

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF RELIGIONS**



**BULLETIN NUMBER 109
NOVEMBER 2006**

ABOUT THE BASR

The British Association for the Study of Religions, 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) Its 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. Membership of the BASR confers membership of the IAHR and the EASR.

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EDITORIAL

Editorial – Welcome

Editorship of the BASR *Bulletin* is now in the combined hands of Helen Waterhouse and Dominic Corrywright. We would like to thank George Chryssides for his excellent, thoughtful and never too bulky editions over the last four years. We take the reins of a genuinely useful networking periodical, that has been carefully nurtured by a series of committed scholars of religion. And, broadly, we don't want to change either its content or its tone. However, colleagues will recognise that good traditions are marked by change and are responsive to their cultural contexts. So we also are responding to an academic context which is increasingly moving away from hard copy formats to electronic media. The *Bulletin* will now be available in e-format via the BASR website as well as in this new format. The website provision will equally provide an easy access archive of past *Bulletins* for colleagues. But we are unwilling to forego the handy utility of the booklet *Bulletin*, for reading while waiting for a train or over a sandwich; for the near future at least members will still receive the *Bulletin* by post.

We are developing the format and main features of the *Bulletin* and its main purpose as a tool for informing the membership of the activities of the association, its executive committee and related organisations, especially the EASR and IAHR. All editions will include information on forthcoming events, conferences and symposia of interest to the membership. Interspersed with these we will continue to include as many reports from events as we are sent by colleagues, as well as updates of recent

publications by members. We have also decided to restrict the number of editions to two per year - November and May

We continue to welcome uncommissioned book reviews and will circulate texts received from publishers with requests for review. The short reviews of 500-800 words provide quick evaluative summaries of real use, by academics and for academics. Please encourage your PhD students to contribute reviews. Writing reviews is a worthy aspect of PhD training and fulfils an important part of the broader experience of academia which is increasingly written into PhD support programmes.

There are two features of the *Bulletin* which we would like to emphasise more in future editions. First in the area of developments, change and progression in the study of religions in the UK. We include within this edition changes in programmes and departments as well as changes in the career paths of individuals. We think it is an important role for the *Bulletin* to inform members of the changing patterns of provision at HE level in the UK and we want to congratulate holders of new posts, recognise new professorships and the achievements of those who retire. This edition includes a report from Gwilym Beckerlegge who is

on live issues such as the new emphasis on ethics in undergraduate courses on religion.

Perhaps what we would appreciate most, after this first edition under our combined editorship, is members' suggestions and comments on what they like and would like in their *Bulletin*.

BASR ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 4.30 p.m. on 5 Sept 2006,
Bath Spa University

1. **Welcome.** Jim Cox opened the meeting by welcoming members (25 attending).
2. **Apologies** received from Brian Bocking, Elizabeth Harris, Ursula King, Kim Knott, Steve Sutcliffe.

3. **Minutes of 2005 AGM:** accepted.

4. **Presidential address:**

The full text of the President's address follows these minutes.

5. **Secretary's Report**

1. Graham Harvey reported that the committee had met three times during the year in addition to during annual conferences, and discussed plans for 2006 and 2007 conference, the *Bulletin* and Occasional Papers, preparations for *Diskus* becoming the BASR journal, changes in the committee to follow from elections at this AGM, and relationships with other Associations (especially IAHR and EASR, but also the Australian and North American Associations for the Study of Religions).

2. Discussion:

- a. Elisabeth Arweck noted the value of collaborations between BASR members and the British Sociological Association's Sociology of Religion group members – e.g. in participating in conferences of both organisations, in supporting postgraduate students and conferences, and in shared interests and approaches.
- b. Peggy Morgan suggested that hard-copies of *Diskus* might also be added to the BASR archive.
- c. Robert Segal suggested that a future conference might explore the theme "is there a distinctive British approach to the Study of Religions" – possibly in dialogue with

European and other colleagues asking similar regionally focussed question. Peggy Morgan added that it could be interesting to explore the impact of British scholars elsewhere. Jim Cox thought this might be an interesting area for the 2008 conference.

- d. Darlene Bird reminded the meeting that the Subject Centre would support (including financially) sessions or panels on pedagogy / teaching and learning in the discipline.

6. Treasurer's Report

1. The full text of the Treasurer's report follows these minutes.
2. Helen Waterhouse also encouraged members to sign up (hardcopy or by email) to gift aid.

7. Bulletin Editor's Report

1. George Chryssides noted that this was his final annual report as Bulletin Editor. During his four years he had aimed to provide information about what has been happening in the discipline. Notices of forthcoming conferences had not always been followed by conference reports & requested members to offer reports. Other means of informing members of what is happening in UK Religious Studies included features on specific departments or institutions, book reviews, and debates about or responses to articles or issues (e.g. "engaged scholarship"). The "Turning Point" series had been maintained from previous editor's innovation (only missed out in one issue), but George Chryssides wondered if it had become more interesting or too confessional now. He expressed sorrow at relinquishing editorship but not the hard work it involved. He had been told by his predecessor, Steve Sutcliffe, that each Bulletin takes "3 or 4 days to prepare", but now finds that it takes more time than he can devote to it.
2. George Chryssides thanked everyone for their support over the years, especially for the prompt and efficient responses to requests for help or material. He closed by saying that editing the Bulletin has been a good way to meet people within the subject.
3. Future Bulletins will be co-edited by Dominic Corrywright and Helen Waterhouse.

Jim Cox thanked George Chryssides for his hard work and reliability in presenting material and getting the Bulletin out in time.

4. Discussion

- a. Moojan Momen and Elisabeth Arweck suggested placing back issues of the Bulletin on the website as PDF files.
- b. Members were also encouraged to submit information on new appointments, and it

was suggested that profiles of departments might be provided as new people took up positions.

8. Conference Organiser's Report

1. Marion Bowman thanked Denise Cush and colleagues at Bath Spa for hosting this year's conference.
2. Marion Bowman is also retiring from the role of Conference Organiser (becoming President this year). She expressed gratitude to Peggy Morgan that she had inherited a tradition of organising friendly events that encouraged younger scholars to participate fully. The big events of Marion Bowman's six years as conference organiser included the joint conference with the European Association for the Study of Religions (Cambridge 2001) and the fiftieth anniversary conference in Oxford (2004). The success of the latter event was in large part due to Peggy Morgan.
3. Marion Bowman also thanked Helen Waterhouse for work before and during the conference, and indeed for all the work she had put in over the past 6 years.
4. The 2007 conference will be in Edinburgh on the theme of "Religious Experience in Global Perspective", including a track organised by the Alister Hardy Trust's Religious Experience Research Centre, to include participation by international scholars funded by the Templeton Foundation. The conference will also include a ceilidh.
5. Marion Bowman concluded by inviting members to volunteer as conference organiser.
6. Discussion:
 - a. Denise Cush thanked Marion Bowman and Helen Waterhouse for organising the 2006 conference.

9. Occasional Papers Editor / Diskus Co-ordinating Editor

1. Prof Ursula King gave the annual lecture, *Cherished Memories, Fractured Identities and New Subjectivities: Celebrating Fifty Years of British Scholarship in Religious Studies* at the BASR Conference, Oxford, Sept. 14, 2004. This has been developed into an Occasional Paper (no. #27) and is now published and available for purchase (price: £3). Copies may be purchased *via* the BASR website (price includes postal and packaging costs), or at BASR events, including this one (copies are on display on a table in the foyer area).
2. As the official journal of the BASR, DISKUS will continue in the tradition established by this journal in recent years. We will aim to publish inter-disciplinary articles on a wide range of religious phenomena, and will also continue to observe the policy of publishing writing that is accessible to a wide readership. Until now the BASR has published the invited lectures from our annual conference as a series of Occasional

Papers. This series will now cease, and from now on, these lectures will be published online in DISKUS (although previous Occasional Papers will remain available for purchase in hard copy *via* the established channels). The advantages this presents are numerous: papers will be available to a much wider (global) audience at no cost to them, we have the opportunity to foster and promote a much larger volume of research without significant financial cost to the BASR, and we are able to perpetuate and develop an established academic journal as an official publication of the BASR.

3. The first issue under our editorship (actually issue #7 within the DISKUS series as a whole) is currently under construction. It will include the two lectures given by Prof Seth Kunin and Prof Frank Whaling as annual lectures at last year's study day in London, as well as an article submitted by Brian Bocking, and an introduction to the new launch of DISKUS as the official BASR journal by our president, Prof James Cox. There have been some delays in getting all of the papers in, but we hope to have the full first issue live and online within the next few weeks. Previous editions of DISKUS (volume 1, 1993, to volume 6, 2000) will also be available via the DISKUS website (itself part of the BASR website).
4. DISKUS will be a peer reviewed journal and submitted articles will be considered by the BASR Executive Committee and expert colleagues as a peer-review panel. Instructions on how to submit articles and on our required style will follow shortly, although the executive committee felt it would be the right policy to include only invited papers during the first year, with an open invitation for submissions after that, subject to a review of progress.
5. This is an exciting time for the BASR. In adopting DISKUS as our official journal, we open up fresh opportunities for publishing the excellent scholarship that we seek to foster, and look forward to developing this resource in the future. Mathew Guest would like to thank the other members of the executive committee for their support in helping to get this venture off the ground, especially Graham Harvey, whose assistance has been invaluable in negotiating the technicalities of an online journal.
6. Discussion:
 - a. It was suggested that alerting search engines to existence of new DISKUS would help. Graham Harvey responded that DISKUS' current home on the Open University computer should guarantee its web presence, but that he would check search engine visibility.

