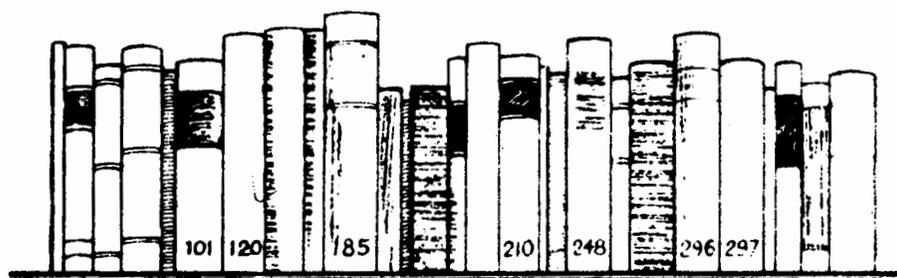


ISSN 0305 781X



# BULLETIN

*of the*

*Association of British Theological  
and Philosophical Libraries*

no. 29 March 1984

## BULLETIN 1984

<i>Subscriptions</i>	Libraries )	£3.00 (\$8.00) per annum
	Personal members )	
	Retired personal members	£1.00
<i>Back numbers</i> (if available)		£1.00 each (postage and
<i>Index to numbers 1 - 20</i>		£1.00 each (bank charges additional)

Orders for subscriptions and back numbers should be sent to the Treasurer with the appropriate remittance.

The *Bulletin* has been published in this form since 1974, three times a year (March, June and November). Circulation is about 180, of which a third are sent to addresses in Europe, the Commonwealth and U.S.A.

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**BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH  
THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARIES**

**(in liaison with The Library Association)**

*No. 29, Edinburgh, March, 1984*

ISSN 0305 – 871X

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**HANDBOOK TO THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES**

Members will recall that this project was commenced some twelve years ago and has never been brought to completion. However, the Chairman is now in possession of the responses to the original questionnaire. These will need considerable updating if the work is to be of any value, and for this task we have been most fortunate in securing the services of Miss Emma Dennis, who was seeking a suitable project for her librarianship dissertation at Loughborough University. She hopes to commence work in April, after meeting a small advisory group from ABTAPL. This has been appointed to enlist the cooperation of members in the various regions of the U.K., and to plan for economical publication at an early date.

M.E.

## A.N.Z.A.T.S. LIBRARY CONSULTATION

Forty librarians and heads of theological colleges attended the Library Consultation which was held at the conclusion of the Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools on 3rd September, 1983.

The special feature of the consultation was its emphasis on library standards, focussing on two key papers. Hans Arns (St. Patrick's, Manly) presented a survey of the present condition of A.N.Z.A.T.S. libraries and Trevor Zweck (Luther, North Adelaide) presented proposals for the adoption of a schedule of standards for A.N.Z.A.T.S. libraries. The meeting enthusiastically supported the proposals and resolved that a task force be established to implement them. Their job will be to draw up a set of policy standards, a set of guidelines for interpreting and implementing them, and an instrument and procedure for gathering and disseminating relevant statistical information. Special attention was drawn to the need for individual libraries to draw up specific collection development policies (using the categories established by the National Library of Australia) to facilitate cooperation between libraries.

Two further proposals were endorsed: (1) the undertaking of a survey of theological libraries and other libraries with theological collections to identify special collections, major holdings, and areas of strength; (2) the development of a special collection on theological education, to be housed in one of the member libraries. There was also a request to develop ways and means (e.g. a workshop and/or a manual) to help unqualified staff to become more professional in their work.

Another feature of the consultation was a demonstration by the Overseas Telecommunications Commission of a DIALOG search using the MIDAS telecommunications link.

A.N.Z.A.T.S. represents more than fifty theological colleges in Australia and New Zealand. Representatives attending the consultation were very conscious of the forward-looking nature of the proposals adopted. Many had the feeling (as one participant expressed it) that this was "Day One" of the future of Australian theological libraries.

(Rev.) Trevor Zweck,  
Luther Seminary, North Adelaide, S.A.

## **LIBRARIES – 28**

### *Wesley Historical Society Library*

Southlands College,  
Wimbledon Parkside,  
London SW19 5NN  
Tel: 01-946-2234 ext. 202

Hon. Librarian: Rev. Kenneth B. Garlick

Hon. Assistant Librarian: Mrs. J. Banks

### **History**

The Wesley Historical Society was founded 1893 with 24 working members, among whom a manuscript journal circulated. Members were expected to contribute; the nominal subscription of 1/- simply covered paper, postage etc. (Six of these early journals are in the library). However, printed Proceedings began in 1898 (and are still published), although the MS. journal continued until 1965. By then, its place had been taken by the publications of local branches, then 11, now 15 in number. From 1951 an appeal to members for contributions of books and money toward a proposed library, was mounted. In 1956, the Rev. F.F. Bretherton died and left over 2000 books to the society which formed the nucleus of the present collection. He also left valuable collections of notes, cuttings, proofs etc. The WHS Library was officially opened 1959 in the crypt of Wesley's Chapel, City Road. Later, the Methodist Archives Centre (at nearby Epworth House) and the WHS Library were administered together by Dr. J.C. Bowmer (now President Emeritus). Restoration of Wesley's Chapel and House forced the removal of both collections in 1977. The archives are now at John Rylands University Library, Manchester, and the WHS Library went to Southlands College, a Methodist foundation and now a constituent college of Roehampton Institute of H.E. It remains the Society's own individual library, but is the largest collection of Methodist material in South-East England.

