can therefore be collapsed into theology on the one hand and the social sciences on the other hand. In effect this is a form of reductionism. It is not on a par with the classical reductionist theories of Durkheim, Freud and Marx but its effect is the same-to reduce religion to something else.

Although classical phenomenology of religion has undergone modification since 1945 in ways described in this book, its basic intuitions concerning the need for suspension of judgement, empathy, and non-judgmental comparisons remain sound. Segal and Wiebe misrepresent the intention of phenomenologists of religion, which is not to get inside the conscious view of believers in a literal sense but to understand them in such a way as not to give offence. Moreover, Smart's focus of faith, Eliade's sacred and Smith's transcendent are not portrayed as ontological or essential realities. The phenomenologist is concerned to understand the believer and his faith and retains suspension of judgement in relation to the object of the believer's faith. Moreover, the phenomenologist agrees that the believer's conscious belief is only part of the sum total of his religiousness, not the whole of it. Furthermore, methodological arguments relating basically to western and Christian matters cannot apply in a universal sense even if they had worked in a western sense. Finally, phenomenology is ultimately a co-operative and dialogical method rather than a dialectical one, as Segal and Wiebe would want to make it. Nevertheless we can be grateful to them for enabling phenomenology of religion to advance in response to the sharpness of their insights.

In the third place the perennial question remains of the relationship between the study of religion and theology. The contributors to this book are in agreement that theology as traditionally conceived is separate from the study of religion in the sense that, although it provides data for such study, its categories do not and cannot dominate it. They also agree that institutional considerations have tended to accentuate the differences between the two educational domains. They agree too that insofar as theology operates from within particular religious traditions and focusses upon the nature of transcendent reality, its concerns are different from those of the study of religion.

At certain places in this volume some unease is expressed at the confrontational attitudes sometimes implied between monolithic views of theology and the study of religion. There are various views of what theology basically is and of what the study of religion basically is, and the need is for flexibility and complementariness rather than confrontation.

Unease is also expressed occasionally at the implied assumption that theology is to be equated with Christian theology. The other religious traditions have their own theology (or Buddhology or Ramology).

More far-reaching is the contemporary search for a global theology of religion. Essayed in the work of scholars such as Hans Kung, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, John Hick, Raimundo Panikkar and others it attempts to seek for universal theological categories that arise out of and are applicable to all the religious traditions of the world. The starting point for such a global theology of religion is not the theology of any particular tradition but the global situation itself. By working back from the global crisis and opportunity to

the theological categories that can speak to global needs, there is the chance to transcend normal theological differences hermeneutically for the sake of the human race on planet earth under transcendence. There is a sense in which a global theology of religion may well develop into a separate discipline which is relevant to the study of religion and to particular theologies from its detached viewpoint. Durwood Foster's quest for what he calls an ultimology would fit into this endeavour (Storey and Storey 1994: 155-163), as would Masao Abe's notion of a positionless position 'in which the diversity and unity of world religions can be fully and dynamically realised' (Storey and Storey 1994: 164).

(h) **Definitions of Religion.** In the course of this book countless definitions of religion are mentioned or assumed, and to summarise them here would be unnecessarily to lengthen this introduction. Perhaps one of the reasons why western philosophy of religion has found it difficult to grapple with the study of religion is because that study has not been amenable to agreement on anyone definition of religion. Conversely one of the probable reasons why the study of religion has not become even more important than it is lies in the fact that it has not been content to settle upon an agreed set of given data which would constitute it as a rigid discipline wherein a particular definition would be universally applicable. Thus the question of definitions is necessarily part of our wider discussion of methods and theories.

Our volume does not solve the question of definition although it does pose it, and it does open up the various definitional alternatives in a more comprehensive way than is usually the case.