10. Elections

1. Elections were held for the positions of Secretary and Treasurer. Graham Harvey was proposed for the position of Secretary by Jim Cox, seconded by Helen Waterhouse. Dermot Tredget was proposed for the position of Treasurer by Helen Waterhouse, seconded by Marion Bowman. There were no other proposals and the AGM voted

unanimously in favour of appointing Graham Harvey and Dermot Tredget to these offices.

2. The Executive Committee co-opted Mathew Guest as DISKUS Co-ordinating Editor, and Dominic Corrywright and Helen Waterhouse as Bulletin Co-editors.
3. The position of Conference Organiser remains vacant but Jim Cox will serve as Local Conference Organiser for the 2007 conference in Edinburgh.

11 Presidents' Votes of Thanks

1. Jim Cox thanked Graham Harvey for work as secretary, and Helen Waterhouse for serving six years as Treasurer. He thanked George Chryssides for keeping the Bulletin as a medium of communication within BASR and expressed the hope that he will continue to contribute to the Bulletin and, in other ways, to BASR. He praised

Presidential Address

Delivered by James Cox at the 2006 BASR Conference

Honorary BASR President (2003-2006) 5th September 2006

I want to thank the AGM for allowing me to present this 'Presidential Address', rather than a report, as a marker concluding my three years as Honorary President of the British Association for the Study of Religions. I was co-opted as a member of the BASR Executive Committee when in 1997 I became the Bulletin Editor. Subsequently, I served as Honorary Secretary from 2000 to 2003 and then as Honorary President until this meeting of the Association. Over the nine years I have served on the Executive Committee, significant changes have occurred in the organisation, which have produced their own challenges. I offer some reflections on these developments in this address.

1) *Connection to International Associations.* A particularly important event occurred in 2001, when the BASR co-hosted the first conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) at the annual conference held in Cambridge. Since that time, the EASR has expanded in part with the steady support of the BASR. This has been noted persistently at the meetings of the EASR. In addition, the BASR has maintained its regular involvement in the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), the international parent body for national associations for the study of religions. Since I have been on the Executive Committee, two IAHR Congresses have been held, one in Durban in 2000 and the other in Tokyo in 2005. BASR members were well represented at both, and, in a way similar to the EASR, our Association has been exemplary in our consistent financial support of international causes, in part due to the excellent stewardship of our finances by our Treasurer, Helen Waterhouse.

2) *Publications*. The Bulletin of the BASR has continued as an exemplary model for how an Association should combine announcements of news events with important reflections on issues relevant to our field of study. George Chryssides, who has guided the Bulletin for the past four years, has developed special topics, but, perhaps most importantly, has encouraged lively debates amongst our members. The Occasional Papers series has continued under the guidance of Mathew Guest, and now will make a substantial advancement when the Executive Committee transforms the electronic journal, DISKUS, into the academic voice of the BASR. Future issues will contain the Annual Lectures delivered at the BASR conferences, and other selected papers that the committee judges as particularly noteworthy. The publication record of the BASR was solidified by the important volume edited by Steven Sutcliffe for the 50th anniversary conference in 2004, which published selected Occasional Papers, and included new contributions as well, under the title, *Religion: Empirical Studies* (Ashgate). Now by taking over DISKUS, the BASR has embarked on an even more ambitious commitment to promoting cutting edge research in Religious Studies.

3) *Research*. One of the lasting achievements of Peggy Morgan's tenure as President of the Association was the lodging of the BASR archive at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. This provides a secure location for the records of the BASR, and with a steady policy of adding to the materials stored there, it should provide a rich resource for those interested in researching the development of the academic study of religions in Britain. In addition, the BASR's commitment to developing young scholars has been exemplary. Each year, a consistent number of postgraduate students attend the annual conferences, many of them supported by bursaries administered by the Executive Committee. The conference organisers have maintained an important section on 'works in progress', and, where it is deemed appropriate, have allowed advanced postgraduate students to present full papers.

A highlight of my term as President was the 50th Anniversary Conference held in 2004 in Oxford, which was organised so skilfully by Marion Bowman and Peggy Morgan, and which witnessed participation by numerous international associations for the study of religions as well as official representatives from the IAHR and the EASR. Many people who had worked closely with the Association for its many years contributed to the conference, making it a special celebration and a significant landmark in its ongoing history. Its theme, 'Mapping the Field', stressed the continued importance of methodological clarification in the study of religions, and point to what I regard as three fundamental issues that will confront the BASR in the years ahead.

1) *Religious Studies as a legitimate academic field*. The traditional view that the study of religions defines an academic subject in its own right has come under increased criticism in recent years. Its claim to be a non-theological field, which at the same time is irreducible to any of the social sciences, poses questions about what makes 'religion' a topic that requires its own methodological approach. The recent conference held in Oxford under the

title 'Theology and Religious Studies or Theology versus Religious Studies' (organised by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies of the Higher Education Academy) highlighted the ongoing debate in this field. The fact that most of us work in Departments of Theology and Religious Studies or Divinity makes continued discussion of this issue highly important, both academically and politically.

2) *The 'Socially Engaged' Scholar of Religion.* Increasingly, scholars of religion are faced not just with ethical decisions about their role as researchers amongst believing communities and their responsibilities to the so-called objects of their investigations, but with the fact that their research often touches on issues of human rights, religious violence and the impact of religious beliefs on community health and well being. Scholarly associations, like the BASR, need to encourage discussion of issues surrounding the appropriate responses scholars need to make to real life threats to human communities, and provide a forum for debate over the appropriate public role in these contexts for researchers. In my view, this issue has become even more important in the light of the increased profile given in the Western media to the relationship of religion to public safety, but it extends beyond concerns of Western governments, and confirms the longstanding scholarly awareness that religion and society are bound together in complex ways.

3) *Relationship to other associations.* In the light of the two overriding issues I have cited above, and indeed in the face of other important concerns, the BASR needs to re-think positively its relationship to other organisations in Britain, including those that are confronting the same issues. These include the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS), the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies of the Higher Education Academy, the Sociology of Religion Study Group and even theological associations. It can do this through its publications, conferences and networks. Usually, a report has been given at the annual conference from some of these associations, and occasionally an announcement is printed in the Bulletin. It seems to me that, since most of us live every day in interdisciplinary environments, the Association needs to engage in lively discussion in a way that mirrors our professional lives.

I want to stress that participating with colleagues on the Executive Committee over these past nine years has been a pleasure. Most recently, working with Graham Harvey as Secretary, Helen Waterhouse as Treasurer, George Chryssides as Bulletin Editor, Marion Bowman as Conference Editor and Mathew Guest as Occasional Papers Editor has provided a model of how a good team should function. I look forward to working for one more year with the new Executive Committee as the Conference Organiser for the 2007 annual meeting that will take place in Edinburgh from 3rd to 6th September. Finally, I want to thank the membership of the BASR for their unfailing support and for their solid contribution to our subject area.

A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion

James L. Cox

A Symposium

**Martin Hall, New College, University of Edinburgh
Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX**

Thursday 7 December 2006 1-4pm

Four responses to *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion: Key Figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates*:

Professor Gavin Flood (Stirling and Oxford), author of *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (1999)

Dr. Timothy Fitzgerald (Stirling), author of *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (2000)

Dr. Carole Cusack (Sydney), editor of *The End of Religions? Religion in an Age of Globalization* (2001).

Dr. Afe Adogame (Edinburgh), editor of *European Traditions of the Study of Religion in Africa* (2004)

Reply by Professor James Cox

All welcome

Tea and coffee mid-session; drinks reception to follow at 4pm.
Further information: s.sutcliffe@ed.ac.uk 0131 650 8947

TREASURER'S REPORT
FINANCIAL YEAR 16 AUGUST 2005 TO 15 AUGUST 2006

INCOME

General Fund

Balance at 16 August 2005	6715 (8045)
Inland Revenue	246 ² (223)
Subscriptions	2494 ³ (2481)
Bulletin insert fees	150 (300)
Occasional papers	37 (145)
Bank int	<u>327 (333)</u>
	9969

Conference Fund

Balance at 16 August 2005	3335
2005 conference fees	1080
2006 conference fees	<u>2647</u>
	6912

Balance at 16 August 2005	10051
Total Income	6980
Total Expenditure	(9471)
Balance at 15 August 2006	7560
Notes to the accounts	

1. Figures for 2004/5 are given in brackets for comparative purposes.
2. This figure represents the amount we were able to reclaim from the Inland Revenue as a result of members' Gift Aid declarations. The more members who sign up, the more we benefit.
3. For the first time in many years we are raising our subscription rate. Full membership will increase to £20 and concessions to £10 per annum. This will take effect from 1 October 2006.
4. The insurance premium has not doubled! This represents payment for two years.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of my audit. I have examined the balance sheet and annexed receipts and payments accounts which are in agreement with the Association's records. In my opinion and to the best of my information, and according to the explanations given to me, the balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the Association's affairs at 15 August 2006, and the receipts and payments account shows properly the transactions for the year expired on that date.

Audited by: Mrs Jill Rowe 25 August 2006

Report on the BASR Conference at Bath Spa University, 4-6 September 2006

The beautiful grounds of Bath Spa University provided the setting for this year's BASR conference, whose theme was 'The Ethical Dimension'. The conference opened with three presentations which focused on 'Ethical Issues for Religious Studies Professionals'. Darlene Bird began the session by reporting on the interdisciplinary work of the Subject Centre for Philosophical & Religious Studies in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds. George Chryssides gave a paper entitled 'The Ethics Code' in which he reported on the work of the AUDTRS *Working Ethics Party* – in particular, the codes of professional practice that inform academic research. This was followed by Paul Weller's paper 'Rendering unto Caesar? Ethical and Methodological Issues in Working for the Government on Researching Religion'. Here Paul explored the role of government in funding academic research and the way in which the government's instrumentalist agenda can constitute an impediment to the autonomous pursuit of academic research.