### **Coverage**

Mainly Methodist history, theology, biography with an emphasis on 18th and 19th centuries. (The balance needs correcting). Some earlier 17th and early 18th century books which influenced Wesley, and/or owned by him, and a complete set of Wesley's Christian Library. Much material about local Methodist churches in book, pamphlet and cuttings form. Collection of pamphlets dealing with 18th and 19th century disputes and secessions. Mounted portraits, early Class Tickets, albums containing letters etc. of all (Wesleyan) Presidents of Conference. A few Wesley letters, including two to his wife. Complete run of the Arminian/Methodist Magazine, and almost complete of other British Methodist magazines.

### **Stock**

About 3000 monograph volumes, 760 volumes of bound periodicals. Some 4000 pamphlets, 4 drawers of cuttings and miscellanea, 9 drawers

of portraits and illustrations. About 30 albums and scrapbooks, also the 'Bretherton Collection' of articles about early 20th century Methodism from the Methodist Recorder and Methodist Times (about 600 items). The Trustees of Southlands College grant a small amount for the purchase of new and secondhand books, otherwise accessions are by way of gifts, legacies, review copies etc. and by exchange of publications with other historical societies.

### **Classification**

Dewey, modified and extended. Special schedules prepared for  
1. The divisions of Methodism. 2. Methodist secessions, and  
3. Methodist law and polity.

### **Catalogues**

1. Author catalogue (for printed books and most pamphlets)
2. General subject catalogue, accompanied by Subject Index.
3. Place-name catalogue/index.

All are on cards. All material, book and non-book is entered in 2. and 3. where appropriate. There is a separate handlist to the 'Bretherton Collection' and a list of biography symbols used. The cataloguing is not quite complete.

### **Access**

WHS Library is open during College library hours (with occasional exceptions), i.e. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in term-time and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in vacations. It is closed for one week at Christmas. Members of WHS and staff and students of the Institute may use it free; others may use it for £1 per annum and must apply for tickets to Rev. K.B. Garlick, 1 Chester Road, Wanstead, London E11 2JR. Tel. 01-530-2589. It is advisable to telephone the library before visiting. For the moment, there are no lending facilities.

### **Staff**

From 1981-1983 the collection was catalogued and organised by a team of four under a Manpower Services Commission scheme. No paid staff are now employed, but two volunteers. General oversight is maintained by the college library staff and the Society. There is a possibility of part-time paid staff in the future.

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHIES & REFERENCE BOOKS – 40**

*Current Research*, Autumn 1983. Institute of Religion and Theology (of Great Britain and Ireland) – annual subscription £4.00. Dr. J. Green, Sunderland Polytechnic, Chester Road, Sunderland, SR1 3SD.

*Current Research* has been published since 1974, when the Institute of Religion and Theology began. It now appears in alternate years, with a substantial amendments supplement in the intervening years. The present issue

has 115 pages and includes about 950 entries. There are still a few universities and colleges which do not contribute (it would probably help to name them prominently: all the contributors are listed as it is). These entries are essentially an indication of work in progress. Completed dissertations are listed in the ASLIB Index.

*Current Research* continues to be a mine of information on academic research in theology and religion in Great Britain and Ireland. Entrance to the mine, however, is through a labyrinth labelled "contents", by which the compilers mean their classification scheme. For the only exact way to find the subject or subjects to be examined is through the pages of this classification or by browsing through the whole index. The entries are arranged systematically in this sequence, which is a scheme apparently unique to *Current Research*, and which reflects the "religious studies" interest of its sponsoring organization in leaning over backwards to treat all religions equally. When 90% of the studies are on Christian topics this gives a rather pedantic series of subdivisions for what are really major sections of the work.

A more serious criticism is that there is no longer any alphabetical subject index. Some critics would also wish to scrap the classified sequence altogether and put each entry under an alphabetical series of subject headings. But this would bulk out the work considerably, because many titles would have to be listed under several headings for adequate subject access, and few of these doctor's or master's dissertations have simple titles. This critic definitely favours a classified sequence — as in a library catalogue — but it does need an accompanying alphabetical subject index. It is true that off-line computer searches of the data base by keyword are offered, but this is little help to the would-be researcher in the library or to his supervisor in his office. Presumably one could also ask the computer what an individual researcher was working at — the volume itself has no name index.

The computer has presumably dictated the layout also. The page has to be turned through 90 degrees and read from top to bottom rather than left to right. This would be less inconvenient if some open-flat binding had been used, instead of a tightly-glued spine which has to be kept open with two hands. Nonconformist spelling is another annoyance. Friedrich Engels (p.113), T.S. Eliot (p.110) and Philip Doddridge are spelt wrongly, and where is "Franand"? The computer should also be taught to spell St Andrews University correctly. Through several issues there has been an apostrophe before the s, suggesting that it is the University of Saint Andrew.

