

BRITISH ASSOCIATION
for the
STUDY OF RELIGIONS



BULLETIN
No 99 June 2003

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The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR), formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), whose object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through international interdisciplinary collaboration. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions and who are normally resident in the United Kingdom. Those interested in membership may apply directly by writing to the **Hon Secretary** to whom all general correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent: **Dr James L Cox, University of Edinburgh, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX.**

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

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

Editorial: Domestic details

At Wolverhampton I have responsibility for the Research Methods module in Religious Studies. Students are given the unoriginal, but very necessary assignment of discussing the methodology that is appropriate to their final year dissertation. Most students successfully examine the major categories of quantitative and qualitative research, literature-based and ethnographical, and determine what kind of sample of interviewees they will select. However, despite repeated cautions, there are always one or two who equate methodology very mundane generic matters, and write about ‘domestic’ details such as the need to manage their time well, or to ensure that books that are not in the library will need to be ordered through inter-library loan. My perennial advice is to look at writers like Ninian Smart, and identify the types of issue that they consider.

Yet I am sure that Ninian Smart — like the rest of us — had to think about time management, negotiating deadlines with editors, and obtaining little-known books and articles. Although the academic community do not normally write about such matters, they go on behind the scenes, although not publicly visible. The product requires the process, even if the latter cannot be seen.

The same is no less true of the *BASR Bulletin*. On the publication of the current edition, I will have been responsible for a whole annual cycle of Bulletins. A year of editing is probably a good time to take stock of the process of bringing out the journal. The Bulletin has well served by previous editors, and the current editor’s tasks is more of maintaining the high quality than making radical innovations. However, the Executive Committee recently discussed some of these ‘behind the scenes’ issues. For example, what conferences should we be advertising? What do we do with an advertisement that runs to four pages for an event that few, if any, members are likely to attend? What should a research report contain?

As journals go, the *BASR Bulletin* is a small one. Its aim is not to publish pieces of academic writing, but to keep academics, researchers and teachers of RS abreast of what is happening in our field. An editor has to maintain a balance of contributions, and to give space to topics and events in proportion to their importance: a lengthy report on a short seminar, placed alongside a brief report on a major conference, creates an imbalance of information, giving a lop-sided account of affairs. Length is proportional to cost, too, and a 3,000-word report generates about nine pages, which have to be paid for as well as read! The Executive Committee considered and endorsed some guidelines for contributions. These are published at the end of this Bulletin: we hope that these will be useful for potential contributors. It should be emphasised that these are guidelines only, and that there can sometimes be

good reason for departing from them. Please continue to send contributions: we hope that the guidelines will encourage contributors to send suitable material, rather than deter them.

Looking ahead on domestic matters — the next, November, issue is the large one in which we include members' details. This is therefore a good time to return the golden enclosed slips, which can be used for address changes, as well as for research and publications. Alternatively, please e-mail me any details when necessary. It would also be good to have as comprehensive a list as possible of members' research interests. Some of these are available from the recently published *AUDTRS Handbook* (2003), but it is better, as well as easier, if members send me this information direct.

Finally, if your address changes, please do not forget to include the BASR in your list of contactees. There always seem to be about half a dozen bulletins that are returned to me undelivered, and usually undeliverable, despite my efforts to track people down! Those who fall into this category are unlikely to be reading this editorial, for obvious reasons, but at least current recipients can ensure that they maintain contact with the Association and the Bulletin.

I hope this editorial is slightly more interesting than the weak student essay about the domestic details of research. If not, I hope it at least serves a purpose, and I shall turn my mind to more substantial topics by November.

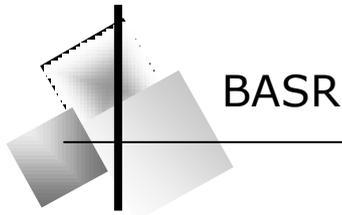
George Chryssides

The annual subscription for the BASR and Bulletin is £15.00 (£8 for postgraduate students and researchers without full employment). Scholars residing abroad may subscribe to the Bulletin for £10.00 a year. Subscriptions are due in October. The BASR is a registered charity (No 801567), and members are encouraged to pay their subscriptions by Gift Aid (if in taxed employment), by direct debit or annual cheque. Cheques should be made out to the 'British Association for the Study of Religions' and sent to the Treasurer: **Dr Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.**

—Visit our website at <basr.org.uk>—

BASR OCCASIONAL PAPERS (order from Kim Knott)

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



BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003

15-17 September

Chester College

RELIGIONS IN TRANSITION:

Diachronic and synchronic perspectives

KEYNOTE LECTURE:

**'Diachronic and Synchronic Factors in Religious Transition:
The Case of New Religious Movements'**

Professor Elom Dovlo, Associate Professor in the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon.

The topic is intended to investigate the dynamic character of religious change in the broadest possible sense. It could include, for example, analyses of religious syncretism, transplantation, diaspora and emergent religion, or encounters among religious communities from historical perspectives or in contemporary situations.

Offers of papers and reports of work in progress *preferably by email* by 14 June 2003 to: Dr Ron Geaves (r.geaves@chester.ac.uk), Department of Theology & Religious Studies, Chester College, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ.

Registration form, bursary application form, and programme details (when available) on the BASR web site (basr.org.uk).

Looking Forward to Looking Back

From Past Bulletins of BAHR / BASR 2 (introduced by Peggy Morgan)

We are often in danger of thinking that cuts, closures and economic constraints are unique to our own times and contexts. In the following extracts from BAHR Bulletins 35 and 37, we have responses to some of the crises of the early eighties. In a report of a meeting of the Institute of Religion and Theology (of Great Britain and Ireland — a sort of precursor of AUDTRS) on page 11 of Bulletin 35 it is noted that cuts affect learned societies. Economic contraction affects membership and attendance at conferences as well as posts, research and publications.

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED 22/9/81 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

Religion under attack on Campuses

There is a serious crisis in the provision of facilities for study and training in the field of religion and religious values. Britain has rather few centres for the modern study of religion — of the meaning and social relevance of Christianity and other world religions. Now two programmes in universities — at Leicester and Sussex — are threatened with the axe, while it may be that deep cuts elsewhere will decimate this area of research and education. Yet our diplomats, business men, teachers, church workers, community leaders and indeed citizens in general desperately need help and knowledge about other cultures and the values which shape behaviour in our world and in our society. We appreciate the role still played by the traditional study of Christian theology and all that goes to make up the training of priests and ministers. But the modern study of religion is needed also in our changed *world*. Yet some of our decision makers seem to undervalue religious and spiritual values. While all universities have courses in economics, many have no systematic teaching in the field of religion.

At a time when people everywhere in our global village are being faced with the need to appreciate the widely different ways of viewing the world, and the varying belief-systems and patterns of behaviour, this country, at least, runs imminent danger of being deprived of one of its most valuable educational resources in this regard, namely, the increasing availability of careful study and teaching of the various worldviews and religious traditions included in courses of Religious Studies.

Such at least is the view of members of the British Association for the History of Religions whose annual conference ended in Oxford on September 20. They expressed alarm at trends discernible over recent years in higher education and now stepped up by the UGC's July action in recommending discontinuance of Religious Studies at two universities with further severe threats to existing courses at Aberystwyth — (the only Welsh speaking centre of the subject) and Scottish centres such as Aberdeen and Stirling. Further departments in England stand likewise to be decimated. There is immediate danger of Religious Studies at higher education level suffering disproportionately from financial cutbacks, since these descriptive studies of religion are more heavily dependent on the universities themselves than are confessionally-supported theological or biblical studies. Urgent action is needed, the Conference declares further, if the present dangerous threats are to be averted. It is precisely at this point, they argue, that the universities have to act responsibly to broaden people's knowledge and understanding of the multicultural and multireligious world which is already upon us. The Association already has support from religious and educational leaders and is planning action to highlight the crisis.

For further information please contact:

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From *BAHR Bulletin* 37: July 1982. Editor: Alistair Mason

In this extract from his speech in the House of Lords, Viscount Combermere (1929-2000) makes his protest at the cuts. Michael Combermere, after a career in the Palestine Police, Royal Canadian Mounties and Royal Air Force, did a degree in the study of religions as a mature student at King's College London. He then initiated a new diploma in Religious Studies for the extra-mural department at the University of London and was a lecturer there from 1972-1994. Birkbeck College of Continuing Education, University of London, now offers full degree courses in the field of the study of religions (see *Bulletin* 94: November 2001) and honours Michael Combermere in a named annual lecture. He was chair of the World Congress of Faiths from 1983-1988 and a member of the Shap Working party on World Religions in Education as well as of BAHHR / BASR.

From Hansard, 17th February 1982

An extract from a speech in the Lords. Viscount Combermere

Examples of closure and threats of closure have been, and no doubt will be, given by others, but my own interest being in the area of religious studies, I propose to single out this area just as an example of what could happen when a subject, for which there is little provision in this country, is threatened with the axe. My comments in this area are not in any way intended to diminish the seriousness of what is happening in other faculties but, rather, the reverse: to underline it and, indeed, to indicate that in what are traditionally arts faculties, the implications of drastic cuts can reach well beyond the curtailment of that cultural richness which our people are entitled to enjoy and benefit from and, in fact, extend into the area of politics and economics. However, religious studies, as opposed to traditional courses in theology and biblical studies, is concerned with the modern study of religion, and in particular with the meaning and social relevance of Christianity and other world religions in the world today.

There are very few faculties of religious studies in the universities of this country, yet two of these faculties — at Leicester and Sussex — are threatened with closure. Leicester is only a small department, yet it is the only department that I know of in this country which gives highest place to the study of modern world religions in their social and cultural context. This department's concern is of real social importance, yet it is faced with closure.