However there is another sense in which this book performs a restricted and yet equally valuable task in the sphere of definitions. Attention is paid in various places to the need for a more exact definition of terms that are important in the study of religion. Thus, more sophisticated views on terms such as myth, history, phenomenology, science, hermeneutics, understanding, and interpretation are given throughout the work. Clarification of terms and concepts within these more limited areas is important.

(i) **Scope and Nature of the Data.** Another difference between the classical period of the study of religion and the contemporary situation lies in the contrast between the scope and nature of the data considered worthy of study. In the classical period there was relatively greater stress put upon the data of primal religion, archaic religion, the religions of antiquity, and the classical forms of the major living religions. Anthropologists such as Tylor and Frazer, sociologists such as Durkheim, and psychologists such as Freud theorised on the basis of the data of primal religion. When they ventured into comment upon the major religions, the likelihood was that their data would be taken from their own Judaeo-Christian tradition.

At the present time, the situation is different. Not only has there been an explosion of knowledge in regard to all the religious traditions of the earth, the greatest relative accumulation of data has encompassed the major living religions. There are a number of reasons why this is so and we will look at them briefly now.

(ia) One reason is the relatively less important position of anthropology in the contemporary study of religion. During the classical period, the data of the primal religions provided the jumping-off point for some of the early formative theories of religion. With the exception of the work of Levi-Strauss, anthropology is now less significant in theory-formation. (ib) Another reason lies in the change of emphasis within sociology of religion. Durkheim's famous definition of religion (1976: 62.)

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them was erected, in the main, on the basis of research into primal religion with its more static flavour. Present-day sociology of religion has a greater interest in contemporary religion and change.

(ic) A third reason lies in the rediscovery of religious traditions in a number of recently independent nations. As we saw earlier, the focus of religious attention and study inevitably falls upon the major religious traditions that are the basis of religious life in those nations.

(id) Another reason lies in the increasing western interest in major non-western religions. Non-academic factors have fostered this growth of interest: the immigration of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs into the West; the steady trickle of converts to eastern religions; the effects in the USA of political events in Korea and Vietnam; the aftermath of empire in Britain; the spread of eastern sects into the West; and the growing importance of Islam. The effect of the above developments has been to focus more attention upon the major religions in their contemporary as well as classical forms.

(ie) A further reason lies in the fact that the pre- 1945 situation of more static and stabilised systems is no longer with us and religious change is the order of the day. New religions are multiplying in Japan, numerous Indigenous African Churches are springing up constantly, and new sects are sprouting in different parts of the West. The general effect of the obvious presence of religious change around the world is to create a greater interest in the contemporary religious scene and in the major living religions.

(if) A sixth reason lies in the concern for the present state of western religion and culture among scholars of religion in both East and West. Whether that concern be for the seeming weakness of Christianity in the West, for rampant materialism in the West, for the help that eastern religions may be able to give to the West, or for the possible dangers that eastern cultures face from the West, the inclination once again is to focus upon the present context and the major religions. The past for its own sake is no longer an end in itself.

(ig) A final reason lies in the growing interest since World War II in religious education in schools, especially in Britain and the United States and increasingly in Europe. The American constitution had banned the teaching of denominational or dogmatic religion in state schools, but this ban did not apply to the non-evaluative teaching of world religions or descriptive teaching about Christianity. Since 1945 such teaching has advanced in American schools. In Britain the pre-1945 stress upon Christian education as a nurturing or even proselytising process has been replaced by a greater emphasis upon teaching world religions and a less theological emphasis upon the teaching of Christianity. Inevitably attention focussed upon the teaching of the living world religions rather than archaic or primal religion, and this development interacted with the study and teaching of religion in higher education to reinforce the emphasis upon the major living religions.

4. Possible Future Direction

So far we have looked at the contrast between the classical and contemporary approaches to the study of religion. There is much more that could be said but it is time to press on and try to erect, on the basis of our work, possible future directions for the study of religion.