The greatest criticism is not of the compilers, however, but of Library Association Publishing, who have apparently decided to steal the title *Current Research* for their journal hitherto called *RADIALS Bulletin*. Certainly it needed re-naming, and it was on the point of expansion and improved frequency. But it is highly reprehensible that our own professional organizations's publishing arm should be so unaware of other specialized bibliographical information services as to cause almost certain confusion. Think again, please. Library Association!

J.V.H

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES & REFERENCE BOOKS – 41

*Methodism in the South-West. An historical bibliography.* By Roger F.S. Thorne [Exeter, 1983] Available from the compiler, at 11 Station Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, at £1.50 (inland) or £2.00 (overseas).

This bibliography is essentially a catalogue of the compiler's own collection of books, pamphlets, articles and leaflets, with a few manuscript histories and biographies. He has also included items in the Devon Record Office, Exeter (where he works), and other archives and local history collections, as well as the Methodist Archives in Manchester. All Devon is covered, with adjacent parts of Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset.

Arrangement is mainly alphabetical by place, within county, so that, for example, the Fairplace Chapel, Okehampton, is listed with two other chapels under Okehampton in the Devon section of the list. More detailed subdivisions are given for areas like Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay. Adequate bibliographical details are given for each entry. There are good indexes to authors, places and subjects.

The typing and its reproduction are, to use the compiler's word, homely, but the booklet makes accessible and organizes an unrivalled store of information on Methodist and Nonconformist history in this area. Non-Methodists will be intrigued to read of the activities of the Society of Cirplanologists!

J.V.H.

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## WHAT IS RELIGIOUS STUDIES?

*Frank Whaling*

This paper arose out of an invitation to review a book entitled *Research Guide to Religious Studies*, edited by John F. Wilson and Thomas P. Slavens, published by the American Library Association in 1982.<sup>1</sup> It became clear that in order to do justice to the title of the book it was necessary to transcend the contents of this particular book, and I agreed to look in some depth at the basic issue lying behind it – namely what is Religious Studies?

This is a complex question with far-reaching ramifications. However, insofar as the title "Religious Studies" appears in the book above-mentioned, it is appropriate that the basic issues involved in Religious Studies should be laid bare. The aim of the book is to suggest sources of information in Religious Studies, but this can only be adequately and exhaustively done if we are aware at a profound level of the nature of the field itself.

Let it be said immediately that *Research Guide to Religious Studies* is small (192 pages) and useful within its limits, although it begs a number of the questions we will address later. The two publications that should be possessed by every library that deals with philosophical and theological questions in the field of Religious Studies are: Charles J. Adams (editor)

*A Reader's Guide to the Great Religions*, Free Press, New York, 1977<sup>2</sup> and *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion* Volume 1 *The Humanities* & Volume 2 *The Social Sciences* (edited by Frank Whaling), Mouton, The Hague, 1984.<sup>3</sup> They give a full overview of the issues and relevant publications in the whole realm of Religious Studies in regard to both content and approach.

Apart from its over-simplicity of approach, the book that provides the starting-point for this paper, in spite of being the first in a series of "Sources of Information in the Humanities", is too American, too Christianity centred, and indeed too Bible centred to deal fully with the issues involved. To illustrate, it has three pages of text on New England Puritanism and four pages of text on the "National Period" in American Religious History – that is to say seven pages on American WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) – compared with just over six pages on all the Indian Religious traditions and Hinduism put together. In the reference works section, there are fifty four biblical type works referred to compared with one book on African Religions, one on Shinto, four on Hinduism, five on Islam, and ten on Buddhism. This reflects unbalanced criteria for selection. It points to an underlying uncertainty as to what Religious Studies basically is.

In its opening section, *Research Guide to Religious Studies* outlines its own theoretical view of what it considers Religious Studies to be. According to the writers of this chapter, Religious Studies purports to contain two strands: the study of religion as a generic entity which makes it like the study of economics, politics, literature, art and other such topics – and the study of religion from the viewpoint of religious believers; a generic scholarly interest in religion – and the continuation of a strand of scholarship located within the Jewish and Christian communities; the study of religion as geared to cultural settings – and the study of religion as a means of self-understanding for individuals. It claims that, "this bipolarity or two dimensionality is basic to religious studies as a field of scholarship"<sup>4</sup> and it states that it is necessary to balance and interweave these strands in order to do justice to the field. The burden of my paper is that this supposed bipolarity within Religious Studies is too simplistic. While seeming to be irenic and all-embracing, an approach based upon this balancing act between these predetermined opposing viewpoints is nothing of the kind. Quite apart from the fact that in practice, as we have seen, this book leans towards one side of the equation there is the more basic question as to whether the equation itself is viable. In order to explore this, we must leave the minutiae of this particular book and look afresh in some depth at the pivotal question: what is Religious Studies?