Panels 2A and 2B were respectively concerned with ethics and the study of religion and ethical issues in the Christian context. In the first panel Graham Harvey spoke on the subject of 'Minobimaatisiwin: indigenous approaches to ethical living' where he identified common ground in the relationship between religion and ethics across indigenous traditions. This was followed by Paul Tremlett's paper 'The Ethics of Suspicion in the Study of Religion' which explored the role of the insider and outsider in the study of religion, with reference to fieldwork on witchcraft and evil spirits in the Philippines. Paul's paper raised questions about ethical issues that inform the relationship between the observer and the religious beliefs of those observed. Are there occasions when it is appropriate to challenge the religious beliefs of those under study?

Panel 2B consisted of Kam Ming Wong's 'The Ethical Dimension of Globalisation for the Christian Self' and Ulla Schmidt's 'Christian Faith and Moral Communication on Euthanasia'. The first paper explored the issue of how Christians can effectively engage in dialogue with one another in the context of globalisation. Kam Ming argued that the fragmentation of the self resulting from globalisation creates particular challenges in Christians' quest to build up relations with one another. The second paper correlated attitudes towards euthanasia with the strength of religious values. Ulla drew on a range of statistical information to demonstrate the correlation between the affirmation of Christian belief and opposition to euthanasia.

Following dinner the BASR Annual Lecture was given by Professor Robert Segal on the topic of 'The Ethical Dimension in Theories of Religion'. Robert's paper examined attitudes towards the interconnection between religion and ethics on the part of two theoreticians of religion whose views are representative of the nineteenth and twentieth century understanding of religion – E.B. Tylor and Sigmund Freud. Robert identified the key

difference between the two thinkers to lie in their perception of the place of ethics in religion. For Tylor religion in its earliest form had the same role as science in the modern period: to observe the world and explain it; it had no interest in ethics. It was only when modern scientific methods were developed that religion had to re-define itself as concerned with ethics. By way of contrast, Sigmund Freud locates ethics within the early development of religion. In a work such as *Totem and Taboo* ethics is central to religion. For Freud the role of religion is to alleviate the sense of guilt felt by the sons on account of their desire to kill the father figure, which in turn produces the need for penance. It is the centrality of ethics in religion that allows scholars such as Stephen Jay Gould to argue for the compatibility of religion and science because of their different functions: science explains how the world is; religion prescribes how people can conduct themselves.

The two panels that took place first thing Tuesday morning were concerned with ethics in their social and political contexts. Panel 3A, Developing Ethics in a Socio-Religious Context, provided an examination of religion, morality and ethics in Zoroastrianism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Michael Stausberg's paper 'From Morals to Ethics in Modern Zoroastrianism' focused on certain scholarly accounts of the role of ethical teaching in Zoroastrianism. Michael argued that such accounts emphasise the collective in Zoroastrian ethics and fear of demons; they, however, need to be aware of the fact that modern Zoroastrians and Parsees do not believe in demons and that the changes in social networks place the individual at centre stage. Dharam Singh's paper on 'Sikh Ethics' outlined the essential beliefs of Sikhs and related Sikh beliefs to a range of ethical issues such as women's rights (Sikh scripture permits widow remarriage and condemns female infanticide), warfare (Sikhism favours peace and justice), and diet (while diet is not specifically prescribed in the scriptures Sikhism is opposed to practices that involve the causing of pain). Naomi Appleton in her paper 'Bodhisatta Behaving Badly: Jatakas as Bad Examples' examined the jataka collections within Theravada Buddhism as sources of moral instructions. Naomi argued that while jataka stories contain useful educational and religious messages, the sources of the stories are varied and not all are usable as moral instruction.

Panel 3B, Religion and Politics, explored the relationship between religion and political power in various cultural and historical contexts. Ursula Troches examined the 'unholy alliance' between the church and imperial power in her paper 'Christianity and Empire'. This was followed by Bettina E. Schmidt's examination of the misuse of vodou as a source of political power and Solmon Zwana's study of the place of church-related higher education in the preservation of academic freedom in Zimbabwe.

The second half of the morning was taken up with two further panels: 4A Ethical Issues in Contested Contexts and 4B Ethical Issues in the South American Context. The first of these panels began with Elliott Shaw presenting the topic 'Mohist Ethics and the Art of Happiness', which focused on the Chinese scholar Mozi (Motzu), whose school flourished in 471-221 BCE. The paper argued that there is an interesting affinity between Mohist

ideas of the nature of the good society and theories of social happiness postulated by new utilitarians such as Richard Layard. Utilitarian thinking originated in Classical China; modern utilitarian-based could benefit from some of the insights provided by their Chinese antecedents.

Suzanne Owen's paper 'Breaking protocol in Native American ceremonies' dealt with the appropriation of Native American rituals by westerners. On the one hand, Black Elk has portrayed Native American religion as a universal religion, but other Native Americans are offended at the selling of pipes, payment for ceremonies, sharing of ceremonies with the wider public, and the participation of menstruating women. Suzanne focused on the 1993 Lakota Declaration, in which Native American Indians set out protocols for researchers: research could be terminated if the protocols were not observed.

Theodore Gabriel's presentation was entitled 'Good and evil, or contrasting world orders? — The Sura Asura theme in Hinduism.' Theodore argued that, although suras and asuras were typically presented in terms of the good/evil contrast, a sharp distinction was not so simple. There are good demons and bad gods. The suras represent stability before the creation of the world of duality (e.g. Vishnu sleeping), while the asuras are the threat to the emergent new world and are capable of reverting it to its former state: the creative act is dangerous as well as creative. Good/bad are not intrinsic qualities, but only so in relation to the ascendancy of emergent gods.

Panel 4B consisted of two papers: Maria Amelia Schmidt Dickie 'Unspoken ethics: multi-religion group and the building of a public identity' and Andrew Dawson's 'Ayahuasca Religiosity in Brazil'. Maria's paper focused on CONER and religious education in Brazil. The presenter described issues within the group CONER relating to inclusion and relations, conversion and education. The second paper by Andrew Dawson was about Ayahuasca religiosity in Brazil. Andrew explained how Ayahuasca was used in dealing with diseases.

The topics of the afternoon panels were 5A 'Negotiating Religions and Spiritual Values in the Social Context' and 5B 'Research in Progress'. The first panel began with a presentation by Stewart M. Hoover on 'Seeking "Right Livelihood" in the Media Age'. In this presentation Stewart identified various ways in which the media and religion have converged in the form of celebrities' use of religious icons (Sinead O'Connor's adoption of Roman Catholic symbolism, Madonna's espousal of Kabbalah), the range of media channels representing religion, magazines advocating healthy living and spiritual values in the workplace.

Ian G. Williams' presentation, entitled 'A foreseeable future: understanding Ethics, Sacred Violence and Martyrdom through Religious Education', expounded the meaning of jihad and shahid against the background of growing criticism of Islam in the media and national politics. Ian identified three types of jihad - personal jihad (the struggle to purify the soul), verbal jihad (the patient conveyance of the message of Islam), and physical jihad (the

defence of Muslims in the face of oppression) - and three types of shahid: one who has experienced violent or premature death (e.g. the first caliphs), one who has died in the context of a faithful act (e.g. travelling in service to people), one who has become a living shahid through having conquered the lower states.

The third speaker, Russell Sandberg, examined current issues relating to the relationship between religion, law and morality. Russell identified various perceptions of the relationship between these three areas – ranging from mutually autonomous to interdependent – and cited some examples of where religion continues to be apparent in the legislative process: namely, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act of 2006 and the refusal of the House of Lords to support the repeal the blasphemy laws. These events indicate that the principle of protecting religion within the law continues even though it is questionable whether the law can embody Christian morality in a multicultural context.

The concurrent panel consisted of a series of five excellent conference reports.

Louise Müller (University of Edinburgh) reflected on her fieldwork experience among the Akan in Ghana as a test of the value of Ninian Smart's allegedly universally applicable ethical approach to research. While she demonstrated a congruence between the generosity given and encouraged by the Akan and Smart, her fieldwork experience while being treated as a "queen mother" revealed the cultural specificity of elements of Smart's programme.

Angela Quartermaine (University of Oxford) discussed alternative readings and receptions of Osama bin Laden's rhetoric. She was particularly concerned with bin Laden's actual and alleged reference to Islamic authorities that may or may not justify the killing of civilians, including Muslims. She cast doubt on some readings of bin Laden's claims but revealed some tensions in the "fit" between bin Laden and other Muslim ideologues.

Patrick Wolley (University of Oxford) showed that the relationship between science and religion(s) is made difficult by the polemical nature of assertions made by some scientists even about scientific views of religion. Einstein in particular was shown to be misused by several contemporary scientists who assert his distance from religion when his own writings clearly reveal strong links between his religious sensibilities and his scientific pursuits.

Isabel Laack (University of Heidelberg) considered the need to engage more fully with music in research about religious identity. Using the case of "patch work" religiosity in Glastonbury she furthered debates about religion as performance and identity as activity. She also illustrated the fluidity of religious identity, not only in relation to "alternative spirituality" but more broadly.

Amy Whitehead (Open University) examined the place of materiality in religions and the study of religion in relation to fieldwork among the makers of religious objects and those who care for and venerate them. She situated her work in relation to recent thinking about the nature of religion and modernity.

Wednesday morning saw the final panels. The topic for Panel 6A was 'Living the New Age'. Nick Campion's paper 'Is there a New Age Ethic?' located the question of a New Age ethic within accounts of the New Age as benignly anticipating a better future (Alice Bailey) or as reactionary (Monica Sjoo). Nick drew upon Karl Popper's thesis that the more groups believe the future to be predetermined, the more likely they are to try and bring about that future to explore the possibility of a teleological ethic in the New Age. The question remains open whether the New Age has a specific or whether it is an umbrella term for a disparate number of groups.