(a) What Religious Data are Involved in the Study of Religion? We saw above how contemporary interest in the study of religion centres mainly upon the contemporary major living religions. In fact this is only a three-quarter truth, even in western academia. Continental European scholars are more likely to make greater use of the data of the religions of antiquity, the classical forms of the major religions, and (to a lesser extent) primal religions, whereas Anglo-Saxon scholars are more likely to make use of the data of the major living religions in their contemporary as well as classical form. The reasons for this are partly academic, but there are non-academic causes too the lack on most of the continent of an imperial background, the smaller presence of immigrants, the lesser presence of eastern sects, a lesser facility in the English language, a weaker concern for

new forms of religious education, a greater predilection for Christian inward-lookingness, and relatively less contact with religious change.

However, as we have seen, the contemporary religious scene in regard to both study and practice is far wider than the confines of Europe. And in principle the study of religion has to do with the study of all religious traditions. No religions are excluded from the study of religion whether they be ancient or modern, living or dead, primal or major. And let us be clear that there is a connection between the kind of religious data that a scholar studies and the theories and methods that the scholar is likely to develop as a result of wrestling with those religious data. For example, had Wilfred Cantwell Smith not begun his career in Islamic Studies, had Eliade not gone to India or used the data of primal religions, and had Dumézil not immersed himself in Indo-European Studies, it is likely that their theoretical approach to the study of religion would have taken a different course. Data and theory are interlinked. What then are the different kinds of religious data involved in the study of religion? What are the different varieties of world religions?

(i) Firstly, there are the living religious traditions of the world. Five of them can be classed as major: the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim traditions, and a case can be made for designating the Baha'is as a major tradition. The first five certainly have an impressive history, a worldwide presence and a complex nature and this compounds the problems involved in trying to understand and study them.

(ii) Other religious traditions are active and alive on the face of the earth today, but it is disputable whether they can be classed as major. They include what we might call the minor living traditions: the Confucians, the Jains, the Parsis, the Sikhs, and the Taoists. Although less 'major' than the first group, they are unique and significant in their own right.

(iii) A third facet of the present-day religious scene is the presence of various new religious movements of one sort or another. There are many of them and they range from the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Spiritualists, and Swedenborgians to the Cargo Cults of Melanesia, the New Religions of Japan, the Rastafarians and the Unification Church. It is estimated that in the United States alone there are something over 900 new Christian religious movements, and around 600 new religious movements with no roots in Christianity.

(iv) A fourth factor on the world scene can be summed up under the heading of primal religion. There are thousands of primal tribes and therefore thousands of primal religions scattered over the surface of the planet. They lacked writing (at any rate until recently), and they generally lack scriptures and historical documents. The hallmarks of their religious life tend to be sacred stories in the form of myths together with the rituals and symbols that are handed down from one generation to another.

(v) In the fifth place there are religious traditions that are no longer alive on the face of the earth. At one time humans had access to transcendence through the medium of these archaic religions but they are present no more: they are dead. Examples are Palaeolithic and Neolithic religion, Egyptian and Mesopotamian religion, Greek and Roman religion, Gnostic and Manichaean religion, and the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas of the Americas.

(vi) A final group are the secular religions which function as 'religions' from one point-of-view and are secular alternatives to religion from another point-of-view. They include Marxism, Humanism and Nationalism. Whether they can be called 'religions' is a moot point. Nevertheless they operate as what Tillich called quasi-religions and they have the functional force of religions.

Such is the vastness and complexity of the field of world religions. All of them in principle have an equal right to be studied even though, in the nature of things, some will be studied more than others. In practice different methodological approaches tend to concentrate upon certain kinds of religious traditions; for example anthropologists often

study primal religions, sociologists are more likely to study new religious movements, philologists may be drawn to literate dead religions, pre-historians of religion may be interested in non-literate dead religions, social scientists may study secular religions, and historians of religion may home in on the major or minor living religions.

(b) Global History of Religion as a Bedrock of the Study of Religion. The history of religion has always been a key element in the study of religion and it has recently become possible to establish a global framework for the history of religion. Upon this framework of pegs the history of religion can be hung.