#### **Four questions**

We start by taking a bird's eye view of some of the axiomatic questions lying behind the notion of Religious Studies. First, what is its institutional setting? It is a sociological truism that concepts are influenced by context. But what are the implications lying behind the matter of where Religious Studies is pursued institutionally? Second, what is the influence of geography upon Religious Studies? Is it viewed differently in the United States, the continent of Europe, the non-western world, the communist world – and if so how and why? Third, what religions should be included

within the umbrella of Religious Studies? As we look at the spectrum of religious traditions that have existed on the face of the earth, we see the major living traditions, primal religions that exist today, minor religions (such as Shinto and the Parsis) that exist today but are not widespread, new religious cults that are recent in origin, and archaic religions that once held sway but have since died out (such as Graeco-Roman religion, Mesopotamian religion, the Mayas and Aztecs). By what criteria do we decide that any or all of these are within the orbit of Religious Studies? Finally there is the complex question of theory and method which (though often perhaps overstressed) cannot be ignored.

The content we recommend and the books we suggest will be influenced, either explicitly or implicitly, by the theoretical presuppositions we hold. It may be, of course, that we will have definite ideas about institutional setting, geographical criteria, what religions are relevant, and what theories and methods are appropriate. In practice, approaches often form themselves around scholars with far-reaching ideas in particular places so that a Chicago, Harvard, Lancaster, Santa Barbara, Rome, Peking, Edinburgh, Tokyo or whatever school emerges with a configuration of scholars gathering together around an agreed project or programme. An attempt to take an overview of the field of Religious Studies must take due account of all these trends and perspectives in their bewildering variety as well as in their ideal integration. This is by no means easy. But it is necessary if justice is to be done to the inter-disciplinary, inter-cultural and inter-national enterprise that is Religious Studies.

Before we analyse the above points in slightly more detail, it is worth standing back for a moment to gain a wider vision of the place of Religious Studies within overall human knowledge. In western intellectual history, three models of human knowledge have gained the ascendancy one after the other. The first was the Graeco-Roman model of *humanitas/paideia*.<sup>5</sup> It gave us our word 'humanities' and for it humankind itself was the focal point. The stress was laid upon areas such as language, literature, history, geography, foreign languages and philosophy. They were the servants of humankind in its literary, humanistic and political endeavours. The natural sciences had a place as well, so too did *theologia*; but they were subordinate to the wider model of *humanitas* and they took their place within a wider, integral whole. During the Middle Ages and the era of Christendom in the West, *humanitas/paideia* was displaced by *theologia*.<sup>6</sup> God rather than humankind became the focal point of knowledge. Theology became the queen of the sciences, and the humanities and natural sciences, although there, became subordinate to theology within the wider model of knowledge of which theology was the head. After the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, the axis moved yet again. Exploration of nature gradually became predominant. The natural sciences took over from theology as the dominating element in the new model based upon nature rather than God or man.<sup>7</sup> Not only so, under the aegis of natural science specialisation triumphed and knowledge became split into discrete disciplines which were separate from each other. The new model of knowledge based upon natural science was no longer an integral one even though scientific method reigned, and the links between the natural sciences, the humanities and theology were effectively lost. We are now at the point in western intellectual history of trying to re-establish some of

those links and of moving on to a yet-to-be-established model that will no longer be overawed and dazzled by the myth of scientific superiority.

How does Religious Studies fit into this analysis? In two ways. Firstly because its interests are not purely western.<sup>8</sup> Other cultures and religions have not undergone such a radical split between nature, humankind and transcendence, between the natural sciences, the humanities and theology, as has the West. With its inherently global concerns, Religious Studies can point this out and supplement western insights with insights from other civilisations so that a new model of human knowledge that is both more universal and more integral can emerge. Secondly Religious Studies has a foot in all three camps — through the social sciences of religion it has a foot in the scientific camp, through its primary concern in humankind in its religious dimension it has a foot in the humanities camp, and through the transcendent element in man's religious dimension it has a foot in the theological camp. Its chief concern is with humankind rather than with nature or with transcendence *per se*, but its concern for humankind covers not merely the relations of humans with other humans but also the relations of humans with nature and the relations of humans with transcendence. The potential answers to many of our other questions follow from this largeness of vision. We will try to deal with them briefly one by one.

### **The institutional setting**

We have already intimated that Religious Studies bestraddles to some extent the normal institutional settings although it is influenced willy-nilly by the actual local institutional setting within which a particular programme is located. In Warsaw and Peking the setting is an Academy of Social Sciences,<sup>9</sup> in the United States (with its separation of church and state) it is often a Liberal Arts College,<sup>10</sup> elsewhere it will vary but will sometimes be a Divinity Faculty.<sup>11</sup> At this point the question of institutional setting sometimes becomes intertwined with that of geographical location. However ideally, and often actually, Religious Studies transcends the institution in which it is placed. And this applies also to the situation where a Humanities or Arts Faculty provides the base, for although this is perhaps the most logical matrix it will be found that a fully-fledged Religious Studies programme will burst through even this institutional enclosure.