Marion Bowman's paper 'Philanthropy in the New Age' examined the place of spirituality in the Glastonbury economy and the role of philanthropy in supporting this economy. Marion identified various ways in which the spiritual service industry (e.g. crystal shops, the green goddess, the crop circle conference) supported the local economy; she also identified how local philanthropists sought to support the spiritual economy and to interconnect such services with the wider local community and economy.

The topic for Panel 6b was 'Ethical Issues in the Study of Religions'. Jo Overend discussed the changing nature and roles of history and historiography among contemporary Wiccans. She noted that recent academic histories that demonstrate the falsity of earlier claims about a "Great Witch Hunt" have been widely but not universally accepted among Wiccans. This has led to a variety of reactions that may interest scholars of all religions: a radical shift in the movement's origins story, a retrenchment asserting the value of the old story, and two opposing forms of disinterest based on either prior acceptance or ignorance of the sceptical view.

James Cox discussed contrasting Victorian views of Africans and African religions. He focused in particular on the writings of an Anglican vicar who argued against prevalent views of African animality to support a view of "shared humanity". While this was intended to support the need for Christian missionary activity, it illustrates themes of importance in the scholarly study of religions as founded on shared humanity.

The final two panels were 7A 'Commodification and Contemporary Spirituality' and 7B "Alternative" Perspectives and Visions: Theory and Practice'. The first of these examined the potential for exploitation inherent in contemporary spirituality. Denise Cush began by relating the Teenage Witch phenomenon to particular commercial concerns. Paul Reid-Bowman critically assessed the process of commodification and activism within the contemporary Goddess movement. And Michael Berman issues relating to the commodification of shamanic counselling.

Panel 7B began with Yokai Hakak's paper on 'Lithuanian Yeshivas in Current Times'. Yokai presented some results of research among men who have dropped out of yeshivas (orthodox Jewish religious seminaries) and sought fuller engagement with wider Israeli

practices are in fact rooted in prejudice.

Moojan Momen discussed recent changes among Baha'is that have been proposed as more fully expressing the egalitarian and global ethical and social programme of the Baha'i founders. Training for fully consensual meetings and authority patterns is being offered, and receiving some challenge from existing authorities, including especially Baha'i scholars. This provides an invaluable lens to observe deliberate change and resistance within a religious movement.

In keeping with the intentions of the conference organisers, the papers explored a wide variety of areas relating to professional ethics, ethics in scholarly study, and the ethical dimension within a variety of religious traditions. The controversy earlier in the year about the Danish cartoons, and more recent statements made by prominent politicians about the appropriateness of certain forms of religious dress, illustrate both the deep-felt sensitivities that exist in our society about religious matters, the concomitant close connection between religious and ethical questions, and the ongoing topicality of the subject.

BASR conference student bursary holders reports

The conference began on a strong note with a panel focused on ethical issues in the profession. Papers included a report by Darlene Bird on 'Inter-Disciplinary Ethics' and George Chryssides' on 'The Ethics Code', which explained the development of the 'Framework of Professional Practice', that is, a set of guidelines for discussion and reflection rather than prescription. This was followed aptly by Paul Weller's paper on government-funded research, where accountability, influence and conflict of interests were raised as potential areas of ethical concern.

Thereafter, we had a choice of two panels at each session. It was interesting to note that only one panel had a 'mainstream' religious tradition as its subject, which may indicate that the current research interests of academics in our field in the UK is less bounded by traditional concepts of 'religion'. Rather, as the theme might suggest, many focused on methodological issues and socio-political contexts. In first panel I attended, 'Lessons from the Field', Graham Harvey looked at the concept of 'good living/life' among the Ojibwe, and Paul Tremlett compared different interpretive accounts, highlighting the benefits of a socio-historical approach to the study of religions.

After dinner, the BASR Annual Lecture was presented by Robert Segal on 'The Ethical Dimension in Theories of Religion'. He explored the differences between nineteenth and twentieth century scholars of religion and suggested that there was a shift between an

explanatory or ritualistic theory of the origin of religion to an ethical one. Segal pointed out that Tylor presented 'primitive' religion as an attempt toward explaining the world. When science took over that role, scholars elevated the importance of ethics in religion. Thus, Freud and other twentieth century scholars thought religion arose to instil ethics.

Although the attendance at the conference was considered low, this made for a more collegial atmosphere in a beautiful setting, which we were able to take advantage of with the good weather. I would like to thank the BASR for the bursary enabling me to attend this conference, which I have found to be particularly welcoming toward students. In the reports below, Amy, Russell and Louise have given their impressions and reports on some of the panels they had attended.

**Suzanne Owen,
University of Edinburgh**

The conference held at Bath Spa University proved to be an excellent introduction to the BASR and its members. 'The Ethical Dimension' theme covered important key topics that are currently at the forefront of the debate in the study of religions. For example, Bettina E. Schmidt discussed the use and abuse of 'magic' and 'sorcery' in vodou as political power. Through a series of slides, Schmidt demonstrated how objects are used and displayed in vodou to manipulate situations of power, and shared her experiences of having spent time with groups of vodou practitioners. Andrew Dawson, in his paper 'Ayahuasca Religiosity in Brazil', gave an account of how Ayahuasca consumption among Brazilians, as well as mixed groups of Brazilians, Columbians and Peruvians, is seen as a rural peasant religiosity, and is therefore legal in Brazil. Dawson also discussed neo-esoteric groups and how they mix traditional elements from Santo Daime or 'vegetalismo' with 'New Age' practices. In his paper, 'Is there a New Age Ethic?', Nick Campion explored the ethical consequence of the New Age belief in the inner divine and discussed the works of scholars and authors working with this dilemma. He left the question posed in theoretical suspension after having examined the common threads that can be said to constitute the 'New Age'.

I also received some very insightful criticism when I delivered my own work in progress, of which I am very grateful. I had not considered the connotations of the words 'idol' and 'fetish' carefully enough in my presentation, and I learned a valuable lesson. I would like to thank the BASR for the bursary and the opportunity to attend the conference. I met some great people and I look forward to attending the conference next year in Edinburgh.

**Amy Whitehead,
The Open University**

Attending my first BASR Conference has proved to be one of the highlights of my doctoral studies to date. As a law student focussing on the interaction of law and religion, I was very impressed by the quality of the papers presented, not only their diverse nature but also their common themes and ideas that emerged through the very well organised programme. A range of papers explored 'The Ethical Dimension' of various religions and traditions,

papers explored 'The Ethical Dimension' of various religions and traditions, including excellent papers on Shamanism by Michael Berman and teenage witchcraft by Denise Cush. Naomi Appleton's fascinating paper on 'Bodhisatta behaving badly' focussed on the interesting question of whether moral inspiration can be drawn by believers from scriptural accounts that show the protagonists in a less than positive light. Furthermore, 'The Ethical Dimension' was examined from a range of different approaches ranging from Graham Harvey's paper on indigenous approaches to ethical living to Stewart M. Hoover's analysis of the media age. James Cox's paper entitled 'An Ape in Human Envelope' provided an enthralling account of nineteenth century attitudes to African Religions.

In addition to this evident diversity, the Conference programme also raised common issues. For example, the relationship between religion and consumer culture was explored in many different ways, including Paul Reid-Bowen's analysis of commodification and global activism in the contemporary Goddess movement. Furthermore, the Conference underlined issues that are important to everyone who studies religion. This was particularly true in relation to the papers on research ethics that opened the conference as well as Ian G. Williams' paper, which looked at how ethics, sacred violence and martyrdom could be understood through religious education and was important for all who teach religion. The lasting memory of this outstanding conference will be not only the professionally and intellectually-stimulating way in which it was organised but also the ideas presented and the issues raised which are important for all those who study religion. I am extremely grateful for the bursary that allowed me to attend the Conference and for the opportunity to present a paper.

Russell Sandberg, University of Cardiff

The topics of the presentations of scholars and students from all around the world one way or another linked to the scholar of religion Ninian Smart and his idea of the ethical dimension. The presenters showed a lot of creativity in the way they managed to associate their own research with that of Smart. Denise Cush of the Bath Spa University, for instance, looked at the ethical dimension in her research on teenage witches and commercialization. Cush concluded that she herself was actually the biggest victim of marketing as she had bought a dozen books and videos on witchcraft for research purposes. Michael Berman, from Cardiff University, put question marks on the value of shamanic counseling on a commercial basis. He ended his presentation – and the Bath conference – with a Chinese story on the loss of memory of a man named Hua Tzu that illustrated the insensitivity of some healing practices. The story he chose could not have been more applicable as it touched the kernel of the theme of the conference.

The Chinese story of Hua Tzu showed the burden of being conscious of past, present and future events. The scholars at the BASR conference, however, shared with participants not only how to become conscious of history and of different worldviews but also how to deal with one's consciousness ethically. This way, the participants of the conference were not left behind as 'lost souls', such as Hua Tzu's initial state of mind, neither were they

The British Association for The Study of Religions

affiliated to: The European Association for The Study of Religions
and The International Association for The History of Religions

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2007

SEPTEMBER 3RD – 6th, 2007
New College, University of Edinburgh

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS

This conference aims to consider religious experience in an age of globalisation. Panels already have been proposed on Religious Experience in China (sponsored by the Alistair Hardy Society's Research Committee) and Religious Experience and the Law. Other panels or papers may be focused on individual religions, new religious movements, indigenous traditions, geographical areas, key themes, important persons or methods relevant to the theme.