There are methodological problems associated with creating this global history of religion. It presupposes the western historical-critical method but yet relies upon the interpretation of pre-historical artefacts; it is difficult to insert primal religions into global history, because of their lack of historical documents; it is necessary to establish the relationship between 'secular' history and 'religious' history; it is not easy to divide the global history of religion into recognisable stages; it is essential to avoid evolutionary or other 'judgmental' presuppositions; it is not easy to conceptualize how different caches of historical records can be fed into a global history of religion, and last but not least the history keeps on changing either through the discovery of new historical records or through the reinterpretation of old ones. For example, the dates of Zarathustra have recently been recalculated by scholars such as Mary Boyce, and the same has happened to the dates of the Buddha in the work of scholars such as Richard Gombrich.

We are now in a position to layout a framework for a global history of religion into which new historical discoveries and reinterpretations can be inserted. Although this works better with historical religions than with pre-historic and primal ones it does provide a good groundwork for the general study of religion. i) The first stage, that of Palaeolithic religion, is shrouded in the mists of pre-history. Palaeolithic humans were hunter-gatherers. From half-a million years ago, with Peking Man, there is evidence of the ritual treatment of skulls; there is evidence of burial from about 75,000 B C E; and from about 30,000 B C E onwards there is the evidence of cave paintings that illustrated Palaeolithic religiousness. It is easy to read too much into the evidence of Palaeolithic skulls, artefacts and caves but that far-off age brought a breakthrough to 'humanity' and evidence of an early religiousness in human beings.

(ii) The second age, starting about 10,000 B C E, was the Neolithic, which gave to human beings a close relationship to the earth and the start of dominance over it by the creative invention of agriculture, animal husbandry, spinning, weaving and pottery. The sacred was seen to be active in nature as well as in human beings in a rhythmic and cyclical way. There was felt to be an inter-linking between human beings, the earth that they tended, and the transcendent powers (including female) that were held to reside in both. Their religious consciousness remained this-worldly; it was experienced in groups, and their myths, rituals and symbols held persons, nature and the transcendent together in a linking bond.

(iii) The next stage saw the rise of town civilisations about 3,500 B C E in Mesopotamia and then in Egypt with diffusion into the Indus Valley, and a spontaneous generation of towns in China. The invention of the plough, sea travel, irrigation, metallurgy, and above all writing enabled town-dwellers to develop interests and specialisations outside agriculture. Contacts were opened up with other areas by sea or land so that trade and ideas could expand. Religious specialisms also came into being in the form of separate priesthoods, temples, festivals and theologies; sacred kings such as the Pharaohs made sure that religion remained linked to life. Although humans, the earth and transcendent forces stayed interconnected, there were premonitions of the later distancing of town civilisations from nature, and existential questions to do with meaning, suffering and life after death began to surface.

(iv) The next major stage (there were other minor ones) emerged in the Axial Age around the sixth century B C E. Great religious leaders and thinkers arose independently in four areas of the world: Greece, the Middle East, India and China. The Ionian philosophers in Greece, the Hebrew prophets and the out-workings of Zarathustra's genius in the Middle East, the emergence of the Buddha, the Mahavira and the Hindu Upanishads in India, and the presence of Confucius and the premonitions of Taoism in China heralded a great religious and cultural breakthrough. With the hindsight of history we can see from that time the emergence of four great civilisations moulded by religious factors, and they were to co-exist for two thousand years on a roughly equal, parallel and separate basis. They were: Europe stemming from Greece and eventually becoming Christendom; India stemming from Hindu roots but using Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Muslim and Parsi sources to build a multi-religious grandeur; China using its three ways, the Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist, to form the glory of Chinese civilisation; and the Middle East, which after a time of decline recovered its former elan through the rise and spread of Islam. None of these civilisations or religions was dominant over the others and they remained roughly in balance. They were civilisations that were affected and formed by religious forces.