The most pressing institutional-type dilemma has usually been that of how to define Religious Studies in regard to Theology. This can be regarded under three headings. The first problem is that a Theology Faculty is usually in practice a Christian Theology Faculty which looks at other religions from the view-point of Christianity and defines its research projects from stand-points inimicable to an authentic grappling with the internal world-views of other religions.<sup>12</sup> The second problem is that even where a Christian Theology Faculty may profess every sympathy with other religions, and exercise no noticeable value-judgments in regard to them, at the same time the bulk of its time and effort is directed towards Christian concerns. The same critique may apply in practice to many Arts Faculties where the designation may be Religious Studies but where the major burden of concern is Christianity. *Research Guide in Religious Studies* veers in this direction.<sup>13</sup> The crux of the matter is whether Religious Studies is effectively an offshoot from the study of Christianity, or whether the study of Christianity is effectively an offshoot from Religious Studies. The third problem is that Theology trad-

tionally (if not presently) has centred upon the question of Theos, of God.<sup>14</sup> Those scholars who have questioned the wisdom of Religious Studies being identified with Theology have been tempted to question also the wisdom of Religious Studies interesting itself in the concept or reality of transcendence. That, they will state, is the proper province of Theology, and it is not the proper province of Religious Studies. This is highly debatable. In fact it was debated at length (although curiously *Research Guide to Religious Studies* ignores this) at the International Association of the History of Religions and the outcome has been inconclusive.<sup>15</sup> Arguably the most important book in the development of an influential part of Religious Studies, Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy*<sup>16</sup> (again not even mentioned in passing in the *Guide*), opens up an alternative view of transcendence based on the idea of the holy or the sacred as being wider than "God". A significant stream of thought and succession of scholars from Otto to Eliade have developed the notions of the holy or the sacred in greater depth. Alternatively Fred Streng defines religion as a "means of ultimate transformation,"<sup>17</sup> and he argues that there are four ways of being religious which are bound up with four notions of ultimacy: personally apprehending the holy; establishing the sacred through myth and ritual; living in harmony with eternal law through the seers of a learned tradition; and attaining freedom through spiritual insight.<sup>18</sup> Underlying his work lies an extension of Otto's idea of the holy in various directions. A variant approach is that of the school of *philosophia perennis*<sup>19</sup> which postulates that there is a perennial philosophy and a transcendent reality underlying all the world's religious traditions and present in them all. Yet again Wilfred Cantwell Smith, John Hick, Raimundo Panikkar and others use the word "God" as an analogue for transcendence,<sup>20</sup> yet their "God" is a universally given transcendence wider than the God of any given religious tradition, and not limited to theism as such. Non-western scholars such as Radhakrishnan, Coomaraswamy, Suzuki, Buber, Nasr, etc, ply the concept of transcendence naturally as part of their academic stock-in-trade. It is open to scholars such as Zwi Werblowsky, if they wish, to call a plague on all the houses of religious transcendentalism on behalf of a Religious Studies that avoids any talk of God or transcendence, whether inside or outside of Christianity, whether inside or outside of Theology.<sup>21</sup> It is no longer legitimate for them to do this a priori, however, and if they wish to do so they must speak to the question, raised in my opening remarks, that transcendence, nature and humankind are basic archetypes. If Religious Studies is not to take transcendence seriously at a global level what other field will? For a variety of reasons contemporary Theology finds it difficult. At the very least, with Ninian Smart, the Religious Studies scholar will address the question of the "Transcendent-as-experienced".<sup>22</sup> What is not legitimate is to ignore the debate altogether, and the literature connected with it, as though Religious Studies were self-obviously a historical and philological enterprise exclusive of the transcendent in any guise. To return to our immediate context, the relationship of Religious Studies institutionally to Theology is not equated with the question as to whether Religious Studies has any necessary connection with the notion of transcendence. If Religious Studies finds a more natural resting-place within an Arts Faculty the corollary may well be that transcendence also should find a natural resting-place within the Arts Faculty and indeed within the secular university.

### **The geographical criterion**

Our second main point relates to geographical areas. Whatever its institutional setting, Religious Studies will also be moulded to some extent by geographical factors.<sup>23</sup> The religious environment itself is not irrelevant (whatever scholars may say about neutral and value-free research). For example, the fact that southern Europe is Roman Catholic, northern Europe mainly Protestant, the United States bewilderingly diverse, eastern Europe Marxist, Israel Jewish, the Middle East Muslim, India mainly Hindu, and South-East Asia Buddhist – all this plays a subtle part in relation to the questions that are asked, if not in regard to the answers that are given. Country is often related to method as well. Italy and Sweden, exemplified in the work of Raffaele Pettazzoni and Geo Widengren, have a strong historical tradition.<sup>24</sup> Germany and Holland, exemplified in the work of Rudolf Otto and Gerardus van der Leeuw, have a strong phenomenological tradition.<sup>25</sup> Non-western scholarship, as symbolised by Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, D.T. Suzuki, Martin Buber, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, John Mbiti, and Wing-tsit Chan, tends towards an interest in philosophy, contemporary religion, and transcendental structures.<sup>26</sup> Extra-academic factors to do with politics and economics may also be relevant. Edward Said has pointed this out in an embarrassing and perhaps somewhat exaggerated form in *Orientalism*.<sup>27</sup> It is little more than common sense to admit that British scholars have had an interest in the places connected with the former British Empire, American scholars have taken Far Eastern religion with some seriousness, and renaissance nations have delved into their own religious heritage at the level of scholarship. The Institute for the Study of World Religions at Beijing (Peking) has departments of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Methods – nothing on Hinduism or Judaism.<sup>28</sup> The two latter traditions have virtually no presence as living religions in contemporary China and therefore are felt to be of secondary importance. Perhaps the same implicit selection is at work in the *Guide* mentioned above with its over-emphasis on American Religion and Christianity. The study of religion comes to mean the study of religions that are either physically present or politically relevant. But in principle and in theory it is much wider than this. Indeed if it is to fulfil its destiny it must be wider than this.

