

Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten. *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity: Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten have made a major contribution both to the study of traditional Inuit religious practices and to the study of Christianity in new contexts. Particularly significant is their thoughtful treatment of the reception of Pentecostalism among Inuit people and of the related changes and continuities that have marked social life in Inuit communities. Their analysis is somewhat unique in that anthropologists frequently have not taken due notice of Christianity in general (and Pentecostal, Charismatic, or Evangelical Christianities in particular) when conducting ethnographic research, especially in Aboriginal North American contexts. Indeed, many researchers consider Pentecostal commitments as being “against” Aboriginal culture (see Kirk Dombrowski, *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (University of Nebraska Press, 2001). Conversely, Laugrand and Oosten are leaders amid networks of anthropologists who consider Pentecostalism among North American Aboriginal Peoples as showing substantial compatibility with some aspects of Aboriginal cultures including shamanic traditions, even though Inuit shamanism itself has largely gone underground (see Marie-Pierre Bousquet, “Catholicisme, pentecôtisme et spiritualité traditionnelle: les choix religieux contemporains chez les Algonquins du Québec” in *Les systèmes religieux*

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amérindiens et inuits: perspectives historiques et contemporaines edited by Claude Gélinas and Guillaume Teasdale [Quebec City and Paris: Muséologie In-Situ and Harmattan] 155-166; Louis-Jacques Dorais, *Quaqtaq: Modernity and Identity in an Inuit Community* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997]; A. Nicole Stuckenberg, *Community at Play: Social and Religious Dynamics in the Modern Inuit Community of Qikiqtarjuaq* [Amsterdam: Rozenberg, 2005].

The authors build on their extensive experience studying the structure and texture of Inuit religious practices, as well as deftly using missiological sources to support their thesis. Theoretically, they apply an interpretation of Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach in anthropology to see transformation as one aspect of continuity of the original structure of belief. Exploring the paradoxical nature of this transformation, the authors point both to continuity and disjuncture associated with Christian and Pentecostal conversions. In doing so, they employ a semiotic theory of reception, whereby elements of the receiving culture are integral to understanding reception of the new religion (see Laugrand, *Mourir et renaître: La réception du christianisme par les Inuit de l'Arctique de l'Est canadien* [Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002]). The result is a challenging assertion of compatibility between shamanic and Christian worldviews, which draws on extensive ethnographic and historical analysis for support. The authors use compelling quotations from elders, recorded at workshops in Nu-

navut, as a key element of their data. They also draw on classical anthropological sources such as Franz Boas, Marcel Mauss, and Knut Rasmussen, as well as more recent data from church websites and films of both Pentecostal missionaries and of the award-winning Inuk director, Zacharias Kunuk.

In chapter 11 (“Reconnecting People and Healing the Land: Inuit Pentecostal and Evangelical Movements”) Laugrand and Oosten document how Inuit Christians are members of a movement that is simultaneously globalized and emplaced, both in a very concrete sense, while still maintaining links to Inuit traditions and also to the reconfiguration of these traditions in modern contexts. Like Stuckenberg and Dorais, the authors examine the impact of Pentecostal missions on local politics and on practices of established Anglican congregations. Healing the land and reconnecting with ancestors and contemporaries are major ritual focuses of Pentecostal, Evangelical, and charismatic Anglican congregations consistent with elements of traditional Inuit culture. At the same time, such rituals are also globalized, as they involve both Fijian delegations and Euro-Canadian missionaries. Like other forms of global “spiritual warfare”, healing the land seems to indicate that the spiritual powers of the past and of the land are still seen by Inuit as relevant, potent, and dangerous (Jean DeBernardi, “Spiritual Warfare and Territorial Spirits: The Globalization and Localization of a Practical Theology” *Religious Studies and Theology* 18 [1999], 66-97). Laugrand and Oosten argue that beliefs and practices of Inuit Christians in general and of Pentecostals in par-

ticular not only resemble shamanic beliefs and practices (in spite of their overt opposition to shamanism) but retain Inuit cultural values and social structures in other ways as well. The authors reject a deprivation- or crisis-based explanation of Pentecostalism's success in the Arctic, arguing instead for strength of cultural factors. Nevertheless, they note that, like shamanism, Pentecostalism also has political and kinship-based overtones. While some Inuit Pentecostals may become active on key issues for Christians nationally (such as gay rights including marriage, to use an example that mobilized Christians in Nunavut), in other cases the issues animating political and theological debates are pre-eminently local.

By documenting ritual practices and organizational structure for charismatic missionary networks, mainly through the use of Internet and other media research, the authors provide a great service for understanding current religious dynamics in Inuit culture. Since Laugrand and Oosten rely to a great extent on Internet media sources for their discussion of charismatic rituals, a gap remains for anthropologists to provide more extensive first-hand ethnographic data on Pentecostal rituals among North American Aboriginal Peoples (Westman, "Faith in God's Temple: Ritual Practice in a Cree Pentecostal Congregation," in *Dynamiques religieuses des autochtones des Amériques* edited by Robert Crépeau and Marie-Pierre Bousquet [Paris: Karthala, forthcoming]). Nevertheless, their work on continuity between Pentecostalism and Inuit culture constitutes a leap forward in terms of analysis of em-

placement and cultural overtones of Pentecostalism in Aboriginal communities. Various other components will appeal more to Arctic anthropologists and similar specialists in Inuit history and religion, as they include a detailed typological analysis of diverse symbolic, ritual, and/or mythological phenomena.

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