**The BASR annual lecture will be given by
Dr Maria Jaschok, Director of the International Gender
Studies Centre, University of Oxford**

Offers of panels, individual papers and reports of work in progress by June 1st 2007 to: Professor James Cox, University of Edinburgh, New College, Edinburgh EH1 2LX
J.Cox@ed.ac.uk

Conference registration form and BASR membership at
[http:// basr.org.uk](http://basr.org.uk)

A limited number of full student bursaries are available for postgraduates presenting papers or work in progress reports.
Applications to Professor James Cox as above.

burden of religious history. The focus of the conference was on the practical use of ethics in research and further life. In addition, there was enough room for conversation and contemplation to send the participants home not only with a greater understanding of religions worldwide but also with some useful ethical guidelines in dealing with one's knowledge and consciousness in situations in and outside the academic world. I felt therefore honored to attend and present a paper at the 2006 BASR conference at Bath Spa University near the beautiful Roman ruins of Bath.

Louise Müller, University of Edinburgh

Seminar on Taiwan in Comparative Perspective

CALL FOR PAPERS

A series of seminars on 'Taiwan in Comparative Perspective' was launched in January 2006, organised by the LSE Taiwan Culture Research Programme. The 'Taiwan in Comparative Perspective Seminar' brings together expertise on issues or themes relating to Taiwan to develop a comparative and inter-disciplinary perspective on the island. For example, the Seminar encourages a multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary approach to the study of Taiwan, including anthropological and sociological studies, political and economic studies, contemporary literary and historical studies, religious studies, media studies, cultural studies, and gender studies. The Seminar also encourages a comparative approach to the study of Taiwan in its East Asian and global contexts. Moreover, the Seminar encourages the development of new theoretical and methodological positions and perspectives that acknowledge the experience of locality in Taiwan in an increasingly unstable and fragmented world.

We welcome papers on any issue or theme relating to Taiwan in comparative and/or inter-disciplinary perspectives from established academics and postgraduate students. We also welcome double presentations which consist of two papers; one focusing on Taiwan while the other on other appropriate comparator(s). Multi-media presentations and/or works in progress are also welcome. The two-hour slot that the Seminar occupies leaves ample space for questions and discussion. The purpose of the seminars is to provide a platform for academic dialogue and critical debate as well as to give constructive feedback to presenters. Outstanding papers may be considered for publication in the E-journal *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective*. The Seminar is usually chaired by Prof Stephan Feuchtwang, and convened by Dr Fang-Long Shih. It is normally held on Thursday evenings, in term one and in term two, at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

The speakers are expected to speak for 50 minutes. There will be no seminar fee but where applicable one night's accommodation will be provided and travel expenses can be reimbursed (a maximum of fifty pounds from the UK, one hundred pounds from Europe, and two hundred pounds from outside Europe). If you would like to give a paper please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words to Dr Fang-Long Shih at F.Shih@lse.ac.uk

CONFERENCE REPORTS

CESNUR 2006: San Diego State University, 13-16 July 2006

This was a truly memorable conference, not simply on account of the papers that were presented, but for the numbers of field visits and opportunities to talk to informants that formed part of the programme. Situated in California, San Diego State University is a prime location for studying new religious movements, and houses the Jonestown Institute, whose remarkable web site is located at <http://jonestown.sdsu.edu>.

The conference began with a session that was addressed by some Jonestown survivors, at which a new documentary CD on Jim Jones' Peoples Temple was previewed. At another stage of the conference, a survivor of David Koresh's Waco community was introduced, and fielded questions. Out and about, we were able to experience the wide range of religious communities that California has cradled. There was Point Loma, now owned by the Nazarene University, but formerly the home of Theosophical leader Katherine Tingley, who established her Raja Yoga School there. From there, we were taken to Paramahansa Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship commune in Encinitas, and on the final day we were hosted by Unarius — one of the first UFO-religions, established in 1954 in Los Angeles — and the Twelve Tribes, a small self-sufficient Christian fundamentalist organisation that stemmed from the 1960s Jesus Movement. During the conference proceedings, two members of the Twelve Tribes gave a multi-media presentation about the controversies surrounding child abuse allegations in 2002, and how the prosecution case collapsed.

Some unofficial visits proved possible as well. San Diego was the location of the notorious Heaven's Gate group, who committed ritual suicide in 1997. Some of us were taken to the site, although the neighbours understandably disapprove of sight-seers, and found it entirely bulldozed. Obviously no-one wanted to live in the house where the event took place. Unbeknown to the conference organisers, San Diego is also the site of 'Judge' Rutherford's (the former Jehovah's Witnesses' leader's) summer house, named Beth Sarim ('House of the Princes'). Rutherford's study of the Bible led him to believe that the Old Testament patriarchs would return from the dead, and the house would accommodate them. The predicted date for this event was 1925, but surprisingly the house was not completed until 1929: Rutherford did not abandon hope when the event failed to occur, and in his 1939 work *Salvation*, it is still mentioned, together with a drawing of the property. It looks almost exactly the same today, and is marked as a national monument.

Amidst the plethora of field visits, the more serious conference agenda seemed to fade in significance. The official theme was 'Religion, Globalization, and Conflict: International Perspectives'. The conference was somewhat small-scale, with around forty attendees, and the creation of three strands made attendance at concurrent sessions somewhat sparse. Topics covered included some New Christian and New Buddhist movements, and,

New Buddhist movements, and, unsurprisingly, the theme of Islamic terrorism received an airing. Other papers addressed wiccan and Aquarian issues, as well as UFO-religions, and Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*.

At times one wondered how some papers related to the theme of 'conflict', but, as tends to happen in conferences, themes are interpreted liberally, and presenters' current research interests can be slightly adapted to pay token homage to the conference title. 'Conflict' need not mean physical violence of course, and conflicts of ideas within and among religious movements are equally of interest, thus enabling Dan Brown to be put on the map.

It would be impossible in a short space to summarise the proceedings of a conference whose theme was broad both in scope and interpretation. Those who wish to follow up the conference in more detail can read the papers in electronic format at http://www.cesnur.org/2006/sd_cyberpro.htm. The next conference will take place in June 2007 in Bordeaux, which promises to be an excellent venue for further field work.

The 2007 conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions

will be held at the University of Bremen, Germany, September 23-27.

It will be a joint conference of the EASR and the DVRW (Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft). The conference title is "Plurality and Representation. Religion in Education, Culture and Society".

Proposals for papers and panel sessions (abstracts of not more than 200 words) may be sent to Wanda Alberts (abstracts@religion.uni-bremen.de). Proposals may be submitted now, and we encourage you to do so early.

For the conference concept and call for papers please take a look at the conference website: www.religion.uni-bremen.de/dvrweasr2007

Report on the 2006 conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR).

In September, the sixth annual EASR conference was hosted in Bucharest by the Romanian Association for the History of Religions (RAHR), and was the first EASR conference to be held in an East European capital. The conference was also a "special conference" of the IAHR. Around 150 participants from most of the European member associations and some more international colleagues met in various Bucharest venues (a central University building, the Athenaeum, and the Cotroceni Palace) to hear and discuss presentations organised in nine strands. The overall theme was the "Religious History of

Europe and Asia” but the presentations seemed fairly even divided between those that focused on historical issues and those that engaged with contemporary religions. Strands were devoted to “Indian Religions and Buddhist Studies”, “Iranian Religions”, “Greek and Roman Religions”, “Christianity in Late Antiquity”, “Monotheisms in the Middle Ages”, “Hermetic Currents and Esotericism”, “Religions and Modernity”, “Mircea Eliade and his Legacy”, “Religious Interactions between Eastern and Western Europe” and “The Reception of the East as the Other”. Most of these strands were related to a keynote lecture. The organisers particularly highlighted the work of Mircea Eliade, noting that 2006 is the centenary of his birth in Romania. In an event so far unparalleled in the discipline, the President of Romania awarded medals to various scholars, especially those who have contributed to “Eliade studies”, and knighted the President of the Romanian Association for the History of Religions, Prof Andrei Oisteanu. The conference also included the EASR’s AGM, at which it was announced that various committee offices will be up for election next year, the Estonian Society for the Study of Religions (ESSR) was welcomed into the EASR, members were encouraged to participate in discussions through the EASR’s network of internet lists (e.g. Dolmen), and the 2007 conference theme and venue were announced (see elsewhere in this Bulletin). The local conference organisers had gained the support of a remarkable array of national and international cultural and political bodies, and hosted a range of impressive academic exchanges and cultural events.

Graham Harvey

IAHR BUSINESS

One of my pleasant duties as IAHR Publications Secretary is to gather information about IAHR-related publications as they appear. I am writing to ask you kindly to send me details of any publications connected with the IAHR Congress in Tokyo (for example, publication of individual papers presented in Tokyo, publication of collections of symposia or panel papers from the Congress). I am aware that there has been a special issue of the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies with papers from the Congress, and one or two other works are in preparation. Any information you can send to me will be most gratefully received.

If you don’t have full details, please send what you can (e.g. author, title) so that I can follow up later.

Please send information by email to me at: bb@soas.ac.uk

Early replies will be appreciated, but it is never too late to reply; this is a standing invitation!
Kind regards

RESEARCH REPORT

Soul Loss and Recovery in Shamanic Stories

Michael Berman

University of Wales, Cardiff

In this study the shamanic concepts of the soul and soul loss will be explored along with the ways in which these differ from perceptions in other religious traditions. This will include a consideration of how many souls in fact there are as some peoples, including the Inuit, believe that each part of the body has its own soul, the Yukaghir recognize three different souls (see Jochelson, 1926, pp.156-157), and the Evenki were of the opinion that human beings had up to seven souls, each with its own function.

The importance of the soul is referred to in the New Testament in Mark 8:37 when the question is asked 'what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' John Bunyan wrote a series of sermons on the subject. He was of the opinion that 'nothing is a matter of that concern as is, and should be, the soul of each one of you.' For Bunyan, soul loss was the result of sin and the solution he proposed was to instil transgressors or potential transgressors with fear of damnation to encourage them to change their ways.