### **Which religious traditions?**

How wide then should it be? If Religious Studies is to move beyond a mere consideration of the religious traditions on its own patch, or threatening its own patch, what should be its limits? How wide is wide? The main choices are: the major living religions, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – with the possible addition of the minor living religions such as Shinto, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Jainism, and the Parsis; the archaic religions such as Mesopotamian and Egyptian Religion, Graeco-Roman Religion, Gnosticism and the Mystery Religions – with the possible addition of non-western dead religions such as the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs; modern cults and new religions, such as African indigenous churches, Japanese new religions, the Baha'is,<sup>29</sup> Christian cults like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unification Church, Melanesian cargo cults, and eastern cults in the West such as Hari Krishna, Divine Light Mission, Raja Yoga and so forth; and finally the various primal religions ranging

from the religious traditions of the Aborigines, Bushmen, Pygmies, Eskimos and American Indians to the indigenous tribal religions of Africa, Asia and elsewhere. Again there tends to be an overlap between the religious traditions chosen for study and the method brought to the study. Anthropologists are more likely to be intimately involved in the study of primal religions, sociologists are now more likely to be involved in the study of modern sects and cults, archaeologists, philologists and critical historians are more likely to be involved in the analysis of the texts and artefacts of the archaic religions, and historians of religion (in the widest sense) are more likely to be involved in the study of the major living religions. Specialisation is a limiting factor in connection with the width of religions selected. A scholar will normally be expert in one or two languages, and in one or two areas. Life is too short for any one person to be involved in all the elements of Religious Studies. Any one person's choice of specialisation will be influenced by personal predilection, availability of funds, and other fairly mundane matters. However, in principle and in intention, there is room for the study of all the religious traditions mentioned above within Religious Studies. Although different centres may exercise their prerogative to go in particular directions, in principle their research findings and programmatic intentions are complementary parts of a greater whole. And that greater whole is nothing less than the story of humankind's religiousness in time and in space. That is why, in any general talk about Religious Studies, there should be a consideration of the literature and issues connected with all the world's religions throughout the whole of global history, not just those religions and that portion of history that happen to be convenient to the group concerned. To avoid naiveté let us admit that in the nature of things even those with global and integral intentions will stress some religious traditions, some eras, and some approaches more than others for reasons that may be unconscious as well as reasoned. What we are talking about is basic intentions and vision. At that level Religious Studies is, by basic design, a global and holistic enterprise.

### Theory and method

This brings us to our fourth and final point, that of theories of the study of religion. The *Research Guide to Religious Studies* is also weak at this point. It gives a number of monographs covering various (as we have seen somewhat preselected) religious traditions. But how do they hang together? There are too many data chasing too little theory. It can be argued that the analysis within this paper has made the situation worse by suggesting that we should take seriously sets of religious data undervalued in the *Guide*. We are reminded of Jordan's comment of 1905, "The accumulation of information, indeed, has never slackened for a moment; and the special embarrassment of today is the overwhelming mass of detail, still rapidly increasing, which confronts every earnest investigator".<sup>30</sup>

If 1905 was bad, what are we to say of 1984! The solution lies not in abandoning the search for new data, but in paying more attention to theoretical models that will better integrate the data. We are reminded of another comment, that of Burnouf in 1872, " This present century will not come to an end without having seen the establishment of a unified science whose elements are still dispersed, a science which the preceding centuries did not have, which is not yet defined, and which, perhaps for the first time, will be named science of religion."<sup>31</sup>

We do not yet possess a unified science of religion over a hundred years later. However, we are nearer to it than the *Guide* suggests. The reasons we

have not yet achieved it are partly honourable and have been indicated in this paper. Had Religious Studies been willing to limit itself to an element within Christian Theology, or to one segment of religious data, or to a schematised and narrowly analytic methodology wherein one crisp definition of religion would have sufficed, a unified science of religion would doubtless have been nearer to fulfilment. It is because Religious Studies has not been willing so to confine its endeavours that it has the potentiality, as no other field of studies has, to speak academically to the global situation and to speak integrally to the fractured spectrum of human knowledge.