The study of world religions in their social and cultural context is not the exclusive concern of a tiny band of academics working in their ivory towers, if such an imaginary group has ever existed, but it is the concern of every thinking person. The biggest damage, however, to this and, indeed, to every subject and faculty on the receiving end of these cuts is to be seen more in the way in which posts are not filled, following early or normal retirement. The effect of this policy of freezing posts is of course quite arbitrary. I will give an example, again from the area of study with which I am most familiar — in other words, religious studies.

At Leeds University, for example, there are three lecturers in each of the three major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. If one of those lecturers retired early and was not replaced, one-third of the provision for religious studies in that faculty would have gone. To give one more example, there are only a handful of lecturers in Islam in faculties of religious study in this country. If, by an unusual combination of circumstances, all these posts became vacant, there would be no provision for the teaching of Islam in faculties of religious study in this country. One needs, for example, only to refer to Shi'a militancy in Iran or to the Moslem Brotherhood's particular brand

of Sunni fundamentalism in Egypt and Syria, in order to underline the necessity for a proper understanding and appreciation of events taking place there. Indeed, one need not look further than our own country and note its increasingly multi-cultural complexion in order to draw attention to the necessity for understanding cultures and religions different from those which we traditionally associate with this country.

To look at this from another angle, the all-party Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts have recommended the approach adopted by Norfolk in its agreed syllabus, which places Christianity at the centre but which also introduces pupils to other religions. How can children be introduced to other religions if there are no teachers qualified in the subject to teach them? For the training of qualified teachers depends on flourishing faculties of theology and religious studies and on PGCE training. So far as the latter is concerned, I am told by the Assistant Principal of the West London Institute of Higher Education that there is a shortage of trainee teachers in religious education and that this shortage is worse in religious education than in mathematics. But instead of matching this shortage, there will be a reduction in both primary and secondary intakes, particularly in PGCE. This is about to happen, in spite of recommendation 17 by the all-party Commons Select Committee, which has come out clearly in favour of more, not less, qualified teachers and inspectors in religious education being appointed.

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

LTSN Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS-LTSN) Subject Centre Development of Faith Guides for Use in Higher Education

It seems that the religious beliefs of individuals are rarely taken into consideration in the design and content of courses in Higher Education (HE). Yet decisions made within HE can have a detrimental effect on people of faith. The PRS-LTSN Subject Centre is seeking to commission a series of guides that will seek to provide individuals, departments, and institutions with tips and resource information on issues relating to teaching people of faith in a HE environment. It is expected that as well as providing basic information these guides could also assist in issues such as recruitment, retention, accessibility, and employability.

There will be an initial series of guides respectively looking at issues involving students who follow Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, the New Age, and Sikhism. There will also be a single 'generic' guide that will address more general issues associated with teaching people of faith. The guides will initially be online resources and will then be produced in hard copy, either as a single volume or as a series of individual guides, each of which would contain the 'generic' guide.

The guides are to be written in a manner that will appeal to an academic who has little knowledge of the subject matter and requires concise but accurate. It is hoped that the first guides will appear in autumn 2003; further guides will be considered depending of funding and feedback.

The guides will be careful to neither promote nor denigrate the beliefs that they discuss, and will need to be conscious of religious diversity, cultural sensitivity, the avoidance of stereotypical assumptions, the domination of specific worldview(s), and religious-cultural blurring.

It is expected that the guides will be relatively informal in style and, where possible, include case studies that will highlight issues and/or provide examples of successful practice. It is expected that they will include a general introduction to the faith, specifically in the UK context; the examination of key sensitivities, particular points of misunderstanding, issues of gender and sexuality, and will provide information on religious practice including ritual, festivals and dress-codes.

In addition to the narrative, each guide will contain a resources section that will include books, Internet links, and addresses of organisations that can provide practical help and advice should the reader wish to investigate a matter further.

The Subject Centre has already consulted widely within the HE sector on what form the guides will take, and will expect authors to continue to

consult with faith, cultural and community groups, chaplains and other campus representatives, and student groups.

As well as providing the means of support for people of faith and the people with whom they interact in HE, we hope that the guides will also help underline the importance of the study of religion in HE and are part of the PRS-LTSN Subject Centre's commitment to promote and raise the profile of the subjects that it supports.

At the time of writing we have not yet obtained authors for all the guides, so if you are interested in developing one (or know of a suitable person — perhaps one of your postgraduates) please contact me <simon@prs-ltsn.ac.uk> for an author's guide. The PRS-LTSN is paying authors an honorarium for each guide.

Simon G. Smith
Centre Manager, PRS-LTSN Subject Centre.

NUMEN

International Review for the History of Missions

Special Offer

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, a special offer is available to new subscribers, who can receive a free book in the Numen book series with their initial subscription.

Further details are available on the publisher Brill's website, at
<www.brill.nl>

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Conference Report on Bergen, 8-10 May 2003 The Globalisation and the Localisation of Religion

Many BASR members will remember the inaugural conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) which BASR hosted in Cambridge in September 2001. A pattern of annual events seems to be establishing itself, and the second EASR conference in September 2002 was in Paris following our London meeting. A report of this by James Cox is in Bulletin 97 (November 2002). The third EASR event was hosted this year in Bergen by the Norwegian Association for the Science of Religions and designated a special conference of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). Various administrative meetings were placed before and after the conference papers, for example the executive of EASR, its general assembly, and meetings of the executive and international committees of IAHR.

The conference was organised in plenary sessions, parallel panels and keynote lectures, with 57 papers mainly in English. UK was well represented in all the layers, Kim Knott (Leeds) giving a plenary session analysis of the innovative research she is developing for a new book on *A spatial analysis of religion: local and global dimensions and processes*, which stimulated a great deal of interest and discussion both formally and informally. Marion Bowman (Open University) gave an exciting and fully illustrated keynote session on her work on Glastonbury which she called *Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem, Heart Chakra of Planet Earth: Globalisation and Localisation in Glastonbury*. This was seen by many as the highlight of the conference. Roland Robertson (Aberdeen) looked at religion, religiosity, theism and civil religion in relation to the EU and the proposed EU constitution. Mona Siddiqui (Glasgow) examined the way in which globalised categories applied to Islam often impede debate and reflection at a local level within individual cultures. James Cox (Edinburgh) discussed the impact of religious studies in Aberdeen on a global interpretation of religion in Africa. Gwilym Beckerlegge (Open University) looked at the conference themes in relation to the history and current issues in the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Christopher Allen (Birmingham) analysed the various factors, both global and local, contributing to anti-Islamic expression in UK. It was particularly good that three of Edinburgh's postgraduate students, Abraham Kovacs, Suzanne Owen and Stephanie Barger received institutional funding to attend the conference and will also be writing a report for the Bulletin on their experience. Other BASR members now working abroad such as Rosalind Hackett (Tennessee, USA) and Michael Pye (Marburg, Germany) played a significant part in the conference events through their executive roles in EASR and IAHR. Altogether there were almost a hundred participants, and the representatives of the professional management firm which organised the event for the

Norwegian Association provided a pleasant information desk and smooth practical arrangements.

The conference provided a stimulating variety of venues and activities in addition to the law faculty building for the formal academic papers. Everything seemed to be about fifteen minutes walk away, with lovely views over water, hills and layered wooden houses. Bergen City gave conference delegates a reception in one of the old wooden buildings, Schotstuene, itself a living museum, in the Hanseatic quarter of the old city near the open air fish and vegetable market. The fiftieth anniversary of *Numen*, the official journal of IAHR, was a cause for another celebratory reception and reminiscences about the journal's history and the contribution of past editors. Brill, which publishes *Numen*, is offering a special anniversary package to all new subscribers to celebrate their fifty years. Anyone interested can consult Brill's website at <www.brill.nl>. There was also a ride up the local funicular to the Floein restaurant on one of Bergen's seven hills which provided stunning views of sea and sky and convivial international conversations. The fourth conference of EASR is to be held in Santander, Spain from 8-11 September 2004 at the invitation of the Spanish Association for the Science of Religions (SECR). The subject is *Religious Tolerance and Intolerance* and the BASR Bulletin will carry all details in due course. Our own BASR fiftieth anniversary conference will be from 13-16 September in Oxford on the theme *The Study of Religions: Mapping The Field*, and we look forward to welcoming some of our European colleagues to this.

REPORT ON THE 28TH SPALDING SYMPOSIUM ON INDIAN RELIGIONS

28-30 March 2003

Dermot Killingley, Newcastle University, opened the Symposium with a paper entitled *Freedom from the world and freedom in the worlds: some Vedic concepts of salvation*. Dr Killingley raised methodological questions about how Vedic texts, and religious texts in general, are to be understood. What reliance should be placed on interpretations within the tradition which holds the text as authoritative? Is it possible or desirable to seek an interpretation independent of that tradition?

Rachel Dwyer (SOAS) offered a paper *Filming the Gods: Religion and Hindi Cinema*, which was wonderfully illustrated and which gave us plenty of reasons to buy her book on Indian cinema to be published next year. Rachel commented that cinema has established itself in India as the dominant form of public culture and is now recognized as a unique form with a global audience, with distinctive features that are not found in other world cinemas, including those which can be labelled 'religious'.

David Webster (University of Gloucestershire) argued in his paper *Desire in the Buddhist Pali Canon* that desire lies at the very heart of Buddhist concerns. Craving (*tanha*) is identified by the Second Noble Truth as the cause of *dukkha*. But does Buddhism condemn all wanting? Buddhism seems to encourage a range of positive spiritual aspirations within us, and would have us still seek goals. There is, he suggested, more to the Buddhist approach to desire than wanting the right thing — we also must want it in the right way.