Although these four religious civilisations were different, common factors can be detected that began to distance them from developments elsewhere in the world, for example in primal areas. There was a strong sense that one's present worldly life was not paramount by contrast with the pull of another world in heaven, moksha, or nirvana; a sense of the inwardness of the real self and true faith as seen in various monastic systems; a sense that reason, analysis and intellectual synthesis could be important in religion; a sense that through mission religions could grow and conceivably become universal; a sense that religious communities, rituals, ethics, social involvement, scriptures, concepts, aesthetics, and spirituality were integral parts of religion and of culture; and a sense of the importance of transcendence and its mediating focus, whether it be God in Christ, Allah through the Koran, Yahweh through the Torah, Brahman through a Hindu personal deity or the Atman, or Nirvana through the Buddha or the Dharma.

(v) The next main stage in global religious history began in the sixteenth century C E when religious and other matters were dominated by the rise of the West. Europe broke out of its medieval captivity through seapower and later through technological power so that it came to supremacy over the other civilisations with which it had formerly been equal. It also uncovered new worlds such as the Americas, Southern Africa and Australasia inhabited by primal religious peoples. This period brought together a time of great strength in the European West with a time of relative weakness in India, the Middle East and China. The vibrant West became dominant.

The religious tradition of the West, Christianity, also spread into different parts of the world. The newly discovered continents of South America, North America, Southern Africa, and Australasia were settled by Europeans and became Christian continents. Christian missionaries went into most parts of the world, partly on the coat-tails of the empires that came into being, and churches, albeit sometimes small ones, were set up in many areas in the world.

The West not only took its religion (albeit in many denominational forms), it also importantly took its scientific and industrial revolutions into the wider world. At one level this brought medical facilities, material progress, city life, railways, factories and expanded trade. At another level it also introduced among intellectual elites elsewhere the scientific secular worldview and towards the end of this period, which lasted until 1945, it brought an awareness of nationalism and also the Marxist version of the secular viewpoint. Through western science and technology the world began to come together and it seemed to become smaller.

Again comparisons are difficult but certain general points can be made.

Primal religions began to undergo dislocation in various parts of the world; laymen and vernacular devotion became more significant in the major religions; the relevance of religion for bettering life in this world received more attention; other religions and cultures were impressed by and to some extent reacted against the West's cultivation of progress; human domination over nature began to increase apace; and a greater knowledge of other religions came into being both at the level of scholarship and at the level of believers, although full-blown dialogue was not yet in view.

The sixth stage in the global history of religion is the one we are living in now. We covered its main facets earlier and so will not repeat them now. This sketch of the outline of a global history of religion has been all too brief. It has merit in itself by providing a framework into which historians of religion can insert their stories, or make their changes, or interpolate their interpretations.

It also has two other merits. In the first place it opens up many fruitful avenues of historical comparison. To mention but four out of numerous possibilities, around 1250 C E there was a convergence of philosophical/ theological intellectual syntheses in many parts of the world through Maimonides in the Jewish world, Aquinas and Bonaventura in the Christian world, Chu Hsi in the neo-Confucian Chinese world, Ramanuja in the Tamil Vedanta Hindu world, and (somewhat earlier) Al-Ghazali in the Muslim world. Most of these remarkable and architectonic systematic syntheses of faith were done in isolation from each other yet at roughly the same time in different parts of the world. The Axial Age itself is an even better example of an age when great things were happening independently in varied parts of the globe.

Another example of historical comparison can be seen in the sixteenth century C E. There was a simultaneous emergence of devotional vernacular religion in scattered areas of the world. The Protestant Reformation arose in Europe using Luther's German or Cranmer's English or other vernaculars as its medium of expression; in India Guru Nanak's devotionalism through the medium of Punjabi heralded the rise of the Sikh tradition; in India also Tulsi Das wrote his great poem to Rama in Hindi, not in Sanskrit, and Caitanya went into devotional ecstasies in Bengali; in Persia there emerged the new Shi'ite devotionalism using Persian; and, in Buddhist South East Asia, Pure Land devotionalism had already stressed the role of laymen and used local vernaculars in praise of Amida Buddha.