Let me end by indicating some of the work that has been done to forge a new integration. First there is the attempt to view the history of religion as a seamless web rather than as a series of disconnected squares, as a cumulative process rather than as the separate histories of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. Trevor Ling, Mircea Eliade, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, W.H. McNeill,<sup>32</sup> in their different ways have highlighted this notion that we can look back from our present global vantage-point and view the religious history of humankind from early man to the present day as an inter-linking story. Second there is the whole enterprise of Phenomenology of Religion or Comparative Religion which has taken an overview of the world's religious traditions and produced models that can trace comparative themes across religious boundaries and cut cross-sections that supersede the separating walls that have seemingly divided the study of different religions from each other. Two of the underlying premises of Phenomenology of Religion would find fairly general acceptance among most scholars, namely the need for epoché, putting one's own value-judgments and predilections into brackets into order to understand others, and the need for Einfühlung, empathising with the religious intentions of others.<sup>33</sup> Various models for comparing religions have emerged ranging from the soft models of a Widengren or Pettazzoni<sup>34</sup> to the more structured models of a Ninian Smart,<sup>35</sup> from the phenomenological typologies of an Eliade<sup>36</sup> to the psychological archetypes of a Campbell,<sup>37</sup> from the binary structures of a Lévi-Strauss<sup>38</sup> to the field-work models of an Evans-Pritchard,<sup>39</sup> from the thematic comparisons of a Parrinder<sup>40</sup> to the limited Indo-European comparisons of a Dumézil.<sup>41</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the seemingly disparate nature of these comparative approaches is given an underlying unity by the fact of their comparative intent, and that Comparative Religion is an important cementing force within the field of Religious Studies.<sup>42</sup> Third there is the new integrating work that has been done on myths and texts. Kees Bolle among others has shown that the study of myths which are verbal and non-literate and the study of texts which are written and literate are not so far apart. Myths after all can be written down, written texts contain myth, in primal tribes myths may be analogues for the scriptures of major traditions, and the mythos lies beneath the logos in both primal and major religions. Much significant work on myth is in progress which brings together the work of anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss, phenomenologists such as the followers of van der Leeuw, historians of religion such as Pettazzoni, and hermeneutists such as Eliade.<sup>43</sup> And finally there is work in progress in hermeneutics and in the building up of an integral science of religion that brings together in complementary fashion the different approaches to Religious Studies. The work of Schmid, *Principles of Integral Science of Religion*,<sup>44</sup> and my own work are straws in the wind.<sup>45</sup>

To summarize this investigation into Religious Studies: it is influenced by institutional setting, geographical location, presuppositions concerning the religious traditions that are taken to be relevant, and theories and methods of integration. In principle, it is a global enterprise covering all religious traditions past and present; in intent, it integrates various approaches to the study of religion into a wider whole that serves in embryo as a model for the wider integration of human knowledge. As a field of studies it serves as a cultural and academic bridge. As such it is of crucial importance for the future.

Clearly much more needs to be said to give flesh to the framework that is outlined in this paper. Much help is given in the two works recommended at the start of this article. Perhaps more important even than the extensive bibliographical suggestions made there is the vision and ideal of Religious Studies that is offered. Religious Studies is a complex, exacting and challenging field of scholarship. It has implications not only for scholarship (although its habitat lies in the field of scholarship and not in the field of mysticism or dialogue); it has implications also for global awareness and integration in an age in which scholarship that relates to and arises out of the different cultures of our planet cannot help but refract upon the global situation that faces spaceship earth.

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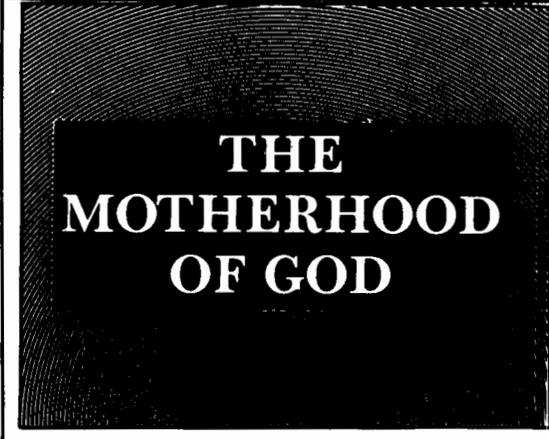
## NOTES