Damien Keown (Goldsmith's College) in *Cloning the Buddha* brought together Buddhism, modern cloning techniques and humour. The cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1997 brought the loudest condemnation from Christians, who see the creation of human life in the laboratory as an attempt to usurp God's divine prerogative as the author of life. Buddhist groups, by comparison, have made few pronouncements, and hardly anything has been published in the way of position papers or in scholarly journals. Dr Keown posed some basic questions which arise from a Buddhist perspective. Is cloning in accordance with Buddhist ethical teachings? Is it possible to clone a Buddha? Is there a 'Buddha gene'? What is the relation between karma and DNA?

Paul Fuller (Bristol University) in his paper *The nature of ditthi in Theravada Buddhism* observed that the notion of 'view' or 'opinion' (*ditthi*) as an obstacle to 'seeing things as they are' is a central concept in Buddhist thought. He considered the two ways in which the notion of views is usually understood, and asked whether we are to understand right-view as a correction of wrong-views (the opposition understanding) or whether the aim of the Buddhist path is the overcoming of all views, even right-view (the no-views understanding). Paul argued persuasively that neither approach is correct. The attainment of right-view and the practising of no-views amounts to the same thing: an order of seeing which transcends all views.

Justin Meiland (Oxford University) in *The exiled prince and the devoted princess: Comparing images of heroism in the Vessantara Jataka and the Ramayana* compared one of the most famous stories in Theravada Buddhism, the *Vessantara Jataka*, with one of the most famous stories in Hinduism, the *Ramayana*. His paper focused on how the *Vessantara Jataka* creates its own distinct vision of epic heroism by using and adapting similar motifs to those found in the *Aranya Kanda* of the *Ramayana*. By comparing and contrasting the heroes and heroines in the two stories, he elucidated the *Vessantara Jataka*'s complex portrayal of social and renunciate values.

Jacqueline Suthren Hirst (University of Manchester) gave a challenging paper entitled *Weaving the Strands: Cognition, Authority and Language in Samkara's Upadesasahasri*. She informed us that *Upadesasahasri* metric 'chapter' 18 is the most complex of the passages which have been collected

together in Samkara's *Thousand Teachings*. Chapter 18 is entitled 'The chapter on "You are that"' and, because of its focus on this teaching, has been much studied by North Atlantic as well as by Indian commentators. Dr Hirst argued that the structure of the *prakarana* as a whole is important, not least in suggesting how the Advaitin teacher might use its material in drawing the pupil closer to final realisation. She suggested that the text works with four 'strands': on authority, on cognition, on language, and on the central reflection analogy, which it weaves together in a complex pattern to that end.

Martin Ovens (University of Wales) followed on appropriately with a very different approach to Sankara in a paper entitled *Samkara and European Philosophy: Sceptical and Constructive Approaches to Comparison*. Martin argued that analysis of much Samkara-Europe comparative work yields very little of direct philosophical value. Nevertheless, it is possible to consider and explore ways of understanding and applying Advaitic texts. Authentic 'creative encounters' between Samkara and European thinkers are possible.

Uma Dinsmore-Tuli (Sitaram Partnership and Wimbledon School of Art) gave an illustrated presentation seductively entitled *The Veil of Maya and Divine Lila in the Hollywood Experience: cosmic projections and transpersonal cinema*. Hollywood scriptwriters and directors have wrestled the concepts of *maya* and *lila* into some pretty remarkable movies. Strange hybrids of Samkara and special effects, popular films like *The Matrix*, *Dark City*, and *The X Files Movie* struggle to reconcile invincible screen heroes with the powerlessness they experience in the face of grand cosmic projections. In *Point Break*, a renegade surfer named Bodhisattva robs banks to finance his engagement with the awesome power of the ocean, and in *The Truman Show*, the illusory nature of the limits of his human vision are revealed to our eponymous hero as he literally steps behind the veil which marks the end of his world.

Sharada Sugirtharajah (Birmingham University) in *Orientalists and their Hinduisms: A Postcolonial Reading* examined, from a postcolonial perspective, the nineteenth-century European Orientalist engagement with Hinduism, focussing in particular on Max Müller's construction of Hinduism. The aim of her paper was not to discredit the erudite scholarship of Müller but to bring to the fore the hermeneutical factors at work in his approach to the *Veda*, and at work in his comparative study of religions, especially Hinduism and Christianity.

David Smith (Lancaster University) surveyed the life and work of Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890), and assessed his relevance to the western reception of Hinduism in the late nineteenth century. After reference to Jacolliot's best known works, *La Bible dans l'Inde* 1869, *Christna et le Christ* 1874. *Le Spiritisme dans le Monde* 1875, and their influence on H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis*

Unveiled, Dr Smith considered Nietzsche's use of Jacolliot's translation and annotation of the Laws of Manu, and compared Nietzsche's attitudes to caste and race with those of Jacolliot. He also discussed the relation of *Le Spiritisme dans le Monde* 1875 to subsequent European esoteric tradition.

This was the third time that the Symposium had been held at Regent's Park College. The next Symposium will be held from Friday, March 26 to Sunday, 28 March 2004.

Anna King

**ASANAS (Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies) Conference
The Open University, Milton Keynes, England
30 May to 1 June 2003**

The ASANAS conference is a continuation of the annual Contemporary and New Age Religions annual conferences, which began in 1993 at Bath Spa University College, as a small gathering of like-minded researchers. From these small beginnings, this year's ASANAS conference attracted some 200 attendees, including participants from other European countries and the U.S.A.

The name 'ASANAS' indicates a new endeavour at finding an appropriate name for 'New Religious Movements' (NRMs) and 'New Age', both of which have come in for criticism in recent times. Various speakers raised terminological and typological issues regarding the various new forms of spirituality. Did the term 'New Age' ever describe a coherent set of spiritualities? In what sense, if any, is the New Age 'dead'? Does the term 'alternative spirituality' do justice to the phenomenon?

The conference began with presentations from Eileen Barker, 'New Age' author William Bloom, and Prudence Jones, Past President of the Pagan Federation. Barker provided some demographic details about NRMs, and how they served to form group boundaries, while Prudence Jones sought to correct some basic misconceptions of Paganism. Bloom argued that the New Age now formed part of a global culture, and that the strong emphasis given to 'body, mind, spirit' in mainstream bookshops was an indication of its occupying a central role in the spiritual arena.

Bloom was the first of a number of speakers to question the appropriateness of regarding New Age spirituality as 'alternative'. Olav Hammer (University of Amsterdam) argued that the New Age had moved away from being a deviant 'cultic milieu', and that Christianity itself — like the New Age — was not monolithic, and offered a number of alternative

spiritualities. Paul Heelas — one of four keynote speakers — described the recent ‘Kendal project’ (an extensive study of religious and spiritual communities in Kendal), suggesting that, if the present decline in traditional religion continues, coupled with the growth of alternative spiritualities and therapies, new spirituality will have overtaken the old in Kendal by the year 2035!

Other keynote speakers argued for the retention of the term ‘New Age’. Christoph Bochinger acknowledged that it was a ‘fuzzy term’, but argued that fuzzy terms were nonetheless useful. Wouter Hanegraaff, speaking on ‘Swedenborg and New Age Religions’ said it was a useful ‘theoretical construct’, and the question of whether the term might function ‘etically’, if not ‘emically’ was raised at various junctures in the duration of the conference. Hanegraaff argued that New Age ideas had become assimilated within mainstream society and religion, and hence it was difficult to disentangle the two. Other speakers commented on the term ‘spirituality’, and there were differences of opinion as to whether one could speak of a ‘spirituality’ that was not identifiable with any particular religious expression of it.

Issues of mapping new forms of spirituality inevitably arose. Michael York — another keynote speaker — raised the question of the relationship between Paganism and New Age. Despite the Pagans’ attempts to distance themselves from New Age, the latter was in fact a subset of Paganism: the development of Paganism as a discrete religion that attempted to revive a pre-Christian spirituality, came later. Paganism featured largely in two of the sessions, and others dealt with related concepts such as Teen Witchcraft, which appears to be receiving increasing academic attention, as well as indigenous religions.

The esoteric tradition featured prominently in a number of presentations throughout the conference. Astrology occupied one major slot, and reappeared in several other sessions. Much attention was given to the roots of esotericism, Emanuel Swedenborg, Gurdjieff and Theosophy being identified as important precursors. However, several speakers drew attention to the fact that this is true predominantly of the American and British tradition, but that different influences are at work in other parts of Europe. Daren Kemp examined some key New Age writers in France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain, while George Ronnevig focused on the New Age in Norway, and Peter Clarke and Inken Prohl examined aspects of new spirituality in Japan.

Despite the apparent ‘fuzziness’ of New Age, a session on ‘New Age and Modernity’ highlighted the ways in which the New Age is, to a significant degree, becoming organized, and caught up in wider societal phenomena such as secularisation, capitalism and globalisation. Reference was made at various points in the conference to the relationship between

New Age and commercial publishing, and its self-promotion at commercial events such as Mind-Body-Spirit festivals. A relationship with capitalism is further forged by the 'management ASANAS', which occupied two full sessions.

A UFO-religions session got off the ground, despite technological hitches and some uncertainty about which speakers had arrived: Mikael Rothstein spoke on first generation UFO-contactees, George Chryssides on Heaven's Gate, and Susan Palmer on the Raëlians.

The content of all these various and distinctive belief systems inevitably raises the issue of how people are persuaded to join, what their state of mental health is, and whether they suffer from delusions. Interestingly, the panel on 'Psychological ASANAS', which included two experimental psychologists, one clinical psychologist and a psychiatrist, found no evidence that those who espoused alternative spiritualities were in a worse state of mental health than the rest of the western population.

Finally, LTSN had a presence at the conference. A rather thinly-attended, but nonetheless important, seminar discussed the place of New Age and new spirituality studies in the teaching of RS, their new proposed guides on 'People of Faith in the HE Environment', and whether New Age ideas might themselves be taught in the classroom. (A separate report from LTSN on these issues can be found elsewhere in the *BASR Bulletin*.)