A final example relates to our present age. As religious traditions have responded to change it is possible to trace comparatively four different responses that have been made. The first is to retreat into one's shell and to pretend that change is not happening; the second is the fundamentalist option which works for the creative or sometimes non-creative restoration of tradition; the third is the way of evolutionary reform which seeks to enable religions to adapt to the changes around them; and the fourth is the way of radical reform which demands a radical reinterpretation of tradition in order to do justice to the crisis that is held to have arisen. Studies of all these developments in individual traditions are in progress, especially in relation to the various fundamentalist movements in different religions. More interesting is to take a comparative overview of the responses to change across religions, and this kind of scholarship is beginning to happen.

A second merit of a global history of religion is that it highlights periods when there have been radical effects of one or more religions on other traditions. Religious traditions have deeply affected each other either for better or for worse and inter-borrowing between religions, whether at a conscious or unconscious level, has been rife. Examples of inter-borrowing can be found widely, for example the interchange between Hindus, Buddhists and Jains in the sixth century C E; the interplay between Jews, Mysteries, Greek religion and thought and Christianity at the time of Christian origins; the interplay between Mani, the Zoroastrians and others in fourth century C E Persia;

the interplay between the San Chiao, the three ways of China (Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist) at various times in Chinese history; the events surrounding the emergence of the Sikhs as a separate tradition in sixteenth century C E India; and the influence of the West and Christianity upon the modern Hindu reformers.

(c) **The Role of Phenomenology of Religion.** Phenomenology of religion has four important roles in the study of religion as a non-theological and non-reductionist enterprise.

(i) In the first place its categories of epoche (putting one's convictions into brackets and suspending judgment in order to understand) and Einfühlung (empathy with the position of others) are helpful in the general study of religion. They avoid the interpolation of value judgments which get in the way of a real understanding of the position of others, and they open up the possibility of seeing the world through the eyes of other people. As such they remain important general principles behind the whole enterprise of the study of religion.

(ii) Secondly, the phenomenological aim to take the position of believers seriously in order to avoid misrepresenting them is another important principle. Verifying with others that our representation of them accords roughly with how they see themselves is an important verification principle. It depends on what kind of other does the verifying-presumably a rigid fundamentalist verification would not suffice! Nor is conscious verification by believers the only criterion of understanding. There are unconscious and structural factors at work as well. Nevertheless an empathetic awareness of the position of others by checking our understanding with their own self-apprehension is important not only for our critical understanding of their being in the world but also for our own critical self-awareness of our own.

(iii) Thirdly, the phenomenological attempt to give greater integration to the study of religion by maintaining that 'religion' is at the heart of this study rather than the methodological canons of another discipline retains its significance as a principle. As such, phenomenology remains a coordinating endeavour within the study of religion rather than a methodological approach based upon the canons of history, theology, sociology, psychology, or any other discipline with its controlling roots outside religion. This does not mean that other approaches are not important. Nor does it make phenomenology into a kind of religion in itself. It is part of a wider enterprise-but an important part.

(iv) Fourthly, the phenomenological stress upon comparison remains deeply relevant. The particular method of comparison opened up by the principle of eidetic vision, basically that of phenomenological typology; is only one of the possible ways of comparing religions. Historical comparison that was mentioned earlier which takes historical contexts seriously in a way that phenomenology does not, and the method of comparison in depth between two religions whereby it becomes clear that typologies do not always work (for example Christ is in some ways more comparable with the Koran as the Islamic Word of God than with Muhammad) are of equal significance (albeit Christ can still be compared with Muhammad). Nevertheless the phenomenological emphasis upon the deep significance of comparison as a category remains important even though phenomenological typology is only one among many methods that can be used.