In shamanism, however, soul loss is the term used to describe the way parts of the psyche become detached when we are faced with traumatic situations. In psychological terms, it is known as dissociation and it works as a defence mechanism, a means of displacing unpleasant feelings, impulses or thoughts into the unconscious. In shamanic terms, these split-off parts can be found in non-ordinary reality and are only accessible to those familiar with its topography (see Gagan, 1998, p.9). Soul retrieval entails the shaman journeying to find the missing parts and then returning them to the client seeking help.

The way in which soul loss is dealt with by indigenous shamans is not necessarily the way in which such cases are dealt with by neo-shamanic practitioners. These differences and the reasons why they exist will be considered. It has been suggested by Harner for example, that one of the attractions of the neo-shamanic approach is that it offers a "quick fix". The shaman journeys to bring back your missing soul parts and it is all over in a flash. 'Another factor that helps to account for the popularity of neo-shamanism is that it is possible to achieve in just a few hours experiences that might otherwise take years ... which makes it ideally suited to the contemporary life of busy people' (see Harner, 1990, p. xii). However, indigenous shamans provide something similar in that the "cure" is achieved relatively quickly, though the accompanying ritual would clearly not be the same as one performed by a neo-shamanic practitioner.

Stories have traditionally been classified as epics, myths, sagas, legends, folk tales, fairy tales, parables and fables. I argued in my MPhil thesis that definitions of the terms have a tendency to overlap making it difficult to classify and categorize material. Alternatively,

definitions put forward are so general in nature that they tend to be of little value. For example, the suggestion that a myth is 'a story about something significant [that] ... can take place in the past ... or in the present, or in the future' (Segal, 2004, p.5) really does not help us very much as this could be applied to more or less every type of tale. For this reason I argue for the introduction of a new genre, termed the shamanic story. This can be defined as a story that has either been based on or inspired by a shamanic journey or one that contains a number of the elements typical of such a journey. Other characteristics typical of the genre include the way in which the stories all tend to contain embedded texts (often the account of the shamanic journey itself), how the number of actors is clearly limited as one would expect in subjective accounts of what can be regarded as inner journeys, and how the stories tend to be used for healing purposes.

Within the new genre of the shamanic story, I will propose that there exists a sub-genre – shamanic stories that deal specifically with soul-loss. Examples, both traditional and contemporary, will be presented and analysed to support this hypothesis. The conclusion will consider what these tales have in common.

For the textual analysis the psychoanalytical approach, as exemplified by the work of Bettelheim and von Franz, will be taken into account, as well as the socio-historical perspective, and formalist approaches such as structuralism and narratology will be alluded to as well. In this way attention will be drawn to how the selected stories can be interpreted on a number of different levels to convey both their richness and depth. By making use of textual material from different cultures and times, the intention is to highlight the pervasive influence the concept of soul loss has had and to show how it has been dealt with by different cultures.

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CHANGES AND MOVEMENTS

Dr Elizabeth De Michelis has moved from the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, to Oxford. The new post she has taken up in Oxford, starting October 2006, is the Gordon Milburn Research Fellowship, dedicated to the study of mysticism and religious experience, and based at the Theology Faculty and Oriel College. She will be working on the history of yoga and meditation, and engaging in research activities aimed at promoting a more in-depth and nuanced knowledge of these disciplines and of their history, with regards to both their past and contemporary forms.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CORK – a course for the 21st century

Gwilym Beckerlegge

College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, UCC

Ireland has undergone a rapid and, some would add, unsettling transformation in recent years. Membership of the EU has brought greater prosperity, attitudes to the Roman Catholic Church have changed, and a fluid labour market has attracted migrant workers (including this writer). There are now, for example, some 25,000 Muslims in Ireland, the second largest community being in Cork. Against this background, University College Cork (UCC) is proposing to offer a new undergraduate course in its BA programme from September 2007, which will focus on the study of religions and the relationship between religion and society in the 21st century.

University College Cork's BA reflects the varied interests of its College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences. Its four-subject entry, followed by single, major, joint, and minor levels of study, suggests a supportive environment for a new route in the study of religions. Also, UCC's international reputation, and the lure of studying in Ireland, brings a steady stream of students from partner institutions in the United States for whom the study of religions would be an attractive option.

Developing and sustaining courses in the study of religions, however, is rarely straightforward, as the history of earlier attempts to introduce degrees in Theology/Religious Studies at UCC illustrates¹. One of Ireland's 'godless colleges', UCC was one of the three Queen's Colleges founded in 1845 to promote mixed rather than denominational education. Although initially shunned by the Catholic hierarchy as a result, various attempts have been made subsequently to introduce Theology into the curriculum, most recently in 2001. By then, however, the debate had shifted to the question of what place, if any, the study of religion should have in the secular university. This latest proposal, a degree in the study of religions as distinct from Theology, thus has its roots in almost a century's negotiation and argument about the place of the scholarly study of religion in Irish higher education.

An external issue that will inevitably impinge upon recruitment to the planned degree is its relationship to RE in Irish secondary education. The new examinable RE curriculum for school leavers, which is less denominational than the religious instruction that to date has been the norm in Irish schools, may provide a supply of students for the degree. A study of religions degree, however, is far-removed from the currently stipulated qualification for a teacher of RE in Irish secondary education (in essence, degree-level study in Roman Catholic Theology). Although the contemporary agenda of the new degree will make its relevance to a range of career destinations, including teaching, abundantly clear, the question of its recognition as a specific qualification for Irish RE teachers has yet to be explored.

If anybody would like to correspond with me about the issues in this preliminary report, I would welcome any conversations about different visions of where the study of religions ought to be a few years from now (and how to realise them). In my second report for *BASR* on the UCC project at the end of the academic year, I hope to be able to talk more directly about the substance of the new degree and its progress to date, rather than merely about the context in which I am currently working and the challenges ahead.

From Lancaster to Aberdeen

Robert A. Segal
Chair in Religious Studies
University of Aberdeen

In autumn 1994 I came from the US to teach in the department of religious studies at Lancaster University. I had never lived or studied, let alone taught, abroad. I soon realized how atypical the Lancaster department—as a department of religious studies exclusively—is. I, an innocent, had never even heard of departments with names like divinity or theology, let alone ones with hybrid names like divinity and religious studies or divinity with religious studies.

In the US nearly all university departments in which religion is taught are departments of religious studies (or just “religion”). The only exceptions are departments of theology in some private, religiously affiliated universities such as the University of Notre Dame. It is not that divinity or theology goes untaught. Rather, it is that divinity or theology is taught in separate schools of divinity or theology, and is taught exclusively at the postgraduate level. Relations between divinity/theology and religious studies may be cordial or cool, but even when cordial, the division is clearcut. No one would ever imagine linking the two enterprises. Doing so would constitute miscegenation.

The department of religious studies at Lancaster would seem wholly conventional in the US. I did not, then, realize how unusual it was, and remains, till I arrived. I doubt that I would have stood a chance at being hired by almost any other university in the UK at the

time, but then I had never applied anywhere else at the time.

In my twelve years at Lancaster, I felt very much at home professionally, and I was hardly yearning to depart. Before accepting the kind offer from the University of Aberdeen, which I knew only from several guest talks I had given over the years, I was warned by some colleagues in religious studies—outside of Lancaster—that I would find the department at Aberdeen alien and even hostile, dominated as it was by “divines” purportedly opposed to religious studies. In my three months here, I am happy to report that I have found the department to be almost the opposite—different from Lancaster, indisputably, but homey nevertheless.

In a recent issue of *Religion*, of which I am the European Editor, James Cox and Steven Sutcliffe published a thorough, lucid history of the state of religious studies in Scotland. I recommend it to all members of the BASR. I myself learned more about the history of religious studies at Aberdeen from that excellent article than I had known before coming here in August. I will, then, forgo recounting the history of religious studies here. Let me instead sum up my experience here.

I am a member of a combined department of divinity and religious studies—a hard-won change in title, I am told, from divinity *with* religious studies. Presently, there are about seventeen fulltime staff members in divinity and just four of us in religious studies. Just a few years ago there were but two staff members in religious studies, so that we have doubled in size! The other three in religious studies are all professional anthropologists, as was Seth Kunin, my predecessor. My three colleagues, Martin Mills, Will Tuladhar-Douglas, and Gabriele Marranci, specialize in Himalayan Buddhism (Mills, Tuladhar-Douglas) and Islam (Marranci).

Divinity, which in days of yore was a faculty all its own, remains divided into the units that once constituted separate departments: Old Testament (no longer called Hebrew Bible!), New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology. The ideal size, not yet realized, would be a unit of four or more staff members, at least one of them a professor.

Undergraduates can enrol in degrees in the MA in Religious Studies, the MA in Divinity, the Bachelor of Divinity, or the Bachelor of Theology. In Scotland, as I myself did not know till all too recently, undergraduates ordinarily study for four, not three, years and therefore garner an MA rather than a BA. Those enrolled for the BA already have an MA. A high percentage of undergraduates in not only religious studies but also divinity choose to do joint honours degrees with any of a large number of other departments.

I am surprised by the surprisingly small number of undergraduates enrolled for either divinity or religious studies but am equally surprised by the almost amazing number of postgraduates and especially doctoral students in the department. Many come to study systematic theology, but other units of the department, including religious studies, are

attracting increasing numbers. The *Bulletin* would have to print a double issue to have space for the names of all of the postgraduate and doctoral degrees offered. As a renowned haven for the study of the work of Karl Barth, the department is particularly alluring to overseas students from the US, with more from Korea in times past than right now. But postgraduates do come from all over, as indeed do undergraduates.