All in all, some 65 papers were presented at this important conference: space does not permit reference to each and every presentation, even if had been possible to trek round them all. Marion Bowman, Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis are to be congratulated on their excellent organization of the event: their efforts have been well worthwhile.

George Chryssides

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Religion-secular dichotomy: historical formations in colonial contexts

University of Stirling: 4-6 July, 2003

The idea behind the conference is that the religion-secular dichotomy is a contested modern category that arose as a result of complex economic and political developments in metropolitan and colonial sites. Different researchers will focus their contributions on different regions and periods in the long history of European world power, from the early contact of Portuguese and Spanish in Central America up to the American-dominated post-colonial present. Taking into account the long period of history and the different cultural contexts involved, the conference will explore the emergence of the category 'religion', its distinction from 'the secular', and its importance in the establishment of different phases of world trade and capitalism. The argument underlying the conference is that colonial powers facilitated the transplantation of institutions such as capitalist markets, representative government, human rights, compulsory schooling, new concepts of labor, exchange and ownership, by insisting on the adoption by the non-western culture of a separation of church and state and a concept of freedom of religion or worship. A key question for presentations at this conference is why the distinction between the secular and the religious was and is ideologically important, how that distinction manifested in power relations and what its general function has been in classifying and ordering the world for Euro-America.

Please visit our website for conference
details and registration information:
http://mysite.freeseerve.com/religion_secular/

Contact Information:

Dr. Timothy Fitzgerald & Kate S Kelley
Department of Religious Studies
University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland
www.stir.ac.uk
religionsecular@yahoo.co.uk

International Sacred Media Conference
10-13 July 2003
Jyväskylä, Finland

The topics of the conference are:

- Religion and terrorism
- Western media facing otherness
- Sacred technology
- Global media ethics

The topics of the sessions are:

- Religion as news
- Visual truth and reality
- Myths, icons and narratives in media contents
- Western media facing otherness
- Religion and technology
- Global media ethics
- Theoretical and methodological challenges of research on media and religion

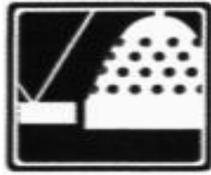
For further information, please check this site: <www.sacredmedia.jyu.fi>

University of Gloucestershire
'Islam in Britain', a one-day conference in Islamic Studies
November 2003
Call for Papers

The annual conference in Islamic Studies at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, School of Humanities, in the University of Gloucestershire invites papers on the above theme.

The conference is usually well attended by academics, students and some members of the public including Muslims. One hour is allotted for each of five papers, including some time for questions and discussion.

Intending speakers are requested to send the title and an abstract of about 250 words to Dr Theodore Gabriel, Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Francis Close Campus, University of Gloucestershire, Swindon Road, GL50 4AZ (E-mail: <tgabriel@glos.ac.uk>; fax: 01242 543314)



RELIGIOUS STUDIES: WHAT'S THE POINT?
Lancaster University

15th-16th December 2003

A two day conference jointly organised by the
**Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre of the
Learning and Teaching Support Network (PRS-LTSN)**
and the
Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University

Starting from a consideration of the impact of **Ninian Smart** on the teaching of Religious Studies, this conference focuses on issues crucial to the field at the beginning of the 21st century and in the years after Smart's death. The question 'What's the point?' has multiple nuances, and starts from a premise intrinsic to Smart's work — that studying religion in comparative contexts is a vital academic discipline and worthwhile exercise that can widen horizons and deeper understandings of the world around us. It continues into the contemporary arguments — over whether 'religion' is a viable topic of analysis and whether 'Religious Studies' should exist at all as a field of study. Between these perspectives lies a host of questions relating to the ways we study, analyse and teach religion — from 'universalist' and 'comparativist', to 'particularist' positions. Linked to these broader areas of discussion are other basic questions: the language and the terms we use (or seek to avoid) in the research and pedagogy associated with the teaching of Religious Studies; and especially, how we deal with terms and words that have particularist orientations or value-laden meanings (e.g. fundamentalism, cult, millenarian) specific to certain cultural discourses, but that come to be applied to other cultures areas, and contexts.

One of the events in the conference will be a public debate between scholars from Lancaster University who take opposed positions on some of these issues, specifically the value of a broadly comparativist perspective akin to the basic foundations of Religious Studies as it developed in the UK; compared with a more particularist approach that challenges the underlying foundations of Religious Studies and, while not actively promoting its demise, seeks a new way for its future.

Papers are sought (approx. 25 minutes speaking time per paper) on topics relevant to the wider themes as set out above. Among the topics that might be explored and questions asked are:

- The end of universalism and the dawn of particularism?
- Is there a subject to study and teach anymore?
- How do we deal with Smart's seven dimensions of religion in the context of contemporary debates about 'religion'?
- Are there terms and vocabularies that should be taboo in teaching and studying the field?
- Can we transplant terminologies seemingly derived in Western contexts into other cultures and fields?
- What alternative ways of studying and teaching non-western traditions in the western academy are possible if the conception of Religious Studies derived from Ninian Smart were to be abandoned?

Please send outlines or abstracts (c. 200 words approx) **by 14 June 2003** to:
Ian Reader and Paul Heelas

Department of Religious Studies

Lancaster University

Lancaster LA1 4YG

Email (send to both please): <i.reader@lancaster.ac.uk> and

<p.heelas@lancaster.ac.uk>

'AFRICAN AND AFRICAN-DERIVED RELIGIONS'

at

Bath Spa University College

8 – 11 SEPTEMBER 2003

THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN CANCELLED

**The Society of Christian Philosophers and
British Society for the Philosophy of Religion
Joint 2003 Conference at
Lady Margaret Hall , University of Oxford**

**Religion and Ethics
Wednesday 6 August to Friday 8 August**

Cost: £205 (residential, en-suite facilities); £195 (standard plus bedroom); £185 (standard bedroom): including all meals, etc., and includes a £25 non returnable deposit and registration fee. Reductions for graduate students.

Further details from: Mr Peter Mitchell, Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EW. Email: <pjm59@cam.ac.uk>

The cost of the Conference as a resident member will be £205 for an en-suite bedroom, £195 for a standard plus bedroom and £185 for a standard bedroom including all meals etc. In each case this includes Non resident members will be liable for a £15 registration fee plus the cost of any meals. It is essential to book these meals beforehand. Those resident members not able to stay full time will be charged at a pro-rata rate so long as this is indicated on the booking form.

**Network for the Study of Implicit Religion, and
Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion & Contemporary Spirituality**

27th Weekend, Denton Hall, Ilkley: inter-disciplinary, international, £125 all-inclusive: 6 p.m. Friday 7 May – 3 p.m. Sunday 9 May 2004

21st Short Course, Implicit Religion & Religious Education: Cold Ash, Berkshire: 5 pm Friday 12 September – 5 pm Saturday 13th September 2003, £60 all-inclusive

69th Churches' Study Day: Peter Brierley, Key Issues in Today's Church. 10 – 3.30, Thursday 23 October 2003, Winterbourne Rectory, Bristol (donation)

Contact: Edward Bailey, 95 High Street, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1RD: 01454 776518; <eibailey@csircs.freeseve.co.uk>

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
(IAHR)**

21-30 March 2005

Tokyo, Japan

Theme: 'Religion, Conflict and Peace'

Further details will be announced in due course. Panels of contributions need to be defined early, however, and proposals of panels for conference sessions should be sent to Gerrie Ter Haar **by 31 December 2003**.

E-mail: <TERHAAR@iss.nl>

III. RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE U.K. (Occasional series)

**An Innovatory Course - Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
at Bath Spa University College**

All religions have a cosmology. Some adopt specific positions in relation to astronomy and astrology as did the Vatican when it prohibited both divination from the stars and Galileo's propagation of the sun-centred Copernican universe in the space of a generation. Now, for the first time, the uses and abuses of the sky by religion, as well as by politicians, artists, psychologists and scientists, is the focus of a new course at Bath Spa University College.

The MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology (CA&A) has its roots in developments, mainly in the USA in the 1990s, amongst astronomers who became increasingly dissatisfied at the extent of academic ignorance of astronomy's cultural impact. But its origins date back to the beginning of the twentieth-century and the realisation by historians such as Lynn Thorndike at Columbia, that the history of astrology is critical to an understanding of the development of western thought.

The MA has been created by Michael York, well known for his expertise in the New Age and contemporary paganism, Nick Campion, who is completing his PhD on contemporary astrology in the Study of Religions department at Bath Spa, and Patrick Curry, whose speciality is the history of

early-modern and modern astrology and the philosophy of science. The MA was launched in October 2002 and the first wave of students will be graduating in 2004. (The MA currently has 13 students).

Although the MA is taught within the Sophia Centre, part of the School of Historical and Cultural Studies, close personal relations are maintained with the Study of Religions department and CA&A students are able to take one of two modules from the Study of Religions MA — either the New Age or Sacred Geography, both taught by Michael York.

So far six Cultural Astronomy and Astrology modules have been devised:

1. Introduction to Cultural Astronomy and Astrology (compulsory).

Includes introductory classes on science, religion, myth, divination, archaeoastronomy, astrology and new cosmologies

2. Research methods (compulsory).

The emphasis is on qualitative methods and a phenomenological perspective. Guest lecturers included Marion Bowman.

3. History of Astrology

Deals with the development and history of western astrology from ancient times to the present day, with philosophical and religious strands, including Neoplatonism and Renaissance Hermeticism, as underlying themes.

4. Psychological Perspectives

Examines the twin questions of psychological attitudes to astrology, with an emphasis on Carl Jung's alchemy and cosmology, and the psychologisation of astrology in the twentieth-century.

5. Science and Scepticism

Covers critiques of astrology beginning with classical scepticism and the Church Fathers' attacks on astrology as pagan, and continues to examine the issues arising from contemporary scientific examination of astrology.