(d) **Complementarity of Methods and Approaches.** We have seen how a whole set of disciplines and approaches in interplay make up the study of religion. It incorporates a field of studies rather than being a narrow enterprise. No methods are excluded whether they centre upon religion or not, whether they belong to the social sciences or the humanities, whether their approach is inductive or hermeneutic, whether they focus upon data or persons. The only exception applies to the type of method that centres upon one religion and explicitly applies its categories to others (as with some kinds of theology and

even philosophy) and the type of method that seeks to absolutise itself into a metaphysic thereby exceeding its methodological brief by attempting to reduce religion to itself.

This book implies the need for a complementarity of approaches. Although each chapter focusses upon a particular approach and in this respect advances its claims, this does not imply that other approaches are inappropriate or that anyone approach should unduly dominate the others. However, despite the variety of materials, issues, theories and angles thereby introduced into the study of religion, the stance of complementarity does not obviate the need for overall integration in the field. As we have seen, that need for integration is partly supplied by the combined roles of history and phenomenology. To this can be added the role of anthropology of religion which provides a bedrock of data on primal religion arising out of empirical studies.

In what way, then, are the different approaches to the study of religion complementary? In large part because they operate a division of labour, and we can see this by means of two examples.

(i) It is clear that the study of religion is different from natural science insofar as it deals with data that involve persons rather than data that centre upon objects in nature. The study of data involving persons relates the study of religion to various disciplines in the arts and social sciences. It can be seen in terms of the religion of groups of persons (sociology and anthropology' of religion), the religion of individuals (psychology of religion), the faith and intentionality of persons (phenomenology and hermeneutics of religion), the myths and texts of persons (the study of myths and texts), and so on. This involvement of religious data with persons, their social groupings, their individual religious experiences, their unconscious moulding by heredity and environment, their history, means that the study of religion has to do with human beings and that it needs complementary approaches to be dealt with in its wholeness.

(ii) Since 1945 various models of religion have been evolved to try and afford a framework of understanding whereby religions can be seen as organisms containing different elements or dimensions. Two contributors to this volume have produced models that are fairly similar, and these models point to the need for a complementary set of approaches to do justice to the study of religions as organisms. Ninian Smart's model stresses six dimensions of religion: doctrines, myths, ethics, rituals, social institutions, and religious experience. Frank Whaling's model stresses eight elements of religion: religious communities, rituals, ethics, social and political involvement of religions in wider society, scripture/myth, concepts, aesthetics, and spirituality. Doctrines and concepts imply some input from, but not control by, philosophy and theology; religious communities and social involvement come mainly under the umbrella of sociology; scripture involves the work of textual experts; religious experience and spirituality include the expertise of psychologists of religion; myth is studied partly by anthropology, as are rituals; ethics involves a range of skills; aesthetics invites the skills of iconography and fine art. These divisions of labour are not watertight but they are clearly relevant. The study of religion is, in the nature of things, a collaborative enterprise involving a complementarity of skills.

(e) New Developments in the Study of Religion. Many new developments in the study of religion are brought out in this volume. In closing this introduction let me briefly mention seven new developments that appear to be of more than passing importance.

(i) The role of aesthetics in religion is now receiving more attention. For most of history and for most people aesthetics in the form of painting, mosaics, music, sculpture, calligraphy and wider literature has been more relevant and compelling than studying doctrines or even reading scripture. Giotto's frescoes of Jesus at Padua and of St. Francis at Assisi, Buddha images illustrating through the five main mudras his compassion and significance, Indian classical dance, Muslim calligraphy, and many other aesthetic representations, not to mention the shape and intentionality of churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, pagodas and gurdwaras have given to ordinary people a visual

theology that was vivid and real. The study of the aesthetic side of religion, both in separate traditions and in comparative studies, is growing apace. It is likely to continue to grow;