The “asymmetry” between the concentration of staff in the study of Christianity and Judaism and the paucity of staff in all the rest of the religions of the world is obvious, but for the UK it is, of course, standard. What I appreciate is the good will between divinity and religious studies. Doubtless views vary, but the staff in divinity do seem to value the work of those in religious studies. So far, I have seen none of the defensiveness that sometimes exists, especially when, as is not true here, religious studies attracts more students than divinity. And I, whose doctoral degree is in religions of the Greco-Roman world and not in any social science, am delighted by the insistence by staff in divinity, if also in religious studies, on competence in the languages of the primary texts being studied. To me, better that students know a foreign language than that they know interviewing techniques.

What I look forward to in years to come is more formal discussion between colleagues in divinity and colleagues in religious studies. As I have already politely pointed out to some, religious studies offers both comparativism and general theories. How far one can press the similarities, not just the differences, among religions of the world, we shall see. How far one can press secular explanations of religion, we shall see as well. I have already invoked the memory of William Robertson Smith, native Aberdonian and perhaps the key pioneer in the modern study of religion.

IN MEMORIUM

Professor William Montgomery Watt
Died 24 October 2006

Professor Clifford Geertz
Died 31 October 2006

Professor Mary Boyce

Mary Boyce (hereafter MB) died in June 2006. She was a pioneering scholar of Zoroastrianism. She was born in 1920 in Darjeeling where her father was in the Indian Civil Service. She herself was educated at Wimbledon High School and Cheltenham Ladies College before going to Newnham College, Cambridge, where she read English for the Part I of the tripos then Archaeology and Anthropology for Part II, obtaining a double 1st. She was taught among others by H. M. Chadwick, Professor of Anglo Saxon and a world authority on oral literatures which deeply influenced her later studies. At his home she met a number of Iranians including Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh then lecturing at SOAS and later

to become Iranian Ambassador to Britain. Chadwick encouraged her to begin the study of Persian. In 1944 she was appointed lecturer in Anglo Saxon Literature and Archaeology at Royal Holloway College. While holding this post she continued her study of Persian at SOAS and there came under the influence of the brilliant philologist W. B. Henning who encouraged her to study Old Persian and other ancient Iranian languages. She attended a seminar series organized by Henning (and Minovi) on the *Letter of Tansar*, a Sasanian document and MB was invited to prepare an annotated English translation of the text which did for publication in the Persian Heritage Series.

In 1946 she returned to Cambridge to study for a Ph.D. under Henning and Professor Sir Harold Bailey on 'The Manichaean hymn-cycles in Parthian' a work based on photographs of manuscript fragments. Her work at that stage was linguistically and textually focused. In 1947 she was appointed to a newly established lectureship in Iranian Studies at SOAS. She became interested in the transmission of epic traditions looking in particular at the role of the minstrel in Parthian society. She was made a Reader at SOAS in 1958. When Henning moved to Berkeley in 1962 she was appointed to the Professorship.

What transformed her studies was a year's field work in the desert city of Yazd and its surrounding remote villages populated by traditional Zoroastrians. Previously academics had taken it as read that Zoroaster's own teachings, based on his visions, had been a radical break from previous religious belief and practice and that after his death his followers had reverted to their pagan ways which had been perpetuated through medieval/ Middle Persian literature until 19th century western scholars such as Martin Haug and J. H. Moulton had rediscovered the 'pure' monotheism of the prophet and separated it off from the corrupt priestly tradition of his successors. As a result of living with devout and priestly Zoroastrians MB came to see a great continuity between living and priestly belief and practice and the ideals of the Middle Persian literature right back to the Gathas, indeed to the Indo Iranian tradition. Her field work was the basis of her 1975 Ratanbai Katrak lectures in the oriental Faculty at Oxford subsequently published as *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* by OUP (1977). For this she was awarded Burton Memorial Medal by the Royal Asiatic Society.

Yet more important than that book was the revolution in her way of understanding the history of the religion. I was very fortunate to become her student shortly after her return from Iran while she was thinking new thoughts and asking questions not previously asked. It was a time of exciting challenge in the subject and studying with her was special – seminars took place in her home with her fantastic library and as debate continued the pile of books on the study floor grew huge – they always lasted several hours. Perhaps the place where she articulated her theoretical issues most clearly was in the Course Reader for the first Open University religions course entitled (now politically incorrectly) 'Man's Religious Quest' edited by Whitfield Foy (1978). She was scathing in her criticism of scholars who studied the religion in the tranquility of their studies, who saw Zoroastrianism as a forerunner of Christianity (though she herself argued for Zoroastrian influence on Judaism and Christianity) and who thereby ignored the teachings which are unique and set

it apart. She argued:

...it has been a weakness in the Western study of Zoroastrianism that it has concentrated largely on texts...In a purely academic study of religion it is possible to make subjective choice of what seems significant, whereas encounters with a living faith force one to accept its adherents' own understanding of its essentials which are likely, moreover, to be embodied in its main observances (in Foy p. 613).

Her central hypothesis was that religions which are transmitted orally within a ritual setting and cut off from outside influences – which was true of the main village Sharifabad, in which she did her field work – is more likely to preserve the ancient tradition than a textually transmitted tradition in a cosmopolitan environment. Previous studies had depicted Zoroaster almost as an abstract monotheistic philosopher with Protestant assumptions about the contrast between a religion of faith contrasting with a religion of works – which was usually interpreted as priestly superstition. Having lived among families of devout priestly Zoroastrians she came to see the Gathas in a new light as works of priestly devotion:

Zoroaster, trained as a priest [the Gathas do explicitly state that he was a priest, something denied by such Protestant scholars as Moulton] must have been familiar from boyhood with this recurrent rite of worship (Yasna), and it seems that it was largely through meditating upon it and upon the mystery and purpose of creation, that he attained enlightenment (Foy p. 611).

She saw the Zoroastrian priestly tradition as essentially conservative and argued that the contemporary practice in Sharifabad could be used to understand the teaching both of the Pahlavi and indeed the ancient Indo-Iranian tradition. Who, she asked, is more likely to understand the teaching of Zoroaster, his own devout followers or outside Christian influenced scholars? She concluded that

...one can see that in fact Zoroaster's followers have remained loyal to their prophet's teaching in all essentials, and that there is an unbroken tradition of orthodoxy from the earliest times through (in a few traditional centres) to the present day. This coherence and fidelity, rather than a history of backsliding and confusion, is what one would look for from a great seminal faith (Foy p. 609).

Further she argued that Zoroaster not only propounded the key teachings but that as a serving priest he would have instituted the great observances of the faith namely the key rituals not only the daily sudre kusti prayers but also the great festivals and major rites such as the Yasna.

With these theoretical and radical arguments she went on to become one of the most prolific of Zoroastrian scholars. She wrote what has become the standard introductory text: *Zoroastrians their religious beliefs and practices* (2nd edition Routledge 2000) and a companion volume *Textual Sources for the Study of Religion* (Chicago University press, 1st edition MUP 1984). These books give what was a unique perspective of the religion from its earliest times down to the present both in Iran and India and are the standard works for university courses on Zoroastrianism. Her greatest work is her *History of Zoroastrianism* (Brill, 1975, 1982, 1991) in three volumes. She was working on Vol. IV when she died. This is to be completed by Dr Albert de Jong from Copenhagen who she had already asked to write the subsequent volumes. What is remarkable about these volumes is the amazing thoroughness and pursuit of sources, both primary and secondary. Mary Boyce had spinal problems before she visited Iran, which visit made those problems yet worse. She wrote all her books and articles lying on her back, until recently in pencil, for a secretary to type up. She had helpers who plied her with books from SOAS and other major libraries. She never married; being as she said wedded to her work. Although thus confined to her flat in Highgate (and a part of each year with her brother in Somerset) she produced an incredible number of articles (said with feeling as someone who is trying to put together a volume of her selected works!).

She was hugely influential not just in the academic world but also among Zoroastrians. She worked with the High Priest (Dastur) Dr Firoze Kotwal and taught the most active of Parsi religious teachers Khojeste Mistree. She is so respected by Zoroastrians that the only picture of a non-Zoroastrian in the new Zoroastrian House in London is a photograph of her and they held a special memorial event there immediately after her death. She supervised the research of numerous academics who went on to professorships at Harvard, SOAS and elsewhere. She was generous friend, and also a fierce critic. To the end of her life I, like many others, would send her the drafts of major chapters or books for comment, her responses were always detailed meticulous and ruthless. My late wife was virtually a teetotaler but when she knew I had sent a draft to MB for comment and saw a letter from her in the morning post she would put along side my breakfast place (Anne always got up earlier than I) a bottle of whisky with a glass to ease the pain of what was to come! Last year (2005) a book I had been working on for over 20 years came out – *The Zoroastrian Diaspora* (OUP). The book was dedicated to MB. Knowing her sharp critical reflections I judged it diplomatic to send her the draft dedication – which she totally rewrote, taking out all the praise I had written. She was indeed a stern critic! I am very aware that I owe my academic career to her, as do many others. We all held her in respect, also in a little fear, but deeply grateful to an inspiring teacher a revolutionary scholar and a generous friend to young academics.

John R. Hinnells

Book Review

Book Review

Nesbitt, Eleanor (2004).

Intercultural Education: Ethnographic and Religious Approaches

Brighton and Portland Oregon: Sussex Academic Press.

viii + 204pp. Prices £25 hbk. and £13.95 pbk.

ISBN 1-84519 - 034 - 3 (pbk.) 1 - 84519 - 033 - 5 (hbk.)