6. Stellar Religion

Ranges from sacred calendars, ancient Egyptian cosmology and theology, the religious context of modern Indian astrology, contemporary pagan cosmologies, Christian attitudes to astrology to UFO cults.

And

7. Sacred Geography — a module held jointly with the Study of Religions Department

Examines attitudes to sacred space from ancient stone circles to modern Glastonbury mysticism.

The MA's innovative significance within the larger area of the study of religions lies in its emphasis on the use that religion has made of the sky as the basis of ritual calendars, a source of meaning, a moral guide and a location for divinity. Such issues are often critical, as the importance of disputes over the date of Easter in Christianity make clear. Yet they are often now forgotten: not many people now realise why Christ's resurrection is celebrated on the first 'sun's day' following the first full moon after the spring equinox, the date when day and night, light and dark, are equally balanced.

There are also contemporary cosmologies which receive little academic attention. One of the greatest is the phenomenon of popular astrology, a topic which exercises many minds but into which there has been almost no research, even though figures for readership of horoscope columns are as high as 80 per cent amongst women. The question of alien abduction is also a pressing one, mainly in the USA, and presents a form of human contact with the sky rivalled only by the continuing presence of angels and demons in some evangelical Christianity.

The Sophia Centre's inaugural conference on 'Astrology and the Academy' will be held on June 13-14 with Ronald Hutton and Liz Greene as keynote speakers. The second conference will be held in June 2004 under the broader title 'Exploring Consciousness'. The Call for Speakers is given below. We welcome all interest, inquiries and suggestions for either the conference, further courses, research opportunities and links with other institutions.

For further details email Alice Ekrek on <a.ekrek@bathspa.ac.uk> or go online at <www.bathspa.ac.uk/sophia>, or call 01225 876147.

Nick Campion

EXPLORING CONSCIOUSNESS

**An Interdisciplinary Conference hosted by the
Centre for the Study of Cultural Astronomy and Astrology.**

Bath Spa University College, 10-13 June 2004.

www.bathspa.ac.uk/sophia

Call for Papers

The connection between the cosmos and consciousness has fascinated and inspired human beings for thousands of years. It has given us rich mythologies and cosmologies. Is the cosmos alive and intelligent? Or is consciousness the bi-product of brain chemistry? We invite papers which will address the twin themes of cosmos and consciousness through the arts, psychology, poetry, science, mythology, archaeology, pharmacology, history and philosophy.

Potential speakers should submit an abstract of around 100 -200 words to Alice Ekrek <a.ekrek@bathspa.ac.uk>

IV. BOOK REVIEW

Edward Hulmes (2002). *The Spalding Trust and The Union for The Study of The Great Religions: H. N. Spalding's Pioneering Vision*. Durham: The Memoir Club. ISBN 1 84104 040 1 (hbk).

Bulletin readers will know the name of The Spalding Trust from its generous support to both institutions, academic enterprises and individual scholars in the study of religions. There is a note about its work in the (then) BAHR's Bulletin No. 26, February 1979. The book under review is of interest because it shows something of the orientation and agenda from the beginning of the Spalding family Trusts (1923 and 1928 are significant dates for these), and of the two men most involved in funding and overseeing their work, H. N. Spalding (1877-1953) and K. D. D. Henderson (1903-1988). The author of the volume has been associated with the Trust since 1974 and acknowledges that his book does not pretend to offer a comprehensive history, but is 'a memoir rather than a formal biography' intended to be 'an affectionate, though not uncritical tribute to the work of the two principal

figures in the history of the Union and The Trust'. These two were not themselves scholars in a strict academic sense but were 'scholarly men'. They were not interested in promoting the study of what Spalding called 'the Great Religions' for its own sake. 'The advocacy of such study was explicitly intended by both men to serve what they believed to be a vital purpose, namely that of helping to promote unity and peace in a world convulsed by dissension and violence. They believed that beneath the outward differences of religious names and forms there lies a unity of religious experience and aspiration'. To study the religions of the world (so they believed) is 'first to sense and then to reveal this unity'. There are also two key women in the story. Monies from K.N. Spalding's mother, Ellen Rebe Spalding, were incorporated into the Spalding family benefactions in 1938. Nellie Maud Emma Spalding inherited wealth which made it possible for her husband, K. N. Spalding, 'to leave paid employment and devote himself to a prolonged exploration and exposition of what he called *The Divine Universe* (the title of one of his books published by Basil Blackwell in 1958). With his wife's full approval, H. N. assumed the responsibility of managing the family's finances'.

Oxford figures largely in the book, the two main protagonists meeting there over breakfast in 1922 and Spalding living with his family and entertaining many visitors, firstly in a house he built on Shotover in 1925 and then at 9 South Parks Road. The prominence of Oriel College on the cover and a foreword by the present Provost of Oriel seem to be personal to Edward Hulmes' connection with that college, though Spalding also funded a research fellowship in Indian Studies there in the years shortly before the outbreak of the second world war (no exact dates or holders of the fellowship given). Perhaps a photograph of All Souls, where the Spalding Professors of Eastern Religions and Ethics have held their fellowships, would have been a more obvious choice. The photographs within the book are an interesting mixture, and include portrait style examples of key family members who have chaired the Trust and of the body of Trustees up to 2000. But many evoke an earlier lifestyle of privilege and leisure which seems to have little to do with the serious vision of the two men, although it was what made their activities possible. For example there is a picture of the nude bathing at Parson's Pleasure which was close to Spalding's South Parks Road home in Oxford and which he is said to have enjoyed; another of entertaining for tea in the garden of the Spalding's Henley house; of H. N. at the Henley Regatta and one of the Hendersons relaxing in the garden of their country home.

What most interests me about the book is the story it tells of the interaction between wealthy benefactors who have a clear agenda and academics who vary in their reactions and interactions to what can be seen

as ‘support’ or ‘interference’ accompanying major funding. It highlights issues that remain with us in these days of economic hardship in higher education and the increasing encouragement to seek private benefactors. These are issues of academic integrity and the maintenance of intellectual independence in academic life. It is stated that Henderson ‘took an interest in the professional bodies working in the widening field of world religions’ (p.160) but minute 6 of the first meeting of the then British Section of the International Association for the History of Religions (BS-IAHR, which was BAHR and BASR’s precursor) at Exeter College in September 1954 states that ‘the possibility of linking up the British Section with other British organizations interested in the subject was discussed, but it was felt advisable to avoid affiliation with any such body having an ideological flavour’.

There are no further details of the discussion, but it *may* have been influenced by the rancour generated in the appointment in 1952 of R. C. Zaehner to follow S. Radhakrishnan in the Spalding Chair in Eastern Religions and Ethics in Oxford. Spalding had been pleased with Radhakrishnan’s work and the two men had seen eye-to-eye, but he was not pleased with the election of Zaehner, and in his inaugural lecture in November 1953 Zaehner challenged Spalding’s ideals. His lecture was later published as *Foolishness to the Greeks*, in which he says ‘The promotion of understanding between the great religions can hardly be pursued in a British University’. In September 1956 Zaehner was invited to give the main paper at the third annual meeting of BS-IAHR, but in that same year K. D. D. Henderson, listed as Secretary of the Union for the Study of the Great Religions, applied for membership and was accepted, according to the minutes of BS-IAHR.

It is unclear from my examination of membership listings, attendances and apologies, whether Zaehner ever joined. There was, though, some positive interaction between the Union and BS-IAHR membership. Hulmes says ‘It is somewhat ironic that as things developed, H. N. Spalding’s ambitious plans for the widest possible inclusion of the study of world religions in education were never to be fulfilled by the post he had created in Oxford for precisely that purpose, when his programme was at least partly to be followed thirty years later at Lancaster’ (p.119). Hulmes then quotes a memorandum written by members of the BS-IAHR for the newsletter of the Union for the Study of the Great Religions 23 February 1967. It is signed by E. O. James, G. Parrinder, R. A. Barclay, J. Bowker, S. G. F. Brandon, R. Clark, R. Hammer, H. D. Lewis, T. Ling, N. Smart, J. Taylor and C. G. Williams.

We the undersigned, are members of the British Section of the International Association for the History of Religions. We are deeply

concerned that there should be a proper expansion of the teaching of comparative religion in our educational system. ...

It should also be recognised that comparative religion can play an important social role in helping to create a better understanding of the different cultural backgrounds of African and Asian people resident in this country.

In Bulletin 32, November 1980 pages 10-12, Ursula King wrote an article about the Union for the Study of the Great Religions, founded in Oxford in 1950 by Spalding, Radhakrishnan and Raven and with worldwide membership of both scholars and religious leaders. It was very committed to the academic development of the subject and 'played an influential part in the negotiations leading up to the foundation of the School of World Religion at Harvard', but ceased to exist when many founder members died. Wilfred Cantwell Smith of that Centre gained a great deal of support from the British scene and was a member of BS-IAHR / BAHHR / BASR till his death.

According to the minutes of the 1985 AGM. printed in BAI-IR *Bulletin* 47, November 1985, K. D. D. Henderson was made an honorary life member in that year. When he died in 1988, both Geoffrey Parrinder and Ursula King wrote about his contribution in the BAHHR's *Bulletin* No 56, November 1988. Geoffrey Parrinder remarks 'We shall long remember Bill for his friendship, his willingness to help in practical ways, and his profound concern for religious tolerance'. Ursula King remembers the support of 'Bill' via the Spalding Trust for students involved in the Community Religions Project at Leeds, his understanding and encouraging presence at BS-IAHR / BAHHR meetings, and his support for the World Congress of Faiths (another tribute is in *World Faiths Insight*, October 1988).

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, which began in 1969 and which is a professional association bringing together people from universities, colleges, local education authorities and schools, is also mentioned in Hulmes' book and it is obvious from an obituary for Henderson written by John Hinnells in 1989 for Shap's annual publication *World Religions in Education* how important the contribution of Spalding had been in kick-starting Shap.