(ii) Another element in the above models, namely spirituality and religious experience, is receiving more attention and study. This is partly due to a rise of interest in spirituality in the mainstream religions, in new religious movements, and in the western New Age phenomenon. However, academic and publishing attention is being given to the whole area of spirituality as well as experiential interest. This is emerging not only in the work of psychologists of religion but also in major textual series. For example the Classics of Western Spirituality published by the Paulist Press beginning in 1978 has brought out nearly 70 volumes of spirituality classics from not only the Christian tradition (although mainly so) but also from the Jewish, Muslim, and American Indian traditions. Another series, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopaedic History of the Religious Quest*, published by Crossroad, New York, beginning in 1985 and planned in 25 volumes, is nearing completion. A series on the Classics of Eastern Spirituality is also planned as an update of Max Muller's *Sacred Books of the East*.

(iii) We have mentioned earlier the rise of interest in a global theology or religion which overlaps the traditional boundaries of theology and the study of religion. Its concern is to conceptualise universal theological categories that transcend the particularities of particular theologies in order to deal with theology as such rather than the theology of a particular religion. Its view of transcendence is wide and open and not basically ontological or essentialist. Its concern is to speak religiously on global issues beginning from the concerns of the global situation rather than from the concerns of particular theologies. It is important in itself; it may well be becoming a new discipline; and it may herald a new relationship between theology and the study of religion based upon complementarity rather than suspicion.

(iv) A fourth nascent development is the growing interest of the study of religion in global issues and what might be called global scholarship. Passages in this book glance briefly at the relationship between the study of religion and wider scholarship, and at the relationship between the study of religion and our emerging global world. One of the main tasks of the study of religion is to study world religions which are global in setting, and it bestraddles a number of disciplines and interests that have as their areas of concern the study of global matters involving nature, human beings, and transcendence. The days when the study of religion was suspected from the side of faith and neglected from the side of reason are passing or past. That the study of religion should play a creative role in contemporary general scholarship is increasingly seen to be important not only for the study of religion but also for the world of learning and the world in general.

(v) The study of religion is also becoming more involved in political matters. This is partly because religion itself is having a wider impact in the world in either the negative sense of Waco and Jonestown, or religious conflicts in Sri Lanka, the Punjab, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Sudan, and Bosnia-or in the positive sense of making eirenic contributions to local and global matters in various parts of the world.

Samuel Huntington's quixotic comments about Islam being the new analogue for the USSR in the Cold War as an adversary, and some of the remarks on religion in Paul Kennedy's otherwise intelligent *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* (1993), illustrate the interest taken in religion by political commentators, and the need for insightful advice to be given by scholars of religion to political leaders at all levels. Good books on religion are increasingly being read by political leaders and advisors, and the study of religion has an important part to play in local and global political affairs. Simple matters such as the setting up of significant museums of religion in places as disparate as Glasgove Marburg and Moscow are straws in the wind. It is very likely that the input of the study of religion into politics and political thinking will grow in the near future.

(vi) A sixth matter of growing interest to the study of religion concerns the role of women and gender in religion. Ursula King has formed a Women's Group at the international meetings of the main International Association for the History of Religions, and her books such as *Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise* (1989) are part of a growing input into this field. Interest in this topic can only increase.

(vii) A final matter picks up the theme of emancipation within a different context. In this book the role of religion in processes of liberation from oppression is mentioned in connection with studies of religious movements that have a prophetic, puritanical, messianic, or reform element within them. Religion is seen not as an obstacle to social development but as a spur to social regeneration. More studies of religious liberation movements can be expected.

5. Conclusion

We hope that readers will find this book to be a worthy companion to Jacques Waardenburg's *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, and that will inevitably be forthcoming when people wrestle with matters of such immense scope serve creatively to advance the cause of the study of religion. Our purpose has been so to summarise the contemporary approaches to the study of religion that momentum may be given to such an advance at an inter-disciplinary, inter-cultural and inter-personal level.

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