This text demonstrates the very best in ethnographic research involving the skills of participant and reflective observation, attentive or deep listening alongside structured and less structured interviews of both individuals and groups. These methods entail 'an unflinching readiness to rethink one's earlier assumptions' and although the collection of fieldwork studies is intended primarily for teachers and teacher educators it is of value to other professionals and those involved in all levels and types of any education which seeks intercultural understanding. The case studies that are used focus on young people from Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities and seek to challenge the stereotyping of members of faith communities as homogenous and as groups different from others. There is detailed cross-reference to other work amongst, for example, Jewish and Muslim young people which indicates that the research is part of a larger body of material, though Buddhists seem to be rather neglected.

Some of the essays are revised versions of earlier published material and the one chosen to open the collection focuses on celebrating birthdays. It sets out a challenge to a teacher's comment 'we treat them all the same' with a demonstration of the differences of families' attitudes and observances which are 'just one index of cultural diversity and continuing changes that escape general notice' (p.20). The next chapter demonstrates the diversity of ideas and practices amongst young 'Hindus' in relation to vegetarianism within a consideration of the importance of 'food' as a whole. The exploration of intrafaith (within a faith) diversity continues with a presentation of research amongst families who self-identify as Christians but whose beliefs and practices vary widely, between for example Orthodox, Catholic and Pentecostal. The next chapter on festivals questions the choices and assumptions that are made in schools and in wider cultural celebrations and how these contribute to cultural change.

Chapter five focuses on the multiple understandings and conceptual breadth in the usage of the term 'God' by young Sikhs and how this overlaps the meaning it has in western, English-speaking society. The same chapter then turns from belief to the practice of Amrit. This is set against the background of the explanation of Amrit in curriculum books and Sikh literature. There follows a presentation of young people's understandings of the way water becomes Amrit and the effects of its use. The chapter ends with a reflection on the lack of any sense of the complexity involved in these understandings and practices in published English-language accounts of the Sikh tradition for the lay reader.

The belief choices that young Hindus make in late modernity are introduced in chapter six in relation to God, dharma, karma and nazar and then with alternative views provided by science, Christianity and atheism. The reactions and positions taken by the young people are analysed as resourced by their upbringing and family environment but with considerable cumulative personal reflection on their part. There is then an interesting final section on how far their flexibility is characteristic of the Hindu tradition or better located in 'twenty-first century western urban young people; whatever their religious identity' (p. 97). Hindu and Sikh attitudes to the reality of caste is the focus of chapter seven and the way this 'calls into question the boundaries that are so often drawn between Hindus and Sikhs (p.112). Chapter eight deals with the multiple or plural identities and multiple cultural competencies across the Britishness, Asian-ness and Hindu-ness of young British Hindus. As with other chapters the complexity of awareness is richly illustrated by substantial quotations from those interviewed. Spirituality and religious experience rather than 'religion' are the focus of chapter nine and as with other terminology that has been introduced (religion, culture, modernity, Hindu) the concepts themselves are carefully examined and reference made to other research.

The chapter on Ethnography as Reflective Practice draws out many of the methodological points made in the case studies of the earlier part of the book. Field studies make a difference to how 'religion' and 'culture' are conceptualised and how we understand young people's plural identities. The value to teachers is emphasised and there is a final appendix on practical guidelines for teachers on Cultural Diversity and the School, but this discussion has wider relevance. There is a useful glossary, an index and a very full bibliography which indicates the sound academic rootedness of the work along with frequent reference to web sites in end of chapter footnotes. As with the work of the rest of the Warwick team this wide-ranging collection, both in its methods, critique of current discourse and assumptions, will be of interest to anyone involved in the study of religions in the contemporary UK and global contexts. It is not only informative and also very enjoyable to read with a real sense

MEMBERS' RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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Fang-Long Shih

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2006. *Power, Invulnerability, Beauty: Producing and Transforming Male Bodies in the Lowland Christianised Philippines*. Occasional Papers in Gender Theory and the Study of Religions. London: School of Oriental & African Studies.

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2006 'Religious Experience in Contemporary China' , in *Modern Believing*, Vol. 47, No. 2, p. 44-61.

International Conference on Syncretism in South and Southeast Asia: Adoption and Adaptation.

We have the pleasure of extending to you with this E-mail the information of our forthcoming International Conference on Syncretism in South and Southeast Asia: Adoption and Adaptation. This is an SSEASR Conference dealing with South and Southeast Asia and is co-sponsored as a Regional Conference by International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), Member of CIPSH, a n affiliate organization of the UNESCO. We plan to hold the Conference in Bangkok from May 24 to 27, 2007 . We would be pleased if you would present paper on any subject covering the scope of the Conference (as suggested in the First announcement attached here). The information can be seen also at <http://www.iahr.dk/conf/SSEASR2007.pdf> by this week and the Pre-registration form can be filled in online. At the same time, if you find the opportunity to send the information to the scholars from your region, we would appreciate it very much. If you have any query, please do not hesitate to enquire. Please see the attached file. Thank you for the cooperation. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sophana Srichampa, Ph.D .

Chair, Organizing Committee,

2nd SSEASR Conference, 2007

<http://www.iahr.dk/conf/SSEASR2007.pdf>

The committee "Religion et société" from the SSS (Swiss society for sociology) and the SGR (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft) as well as the Observatory of religions in Switzerland are pleased to inform you about the coming workshop:

"Qualitative methods in sociology and study of religions",
The 7th, 8th and 9th of December 2006, room 4202, Unithèque, University of Lausanne.

This workshop will be aiming at:

- offering a training in ethnographic and qualitative approaches
- exploring the field of the new religious movements

The workshops are given by Dr. Susan J. Palmer and Dr. Lea Sgier.

Susan J, Palmer is a Professor in Religious Studies at the Dawson College of Montreal. She investigates the new religious movements with using an ethnographic method.

Lea Sgier is a Political analyst and a teacher at the Geneva University. She is an an expert in qualitative interviewing.

A conference by Susan Palmer: " Adoring the Aliens: Is the Raelien Movement a "real religion" will take place on the 7th of December, at 4.00p.m.: room 4202 - Unithèque (UNIL).

Spoken languages at the workshop: French and English.

International Interfaith Conference: 19-21 February 2007

***Jointly sponsored by the International Interfaith Centre, Oxford
and Punjabi University, Patiala, India.***

An international interfaith conference is being held at Punjabi University, Patiala from 19-21 February, 2007. Scholars and practitioners of interfaith from India, the UK and North America will be presenting academic papers at the conference. If you are interested in offering a paper, which should be of 40 minutes duration, please contact Dr Joy Barrow, Director, International Interfaith Centre, 2 Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF; e-mail: office@interfaith-centre.org.

Those attending the conference will also be given a short tour of the Punjab including visits to Anandpur Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh formalized the institution of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi, 1699, and the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar.

The cost, including conference attendance and accommodation at Punjabi University, and the short tour of Punjab, is £150 which is payable in India.

IAHR Special Conference 2007.

Religion on the Borders:

New Challenges in the Academic Study of Religion
19-22 April 2007, Södertörn, Stockholm

<http://www1.stocon.se/religion2007/9/41055.asp>

Borders and boundary conceptions are important themes in the academic study of religion. As scholars of religion we have always been challenged by the religious significance of borders. This is true no matter whether we study ritual, linguistic, social, gendered, economic, or political aspects of religion. Furthermore, the crossing of borders is a recurrent theme in our time. A seemingly boundless world is taking shape. Formerly fixed borders between ethnic groups, classes and sexes are dissolving. At the same time, new borders are drawn up. New political agendas with universal claims are outlined while the gap between rich and poor grows. Religion plays a crucial part in these processes.

We are pleased to invite scholars of different disciplines to take part in this conference, by which we hope to stimulate the theoretical, methodological and empirical progress within our field. Religion on the Borders is organized in collaboration IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions).

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON SOCIO-RELIGIOUS STUDIES

" Jorge Ramírez Calzadilla In Memoriam"

*The religious movements in the face of the conflicts and challenges
of a world in crisis*

Havana, July 9-12 2007

The Department of Socio-religious Studies of the Center for Psychological and Sociological Research (CIPS) of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment of Cuba calls researchers, professors, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, political science specialists, philosophers, historians, ethnologists, culture specialists, economists, scholars and religion experts from academic and religious institutions to participate in the FIFTH INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS STUDIES.

This event will take place in the midst of the serious problems, with no immediate prospects of being solved, being faced by humankind in the fields of social, economic, political, ethical and cultural relations, that have a growing impact on religion.

The particular impact on the field of religion of the current critical world situation brings about an interrelationship of the changes taking place in both fields.

On this basis the papers will be presented and discussed in oral presentations, panels, round tables, lectures, posters and videos on the following topics:

*Religious plurality, freedom of religion and laicism
Dialogue, integration and macroecumenism
The so-called New Religious Movement
Politics, culture, globalization and religion
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Theoretical and methodological prospects for the study of religion
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Specify if you will participate: presenting a paper, a poster, as an observer, accompanying person or student

Registration applications, abstracts and papers, or any request, should be sent to:

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Fifth International Meeting of Socio-Religious Studies
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English and Spanish are the official languages.

अनु प्रत्नास आयवः पदं नवीयो अक्रमुः

The ancient bards have walked in a newer step—Rg-Veda 9, 23, 2

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- 25 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State*, 2002
- 26 Rosalind Hackett, *The Response of Scholars of Religion to Global Religious Violence*, 2003
- 27 Ursula King, *Cherished Memories, Fractured Identities and New Subjectivities: Celebrating Fifty Years of British Scholarship in Religious Studies*, 2006.

GUIDELINES FOR *BULLETIN* CONTRIBUTORS

The Editors welcome 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	800 words
Research in progress	800-1,000 words
Turning Point	800-1,000 words
Tributes	normally 500 words

We welcome, in particular, accounts of research in progress by post-graduate students, and 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. The deadline for the next edition is 15th April 2007.

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

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