From the point of view of scholarly research, I should have liked even fuller details in chapter six on 'The Continuing Work of the Trust.' The chronology is a little confusing in a book that tends throughout to be repetitive, not least here. One might at first think that chapter six will deal with the years after Henderson's death in 1988, but it summarises some earlier initiatives, without making it completely clear how they involve the Trust's financial backing or, as in the case of two publishing series by

George Allen and Unwin and O.U.P. which involved A. J. Arberry (a Spalding Trustee), whether the links are mainly ideological. It is in a footnote that one finds that it is Arberry's secretarial expenses while editing the series that the Trust seems to have covered. I was not sure from reading the relevant paragraph whether the 'support' for the journal *Religious Studies* when it began in 1965 (four members of the first editorial board had Spalding links) has continued or not. One major omission seems to be mention of the grant given in recent years to the Symposium on Indian Religions which meets in Oxford annually and which has born the Spalding name since 1995. Some of the Trust's enterprises have been continuous, like the Spalding Chair in Oxford, some have started and stopped or been transferred, like the Wolfson College, Oxford fellowships to Clare College, Cambridge.

Appendix One outlines the 1953 Direction to The Trustees updating the original Spalding family Trusts documents from 1923, 1928 and 1938. Appendix two lists the members at its foundation in 1954 of the coordinating committee of the Union for the Study of the Great Religions and its area secretaries, all academics and in the latter case in different areas of the world. There is also a list of the Advisory Council and Founding Members of the Union, which seems to include only three women amongst its sixty participants. Appendix three gives the names of Spalding Trustees since 1953 with their dates of service. There is also a select bibliography and useful index.

The vision of these men is worthy, and much has been achieved that would not have been done without them. But, in many academics' eyes, their agenda was inappropriate for the university. Where it has been continued most explicitly is in the important work of various interfaith movements, most of which have an educational outreach. Henderson was, for example a Vice-President of the World Congress of Faiths and would have been very supportive of the more recent United Religions Initiative. Academically, there is now much more acknowledgement of the negative as well as the positive influence of religions and of diversity rather than core experience, of the challenge of outsiders looking in and questioning of the category 'religion' let alone of 'great' and 'world' religions, and the relationship of the field to cultural studies. Yet their positive stance and clarity about the point of religious studies set an affirming context for many of those working in the field. As mentioned above, R. C. Zaehner, the second holder of the Spalding Chair in Eastern Religions and Ethics, reacted against Spalding's agenda in a rather dramatic way and one which soured relationships for a long time. The issues are significant enough to be reported in Eric Sharpe's *Comparative Religion: A History* as well as in Hulmes' text. But Zaehner's stance, too, is a dated perspective, or at least, only one controversial perspective amongst the many that are now an

important part of both the content and the multi-disciplinary approaches in the field of the study of religions. The other important and related area that the contents of this book bring to the fore, as mentioned above, is that of the relationships of benefactors and those engaged in academic work, or rather the relationships between the agendas of each. The ideal from an academic perspective is for benefactors to have enough trust in academic integrity to fund posts or institutes without strings and interference. Spalding was hurt when his plans for a new institute in Oxford to replace the existing Indian Institute, to be called Asia House and to be a kind of 'Rhodes House for Asians' were rejected. But any academic looking at his plans (page 129) from the point of view of both terminology and geographical compartmentalisation is bound to be critical.

This book is a 'good read', full of anecdotes and insights into, particularly, the cutting nature of Oxford controversy (see Evans-Pritchard's comments on Radhakrishnan on page 112!). It is also often repetitive and does not present events as systematically as those not already familiar with the material might wish. Having said all this, many will have first hand experience of how important the Spalding support (without any agenda) has been to them and the continuance of this support and the academic work that results from it is the most important memoir of all.

Peggy Morgan

V. TURNING POINT

Frank Whaling: Harvard and Wilfred Cantwell Smith

This writer arrived at Harvard in September 1969. He took with him degrees in History and Theology, four years experience of living in India, a working knowledge of Hindi and Hindustani, experience of dialogue with other religions from a Christian base in Varanasi (Banaras) and Faizabad (near Ayodhya), and a pragmatically acquired knowledge of India generally and Hinduism in particular gained partly through being manager of a college of 2,000 students and partly through Indian friends such as Pundit Ambika Datta Upadhyaya. . This writer's first book had also been written in India. What I did not have was an academic training in Religious Studies or a deep awareness of the issues in the academic study of religion. This was obtained at Harvard, which for me and for many others was a turning point, especially through contact with many fine minds, above all through contact with Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

Harvard in 1969 had undergone significant student turmoil centred upon the twin issues of the Vietnam war and Black Consciousness. The 1969 May

exams had been cancelled for the first and only time in Harvard's history. Peripherally one could not help getting involved in student issues and the American trauma and it was an exciting if chaotic time. However with two small children and an exacting schedule there was little time to get deeply involved in outside matters. In any case Harvard itself had so much to offer.

The Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions was like a motel with 25 apartments containing people, mainly families, from many countries and many religious traditions of the world. Thus there was a Muslim Arab in the next apartment to a Jew, and there were Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Christians living and studying side-by-side. In spite of the rigorous programme there was ample opportunity to get to know one another over coffee, tea and dinner, in informal discussions and dialogues, in the silent meditation organised by Raimundo Panikkar, or in the weekly Wednesday evening colloquium which was one of Smith's innovations. We were all, including families (if possible), morally bound to go to the Wednesday evening colloquium where we listened to and discussed with world-class visiting scholars and occasionally gave papers ourselves. The Center was not just an academic institution it was also a forum for dialogues and friendships, spread over cultures and religions, which have lasted down the years. Sadly it has now reverted to being just another academic programme.

We grappled in class with fine minds. From Daniel Ingalls I learnt Sanskrit, from Yerushalmi Judaism, from Anne-Marie Schimmel Islam, from Mas Nagatomi Buddhism, from John Carman Hinduism and Methodology, from Niebuhr and Gordon Kaufman Christianity. From others such as Raimundo Panikkar came further insights. However the jewel in the crown was Wilfred Cantwell Smith who was then at the height of his powers. He was a humble, unassuming, and slightly diffident man, in spite of having five children (!), who had no pretensions about building up a school of Smithians on the lines of the Chicago School forming around Mircea Eliade. He made sure that the academic programme was intensive. For example I was required to 'have' Latin, Greek, French, German and Hebrew as well as four years of Sanskrit, and to sit the gargantuan famous (or infamous) General Exams in Hinduism, History of Religions, Methodology, and Theology, before writing a thesis. For my karma I did the ThD which was harder than the PhD. But alongside the exacting study there was the virtually day-to-day contact with Wilfred Cantwell Smith who had his family apartment alongside his students. There was contact with a great mind which was exact in scholarship — his books were known to have 150 pages of text and 150 pages of notes — but which was also wide-roving, insatiably curious, deeply intellectual, and creatively stimulating. It was an education to see the wheels of his mind go round as he pursued a point or tackled a problem. His aim was to get us to think rather than to create a school of followers. Ironically such is the way of the world that if he had created a school of followers his

ideas would probably have been even more influential than has been the case. In the nature of things Smith's students, such as Diana Eck and Bill Graham who are now professors at Harvard, and people like myself scattered around the world, were influenced by him, mainly positively, but we would not consider ourselves to belong to a Wilfred Cantwell Smith School.

What then were some of the ideas that Smith floated in our direction? Let me briefly summarise seven. In the first place came his bombshell attack upon the concept of 'religion'. He argued that the concept itself and the notion of 'religions' as watertight reified entities were unhelpful and even dangerous. Religion could mean different and conflicting things. It could mean religion as personal piety, religion as an ideal, religion as a socio-cultural phenomenon, or religion as an academic discipline separate from other disciplines. Religions in the sense of 'isms' such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, etc, were academically constructed entities, deriving mainly from western scholarship since the Enlightenment, which 'thingified' and distorted the reality of 'religion' both in history and in life. For him the words 'religion' and 'religions' had become confusing and counter-productive and should be dropped. They should be replaced by the terms 'faith' and 'cumulative tradition' which indicated better and more clearly what Religious Studies was really all about. As has been pointed out it was possible for Smith's new terms to become reified as well. However the notion of talking about religious traditions rather than religions has become reasonably common since he suggested the idea, and the debate about the meaning and end of religion, which was the title of his book, has raged on ever since.

Secondly his view of the study of religion as being primarily about persons within religious traditions rather than about reified entities or sociological phenomena or theological systems was an attempt to humanise the discipline in a Martin Buber I-Thou kind of direction. On the one hand Smith eventually pioneered a Religious Studies enterprise in Harvard Yard in the Harvard Humanities set-up so that it was separate both from Divinity and from the Social Sciences. On the other hand for him Religious Studies was the study by scholars as persons of the persons in various religious traditions involving dialogue between scholars from different traditions, and ultimately colloquium in which in principle they all engaged together. This was not a glorification of persons on the lines of Carlyle's heroes but a plea that religious persons, indeed persons in general, should be taken with absolute seriousness, academically and in life, in the sense that all human beings are 'persons'. This insight has not lost its resonance. Nor has the movement of Religious Studies from semi-capitulation to Theology to sometimes more than semi-capitulation to the Social Sciences removed the

need for its humaneness as a Humanity to be taken seriously. Religious Studies remains a key humane academic discipline in its own right.

In the third place Smith helped to pioneer the notion that it was possible, in his contemporary situation, to conceptualise a global history of religion ranging from Palaeolithic humans to the present day. A start was being made in this direction by scholars such as Trevor Ling in his *History of Religion: East and West*. Smith had a more radical sense of what was involved in that he saw the importance of new finds of caches of religious material but he also saw the importance of bringing a global perspective to bear upon all the material so that the history of religion could be presented not just in side-by-side narratives but in a truly global sweep. This remains to be done and it is surely a contribution that the study of religion can make on behalf of wider scholarship.