1. Wilson, John F and Slavens, Thomas P (eds), *Research Guide to Religious Studies*, (Sources of information in the humanities series), American Library Association, Chicago, 1982. 0-8389-0330-4 £16.95.
2. Adams, Charles J (ed), *A Reader's Guide to the Great Religions*, Free Press, New York, 1977.
3. Whaling, Frank (ed), *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Volume 1: *The Humanities* and Volume 2: *The Social Sciences*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
4. *Research Guide to Religious Studies*, p.13. See also pages 3-14.
5. There is an interesting account of these three models in Otto Bird, *Cultures in Conflict*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1976.
6. For St. Augustine the City of God was sure and its inhabitants immortal by contrast with the earthly city of Rome that was fading. See St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Burns Oates & Washbourne, London, 1920-22 (19 volumes).
7. The origins of this switch are traced in H. Butterfield, *Origins of Modern Science*, Bell & Sons, London, 1949.
8. Both in the sense that it deals with non-western cultures and religions, and in the sense that non-western scholars contribute to the study of religion in east and west.
9. These institutional points are mentioned in Claude Welch, *Graduate Education in Religion: A Critical Appraisal*, University of Montana Press, Missoula, 1971 (pp. 27-54) and Jacques Waardenburg, *Religionswissenschaft in Continental Europe*, in *Numen*, pp. 219-39, 1976.
10. This is not always the case. See *University Divinity Schools: A Report on Ecclesiastically Independent Theological Education*, 1976. (Rockefeller Foundation, edited by G. Lindbeck, K. Deutsch and N. Glazer).
11. In Germany, for example, the majority of studies of religion are conducted in the theological faculties, although there are independent chairs at Berlin, Bonn, Erlangen, Göttingen, Leipzig, and Marburg.

12. Theology need not always imply Christian Theology. See Whaling, F *The Development of the Word 'Theology'*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, pp. 289-312, 1981.
13. As we have seen it highlights a generic history of religions approach over against the traditional Judaeo-Christian approaches, but concentrates in practice on literature connected with Christianity.
14. For example, in Athanasius' *Oration I, Contra Arianos*, 18, theologia came to have the semi-technical meaning of knowledge of God in Himself as distinguished from oikonomia which related to what God did through creation and salvation.
15. This debate began at the conferences of the International Association of the History of Religions at Marburg (1960) and Claremont (1965) and has continued ever since.
16. Otto, Rudolf, *The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford University Press, 1923 (*Das Heilige*, Breslau, Munich, 1917).
17. Streng, Frederick J., *Understanding Religious Man*, Dickenson, Belmont, 1969 (p.4).
18. Streng, op. cit., pp. 47-80.
19. Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Gifford Lectures *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Edinburgh University Press, 1981, assume this approach and refer to it often. See also S.H. Nasr, *Philosophia Perennis*, in F. Whaling (ed), *The World's Religious Traditions*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1984.
20. See W.C. Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1981; John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, Collins, Glasgow, 1973; R. Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, Orbis, New York, 1973.
21. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, "The history of religions is a branch of the humanities, not of theology and still less of international politics; it is simply there, to be discussed as dispassionately as possible on the principle of truth for its own sake" in E. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, Duckworth, London, 1975 (p.278).
22. N. Smart, *The Scientific Study of Religion in its Plurality*, pp. 365-378 in F. Whaling (ed) *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
23. See U. King, *Geographical Distribution of the Participants in the Debate in Historical and Phenomenological Approaches to the Study of Religion* pp. 44-47 in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
24. See for example, Pettazzoni, R., *Essays on the History of Religions*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1954; *The All-knowing God: Researches into Early Religion and Culture*, Methuen, London, 1956 (*L'Onniscienza Di Dio*, Einaudi, Turin). Widengren G., *Iranische Geisteswelt. Von Den Anfängen Bis Zum Islam*, Holle Verlag, Baden-Baden, 1961; *Religious Syncretism in Antiquity: Essays in Conversation with Geo Widengren* (ed. Birger A. Pearson), Scholars Press, Missoula, 1975.
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26. See an extended study of these thinkers in Frank Whaling, *The Study of Religion in a Global Context* pp. 391-443 in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
27. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
28. See F. Whaling, *Beijing and Harvard: A Comparison of Two Centers for the Study of World Religions*, pp. 12-20, *Bulletin of Center for the Study of World Religions*, Harvard University, Fall 1983.

29. It is a moot point as to whether the Baha'is are not now a minor world religion rather than a modern cult or sect. They are treated as such in Holmes McDougall, *Religions of the World*, 1984.
30. Jordan, Louis Henry, *Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth*, p.163, Edinburgh, 1905.
31. Burnouf, E.L., *The Science of Religions*, London, 1888, p.1 (*La Science des Religions*, Paris, 1872).
32. Ling, Trevor, *A History of Religion: East and West*, Macmillan, London, 1968; Eliade, M., *A History of Religious Ideas* (Vol 1), Collins, London, 1979 (*Histoire des Croyances et des Idées Religieuses*, Vols 1 & 2, Payot, Paris, 1976 & 1978; Smith, W.C., *Towards a World Theology*, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1981; McNeill, W.H., *The Rise of the West*, University of Chicago Press, 1963.
33. See Whaling, F., *Comparative Approaches to the Study of Religion* p. 211-14 in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
34. See Pettazzoni, R., *La Confessione dei Peccati*, 3 Vols, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1929-36; *Miti e Leggende*, 4 Vols, Unione Tipografico Editrice Torinese, Turin, 1948-63. Bleeker, C.J. and Widengren, G., (eds), *Historia Religionum. Handbook for the History of Religions*, 2 Vols, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1969 & 1971.
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42. Frank Whaling, "Comparative Approaches to the Study of Religion" pp. 165-296 in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
43. This is summed up in Kees Bolle's *Myths and other Religious Texts* pp. 297-364 in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion: The Humanities*, Mouton, Berlin, 1984.
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