Fourthly, and arising from the last point, Smith desired to move academically beyond a purely western approach to the study of religion. He saw the need to appoint scholars from the religious tradition concerned to teach that tradition; he saw the need to take seriously the insights of scholars of other traditions; he saw the need to involve scholars from other traditions in writing books about their tradition (and if competent about other traditions); at McGill he had set up a programme of Islamic Studies composed (in principle) of equal numbers of western and Muslim students. It is a cause for deep concern that Religious Studies has in some ways become more western than less western in recent years in personnel, methodology and style. This is partly due to post-modernism which is ineluctably western in provenance but also involved is the sense that western secular and scientific categories are the norms into which it is requisite for all disciplines to fit. In our age of post-colonialism is this not an implicit reversion to colonialism of a different kind?

Fifthly, and again the point is allied to the past two points, Smith looked for verification in religious scholarship in multi-faceted directions. If a western scholar was writing about a non-western religious tradition he required one examiner, in principle, to be from the tradition concerned and another to be a scholar not involved in that tradition. If the PhD thesis was comparative in the sense of involving two traditions then examiners from both traditions should be involved along with an uninvolved scholar. In other words verification concerning scholarship about another religious tradition should be adjudicated by reference to the tradition concerned as well as by reference to outside scholarship. In practice of course Smith meant that the examiner from the other tradition should be liberal rather than traditionally conservative but the point still stands.

Sixthly Smith's main interests were in the major and minor living religious traditions of the world and in creative secular humanism rather than in primal religions, new religious movements, dead religious traditions, and

secular 'religions' such as Marxism. Had he ever got round to writing a global history of religion it would have been necessary for him to widen his interests. In his concern for the contemporary he was more similar to someone like Ninian Smart than to Eliade and the main continental scholars whose concerns were more in the direction of archaic, classical and pre-modern religion. For Smith the study of religion was relevant to contemporary life. Religion was an integral part of contemporary life. Its mature insights were vital for contemporary life. His criteria for deciding what is a major religious tradition were, paradoxically, that it should have produced or substantially contributed to a major civilisation and that it should have known a certain longevity. However this was not necessarily to downplay primal religious traditions, new religious movements, new age spirituality and so on. He was aware of them but life was short and it was necessary to put them into a wider perspective. He saw clearly, perhaps before his time, that the West was the main problem and that it could even endanger the world, and yet it was important. But it needed to move in a global direction not only in the sense of expanding multi-national companies but by taking seriously the other major civilisations, by seeing them in their human dimension, by seeing the whole in the light of the looming ecological crisis, and by seeing the relevance of religious traditions to world civilisations both in a particular and in a universal sense. His insight was that modernisation did not need to be universal westernisation and his views are being partly vindicated in the present situation wherein Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Muslim, Orthodox, Latin American and other cultures are adapting, or occasionally not adapting, to modernity (or post-modernity) in their own indigenous way. Smith combined a sense that the contemporary world was important for Religious Studies, and therefore that contemporary major and minor traditions were important, with a sense that Religious Studies was significant for contemporary academic life globally and for the contemporary actuality of life globally.

In the seventh place Smith was interested in the question as to whether it was possible to conceptualise a world theology of religion. He was writing not as a Christian theologian, as or any other kind of particular theologian, but as a scholar of religion concerned about global religious truth. He saw truth as being more personal than propositional. He saw that in practice 'truths' had to some extent passed over between religious traditions in unexpected and unique ways. In the modern situation and in climactic earlier situations it was and had been possible to 'pass over' into other traditions and inter-borrow concepts which in any case were second-order categories. This led him in two directions. Before he went to Birmingham to give the Cadbury Lectures in 1970 he discussed some of the issues with me. Sadly I was too new to them to help as much as I would have liked. Those lectures

had a deep influence upon our colleague John Hick in that Smith pointed out that religious traditions were not ends in themselves, they were moving and changing, and were means to the end that human beings could lead fulfilled lives under transcendence and move from self-centredness to faithful lives under transcendence.

On the one hand this fed into Hick's preference for pluralism rather than inclusivism or exclusivism as the appropriate attitude towards other religious traditions and to the lively debate that has ensued since. On the other hand Smith's search was deeper than a quest for the appropriate attitude towards other traditions. It was for a theology that would be in some sense Christian yet more than Christian, that would be Buddhist yet more than Buddhist, and so on — for a theology that would be a world theology. In spite of Kung's global ethic and many other straws in the theological and quasi-theological wind, present global circumstances tend to take matters in particular rather than universal theological and other directions. The clash of civilisations, whether in Huntington's or other senses of the phrase, seems to have an element of truth in the present situation, at the start of the Iraq conflict. The stress upon contextualisation has also been influential. One suspects however that the day of a world theology of religion is still to come and in this as in other ways Wilfred Cantwell Smith will be seen to have been a prophet before his time as well as a deep influence in his time. He looked back from the world in general to particular theologies and asked not so much a theological question but a religious scholar's question as to how theology could be conceptualised globally across traditions rather than viewed through separate particular spectacles.

These matters, together with others for which we have no space, were talked about at Harvard as we listened to and engaged with Wilfred Smith. Like all students I learnt from him and also rebelled against him. My work on methodology was a departure from his path in that he had a healthy distrust for methodology insofar as it could and often did become an end rather than a means. My work on models and religious education tended to focus attention on religious traditions in their separation rather than in their inter-twinedness albeit for schoolchildren at the dawn of contemporary religious education it could hardly have been otherwise. I became more embroiled in pragmatic inter-religious discussion than he had. He was more of a pure intellectual than I am. I became interested in new religious movements, primal religions, and the spirituality debate which had not been the case with him. Yet going to Harvard and meeting Wilfred Cantwell Smith was undoubtedly a turning-point in my life as it was for my contemporary colleagues. One senses that his stress on empathy remains important at a time when lack of empathy for 'religion' and 'religions' remains curiously strong among a cohort of scholars of religion. One

suspects that his work, while enjoying a certain quiescence now, contains turning-points for the future and that part of his time is still to come.

Frank Whaling

VI. TRIBUTE

Annemarie Schimmel, orientalist, born 7 April 1922; died January 25 2003.

For those of us who study Islam, and, in particular, have become fascinated by Sufism, the death of Annemarie Schimmel at the age of eighty will leave an irreplaceable vacancy at the heart of such scholarship. Although I never personally knew her or even heard her lecture in her unique style in which she would deliver with eyes closed, spontaneously and serenely, to the fascination of her audiences, I still remain deeply indebted to her scholarship and especially her writings on Muhammad as conveyed in *Muhammad, the Messenger of God*. I had long been disturbed by the difference between the Muhammad of faith I found when speaking to Muslim friends and informants and the Muhammad of history usually depicted by western orientalists. I felt that a book was needed to bridge the gap and even considered writing it myself until I discovered Annemarie Schimmel's work and realised that a scholar that I could never surpass had completed the task already.

To her great credit she was one of those exceptional scholars able to bridge the world of the insider and the outsider, and many Muslims have acknowledged to me that her work on the Prophet of Islam surpassed anything achieved by Muslim scholars. She wrote poetry in the style of the Sufis she loved, such as Al-Hallaj, Hafiz and Rumi and was able to translate works written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Pashtu and Sindhi, as well as speaking fluently in English, Czech, Swedish, French, Spanish and Italian in addition to her native German. She maintained her passionate love for the Sufis by keeping a second home in Pakistan from where she frequently visited the tombs of the Sindhi mystics. Unusually for a non-Muslim woman she was appointed by Ankara University's Theological faculty where she taught comparative religions and Church history from 1954-1959.

Born in Erfurt on 7 April 1922, she began to study Arabic at the age of 15 and completed her first doctorate in Arabic, Turkish and Islamic History from the University of Berlin at 19. She then went on to postdoctoral studies in Mamluk history before being invited to join the University of Marburg as

assistant professor in Islamic Studies (1946-1954) at the age of 24. In 1951, she completed a second doctorate on Islamic mysticism. After her spell at Ankara University, she returned to Germany as associate professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at Bonn University (1961-1965). After considerable persuasion from Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Richard Frye, she left Bonn to take a position in Harvard, where she was offered the first teaching post provided exclusively for South Asian Islamic culture, being awarded a full professorship in Indo-Muslim Languages and Culture in 1972, which she held until 1992. After her retirement she was awarded an honorary professorship at Bonn University and a Annemarie Schimmel Chair for Indo-Muslim Languages and Culture was instituted there on her 75th birthday in 1997.

Annemarie Schimmel gained both the respect of the Muslim world and the world of western academia, gaining several honorary doctorates, and even achieving the fame of having a boulevard in Lahore named after her. She was the first female president of the International Association for the Study of Religion (1980), a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a receiver of the Grosses Bundesverdienskrenz (1989) and the Friedenspreis des Deutsche Buchhandels (1995) among other honours. Although regarded as a classical orientalist, she succeeded in avoiding the stigma given to that term by Muslims and remains regarded by them as that rare phenomenon, a non-Muslim sensitive interpreter of Islam familiar not only with classical literature and poetry but also popular devotion. We will miss her but she will always remain with us in the 105 works that she wrote and translated throughout her wonderful life and career.

Ron Geaves

Annemarie Schimmel Remembered: Some Personal Reflections

I last spoke to Annemarie Schimmel on the phone when briefly passing through Bonn during the summer of 2000. I had hoped to meet her but had to postpone my visit until a future trip which unfortunately never came about. Since 1961 she had maintained her home at 42 Lennéstrasse, Bonn — an address I always remembered as it was just a few hundred yards from the student residence where I started as a young student in 1958. More recently, at the end of 2002, I read with the greatest enjoyment Annemarie Schimmel's German autobiography *Morgenland und Abendland. Mein west-östliches Leben (Occident and Orient. My western-eastern life)*, published last summer shortly after her eightieth birthday. It was an engrossing, inspiring read, telling of a rich human life, of friendships around the world, of a life of learning, lecturing and writing, of poetry and mysticism, of indefatigable enthusiasm, lasting faith and hope. It ends with the words of

the nineteenth century German poet-orientalist Friedrich Rückert, much revered by Annemarie Schimmel: 'If I have to die tomorrow, I have worked enough. If I should live another ten years, I have enough work to do.' It is followed by the Muslim saying 'People are asleep and when they die, they wake up', which had impressed itself on her mind since childhood.

The book explained much about Annemarie Schimmel's background and career but also raised further questions in my mind. Its bibliography of only 'her most significant publications' came up to 93 titles until 2001, and the whole tone of the autobiography gave the strong impression of an ongoing, very active career. I wanted to write to Annemarie Schimmel and suggest a visit during a forthcoming trip to Germany. Alas, it was not to be. In early February I learnt of her unexpected death (26 January 2003) when on a visit to the USA. The *New York Times* described her as 'one of the twentieth century's most influential scholars of Islam' who 'taught generations of students in a breathtaking style that included lecturing with her eyes closed and reciting long passages of mystical poetry from memory'. Her former Harvard department wrote that she 'dedicated her life to fostering a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim world in the West. She served as an important bridge for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, a role that brought her much public recognition. The impact of her scholarship was felt all over the Muslim world, particularly in South Asia, Turkey and the Arab world. In recent years, her work received acclaim in Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and the countries of Central Asia. ... A scholar of great mystical and literary sensitivity, she also composed her own poetry in several languages, including German and English.'

I have read many obituaries since and also the report of her German funeral in Bonn, in the presence of many international personalities, one of whom described Schimmel as a true 'UNESCO-character'. A genuinely cosmopolitan scholar was honoured, a brilliant and unprecedented career acclaimed, but she has also been criticised for too romantic a view of Islam and too naïve an attitude about international politics. In Germany this was especially widely debated in 1995 when the German Book Trade awarded its prestigious Peace Prize to Annemarie Schimmel.

I had met Annemarie Schimmel at international conferences, especially the IAHR congresses. She had attended all of them since the foundation of the IAHR in Amsterdam in 1950. She was involved with the Tokyo Congress in 1958, co-organised the Marburg Congress in 1960 with Friedrich Heiler, her much admired mentor and colleague, and helped with the 1965 Congress in Claremont (as described in her autobiography). Our paths may first have crossed at the 1975 Lancaster IAHR Congress, but our personal acquaintance certainly dates from 1980 when she was elected IAHR President at the Winnipeg Congress, the first woman and Islamicist to

hold this office (which she held until 1990). I had heard about her reputation long before that. In fact, it was Ken Morgan from Colgate University in upstate New York who first told me about Annemarie Schimmel in September 1969, at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings at Punjabi University, Patiala. He talked about the difficulty of women scholars finding an institutional niche in academia and how Annemarie Schimmel, in spite of all her scholarly achievements, could not find a Chair in Germany, but now that she had been given a position in Harvard (in 1966), 'the Germans come and lick her boots'. I have often thought of that since as this story can be applied to more countries than Germany alone. Ken Morgan had been the mediator for the Harvard job and when Annemarie accepted it, he told her 'Harvard is the loneliest place on earth'. She repeated this more than once, and in the twenty-five years there Harvard never became a true home. In her autobiography she describes it as 'the western exile of the soul' where she made few permanent friends. In a sense this is not surprising, for she was always travelling for half the year and went regularly back to her base in Bonn. It is far more amazing that she was so productive in her writing in spite of all her intensive international travelling and lecturing. One year she said to me 'I have crossed the Atlantic seven times this year in a metal box, and I don't want to enter another aeroplane again this year.'

She comments on many experiences, events and contemporaneous scholars in her autobiography and in its earlier summary *A Life of Learning*, her 1993 Haskins Lecture. I want to pick out just a few comments regarding the international study of religion and her personal experience as a woman scholar, both of which give food for further thought. The Amsterdam foundational IAHR Congress in 1950 opened her eyes 'to the numerous possible ways to interpret religion in its essence and its manifestations, philological, historical, theological, sociological...' Shortly afterwards, in 1951, she was the first student to receive the newly founded Dr sc.rel. (a new doctorate in *Religionswissenschaft*) under Heiler at Marburg University (where the doctorate was later discontinued, but the Golden Jubilee of Schimmel's doctorate was celebrated in May 2001). She certainly stuck to the phenomenological approach, broadly conceived, and wrote in her 1993 Haskins Lecture: 'When I learned how to handle the phenomenological approach to religion, which seems to facilitate the understanding of the external manifestations of religions and slowly guides the seeker into the heart of each religion, I was and still am convinced that such an approach can lead to much needed tolerance without losing oneself in sweeping, dangerous "syncretistic" views that blur all differences.' She wrote this after she had ceased being President of the IAHR in 1990, which for her also meant the cessation of participation in future congresses because 'the methods and ideals of the history of religions had changed, the emphasis

was now first of all on “science”, that is to say, theory, sociology and psychology, but less on philosophy of religion’. It is interesting to note that her doctoral Golden Jubilee Lecture in 2001 dealt with a similar theme, the transformation and changes in the history of religions.

The topic of her second, Marburg doctorate (her first doctorate was obtained in 1941 at the University of Berlin) had been ‘The Concept of Mystical Love in Islam’. It required a woman scholar like Annemarie Schimmel to write on ‘The Feminine Element in Sufism’ (in her *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*) and point out the contribution of women Sufis. I remember a fascinating conversation with her about this topic, about ‘the piety of old women’ in Turkey and religious lives of women in Pakistan and Egypt when we were travelling by bus from Sydney to Canberra. She also writes that ‘the concept of the woman as the representative of the soul in her quest for the Eternal Beloved fascinated me for years’. The outcome of this is no doubt her book *My Soul Is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam*’.

As a young scholar she was pleased to work with Heiler at Marburg. According to her, ‘Friedrich Heiler was one of the first to realize the importance of women’s contribution to religion and scholarship. His seminars and his book *Die Frau in den Religionen*, tackled the problem long before it became an issue in the clerical and academic world. We jokingly called him “the patron saint of women professors”. In this quality he warmly advocated the role of women as ministers of the church...’ Earlier, when a student in Berlin during the second world war, Schimmel had two professors who ‘were married to academic women who generously encouraged me in my work. This certainly contributed to the fact that I never felt a stranger in the academic world and took it for granted that women had the same role to play in the academic community as did men.’ Yet Schimmel herself experienced considerable personal and administrative difficulties in her career to which she only alludes in passing. I wished she had given us more details. She could not find a permanent position at Marburg University where her chairman had remarked: ‘Miss Schimmel, if you were a man, you would get a chair’, and where the only woman member of the faculty had told her after the lecture following her *Habilitation*, ‘remember *one* thing — men are our enemies’. This was said in 1946 but it proved to be ‘much more true’ in the early 1950s when Germany appeared to her ‘cold and unfriendly’, when there were at the university ‘enough people who did not like a young woman, who, to add to this in itself negative aspect, had published a book of verse translations of Oriental poetry, not to mention a volume of German verse in Persian style and who was — even worse! — fascinated by the mystical dimensions of Islam instead relying solely on the hard external facts, be it history or philology.’ She then accepted an appointment as Professor of History of Religion in the Faculty of Islamic

Theology at Ankara University — itself a remarkable fact — where she taught from 1954-59. When returning to Marburg, she ‘was not exactly welcomed’ by her colleagues and soon took up a position at the University of Bonn from where she later moved to Harvard. She was appointed there to the newly founded Chair of Indo-Muslim Culture, endowed by an Indian Muslim who had made a fortune by inventing ‘Minute Rice’.

Schimmel’s autobiography starts with a preface on ‘A Life as a *One-Woman-Show*’ (using this English expression). She is proud to have achieved her work *without* a secretary, *without* an assistant, *without* a computer and, as stated later in her book, *without* a car, *without* holidays or exercise - in fact, *without* much of a private life. For her, scholarly life ‘is almost a coterminous with my life in general’. Yet this is more of a denial than the whole truth. It is known that in the 1950s she was briefly married to a Turkish Muslim, but this does not even get a mention. She also writes ‘How many women crossed my path’, and she writes movingly about some of them, but when several women students approached her after her 1980 inaugural address as IAHR President in Winnipeg, suggesting she might at long last do something more for women scholars, this is merely passed over without further comment.

Towards the end of her autobiography she sadly remarks: ‘That it was not always easy to continue on the path assigned to me and not to lose sight of my goal is obvious. One does not speak about the many tears, the disappointments, the human problems; they are nobody else’s business.’ I wished, and surely many other readers would wish, she had said more. For the future she hopes for peace, better understanding and respect for the other while following the proverb: ‘Always hope for the best and be prepared for the worst.’

There is so much more to be said, but also much to be celebrated. No doubt we will hear a great deal more about Annemarie Schimmel (there were already 14,100 website references to her in February 2003). In many ways younger women scholars may see her as an inspiring pioneer and role model, but they are also left with numerous unanswered questions. Perhaps these will strengthen their determination to wrestle with the numerous structural obstacles that so often still block their path.

Ursula King

VII. RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY BASR MEMBERS

(Please send in your details by e-mail where possible.)

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VIII. GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

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

BASR EXECUTIVE: NOMINATIONS

Your attention is drawn to the nomination slips mailed with this edition of the BASR Bulletin. All members are entitled to make nominations for the posts of Secretary and Treasurer, and the election of offices will take place at the AGM, during the BASR Conference in Chester.

Please send the completed form by **1 September 2003** to Dr James L Cox, Honorary Secretary BASR, University of Edinburgh, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX