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Religion in the United States



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Editorial

Lutherstadt Wittenberg, January 1999

Dear Readers:

Three years ago, when the German Association for American Studies agreed to publish the *American Studies Journal*, I became its editor. As I write this editorial, my term as president is about to expire and the editorship will change accordingly. Let me, therefore, use this opportunity to say goodbye. Being editor of the *ASJ* has been a burden because of my many other responsibilities, but it has also been a pleasure because acceptance of the product in the schools is continuously growing.

The feedback we received has been encouraging. Some critical letters also arrived, charging that we give too much room to quasi-official views of current American developments. I believe that, on the whole, we present our topics in a balanced way. As I have explained in an earlier editorial, we would like to develop a News/Notes/Views section where differing viewpoints would be published.

The current issue focuses on religion. European observers have often wondered why religion plays such an important role in a country where church and state are so strictly separated. Hopefully, the articles and interviews presented in these pages provide some pertinent answers.

As you know, the editorial team is located in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Martin Luther's city. There are strong ties to the Lutheran Churches of America. When we asked pastors who visited Wittenberg in 1998 to give us first-hand accounts of worship and social activities in their parishes, several lively accounts arrived. They are presented on pp. 43-48. Also in this issue, you will find selected web sites of American churches and denominations where students and teachers may gain access to a wealth of further information.

Yours sincerely,

Hans-Jürgen Grabbe
President, German Association
for American Studies



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Religion in America: An Overview

by William Peters

Roots of Religions

Pre-Columbian America, like most indigenous societies, had rich and diverse religious cultures, elements of which remain. But Europeans coming to the New World brought their own religions with them. Indeed, it was for the freedom to practice these beliefs that many people came to the New World. These communities flourished, and the resulting religious variety helped give rise to a highly unique and important contribution to world religions—the most fundamental commitment to religious pluralism and freedom.

The effects of the Protestant Reformation (1517) were quickly felt throughout Europe, and, as the movement gathered momentum, increasing numbers of religious non-conformists frequently became religious refugees. These groups were often able to find temporary asylum by moving to a different European country. But eventually, many dissenters concluded that the New World offered the best hope for long-term survival and freedom to realize their religious objectives.

America became a haven for many different strongly motivated religious communities. For some, the very strength of their religious beliefs restricted their tolerance for those who did not share their theological views. People were pushed out of these groups or left on their own to pursue their personal religious expression. Thus, the continuing desire to define personal religious practices produced new domestic groups even while fresh religious refugees from Europe appeared on America's shores. The original religious leaders were often succeeded by others who were less single-minded. Communities developed with their multiple strands of interaction, and religious sects began to learn to live together. Gradually, a pattern of basic religious tolerance began to emerge in the colonies.

Religious differences still existed, however, and they were often reflected by region. Early Virginia was largely identified with the new Church of England, and later with Baptists and Methodists. Maryland was founded as a Catholic haven. Pennsylvania and New York had substantial numbers of Lutherans, other minor German Protestant groups, and members of the Society of Friends or Quakers. New England was the home of various Puritan groups. In the north, in what would become Maine, Vermont and Quebec, French Catholics exercised substantial influence. As different as these groups were, though, they all derived from a Judeo-Christian cultural and historical background.

American territorial gains in the nineteenth century added Spanish and French lands and peoples. Between the Napoleonic wars and World War I, waves of immigration brought English, Scots and Irish, Italians and Greeks, Germans and Poles, Swedes and Russians. Immigration to the U.S. changed the mix of religious groups, but America's overall heritage remained primarily European, and primarily Judeo-Christian.

The 125-year period following the birth of the new American nation was a time of many individual and national struggles, as the nation and its citizens confronted myriad social issues. During this time, the critical role of the United States Supreme Court in interpreting and defining the application of the U.S. Constitution was born. The issues which occupied the court were not primarily those of religion. They involved the balance between the three branches of the national government and between the national government and the governments of the states.

The religious protections incorporated in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights depended on government and society for their application.

There were clear cases of breakdowns. The failure of European Americans to understand and recognize the unique role and importance of Native American religious practices, so much a part of their culture, and so closely linked to nature, is a notable example. Another more conventionally acknowledged situation concerns the Mormons. Religious intolerance expressed in physical and political attacks drove them out of the northeastern and midwestern states before they found refuge in the frontier state of Utah. By the midpoint of the twentieth century, however, the United States, for the most part, was a successful example of a society acting with general tolerance towards a wide array of primarily Christian sects.

While most Americans saw themselves as religiously tolerant, there were troubling reminders of religious prejudice. The Holocaust forced many Americans to think about the treatment of Jews, even in the United States. Catholic John F. Kennedy's candidacy for president in 1960 raised other questions about the extent of religious tolerance in the country. At about the same time, cases before the Supreme Court forced a renewed recognition that personal religious freedom of conscience also implied freedom to be non-religious. Application of this guarantee had implications not just for individuals but for U.S. society as a whole.

The wars of empire in Europe did much to shape the religious landscape of nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Subsequent immigration did not have a similar effect until the mid-1960s when immigration reform removed restrictions which long had given preference to Europeans. New groups of immigrants from Asia and Latin America brought their cultural and religious values to the U.S., significantly fueling the growth of Islam and having an important impact on American Catholicism.

Present Day Religious Affiliation

After more than 200 years as a nation, religion in America is a complex picture. [. . .] For the convenience of the reader not familiar with religious America, here are some basic facts and numbers:

- 163 million Americans (sixty-three percent) identify themselves as affiliated with a specific religious denomination.
- Roman Catholics are the single largest denomination with some sixty million adherents.
- Members of American Protestant churches total some ninety-four million persons, spread across some 220 particular denominations. *The Universal Almanac* for 1997 groups the denominations into twenty-six major families with memberships of 100,000 or more, but also notes that there are thousands of self-identified independent groups of believers.
- There are more than 300,000 local congregations.
- There are more than 530,000 total clergy.
- The U.S. has some 3.8 million religiously identified or affiliated Jews (an additional two million define themselves as primarily culturally or ethnically Jewish).
- There are an estimated 3.5 to 3.8 million Muslims. Islam is the most rapidly growing religion in the U.S.
- In any given week, more Americans will attend religious events than professional sporting events.
- In terms of personal religious identification, the most rapidly growing group is atheists/agnostics (currently about eight million).

This religious community can be viewed in a variety of other useful ways. Protestant churches are often divided between "mainline" and "Evan-

gelical" denominations. Evangelical churches are those whose current practices include an active and conscious drive to attract new members in both the United States and outside the country. Evangelical churches are often less hierarchical, more "fundamental" in terms of a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and more inclined toward a "personal" relationship with God. Mainline churches are more traditional, are less focused on soliciting new members, may have a more "defined" body of religious leaders, and in general comprise a diminishing percentage of overall Protestant adherents. Even the Roman Catholic Church has begun to develop something of a mainline/Evangelical division.

There are important racial differences. For example, the world of Methodists of color is largely represented by the African Methodist Episcopal Churches, while white Methodists are largely found in the United Methodist Church. There is a similar important difference among African-American (National Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches, Progressive National Baptist Convention) and the largely white Southern Baptist Convention. While not deriving from the same historical experience, there are important separate immigrant Christian communities. For example, the number of independent Korean and Central American evangelical Christian churches in the region around Washington, D.C. is noticed by even the most casual observer.

Judaism continues to be a religion of substantial importance in the U.S., with persons of Jewish faith and culture making extensive and wide ranging contributions in all walks of American life. More Jews live in the United States than in any other country, including Israel. There are three major branches of Judaism in this country: Orthodox, Reform and Conservative.

Islam in the U.S. comes from two distinct traditions. African Americans, seeking an alternative to their "slave" identities, seized on the fact that many of the original slaves would likely have been Muslim. An evolving "Black Muslim" community existed in the late nineteenth century, but only came into its own at mid-twentieth century. Muslims from Lebanon and Syria were present in America at the turn of the century, but it was the revision of the immigration laws in the mid-1960s which permitted the entry of substantial numbers of educated Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and the Middle East. It is this group of immigrants which has largely defined the second American Islamic tradition.

[. . .] Public expressions of religion in the seventies and eighties had been viewed with disfavor. More recently, many religious Americans have consciously become more overtly expressive of their faith. There is currently a burgeoning world of religious rock music. Religious bookstores are an increasing phenomenon. And religious radio broadcasters can be heard in every major and minor American market.

In fact, radio and television broadcasting have become a major element of contemporary American religion. Major network broadcasters are increasingly likely to have programs with a visible religious content. The explosion of cable and direct broadcast television outlets—many Americans can select from more than one hundred television channels—means that even "minor" or non-traditional denominations or faiths have been able to establish their electronic presence. Some years ago, a major national news magazine headlined an issue with the question "Is God Dead?" Most American observers would say confidently that today in America the answer is clearly no.

Timeline: Religious Liberty

1641

The Massachusetts General Court drafts the first broad statement of American liberties, the Massachusetts Body of Liberties. The document includes a right to petition and a statement about due process.

1663

Rhode Island grants religious freedom.

1689

Publication of John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*. It provides the philosophical basis for George Mason's proposed Article Sixteen of the *Virginia Declaration of Rights* of 1776, which deals with religion. Mason's proposal provides that "all Men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion."

1708

Connecticut passes first dissenter statute and allows "full liberty of worship" to Anglicans and Baptists.

1771

The State of Virginia jails fifty Baptist worshippers for preaching the Gospel contrary to the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*.

1774

Eighteen Baptists are jailed in Massachusetts for refusing to pay taxes that support the Congregational Church.

1777

Thomas Jefferson completes his first draft of a Virginia state bill for religious freedom, which states: "No man shall be forced to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever." The bill later becomes the famous *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*.

1786

The Virginia legislature adopts the Ordinance of Religious Freedom, which disestablishes the Anglican Church as the official church and prohibits harassment based on religious differences.

1787

Congress passes the Northwest Ordinance. Though primarily a law establishing government guidelines for colonization of new territory, it also provides that "religion, morality and knowledge being necessary also to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

1789

Ratification of the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

1791

On December 15, Virginia becomes the eleventh state to approve the first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights.

1796

Andrew Jackson opposes the inclusion of the word "God" in Tennessee's constitution.

1868

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution is ratified. The amendment, in part, requires that no state shall deprive "any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

1939

Georgia, Massachusetts and Connecticut finally ratify the Bill of Rights.

1947

In *Everson v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court upholds a state program which reimburses parents for money spent on transporting their children to parochial schools. The Court finds that the state provision of free bus transportation to all school children amounts only to a general service benefit and safeguards children rather than aiding religion.

1962

The Supreme Court rules that a state-composed, non-denominational prayer violates the No Establishment clause of the First Amendment. In *Engel v. Vitale*, the Court states that such a prayer represents government sponsorship of religion.

1963

The Supreme Court finds that a South Carolina policy denying unemployment compensation to a Seventh Day Adventist refusing to work on Saturdays is in violation of the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment. In *Sherbert v. Verner*, the Court determines that a law which has the unintended effect of burdening religious beliefs will be upheld only when it is the least restrictive means of accomplishing a compelling state objective.

1968

In *Epperson v. Arkansas*, the Supreme Court invalidates an Arkansas statute prohibiting public school teachers to teach evolution. The Court finds that the statute violates the No Establishment clause because it bans the teaching of evolution solely on religious grounds.

1990

In *Employment Div., Dept. of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith*, the Supreme Court rules against members of a Native American church who in their rituals used illegal hallucinogenic peyote. Most Native American religious leaders find this an offensive intrusion into the protected sphere of religion.

The Supreme Court effectually emasculates the 1963 ruling by stating that a law that is neutral with respect to religion, even though it may result in restricting some religious practices, is not unconstitutional.

1992

The Supreme Court determines in *Lee v. Weisman* that an administrative policy allowing religious invocations at public high school graduation ceremonies violates the No Establishment clause.

1993

Congress passes the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in response to the 1990 Supreme Court decision, which was widely condemned as restricting religious faith.

1994

In *Rosenberger v. Rectors of the University of Virginia*, the Supreme Court invalidates a policy denying funds to a Christian student newspaper on free-speech and No Establishment clause grounds. The Court finds that, once a public university chooses to fund some student viewpoints, it may not choose which viewpoints to fund.

1997

The Supreme Court finds in *Boerne v. Flores* that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is unconstitutional. The Court states that it is not within the constitutional powers of the Congress to tell courts how to interpret the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment.

1998

Congress considers a new version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

The Roots of American Religious Liberty

by Charles C. Haynes

From the colonial era to the present, religions and religious beliefs have played a significant role in the political life of the United States. Religion has been at the heart of some of the best and some of the worst movements in American history. The guiding principles that the framers intended to govern the relationship between religion and politics are set forth in Article VI of the Constitution and in the opening sixteen words of the First Amendment. Now that America has expanded from the largely Protestant pluralism of the seventeenth century to a nation of some 3,000 religious groups, it is more vital than ever that every citizen understand the appropriate role of religion in public life and affirm the constitutional guaran-

tees of religious liberty, or freedom of conscience, for people of all faiths or none.

The philosophical ideas and religious convictions of Roger Williams, William Penn, John Leland, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other leaders were decisive in the struggle for freedom of conscience. The United States is a nation built on ideals and convictions that have become democratic first principles. These principles must be understood and affirmed by every generation if the American experiment in liberty is to endure.

The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every



Early settlers in North America came seeking freedom of religious expression, especially in matters of worship. The Puritans were forceful advocates in this position.

man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right. (James Madison, 1785)

The Religious Liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution are a momentous decision, the most important political decision for religious liberty and public justice in history. Two hundred years after their enactment they stand out boldly in a century made dark by state repression and sectarian conflict. Yet the ignorance and contention now surrounding the clauses are a reminder that their advocacy and defense is a task for each succeeding generation. (The Williamsburg Charter, 1988)

Guarantees of Religious Liberty in the Constitution

The guiding principles supporting the definition of religious liberty are set forth in Article VI of the Constitution and in the opening words of the First Amendment to the Constitution. These principles have become the ground rules by which people of all religions or none can live together as citizens of one nation.

Article VI concludes with these words: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." With this bold stroke, the framers broke with European tradition and opened public office in the federal government to people of all faiths or none. The First Amendment's Religious Liberty clauses state that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Taken together, these two clauses safeguard religious liberty by protecting religions and religious convictions from

governmental interference or control. They ensure that religious belief or nonbelief remains voluntary, free from governmental coercion. The clauses apply equally to actions of both state and local governments, because the Supreme Court has ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's dictum that states are not to deprive any person of liberty makes the First Amendment applicable to the states.

Meaning of "No Establishment"

"No establishment" means that neither a state nor the federal government can establish a particular religion or religion in general. Further, government is prohibited from advancing or supporting religion. This does not mean that the government can be hostile to religion. The government must maintain what the Supreme Court has called "benevolent neutrality," which permits religious exercise to exist but denies it government sponsorship. The No Establishment clause serves to prevent both religious control over government and political control over religion.

Meaning of "Free Exercise"

"Free exercise" is the freedom of every citizen to reach, hold, practice, and change beliefs according to the dictates of conscience. The Free Exercise clause prohibits governmental interference with religious belief and, within limits, religious practice.

The Difference Between Belief and Practice

The Supreme Court has interpreted "free exercise" to mean that any individual may believe anything he or she wants, but there may be times when the state can limit or interfere with practices that flow from these beliefs.



Congregation forms circle for communion at St. Alphonso's Catholic Church in Paradise Valley, Nevada.



Evening worship at as Protestant Church in Paradise Valley, Nevada.

Traditionally, the Court has required a government to demonstrate a compelling interest of the "highest order" before it can burden or otherwise interfere with religious conduct. Even then, the government has to demonstrate that it has no alternative means of achieving its interest that would be less restrictive of religious conduct. [. . .]

The Movement Toward Religious Liberty

The momentous decision by the framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to prohibit religious establishment on the federal level and to guarantee free exercise of religion was related to a number of religious, political, and economic factors in eighteenth-century America. Underlying all of these factors, of course, was the practical difficulty of establishing any one faith in an emerging nation composed of a multiplicity of faiths (mostly Protestant sects), none of which was strong enough to dominate the others.

The period between 1776 and the passage of the First Amendment in 1791 saw critical changes in fundamental ideas about reli-

gious freedom. In May 1776, just prior to the *Declaration of Independence*, the leaders of Virginia adopted the *Virginia Declaration of Rights*, drafted by George Mason. The first draft of the *Declaration* argued for the "full-est toleration in the exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience." This language echoed the writings of John Locke and the movement in England toward toleration.

Although toleration was a great step forward, a twenty-five-year-old delegate named James Madison (1751-1836) did not think it went far enough. Madison, also deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, successfully argued that "toleration" should be changed to "free exercise" of religion. This seemingly small change in language signaled a revolutionary change in ideas. For Madison, religious liberty was not a concession by the state or the established church, but an inalienable, or natural, right of every citizen.

In 1791, the free exercise of religion proclaimed in the Virginia Declaration became a part of the First Amendment, guaranteeing all Americans freedom of conscience.

The Roots of American Religious Liberty

From Establishment to Separation

The decisive battle for disestablishment came in the large and influential colony of Virginia where the Anglican Church was the established faith. Once again, James Madison played a pivotal role by leading the fight that persuaded the Virginia legislature to adopt in 1786 Thomas Jefferson's Bill for the Establishment of Religious Freedom.

Madison and Jefferson argued that state support for a particular religion or for all religions is wrong, because compelling citizens to support through taxes a faith they do not follow violates their natural right to religious liberty. "Almighty God had created the mind free," declared Jefferson's bill. Thus, "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical."

The Great Awakening and the Struggle for Disestablishment

Madison and Jefferson were greatly aided in the struggle for disestablishment by the Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and other "dissenting" faiths of Anglican Virginia. The religious revivals of the eighteenth century, often called the "Great Awakening" (1728-1790), produced new forms of religious expression and belief that influenced the development of religious liberty throughout the colonies. The revivalists' message of salvation through Christ alone evoked a deeply personal and emotional response in thousands of Americans.

The evangelical fervor of the Awakening cut across denominational lines and undercut support for the privileges of the established church. Religion was seen by many as a matter of free

choice and churches as places of self-government. The alliance of church and state was now seen by many as harmful to the cause of religion. In Virginia this climate of dissent and the leadership of such religious leaders as John Leland, a Baptist, provided the crucial support Madison needed to win the battle for religious liberty in Virginia.

The successful battle for disestablishment in Virginia is a vital chapter in the story of religious liberty in America. By the time of the ratification of the First Amendment in 1791, all of the other Anglican establishments (except in Maryland) were ended. The Congregational establishments of New England lasted longer. Not until 1818 in Connecticut and 1833 in Massachusetts were the state constitutions amended to complete disestablishment.

Charles C. Haynes is a senior scholar on religious freedom at The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Haynes is the author of *Religious Freedom in America: A Teacher's Guide* and of *Religion in American History: What to Teach and How*. He co-authored *Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Society* and edited *Finding Common Ground: A First Amendment Guide to Religion and Public Education*.

Separating Church and State: Freedom of Religion

by George Clack

Early in their history Americans rejected the concept of the established or government-favored religion that had dominated and divided so many European countries. Separation of church and state was ordained by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The First Amendment sounds straightforward, but at times it is difficult even for American constitutional scholars to draw a distinct line between government and religion in the United States. Students in public schools may not pray publicly as part of the school day, yet sessions of the U.S. Congress regularly begin with a prayer by a minister. Cities may not display a Christmas crèche on public property, but the slogan "In God We Trust" appears on U.S. currency, and money given to religious institutions can be deducted from one's income for tax purposes. Students who attend church-affiliated colleges may receive federal loans like other students, but their younger siblings may not receive federal monies specifically to attend religious elementary or secondary schools.

It may never be possible to resolve these apparent inconsistencies. They derive, in fact, from a tension built into the First Amendment itself, which tells Congress neither to establish nor to interfere with religion. Trying to steer a clear course between those two dictates is one of the most delicate exercises required of American public officials.

Interpreting the First Amendment

One of the first permanent settlements in what became the North American colonies was founded by English Puritans, Calvinists who

had been outsiders in their homeland, where the Church of England was established. The Puritans settled in Massachusetts, where they grew and prospered. They considered their success to be a sign that God was pleased with them, and they assumed that those who disagreed with their religious ideas should not be tolerated.

When the colony's leaders forced out one of their members, Roger Williams, for disagreeing with the clergy, Williams responded by founding a separate colony, which became the state of Rhode Island, where everyone enjoyed religious freedom. Two other states originated as havens for people being persecuted for their religious beliefs: Maryland as a refuge for Catholics and Pennsylvania for the Society of Friends (Quakers), a Protestant group whose members espouse plain living and pacifism.

Even after the adoption of the Constitution in 1787 and the Bill of Rights in 1791, Protestantism continued to enjoy a favored status in some states. Massachusetts, for example, did not cut its last ties between church and state until 1833. [. . .] In the twentieth century, the relationship between church and state reached a new stage of conflict—that between civic duty and individual conscience. The broad outlines of an approach to that conflict took shape in a number of Supreme Court rulings. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these was *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943). The suit stemmed from the refusal of certain members of the Jehovah's Witness religion to salute the American flag during the school day, as commanded by state law. Because their creed forbade such pledges of loyalty, the Witnesses argued, they were being forced to violate their consciences. Three years earlier, the Supreme Court had upheld a nearly identical law—a decision that had been roundly criticized. In the 1943 case, the

Court in effect overruled itself by invoking a different clause in the First Amendment, the one guaranteeing freedom of speech. Saluting the flag was held to be a form of speech, which the state could not force its citizens to perform.

Since then the Supreme Court has carved out other exceptions to laws on behalf of certain religious groups. There remains, however, a distinction between matters of private conscience and actions that adversely affect other people. Thus, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) were jailed in the nineteenth century for practicing polygamy (subsequently the Mormon Church withdrew its sanction of polygamy). More recently, parents have been convicted of criminal negligence for refusing to obtain medical help for their ailing children, who went on to die, even though the parents' religious beliefs dictated that they refuse treatment because faith would provide a cure.

Protestants Liberal and Conservative

Americans have been swept up in many waves of religious excitement. One that occurred in the 1740s, called the "Great Awakening," united several Protestant denominations in an effort to overcome a sense of complacency that had afflicted organized religion. A second "Great Awakening" swept through New England in the early nineteenth century.

Not all of New England's clergymen, however, were sympathetic to the call for revival. Some had abandoned the Calvinist idea of predestination, which holds that God has chosen those who will be saved—the "elect"—leaving humans no ability to affect their destinies through good works or other means. Some ministers preached that all men had free will and could be saved. Others took even more liberal positions,

giving up many traditional Christian beliefs. They were influenced by the idea of progress that had taken hold in the United States generally. Just as science adjusted our understanding of the natural world, they suggested, reason should prompt reassessments of religious doctrine.

Liberal American Protestantism in the nineteenth century was allied with similar trends in Europe, where scholars were reading and interpreting the Bible in a new way. They questioned the validity of biblical miracles and traditional beliefs about the authorship of biblical books. There was also the challenge of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to contend with. If human beings were descended from other animals, as most scientists came to believe, then the story of Adam and Eve, the biblical first parents, could not be literally true.

What distinguished nineteenth-century liberal Protestants from their twentieth-century counterparts was optimism about the human capacity for improvement. Some of the early ministers believed that the church could accelerate progress by trying to reform society. In the spirit of the gospels they began to work on behalf of the urban poor. Today's liberal clergymen—not just Protestants but Catholics and others, too—may be less convinced that progress is inevitable, but many of them have continued their efforts on behalf of the poor by managing shelters for homeless people, feeding the hungry, running day-care centers for children, and speaking out on social issues. Many are active in the ecumenical movement, which seeks to bring about the reunion of Christians into one church. While liberal Protestants sought a relaxation of doctrine, conservatives believed that departures from the literal truth of the Bible were unjustified. Their branch of Protestantism is often called "evangelical," after their enthusiasm for the gospels of the New Testament.

Evangelical Christians favor an impassioned, participatory approach to religion, and their services are often highly charged, with group singing and dramatic sermons that evoke spirited responses from the congregation. The South, in particular, became a bastion of this "old-time religion," and the conservative Baptist church is very influential in that region. In recent decades some preachers have taken their ministry to television, preaching as "televangelists" to large audiences.

In 1925 the conflict between conservative faith and modern science crystallized in what is known as the Scopes [Monkey] Trial in [Dayton,] Tennessee. John Scopes, a high school biology teacher, was indicted for violating a state law that forbade teaching the theory of evolution in public schools. Scopes was convicted after a sensational trial that featured America's finest criminal lawyer of the time, Clarence Darrow, for the defense and the renowned populist and former presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, for the prosecution. Since then the Supreme Court has ruled that laws banning the teaching of evolution violate the First Amendment's prohibition of establishing religion. Subsequently the state of Louisiana tried a different approach: it banned the teaching of evolution unless the biblical doctrine of special creation was taught as an alternative. This, too, the Court invalidated as an establishment of religion.

Despite the Supreme Court's clear rulings, this and similar issues pitting reason versus faith remain alive. Religious conservatives argue that teaching evolution alone elevates human reason above revealed truth and thus is antireligious. And even some thinkers who might otherwise be considered liberals have argued that the media and other American institutions foster a climate that tends to slight, if not ridicule, organized religion. Meanwhile, the trend to-

ward removing religious teaching and practices from public schools has prompted some parents to send their children to religious schools and others to educate their children at home.

Catholics and Religious Schools

By the time of the Civil War over one million Irish Catholics had come to the United States. In a majority Protestant country, Protestants and Catholics of other backgrounds were subjected to prejudice. As late as 1960, some Americans opposed Catholic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy on the grounds that, if elected, he would do the Pope's bidding. Kennedy confronted the issue directly, pledging to be an American president, and his election did much to lessen anti-Catholic prejudice in the United States.

Although Catholics were never denied access to public schools or hospitals, beginning in the nineteenth century they built institutions of their own, which met accepted standards while observing the tenets of Catholic belief and morality. On the other hand, the Catholic Church does not require its members to go to church-run institutions. Many Catholic students attend public schools and secular colleges. But Catholic schools still educate many Catholic young people, as well as a growing number of non-Catholics, whose parents are attracted by the discipline and quality of instruction.

Catholics have long recognized that the separation of church and state protects them, like members of other religions, in the exercise of their faith. But as the costs of maintaining a separate educational system mounted, Catholics began to question one application of that principle. Catholic parents reasoned that the taxes they pay support public schools, but they

Separating Church and State

save the government money by sending their children to private schools, for which they also pay tuition. They sought a way in which they might obtain public funds to defray their educational expenses. Parents who sent their children to other private schools, not necessarily religious, joined in this effort.

The legislatures of many states were sympathetic, but the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional most attempts to aid religious schools. Too much "entanglement" between state and church, the Court held, violated the First Amendment's ban on establishing religion. Attempts to alter the separation of church and state by amending the Constitution have not been successful.

Land of Many Faiths

Like Catholics, Jews were a small minority in the first years of the American republic. Until the late nineteenth century, most Jews in America were of German origin. Many of them belonged to the Reform movement, a liberal branch of Judaism which had made many adjustments to modern life. Anti-Semitism was not a big problem before the Civil War. But when Jews began coming to America in great numbers, anti-Semitism appeared. Jews from Russia and Poland, who as Orthodox Jews strictly observed the traditions and dietary laws of Judaism, clustered in city neighborhoods when they first arrived in the United States.

Usually, Jewish children attended public schools and took religious instruction in special Hebrew schools. The children of Jewish immigrants moved rapidly into the professions and into American universities, where many became intellectual leaders. Many remained religiously observant, while others continued to think of themselves as ethnically Jewish, but

adopted a secular, nonreligious outlook. To combat prejudice and discrimination, Jews formed the B'nai Brith Anti-Defamation League, which has played a major role in educating Americans about the injustice of prejudice and making them aware of the rights, not only of Jews, but of all minorities.

By the 1950s a three-faith model had taken root: Americans were described as coming in three basic varieties—Protestant, Catholic and Jew. The order reflects the numerical strength of each group: in the 1990 census, Protestants of all denominations numbered 140 million, Catholics sixty-two million, and Jews five million. Today the three-faith formula is obsolete. The Islamic faith also has five million U.S. adherents, many of whom are African-American converts. It is estimated that the number of mosques in the United States—today, about 1,200—has doubled in the last fifteen years. Buddhism and Hinduism are growing with the arrival of immigrants from countries where these are the majority religions. In some cases, inner-city Christian churches whose congregations have moved to the suburbs have sold their buildings to Buddhists, who have refitted them to suit their practices.

Principles of Tolerance

America has been a fertile ground for new religions. The Mormon and Christian Science Churches are perhaps the best-known of the faiths that have sprung up on American soil. Because of its tradition of noninterference in religious matters, the United States has also provided a comfortable home for many small sects from overseas. The Amish, for example, descendants of German immigrants who reside mostly in Pennsylvania and neighboring states, have lived simple lives, wearing plain clothes and shunning modern technology, for generations.

Some small groups are considered to be religious cults because they profess extremist beliefs and tend to glorify a founding figure. As long as cults and their members abide by the law, they are generally left alone. Religious prejudice is rare in America, and interfaith meetings and cooperation are commonplace.

The most controversial aspect of religion in the United States today is probably its role in politics. In recent decades some Americans have come to believe that separation of church and state has been interpreted in ways hostile to religion. Religious conservatives and fundamentalists have joined forces to become a powerful political movement known as the Christian right. Among their goals is to overturn, by law or constitutional amendment, Supreme Court decisions allowing abortion and banning prayer in public schools. Ralph Reed, former executive director of the Christian Coalition, estimates that one-third of del-

egates to the 1996 Republican Convention were members of his or similar conservative Christian groups, an indication of the increased involvement of religion in politics.

While some groups openly demonstrate their religious convictions, for most Americans religion is a personal matter not usually discussed in everyday conversation. The vast majority practice their faith quietly in whatever manner they choose—as members of one of the traditional religious denominations, as participants in nondenominational congregations, or as individuals who join no organized group. However Americans choose to exercise their faith, they are a spiritual people. Nine out of ten Americans express some religious preference, and approximately seventy percent are members of religious congregations.

Reprinted from George Clack (ed.). *Portrait of the USA*. United States Information Agency, 1997.

Baptism and First Holy Communion in an American Family

by Andrea Noel

The photograph on the cover of this issue of the *ASJ* captured the baptisms of Natasha and Erin Butler. Pictured from left to right are Father Norman Derosier, Natasha M. Butler, David Butler, holding his younger daughter Erin M. Butler, two godmothers and the godfather.

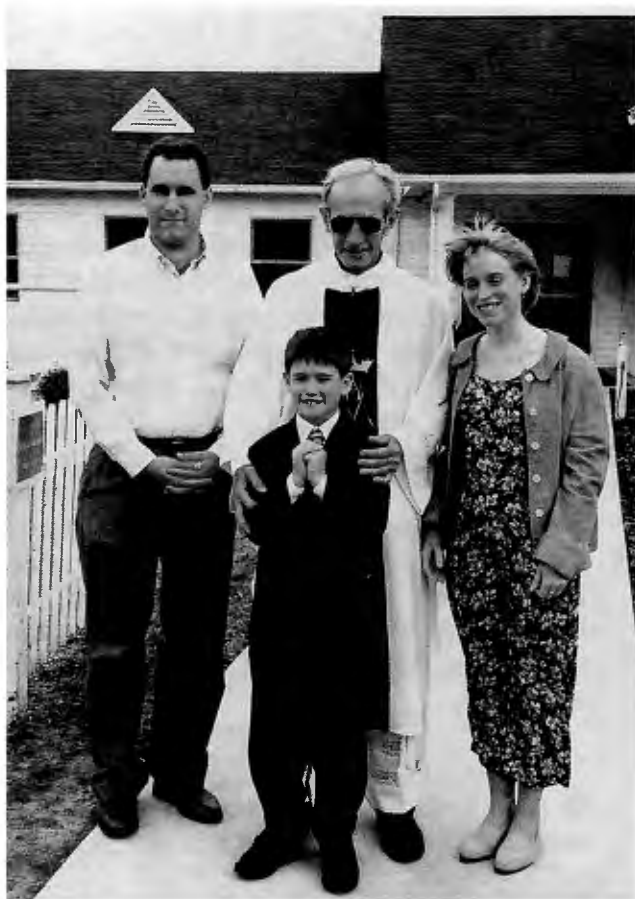
The baptisms were celebrated in June 1998 at a military chapel on Maxwell Air Force Base

in Montgomery, Alabama. Natasha and Erin's mother, Major Barbara Moss, is in the U.S. Air Force and currently stationed at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Both girls were baptized in the same Episcopal ceremony by Father Norman Desrosier, an Air Force Chaplain. Like Catholics, Episcopal parents often baptize their children during infancy. However, as in this case,

parents may decide to wait until the children are older. Natasha (standing) is four years old and Erin (being baptized) is two. The girls share one godfather (their mother's brother), and two godmothers (their father's sisters).

This military chapel is designed to accommodate the needs of service members of many religions. It can be easily "converted" into a Catholic or Protestant chapel, or into a Jewish synagogue.



Pictured from Left to Right:
Ernie Moss, Godfather; Father Gene Grobe, Pastor Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Esopus, New York; Elisabeth McInnis, Godmother; Middle: Adam Noel.

Statues and wall hangings are reversible or easily removable. For example, the cross in the photo can be moved out of view and replaced with a crucifix for Catholic ceremonies.

The picture on this page was taken immediately after Adam Noel's first Holy Communion in May 1997. Twenty-five second grade children received their first Holy Communion on this day. This was a large number for the small white wooden church in Esopus, New York; so large in fact that each family could invite to mass only the the number of people who could be seated in one church pew. This fairly typical small town Catholic church has barely more than twenty-five pews. For this reason most families invited only parents, grandparents and godparents to attend the mass. Other relatives and friends met after the ceremony at parties in the children's honor.

Approximately one half of the children who received their first Holy Communion at Sacred Heart Church in 1997 attended the local private Kingston Catholic School. For these children, preparations for first Holy Communion were an integral part of their school day. The remainder of the children attended local public schools and prepared for first Holy Communion by attending religious education classes at the church one evening per week.

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Separation and Interaction: Religion and Politics

Interview with Kenneth D. Wald

In the course of the past three hundred years, the relationship between religion and politics in the United States has been one of frequent shifts in intensity and degree. Sometimes intersecting, sometimes clashing, sometimes operating on parallel tracks, the linkage has been one of the more fascinating aspects of American history and life. In the following conversation, Kenneth D. Wald, professor of political science at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and author of a seminal book, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, discusses this phenomenon.

Question: The constitutional prohibitions have been interpreted to raise a wall of separation between church and state. Does this preclude the involvement of religion and politics?

Wald: Not at all. The Constitution did clearly establish a secular state or a secular government, but in doing so there was no intent to prevent religion from having an influence in society broadly, and in politics specifically. There were religious ideas that had a strong influence on the Constitution itself, and the nature of the political system that was created. Religious values have been a very powerful influence for a variety of movements, including those to abolish slavery, and to promote civil rights. And religious institutions remain important places where people learn civic norms. So there is no attempt, and it really would have been impossible, to rule religion off the political agenda. All the Constitution attempted to do was to say that the state as a government does not take any particular position with regard to religious questions or religious issues.

Q: The Constitution's religious clauses of significance, you write in your book, address "freedom from" versus "freedom of".

Wald: Exactly. The interesting thing about the separation of church and state in the United States is that it really was inspired by two different political movements. The founders of the United States, particularly people like [James] Madison and [Thomas] Jefferson, were very much influenced by the thinking of the French Enlightenment, and they took the position that giving religion state power would produce bad government. The very hostilities the people might have toward other religions would become political hostilities, and the entire system would have trouble surviving.

On the other hand, you had the other form; what I call Protestant separationism, which was supported by groups like Methodists and Baptists. They felt that to endow religion with state power would produce bad religion; it would give state sanctions to religions which might be in error, or would limit the religious freedom of other Americans. So there is a kind of two-way street operating in the Constitution—the sense that religion will do best and government will do best if they flourish independently of one another.

Some people, I think, assume that the Constitution takes a position that is antireligious, and that's what separation of church and state means. I think quite the contrary. I think that the separation was designed to make religion stronger, provided it focused on an appropriate sphere.

Q: It seems almost as if religion is designed to make the political objective stronger as well.

Wald: Certainly there have been political thinkers who have taken the position that a strong religious sphere is important to the strength of a democratic government. Some people have

said that churches are in a sense incubators of civic virtues. It's in churches and congregations that people learn habits of mind and dispositions that may contribute in a positive way to the maintenance of democracy.

Similarly, de Tocqueville argued that you couldn't understand anything about American society unless you first saw that very strong religious base which made a democratic system possible. It taught people to think about means and ends and the importance of taking a long range objective. So there certainly is a stream of thought which says that the founders did intend separation to build a strong religious sector, and that this would be good for the political system as well.

Q: When you refer to what was being taught in the churches, you are basically talking about values?

Wald: Yes. Churches are important to democracies in lots of different ways. On the one hand, churches are institutions where people learn skills and abilities that will enable them to participate effectively in democratic politics. It's been shown, I think very persuasively, that African Americans actually out-participate other Americans, given their level of socioeconomic standing, largely because the churches that they belong to are such powerful schools of political training. In those churches people learn how to give speeches, they learn how to run meetings, they learn how to organize campaigns. They learn a whole host of skills which translate very directly into the political process. So in a sense they are little schools of democratic practice. For many Americans who don't belong to any other organization that gives them these skills, the church is really essential in promoting a broad-based democratic participation.

Similarly, I think you can argue that in their Washington-based representation, churches often provide a voice for people who are otherwise without that voice. The American Catholic Bishops are an example, with their impressive presence in Washington, or the various groups located in the Methodist Building. Theirs are important voices that talk about the needs of the homeless, the needs of people who are defenseless. They simply give a voice to positions that may not be represented by the major interest groups. So I think in ways most intimate in the congregation and much more broadly in terms of a Washington presence, religious congregations do really enhance and bring additional vitality to the government.

Q: This is true, actually, in Jewish circles, too. You have a strong representation of Jewish religious groups lobbying in Washington.

Wald: Yes. In fact, you can argue that the extension of the First Amendment, particularly the No Establishment clause, has really come through minority religious groups that have lobbied for a broader sense of what government should not do to benefit a religion. Certainly Jewish groups have been at the forefront of almost all of these cases. The late Leo Pfeffer, who represented the American Jewish Committee, was the key litigator. But many of the really critical cases have been argued on behalf of groups like Jehovah's Witnesses, or Seventh Day Adventists, and most recently the Church of Santeria, all of whom have been key actors. Again, I think they expand the rights of all of us by taking these actions.

Q: You earlier referred to the religious roots of the Constitution. In your book, you talk about your theory of "inherent depravity" in connec-

tion with Puritan theology. As I understood it, this is basically the sense that man is inherently sinful or depraved, and you basically can't trust humankind. The extension of this is that you can't trust any one branch of government; you ought to have checks and balances. Is that correct?

Wald: Yes. One can even call it original sin if one wants. It is a powerful factor that was in the minds of almost everybody at the Constitutional Convention. Jefferson believed we should leave nothing to human virtue that can be provided for by a constitutional mechanism. The sense was that whether you embody government in a single individual like a monarch, or whether you embody it in an elected assembly like a congress, human nature is such that we will abuse the power that we are given. We will try to accumulate as much power as possible. And we will not always be sensitive to the needs of others, particularly those who are less powerful. So the solution to this in the eyes of the founders was not divine kingship which has the same problem, but the creation of a government with so many auxiliary protections for liberty that it becomes very difficult for anybody to abuse power.

The other assumption I find very important in the whole development of American constitutionalism is the idea of the covenant. Most Americans learn this from the Bible. They often learn it from the Mosaic Covenant in which God made certain commitments to the people of Israel if they would follow his laws as provided in the Ten Commandments, or in the covenants with Jesus. In these covenants, God makes an agreement, a contract as it were, with people, providing certain benefits in exchange for certain costs. If God is willing to be limited in this way, it is hard to support

an argument for a divine monarch. That kind of thinking is also very important in the Constitution.

Q: Religion as it exists in the United States is not at all monolithic or homogeneous, among the different religions or even within the denominations of particular religions. What happens when these myriad views, credos, interests all converge on the political landscape? How is a cultural war avoided?

Wald: I think that one of the great good fortunes of American life is that we have such a highly diverse and differentiated religious community that, in a sense, we are all members of minority religions. The single largest denomination in the United States is Roman Catholicism, and yet that takes in only about twenty-five percent of the adult believers, based on most surveys. So in that sense, most of us live in places where there are lots of different religions. I think that has prevented the kind of—what game theorists would call—zero-sum situations, which you have in Northern Ireland, or Lebanon, or Bosnia, where you have a majority religion facing a minority religion.

Our diverse religious community, in a sense, has made all of us minority religions at some time or another, and on some issues. So groups often change position based on the issue according to their particular interest. Catholic Americans [. . .] have been very strongly in the pro-life camp that has resisted liberalized abortion. On that issue they have been on very different ground than the American Jewish community, or some other liberal Protestants. Yet on other issues, they have been in the forefront of religious activism because they have a very diverse mandate. So Catholics will change sides; Jews will sometimes work with Evangelicals, sometimes not.

Separation and Interaction

Q: In other words, politics does make strange bedfellows. You have ultra-Orthodox Jews and Evangelical Christians getting together on more conservative issues, for example.

Wald: Sure. People may think that they have very little in common, but when it comes to issues like school vouchers, or certain other aspects of the process, they find common ground. So in a sense, I think we have been lucky. We have not become like Northern Ireland because every issue isn't simply Catholic versus Protestant with one of the sides foreordained to win. In the American system there is so much difference among religions, so much variety that it's probably preserved some balance, and prevented any one group from becoming dominant.

And the trend in American religion is toward ever more diversity. Since the immigration laws were changed in the sixties, the number of people who are adherents of what are called Eastern or Asian religions has increased significantly. And I think, in a sense, that's the future of American religion: more and more diversity, more and more variation, even within the same denomination.

Southern Baptists, for example, are probably in the process of splitting into two separate denominations. There are two different trends already. American Jews are divided into four or five different traditions or denominations, if you want to use that term. So the pattern, I think, is toward ever greater differentiation. Therefore, I feel it's going to make it even less likely that any one faith is going to be dominant.

Q: There's a lot of talk about the success of religious interest groups in lobbying on issues.

How are these activities different from those carried on by trade unionists or environmentalists or oil interests and so on?

Wald: I think, broadly speaking, there is a lot of similarity between the way religious interests groups lobby, and how economic interests or labor interests would lobby. There are differences, I think, as well. Religious interest groups, for example, seldom engage in direct campaign contributions in the manner that we associate with political action committees. But in other respects, religious interest groups will do what is called "grass roots" lobbying. They will encourage their members to communicate with public officials. They will host demonstrations and public information campaigns. They will occasionally secure professional lobbyists to represent their point of view. So in some senses they look a lot like some of the secular interest groups.

On the other hand, I think it's important to understand that sometimes the style of lobbying can be very different. Religious interest groups will often argue that they have a prophetic motivation; that is to say they try to bring the insights of their religious tradition to the attention of public officials. In so doing, they deal in a very different currency—spiritual as opposed to financial. Sometimes this means that they are less likely to win, but they focus on much broader concerns. So sometimes they are very distinctive from the run of the mill.

On occasion, this can take the form of something that I think is very unpalatable. Religious interest groups may take the position that "if you fail to support me on this issue, you are somehow obstructing the will of God." They literally can, on occasion, associate a particular program with a divine mandate. Most reli-

gious traditions that I am familiar with would regard that as blasphemy because it, in a sense, connects a religious imperative or a divine mandate with a program of political action, and I would argue that's not what religion does; that's really perverting the goal of religion.

Q: Is that part of the source of the tension over the perceived activities of the radical right, a sense that they are going beyond what is traditionally appropriate in religious expression?

Wald: Well, I think that really comes back to the early 1980s, when these groups first began to have a political presence in Washington. The groups that come to mind are the Moral Majority and the Religious Roundtable. These groups were charged in particular with this style of lobbying—with coming into legislators' offices and saying that God's will is that we pass a certain piece of legislation, a balanced budget amendment, or an antiabortion amendment, or something of this nature. Basically, in so doing, they were tremendously ineffective because legislators and the American public, frankly don't like the notion that their sacred tradition is necessarily embodied in a particular political plan.

One of the things that encourages me is that those conservative religious groups have learned some lessons from their failures in the early 1980s. If you compare an organization like Christian Coalition with Moral Majority, which in some ways was its spiritual predecessor, you see a much shrewder and more sensitive approach to religious lobbying. You see a tendency to argue not that this is God's will, but that this is our humble attempt to understand the insights of our tradition as it applies to this

issue or policy. And there is much more talking about the religious freedom of students than talking about school prayer.

This is partly a strategic shift. It's clear that Ralph Reed, who runs Christian Coalition, is much shrewder politically than was Jerry Falwell, or many of the people who worked for Moral Majority. In part, though, I think it reflects a learning experience. People have been chastened by some of the feedback they've gotten from their own churches, and some of their own parishioners. They've come to understand that it's important to be modest in linking your policy preferences to your religious views.

There's a prayer that we recite in my congregation on Saturday mornings, for the United States, in which we ask God to give to legislators and public officials the insights of his Torah. It doesn't ask them to convert. It doesn't say that there are particular policies that are consistent with our tradition; others that aren't. It says there are insights in our tradition about what is just, what is fair, what is reasonable, that ought to be factored into the political process. I think that's the level at which most Americans are comfortable with religion in the political process.

Q: In fact, then, the success of this somewhat more sophisticated right is a reaffirmation of how Americans in the middle perceive this entire process?

Wald: Yes, I think that's absolutely right.

Q: I sense that there is a misperception outside the U.S., as to what the outcomes are here, when religious interests attempt to affect national interest politics or policies.

Separation and Interaction

Wald: Yes, I think that's true. When I have lectured overseas, I have seen, really, two massive misperceptions about religion in American politics. One is the assumption that Americans are not religious, and that the constitutional separation of church and state reflects hostility to religion. I have already indicated that I feel that is not the case—that indeed, many people think it is the absence of a state sanction for religion that has enabled it to be so vigorous. Certainly religion is a more vigorous institution and a more vigorous factor in the United States than it is in almost any society where there has been state support for it. I think there are some interesting free market explanations for this. So that's one misperception that is very powerful. I think it's just belied by the facts.

The other major misperception is that there are some policy areas where religious interest groups totally dominate the process, and there is no example that we hear more often than the American Jewish community and Israel. This is probably a policy area where the circumstances, more than [in] any other policy area, do favor interest group impact. [. . .] This is [. . .] central to American Jews for a whole series of reasons. Many Jews see their identity tied up in important ways with the existence of the state of Israel. It is critical in many cases to the survival and the security of Jews. And it is a policy area where most admit there really isn't any other interest group that's been involved until recently. So you would expect that, if there is any policy area where a religious group should be powerful, it would be an area like the Middle East, and a community like the American Jews.

But in point of fact, the evidence suggests that, while American Jews have been successful in some important respects, their success

is largely because the policies they prefer are interpreted by the president to be in the American national interest. When the American Jews have run up against the Administration, and this is true all the way back to the 1950s, then they've had very little success. For example, they couldn't stop the sale of AWACS [E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System] planes under the Reagan Administration. They couldn't persuade George Bush to unfreeze loan guarantees to the state of Israel. And I would suspect if Bill Clinton should decide that Israel is not being aggressive enough in pursuing a Middle East peace, the American Jewish community would be able to do very little to prevent him from trying to put more pressure on the state of Israel today. So, if the president is an ally, groups do succeed very well. If the president isn't an ally, then the Jewish community doesn't usually succeed in these things.

Q: Hand in hand with religious tolerance over the years, we've witnessed religious intolerance. On the social and political landscape, is this something that can be deterred or thwarted, and how?

Wald: Well, I think the evidence in America is that on the one hand, speaking at the mass level, there has actually been a growth in religious tolerance. Overt anti-Semitism and overt anti-Catholicism are now clearly phenomena of fringe movements. Americans have shown themselves, for example, much more willing to vote for candidates of minority religious traditions than was ever the case in the past. So in the one sense, I am heartened by the fact that there is less overt religious prejudice. It's less socially acceptable, and affiliation with a minority religion is less of a bar to success.

On the other hand, what worries me is that at the fringes there has been a growth in religiously inspired political violence. We have seen this, for example, in the extreme fringe wing of the antiabortion movements, with the bombing of abortion clinics and the murder of people who work there. We've also seen it at the fringes in some of the militia movements, primarily in the western states, where the so-called Christian Identity Movement has inspired certain murders and assassinations. So in the mainstream the news is good. At the fringe the news is worrisome.

The evidence suggests that the way to counter this sort of violence is, first of all, through aggressive law enforcement which is important—taking these threats seriously and dealing appropriately with them. The other prong, and what's probably more important, is that communities themselves have to speak up. There was a very heartening case in Billings, Montana, when there was some anti-Semitic vandalism. Members of the committee decided if vandals were targeting houses with menorahs (Jewish holiday candelabra) in the windows during Hanukkah season, everybody in Billings would put menorahs on their window sills. I think when the community makes it clear that it simply doesn't tolerate this kind of behavior, it sends a very powerful message.

Q: Granted that there is nothing new about the linkage between religion and politics in American life, are there any new wrinkles surfacing these days that could have an important impact one way or the other in the years ahead?

Wald: I think there are two really interesting changes that we've seen in the last ten or

fifteen years. The first is the political emergence of Evangelical Christians. This is a community that may be as much as twenty-five percent of the American public now, which didn't use to have much of an organized political voice. Since 1980, the story has been a much more dramatic, much more assertive political voice for Evangelicals. The results have not always been decorous, and there has certainly been some learning, but, by and large, Evangelicals, who used to be politically marginal, have really come into their own.

The other transformation, I think, has been much quieter, but also interesting. It is the changing role of American Catholics. Catholics used to be politically involved, pretty much, only when direct Catholic interests were involved. Questions like public funding for parochial schools, or overt instances of anti-Catholicism used to be the issues that brought Catholics into the political realm.

Now, clearly, Catholics have taken their place on the center stage of American political life, and they've done so in interesting and not always consistent ways. Most of us think of the Catholic church as an opponent of abortion and a driving force of the pro-life movement, but at the same time, the Catholic church has been very active in speaking up on behalf of disadvantaged Americans. In part, this reflects the transition of the American church as it becomes more Hispanic and goes back to its working class roots. In part, I think it represents the impact of the whole series of reforms of Vatican II.

Q: In your book, you argue that ultimately the intertwining of religion and politics in the United States has been both beneficial and detrimental. Could you summarize your views?

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Wald: I think any fair-minded person would have to say that religion, on occasion, has ennobled our politics, and caused us to act in the best way we possibly can. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s is perhaps the high water mark of religious involvement in a very constructive way in our political system.

On the other hand, any fair-minded person would also say that religion has fueled some of the excesses. It's as if religion sometimes licenses an extra savagery when people mix it with politics. There have been events that many of us would be ashamed about: the bombing of the abortion clinics, the violence among the militia movement, are two recent examples.

To my mind, the connection between religion and politics is good or bad depending on the way people bring their religious values into the political process. I think if they subscribe to the sort of triumphalist notion that they have all the answers, and all we need is to subordinate our political system to our clear religious traditions, then you're going to have problems.

I think our religious traditions are subtle; applying them to the political sphere requires

some degree of modesty, some sense that we only dimly perceive the implications of our religious faith in the secular realm. When people approach it with modesty, and tolerance, and understand that, when you speak in the public square, you need to speak a public language, then I think that kind of religion and that kind of religious impulse is very constructive.

I've learned a lot from people with whom I disagree politically, when they've explained to me the religious basis of their policy preferences. When people shout at me, when people tell me that their way is the only way, that God has spoken clearly on policy questions, then I don't pay much attention, and I don't think our political life is in any way ennobled. To my mind, it all depends on the attitude with which one finds a link between the religious and the secular.

Q: And the presentation.

Wald: Very much so.

Dr. Wald spoke with *U.S. Society & Values* editors Michael J. Bandler and William Peters.

Will the Vitality of Churches Be the Surprise of the Next Century?

by George Gallup, Jr.

A clear understanding of the functioning of American society is impossible without an appreciation for the powerful religious dynamic that affects the attitudes and behavior of the populace. Ironically, though this dynamic is clearly evident, social commentators frequently downplay it.

A recent study conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for William Moss shows that Americans' concerns about society, democracy and the future are deeply rooted in their beliefs about God.⁽¹⁾ While most survey respondents hold staunchly to the view that one can be a good and ethical person without believing in God, a solid majority (61%) say that a democracy cannot survive without a widespread belief in God or a Supreme Being. Further evidence of the power of the religious dynamic in U.S. society is seen in the fact that the importance one places on religion, and the intensity of one's faith, often has more to do with attitudes and behavior than such background characteristics as age, level of education, and political affiliation.

Religious Diversity and Vitality

The Religious Liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution—described as perhaps the most important political statement of religious liberty and public justice in the history of mankind—are embodied in just sixteen words: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." One need only look at the landscape of the United States to discover the importance of this provision for both the promi-

nence given religion in our nation, and its diversity. Nearly 500,000 churches, temples and mosques of all shapes and sizes dot the landscape. There are no fewer than 2,000 denominations, not to mention countless independent churches and faith communities. The way to reach the American people is through their houses of worship: sixty percent of the populace can be found attending them in a given month.

Clearly the U.S. is a "churched" nation; in fact, the last fifty years have been the most churched half-century in the nation's history, judging from census and other data reported by Roger Finke and Rodney Stark in *The Churching of America*.⁽²⁾ Levels of attested religious belief, surveys reveal, are extraordinarily high. Virtually all Americans say they believe in God or a universal spirit. Most believe in a personal God who watches over and judges people. Most believe God performs miracles today. And many say they have felt the presence of God at various points in their lives, and that God has a plan for their lives. A substantial majority believe that they will be called before God at Judgment Day to answer for their sins. Americans attest to a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, although what is meant by "divinity" varies. Most believe in an indwelling living Christ, and in the Second Coming. We say we believe in Heaven, and to a lesser extent, Hell. Half of Americans believe in the Devil. Also, the vast majority of Americans believe the Bible is either the literal or inspired Word of God. We believe the Ten Commandments to be valid rules for living.

In the area of religious experience, some dramatic survey findings emerge. A remarkable and consistent one-third of Americans report a profound spiritual experience, either sudden or gradual, which has been life-changing. These occurrences are often the focal point in faith development.

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Turning to experiences in the realm of traditional religion, more than one-in-three American adults (36%) say that God speaks to them directly. About four-in-ten believe that during the time of the Bible, God Himself spoke out loud to people. And almost as many think God spoke through other people. About half of the persons interviewed believe God speaks today through the Bible/Scriptures. Forty-eight percent believe God speaks through an internal feeling or impression. Nearly a quarter of the people say that God speaks through another person, and eleven percent say God still speaks audibly.(3)

Prayer has meaning for many Americans. Virtually everyone prays, at least in some fashion, and we believe prayers are answered. A consistent four-in-ten Americans attend church or synagogue every week. Seven-in-ten say they are church members. One-third of Americans watch at least some religious television each week. The vast majority want religious training for their children. Millions of Americans attend athletic events every year, but many more attend churches and synagogues. Professional sports events gross millions of dollars, but Christians and Jews give billions to their churches as free will gifts.

Of key institutions that elicit respect in society, the church or organized religion rates near the top, and has consistently been in this position since the measurement began twenty years ago. The clergy are held in comparative high esteem. Generally speaking, they receive good marks from the public for the way they are dealing with the needs of their parishioners and the problems of their communities.

Fewer than one-person-in-ten indicates that he or she has no religious preference. Only three out of every one hundred Americans say

their lives have not been touched at all by Jesus Christ, either in a supernatural sense or in the sense of Jesus being an ethical or moral influence on their lives. Three-fourths of Americans say that religion is currently very important or was important at some earlier point in their lives. Fifty-six percent are church—people who are members of a church or have attended services in the previous six months, other than for special religious holidays. The church and unchurched are in a constant state of flux: many people in churches are about to leave, but at the same time, many outside the churches are about to join. Half of the currently unchurched say there is a good chance that they can be brought back into the community of active worshippers.

It should come as no surprise to learn, then, that the United States is one of the most religious nations of the entire industrialized world, in terms of the level of attested religious beliefs and practices. As we look at other countries, we generally see an inverse correlation between levels of religious commitment and levels of education. The more highly educated a country's populace is, the less religiously committed and participating it is. The U.S. is unique in that we have at the same time a high level of religious belief and a high level of formal education.

Impact of Religion

Religious feelings have spurred much of the volunteerism in our nation. Remarkably, one American in every two gives two or three hours of effort each week to some volunteer cause. This volunteerism is frequently church-related. Probably no other institution in our society has had a greater impact for the good than has the church. From the church, histori-

cally, have sprung hospitals, nursing homes, universities, public schools, child care programs, concepts of human dignity and, above all, the concept of democracy.

In one form or another, every religion teaches a gospel of service and charity. A study conducted by Gallup for *Independent Sector* reveals that America's religious institutions do as they say. Churches and other religious bodies are the major supporters of voluntary services for neighborhoods and communities. Members of a church or synagogue, we discovered in a Gallup Poll, tend to be much more involved in charitable activity, particularly through organized groups, than non-members. Almost half of the church members did unpaid volunteer work in a given year, compared to only a third of non-members. Nine-in-ten (92%) gave money to a charity, compared to only seven-in-ten (71%) of non-members. Eight-in-ten members (78%) gave goods, clothing or other property to a charitable organization, compared to two-thirds (66%) of non-members.(4)

Religion would appear to have an early impact upon volunteerism and charitable giving, according to the findings of another survey conducted by Gallup for the *Independent Sector*. Among the seventy-six percent of teens who reported that they were members of religious institutions, sixty-two percent were also volunteers, and fifty-six percent were charitable contributors.(5) By contrast, among those who reported no religious affiliation, far fewer were either volunteers (44%) or contributors (25%).

No fewer than seventy-four percent of U.S. adults say religion in their homes has strengthened family relationships a great deal or somewhat. In addition, eighty-two percent say that religion was very important or fairly important in their homes when they were growing up.

Those who say religion was important in their homes when they were growing up are far more likely than are those who say it was not important to indicate that it is currently strengthening family relationships "a great deal" in their homes.(6) Interestingly, "moral and spiritual values based on the Bible" far outranked "family counseling," "parent training classes" and "government laws and policies" as the main factor in strengthening the family, and was only superseded by "family ties, loyalty, and traditions."

Eight-in-ten Americans report that their religious beliefs help them to respect and assist other people, while eighty-three percent say they lead them to respect people of other religions. Almost as many claim that their religious beliefs and values help them to respect themselves. In another study we determined that the closer people feel to God, the better they feel about themselves and other people.(7) The survey also shows sixty-three percent stating that their beliefs keep them from doing things they know they shouldn't do. Only four percent say their beliefs have little or no effect on their lives. Still another survey shows that Americans who say religion is the most important influence in their lives, and those who receive a great deal of comfort from their beliefs, are far more likely than their counterparts to feel close to their families, to find their jobs fulfilling, and to be excited about the future.

Trends in the Last Sixty Years

The major perceivable swings in the religious life of the nation over the last six decades—the period charted by modern scientific surveys of the population—were a post-World War II surge of interest in religion characterized by increased church membership and attendance, an increase in Bible reading and

giving to churches, and extensive church building. Religious leaders such as Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, and Fulton J. Sheen had wide followings during this period. This surge lasted until the late 1950s or early 1960s, when there was a decline in religious interest and involvement. Today, there appears to be a "bottoming out" in certain indicators, if not a reversal of some of the declines.

Organized religion in America is regaining its strength, according to the latest *Princeton Religion Research Center Index*. Modern American religious belief and practice attained their peak during the 1950s, before the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s took their toll on most institutions, including religion.

Despite these ebbs and flows, one of the most remarkable aspects of America's faith is its durability. In the face of all of the dramatic social changes of the past half century—depression, war, the civil rights movement, social unrest, technological change—the religious beliefs and practices of Americans today look very much like those of the 1930s and 1940s. The percentage of the populace who are active church members today closely matches the figures recorded in the 1930s. (One must note, of course, that for certain churches and denominations, these figures are not going in the same direction.) This applies to church attendance as well as to basic religious beliefs. Despite this consistent orthodoxy, Americans remain highly independent in their religious lives and independent of their religious institutions.

The religious liberty most Americans cherish and celebrate has enabled religion to flourish in many forms, and to become a profound shaper of the American character. Religious liberty has contributed vitality and vigor to the American

outlook—an exuberance, a feeling that anything is possible—and often, the courage to bring about difficult but needed change in society.

Superficial or Transforming?

The record of organized religion is impressive. But in trying to assess the impact of religion in America, it is necessary to examine religion on two levels: surface religion (such as being religious for social reasons) versus deep transforming faith (perhaps best measured by the way faith is lived out in service to others).

There is no gainsaying the fact that organized religion remains strong in our nation or the fact that religion has shaped America in distinctly positive terms. Yet when we use measurements to probe the depth of our religious conviction, we become less impressed with the depth of our faith, at least in terms of traditional religion. We believe in God, but this God is often only an affirming one, not a demanding one: He does not command our total allegiance. We pray but often in a desultory fashion, with the emphasis on asking, or petition, not on thanksgiving, adoration, intercession, or forgiveness. We revere the Bible, but many of us rarely read it. The proof is the sorry state of biblical knowledge among Americans—we are truly "biblical illiterates."

Religious ignorance extends to a lack of awareness and understanding of one's own religious traditions and of the central doctrines of one's faith. The result is that large numbers of Americans are unrooted in their faith and therefore, in the view of some, easy prey for movements of a far-ranging and bizarre nature. We pick and choose those beliefs and practices that are most comfortable and least demanding. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby calls this "religion a la carte."

We want the fruits of faith, but less, its obligations. Of nineteen social values, "following God's will" is far down the list among the public's choices as the "most important," behind happiness and satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment and five other values. Of eight important traits, teenagers rate "religious faith" as least important, behind patience, hard work, and five other traits.(8)

Church involvement alone does not seem to make a great deal of difference in the way we live our lives. It is at the level of deep religious commitment where we find extraordinary differences—in outlook, in charitable activity, in happiness, and in other ways. The highly committed segment of the populace—the "hidden saints," if you will—comprise a small percentage of the population, but their influence is far out of proportion to their numbers. In my book *The Saints Among Us* (written with Tim Jones), we report that only thirteen percent of Americans can be said to have a deep integrated and lived-out faith—as measured by a twelve-item scale.(9)

Any such survey effort is bound to be imperfect—given the complexity and subtlety of religious feelings. Ours did, nonetheless, help identify people who truly live what they profess religiously. They may not be canonized or officially recognized, but they find deep meaning in prayer. They gain personal strength from their religious convictions. And they demonstrate more than mere religious sentiment. They often spend significant time helping people burdened with physical and emotional needs. They are less likely to be intolerant of other faiths, and more giving, more forgiving. They appear to have bucked the trend of many in society toward narcissism and privatism.

Three Gaps

The religious condition of Americans today can perhaps be best described in terms of gaps. First, there is an ethics gap—the difference between the way we think of ourselves and the way we actually are. While religion is highly popular in this country, survey evidence suggests that it does not change people's lives to the degree one would expect from the level of professed faith. Perhaps such a gap must always exist. There is also a knowledge gap—the gap between Americans' stated faith and their lack of the most basic knowledge about that faith. Finally, there is a gap, a growing one, between believers and belongers—a decoupling of belief and practice, if you will. Millions of Christians are believers, many devout, but they do not participate in the congregational lives of their denominations. Americans increasingly view their faith as a matter between them and God, to be aided, but not necessarily influenced, by religious institutions.

The decoupling of faith and church stems in considerable measure from what has been called privatism, or "radical individualism," dramatically represented in a related series of beliefs. The vast majority of Americans believe that it is possible to be a good Christian or Jew without going to church or synagogue. They also believe that people should arrive at their religious beliefs independently of any church or synagogue. Lastly, a majority agree that it does not make any difference which church a person attends because one is as good as another.

Role of Surveys

With the advent of scientific surveys in the mid-1930s, observers of the religious scene gained greater confidence in drawing conclu-

sions about the dynamics of religion in society. Such surveys have added a new dimension to the history of what average citizens believe and think. Yet probably no more difficult task faces the survey researcher than attempting to measure the religious mood. There is much about religion that defies statistical description: questions can be blunt instruments, while religious beliefs are varied and subtle and do not yield easily to categorization. Complicating the effort to assess the spiritual climate through survey research is the difficulty of examining the findings on the basis of denominations and other religious groups—for example, fundamentalists, evangelicals and charismatics. The terms are in flux, blurred and overlapping.

Nonetheless, surveys serve as an important reality check, by going to the people themselves, thus bringing the nation's elites in touch with mainstream America. Surveys are valuable as a way of obtaining factual information not otherwise available—for example, on church attendance and membership. Data collected by census means through individual churches is often incomplete and unreliable, due to differing classifications of members and collection methods. The Gallup Poll has devoted considerable time and money to reduce to a minimum the tendency of respondents to give the socially acceptable answer.

I expect the importance of religion to grow in the decades ahead, as religion is increasingly shaped from the people in the pews rather than by the church hierarchy. While scientific probing of the religious scene through surveys is beginning to catch up with survey research in other areas of life, I see an urgent need for more penetrating explorations into the religious life. We know a great deal about the

breadth of religion in America, but not about the depth. Certainly one of the new frontiers of survey research is the "inner life."

The Future

Organized religion plays a large, pivotal role in American society. What is much less clear—and far more difficult to predict—is the direction in terms of the depth of faith. It is at a level of deep commitment that we are most likely to find lives changed, and social outreach empowered. Will the nation's faith communities challenge as well as comfort people? Will they be able to raise the level of religious literacy? These are the questions that need to be addressed by the clergy and religious educators of all faiths. The threat to the traditional church is that an uninformed faith that comforts only can lead to a free-floating kind of spirituality, which could go in any direction.

There is an exciting development in this nation (Princeton sociology Professor Robert Wuthnow calls it a "quiet revolution") that merits close attention—the proliferation of small groups of many kinds that meet regularly for caring and sharing. A 1991 study conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for the Lilly Endowment revealed that forty percent of Americans are so engaged, with another seven percent interested in joining such groups, and still another fifteen percent who had been members of such groups in the past. Sixty percent of these groups were related to a church or other faith community.⁽¹⁰⁾

Wuthnow, the director of this landmark study, notes in his book, *Sharing the Journey*, that a number of these groups tend to cultivate an "anything goes" spirituality. There are, however, other groups, often related to a faith

community, that challenge, as well as comfort participants; that help people in their faith journey; and encourage them to be open and honest with each other. Small groups can serve as both a support for persons who find the church setting too impersonal, as well as an entrance to the larger community.

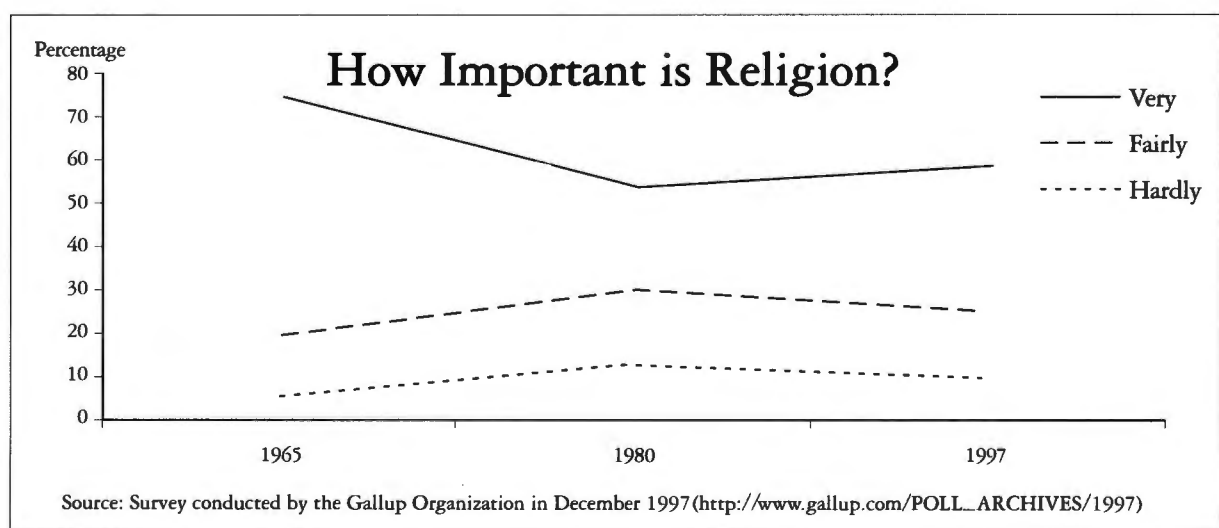
The growth of these groups, involving close to half the populace, and the intense searching for spiritual moorings suggest that a widespread healing process may be under way in our society. Because most Americans believe in a personal, approachable God (ninety-four percent believe in God or a universal spirit, and eighty-four percent in a personal God who is reached by prayer), we are predisposed to reach out in this direction for guidance.

When functioning at a deep spiritual level, small groups can be the vehicle for changing church life from the merely functional to the transformational. They can help meet two of the great desires of the heart of Americans, particularly at this point in time: the desire to find deeper meaning in our world, and the desire to build deeper, more trusting relation-

ships with other people in our impersonal and fragmented society. If these desires are met, the vitality of our churches could well be the surprise of the next century.

Endnotes

- (1) Survey conducted for William Moss by the George H. Gallup Institute, September 1994.
- (2) Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992.
- (3) Survey by the Gallup Organization, 1986.
- (4) Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 1989.
- (5) Gallup Youth Survey, October 1990.
- (6) Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 1986.
- (7) Survey by the Gallup Organization, 1988.
- (8) Gallup Youth Survey, March 1987.
- (9) Gallup, George Jr. and Tim Jones. *The Saints Among Us*. Richfield, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1992.
- (10) Wuthrow, Robert. *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community*. New York: Free Press, 1994.



Islam in the United States

Interview with Yvonne Haddad

The Islamic presence in the United States has grown substantially over the past decade or two. With that expansion, however, have come self-assessments from within the Islamic-American community, and speculation on what the future holds. In this interview Yvonne Haddad, professor of Islamic history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, considers the state of Muslims in America today.

Question: The rise of Islam in the United States can be seen tangibly, every day, with the mosques that have been constructed in the nation's urban areas. What is the current total?

Haddad: There are 1,250 mosques and Islamic centers.

Q: How many have been erected in the past ten years?

Haddad: Quite a few. I think that since 1984, the number has doubled.

Q: Then there are the intangibles—the spirit and resolve and determination of that community to make a life for itself in the United States. But first, I thought we'd discuss the fact that Islam is not completely new to these shores. It didn't spring up in the last twenty years.

Haddad: No, it did not. Some scholars are exploring the possibility that Muslims even preceded the Plymouth Plantation and the Virginia settlements. We have historical evidence that some of the Moors who were expelled from Spain somehow made their way to the islands of the Caribbean, and from there to the southern part of the United States. There's a book on the Melungeons who came

to North America prior to the 1600s. So there are some Muslims now who are looking at this history and seeing themselves as part of the founding of America. It's sort of the Spanish version of the founding of America. We also know that a substantial number of the African Americans who were brought as slaves to the United States were Muslim, and were converted to Christianity. Some continued to practice Islam until the early part of this century. They lived on the outer banks of Georgia, on the periphery. So there are different ways of looking at the history. Generally speaking, we talk about steady emigration in the 1870s and 1880s when the Muslims from Lebanon and Syria came to the United States.

Q: Were these people able to live their lives as Muslims?

Haddad: They did continue their lives as Muslims. One of the things that is interesting about Islam is that it's a portable religion. Any place can be a place of worship. It's just that the establishment of community, and perpetuation of the faith is something that became prominent only at the beginning of the 1930s, during the Depression. We see a great deal of institutionalization among the immigrants. We ended up with about fifty-two mosques by the end of World War II. The United States, from the 1920s through the end of the Second World War, had no immigration to speak of. That's when you had the homogenization of America. Then, in the 1960s, the doors opened again, leading to a massive new immigration from all over the world—reminiscent of the waves of Eastern Europeans who came at the turn of the twentieth century.

Q: You mentioned a figure of fifty-two mosques.

Haddad: [The year] 1952 saw the creation of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada. Fifty-two mosques joined, with predominantly Lebanese and Syrian populations. There were a few groups of Muslims from the Balkans. Not included in that count were about a hundred African American mosques.

Q: So you're talking about the growth from 150 to 1,250 over less than a half-century.

Haddad: Right.

Q: In those early days, were there contacts between the different communities?

Haddad: Most of them were chain migration Muslims. They came out of the same villages in Lebanon. You had people who settled in North Dakota. Then, during the First World War, some were drafted, went to Europe and died. Others came back, but didn't go back to North Dakota, where they had homesteaded, but went into the automobile factories in Detroit [Michigan], for example, or started businesses in Ohio.

Q: Was that the genesis of the strong Muslim presence in the Detroit area?

Haddad: It was the Ford Rouge Factory. It employed Muslims as well as African Americans from the South. The company paid five dollars a day, and took in anybody who could put up with the heat and horrible working conditions. Most of the people who came from the Middle East didn't know any English. It was good pay.

Q: Were there any tensions with American society, based on religion?

Haddad: It was more racist than religious. There were two court cases at the time. The question was whether Arabs were considered fit citizens for the United States, because at that time citizenship was defined either by being Caucasian or Negroid, and the Arabs didn't fit either profile.

Q: Let's focus on the tremendous growth that has taken place in recent years. First, pinpoint the reasons for it.

Haddad: The most important factor is the change in the U.S. immigration laws around 1965, in which people were given visas based on their ability to contribute to society, rather than chain migration, which is through relatives. What you had after 1965 was the inflow of doctors and engineers—the brain drain, the professional class—Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and Arabs. That is what established Islam in a very solid way as a religion in America. They soon set up mosques, because they could not relate to the more assimilationist mosques that were established by the Federation of Islamic Associations. They thought of them as being too Americanized, too Christianized.

Q: So there was a very definite distinction between the old-line mosques and the new ones.

Haddad: Correct.

Q: What were the older ones like?

Haddad: First of all, the immigrants who came in that earlier wave were uneducated, mostly young single men. We even have records of people on a train going to Washington State,

passing through Chicago. The group included more than fifty people who were between the ages of nine and eleven. It was child labor, headed for the mines or orchards, or the railroads. These kids didn't even know where they came from. They didn't know English. But eventually, they married Americans, settled, and tried to invent an identity, and developed a bare minimum of religion, with the food and music and marriage customs as culture.

Q: So the worship wasn't the focal point. It was almost incidental.

Haddad: That's right. These mosques were social clubs. But then, once they got married, they began to worry about bringing up children. We have a record of the Quincy [Massachusetts] mosque. Eleven families banded together and said, we need a mosque, a building, a place where we can gather so our children can grow up as Muslims and marry each other. They built the mosque. But, according to a survey, not one of the children, male or female, married Muslims. And all the marriages ended in divorce. It's an incredible statistic.

Q: That's the way it was. And obviously, change was needed.

Haddad: Right. When the post-1965 immigrants came, they looked at what had been going on, and decided that wasn't what they wanted. The identity and consciousness of the new immigrants are different. They are the product of the nation-states that arose after the Second World War. They are educated. They have a national identity, whether as Pakistanis, Lebanese, or Syrians. They have been taught a particular history, a background, as well as the history of Islam, its culture and

contribution to world civilization. So they came already formed with a particular perspective on life. They looked at the earlier immigrants who did not share their identity, and decided to establish their own institutions.

Q: So you've identified two distinctive schools. Then there is the black Muslim.

Haddad: Absolutely. From 1933 to 1975, they were growing up parallel and separate. The African American experience really developed in the industrial cities in the North as a reaction to racism. When African Americans left the Southern cotton fields at the beginning of the twentieth century, they expected the North would be more open, and it wasn't. So gradually, Islam was rediscovered as an identity that would ground them in their original African identity—since Africa had at least three Islamic kingdoms (Mali, Songhai and Ghana) that had made great contributions to African civilizations. African Americans started changing their names as a rejection of slave identity.

Q: Today, in the Islamic community, as one response to the voids of the past, there is a whole network of schools.

Haddad: There are over a hundred day schools, and over a thousand Sunday or weekend schools.

Q: And are there community organizations?

Haddad: Yes, besides the 1,250 mosques or Islamic centers, we have addresses for organizations, publishers, radio stations—about 1,200 institutions.

Q: Is there a religious training program for leaders?

Haddad: There is a new one established this year near Herndon, Virginia. It is run by the International Institute of Islamic Thought. It gives an M.A. in Imamate Studies, preparing Imams for religious leadership; and an M.A. in Islamic Studies. It is going to serve as a seminary, to prepare leaders who have lived and are trained in America. Up to now the leadership has been imported. And that isn't working too well.

Q: That must have created some stresses.

Haddad: At first it didn't, but it did as the immigrants acclimatized to life in America. And the imported leaders couldn't communicate with the children.

Q: I'm sure that even the youngsters who go to day schools are Americanized in many ways.

Haddad: They are. They live in two cultures, straddling them.

Q: Let's talk about living in two cultures—whether it's even possible to do so. How successfully is it accomplished?

Haddad: It's a very interesting question. I've been looking at it for some time. On one level, they've been able to do that very successfully. On another level, given the heightened Islamophobia in America, it's become very uncomfortable. In one of the surveys we did in the 1980s, we asked people whether they believed America discriminated against Muslims. Of a sample of

365 people, one hundred percent said yes. Then, when we asked whether any had personally experienced discrimination, none had. So it is in the air. The press contributes to the paranoia, and we cannot ignore it. Muslims feel comfortable. They've been invited to churches and synagogues, and have participated in inter-faith dialogue. They know we're not out to get them. And yet, they get up in the morning and read press reports about terrorists and they panic. There is this fear that at any moment, you'll have a mob marching, trying to bomb a mosque. It has happened. There have been three or four bombings, perhaps two cases of arson, and some desecration of mosques, since 1989. No one has been killed, but these religious sites have been attacked, and this is very frightening. Usually these incidents follow, or are linked to, some high-visibility terrorist act overseas.

Q: Certainly there has been, particularly among some of the strongly ecumenical Christian groups, a sense that they have a mission to reach out, and correct the errors of the past.

Haddad: Absolutely. The National Council of Churches has come out with statements about Christian relations with Muslims. At least eight denominations have come out in support of Christian and Muslim rights in Jerusalem. These same denominations have presented statements about how to treat our neighbors, how to get churches to reach out to the Muslim community.

Q: So there's some counterbalance to the extreme actions.

Haddad: From some of the churches, yes. I agree. Many have taken a stand that neighbors should work with each other, that congrega-

tions should be taught how to relate with Muslims as Americans, as full citizens, as participants in building the future of America.

Q: Today, do you think a good Muslim can practice his or her religion in this country comfortably?

Haddad: Well, the practice of religion is to pray five times a day, to perform ablutions before the prayers, to fast the month of Ramadan, to give alms, to go on the "hajj" once in a lifetime. Fasting is not as easy as fasting in a Muslim country, where the work-day is shortened.

Q: Yet the United States has religious leave and other laws.

Haddad: Well, they haven't accommodated Muslims yet. The only place where this has been tested is in the prison system. African American Muslims have sued certain prison systems and have acquired the right, for example, to get halal food—Islamically slaughtered food—and the right, while fasting, to eat not at times designated by the prison authorities but at the times that the religion allows them to eat.

The five daily prayers happen to be concentrated in the afternoon and evening. You do the first one in the morning before you leave the house, and have a noon break for the second. You can postpone the mid-afternoon one in some cases. They don't take that much time—five to ten minutes. The only thing is that you need a clean space to be able to perform ablutions. That's the toughest thing. Performing ablutions in a public bathroom, the lack of a private space, is hard.

Q: Because we're considering Islam in America as an evolutionary situation, would you say that it is easier today for Muslims to effectively practice their religion in this country as opposed to fifty years ago?

Haddad: It's easier in that there are Muslim mosques throughout the fifty states, and you can find a community where you can worship. When we first moved into Hartford [Connecticut] in 1970, we knew there was a Muslim person. He used to go to the Maronite church to seek community. At that time, there was no mosque. He died, and was buried in a Christian cemetery. Now there is a Muslim section of the cemetery. And Muslims are able to make arrangements with funeral homes that will allow them to wash the bodies according to Islamic practice and prescriptions and perform the prayers. So it is becoming easier for Muslims to live in the United States. It is more comfortable; there's no question about it. They are organized better, and they are beginning to ask for their rights under American law.

Q: Let's discuss the current state of political activism among Muslims in the United States today—both in terms of specific causes and also some of the more broad-based kinds of issues where they might join with other groups.

Haddad: Political action is very hard to pinpoint, basically because it's not well-organized. There's no consensus on issues. Since the early 1970s, there have been several Arab-American political action groups such as the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee and the National Association of Arab Americans, but those included both Muslims and Christians. They came into existence after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. These are not necessarily Islamic. They will work for Arab-American causes, like dis-

crimination. For Muslims, at the moment, the cause is [U.S.] antiterrorism legislation that attempts to create profiles. There is a fear that it could target Muslims and Arabs, or people who look like Arabs, when they go to an airport.

Q: But that's not an Islamic religious issue.

Haddad: No. Then you have different groups, like the United Muslims of America, or the Muslim Alliance, that have defined themselves as political action groups, that try to invite candidates for office to speak to them. They have not been very successful, for a variety of reasons. We do have a record, for example, of public officials who returned Arab-American Christian money because they said it was tainted.

Q: That was ten or more years ago.

Haddad: Right. But it is a fear that they are being disenfranchised. This changed, though, with Jesse Jackson running for office. When he ran for president in 1988, there were fifty Arab Americans and Muslim Americans who were part of his delegation to the Democratic National Convention. And [candidate Michael] Dukakis acknowledged them when he addressed the assemblage as "Christians, Jews and Muslims." President Reagan once met the Pope in Florida, and welcomed him in the name of Americans, their churches, synagogues and mosques. President Clinton, several times, has sent congratulations at the time of Ramadan. And Mrs. Clinton invited Muslims for an Iftar dinner [the meal that breaks the Ramadan Fast] at the White House. So there is a feeling that people are beginning to notice Muslims as part of America.

During the last election, there was an effort to bring five Muslim political action committees

together, trying to create a voting bloc. Knowing the Jewish vote was going to go for [President] Clinton, Muslims wondered, could they go for Dole? They couldn't do that. About fifty percent voted for the Democratic party, and fifty for the Republicans. So they're totally divided, and have independent opinions. Also, since they're mostly recent immigrants, they have their own particular interests. The issue of Jerusalem is universal for all Muslims, regardless of where they're from. But when you talk about Kashmir, for example, you'll see that Indian and Pakistani Muslims will focus on that. You have the issue of the Moro revolution in the Philippines—everybody will give some sort of lip service to it, but that's about it. They all rallied in support of the Muslims of Bosnia.

Q: You've been citing foreign policy issues, for the most part. Where do Muslims in the United States come down on critical domestic issues?

Haddad: Nowhere. They have not been able to organize or make an impact. First of all, the people running for office don't want to be associated with Muslims. There is this fear of being tarred. I agree that there are issues that they could share with other groups. One example of cooperation I can cite is the statement about abortion issued by the American Muslim Council in Washington in collaboration with the Catholic Bishop of Maryland.

Q: What was the substance of that?

Haddad: They were jointly against abortions, at the time of the United Nations Beijing Conference. It's not that they were against women's rights, but they felt that the way these rights were defined was against the religious teach-

ings of Catholicism and Islam. There also was one court case where Muslims and Jews collaborated, that had to do with freedom of worship. Generally, though, even where there may be a confluence of interests, there is no cooperation.

Q: So what else can you say about this newly vibrant community?

Haddad: The thing is that it becomes more vibrant the more it feels persecuted. We ran a survey in the 1980s and found out that only five to ten percent of the community is interested in organized religion. Most people of Islamic background will have nothing to do with the mosques, even though they see themselves as Muslims and identify themselves as Muslims.

Q: Is that still true today?

Haddad: I think it gets higher in periods when you have a perception of persecution.

Q: What does Muslim education accomplish, in the day schools and weekend schools? Do these institutions expand and build a base?

Haddad: They hope it will. Some Christians attend these schools. They're good schools, sometimes operating in ghetto areas. But there aren't that many schools—what is a hundred across the whole United States? And only a few go through high school. The Sunday schools are producing a very interesting group of students. I'm starting to get them in my college classes, and they all come knowing what Islam is, because they were raised in this consciousness. They're a very interesting parallel to my Jewish students. They have a spe-

cific knowledge but not necessarily grounded in the historical facts of Judaism or Islam, their thoughts and institutions. Sometimes I say something about Judaism, and my students jump. There was one student who would challenge me all the time. I told him to go check with his rabbi. He came back, and told me, "the rabbi said you're right." And the same happens with the Muslim students.

Q: How do you view things as they are going to evolve into the next century? Are you sanguine about the growth and enrichment of Islam in the United States?

Haddad: I believe that the issue of Islamophobia in some quarters of the United States is serious. One of the leaders told me, "our biggest enemy in America would be tolerance." We know, for example, that in Chicago we had two or three mosques. Then the Salman Rushdie affair developed, bringing fears among the Muslim immigrants that their children would become Salman Rushdies, denying their faith and being integrated into the system—in a sense adopting the language of the enemy of Islam and using it against Islam. So what happened was that more than sixty Sunday schools sprang up, and each one became a mosque. It was a wakeup call for the community. Then there was the World Trade Center bombing, and people began going to mosques. Others were hiding. They were claiming, "I'm not Pakistani, I'm Hindu;" or "I'm not Egyptian, I'm Greek;" just to get rid of the bias and the stereotype.

I really personally believe, having been doing research on the Islamic community for over twenty years, that if they felt comfortable, they would probably integrate much more easily and would have an easier life. But the last few

years, since the fall of the Soviet empire, there are certain people who feel we need an enemy.

Muslims are eager to be part of this country. They don't want to be discriminated against. They want their children to be able to live here. They would like Islam to be recognized as a positive force for justice and peace in the world.

Q: If there is more recognition of Islam, as you said, by various U.S. presidents, or greetings to Muslims during the Ramadan season that appear on local television stations, isn't this an acknowledgment of some forward movement?

Haddad: I think that goes a long way towards making them feel at home in the United States. There are developments coming through. If you look at the mosque movement itself, you will see a great deal of Americanization within it. Remember that in most of the countries Muslims came from—especially in the early parts of the century—people did not go to the mosques. Now there is a mosque movement worldwide. And what we have in America is that women, too, are going. Female space has been created—sometimes in the basement, sometimes in a separate room, sometimes side-by-side or in the back or on a higher level from the men. Basically, we're seeing the kind of innovations that are making the mosques American.

Q: If we try to sum up the Islamic community in the United States, putting the religion aside, how would you assess it?

Haddad: I think they will feel comfortable. Increasingly, they are learning how to operate within the system. Their children are Ameri-

can, and they know it. They may know that they are also Pakistani, or Lebanese, or Syrian, or Palestinian, but at the same time, they are Americans, and they can operate better within the American system than they can in Pakistan, for instance. Some of them have never been to Pakistan—it's a place their parents talk about. And they know that that's what they're supposed to be, but they don't know what it is. I think it's the coming generation that is going to define what Islam is going to be in America. If we look at the history of the development of religion in America, it would be parallel to churches. We're beginning to have more pot-luck dinners. There is one mosque in New York with a woman president—which is unheard of. She's a medical doctor, of Pakistani extraction. So why not?

In a sense, then, the mosque is not going to be a transplant—something that is foreign and brought here. It is going to be an indigenous experience of religiosity in America.

The interview was conducted by *U.S. Society & Values* editors William Peters and Michael J. Bandler.

Lutheran Churches

Since 1997 Lutherstadt Wittenberg has hosted an annual English worship ministry. As part of this year's program, regular church services were conducted from May to November by thirteen American Lutheran pastors. Services took place alternately at the Town Church—Luther's parish church—and the Castle Church. It was the door of the Castle Church to which Luther is said to have nailed his ninety-five theses on October 31, 1517 and initiated the Protestant Reformation.

The *American Studies Journal* invited a number of these Lutheran pastors to write short articles on the religious life of their congregations in the U.S. These contributions are reprinted on the following pages.

Grace Lutheran Church in Woodbridge, Virginia by Rev. Keith Loesch



The parish I serve is a forty-year-old congregation located in Woodbridge, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. It is a very diverse congregation, with the people having grown up in all parts of the United States and having lived in all parts of the world due to their careers in

the military, government, or private industry. The congregation, like the larger community, is highly transient, so that fifty percent of the members are new to the congregation every four years. The median age of the 250 people who regularly attend the Sunday worship services is thirty-two. Some have been lifelong members of the Lutheran Church, but many

come from a large number of other Christian denominational backgrounds, and some were not previously Christian. We are also multicultural, mostly Caucasian with a small number of Asian and African Americans, as well as a few native Germans. Our pastoral staff consists of myself as Senior Pastor and an Assistant Pastor, presently African American. The members are highly educated and highly skilled, with many holding high rank in the U.S. Armed Forces and assigned to the Pentagon and others working for the United States government or its agencies.



The religious life of our congregation flows from the congregation's vision "to be a faith-filled welcoming, worshiping, caring and reaching people of God." We welcome all who enter the church, we worship and relate together as the Family and Body of Christ, we care for one another, and we reach out to our community and world to help others know and experience the love of Jesus. The two Sunday morning worship services, the Sunday School classes for all ages, and the Wednesday evening Prayer and Praise Service are designed to feed the faith of all who attend so that the people know the love of God in Jesus Christ, value preaching of the Word and reception of Baptism and the Eucharist, and experience a living connection to Jesus Christ. It is through this living connection to Jesus Christ that our people find their personal calling to be his servants and see themselves as "little Christs" in daily ministry to all other

people with whom they are in contact. As such, the congregation has become known in the wider community for its warm-hearted love, a love that begins with Sunday worship and radiates into all of life.

In our congregation we offer many opportunities for the people to gather in small groups so they can learn to know one another, so they can grow in the knowledge of the Bible, and so that they can work together to nourish and



WORSHIP

Sunday Services at:
8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Nursery Provided

LEARNING

- Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Classes for all ages
- Ongoing courses in Bible and
Life-related topics
- Religious Life Education
classes for youth
- Vacation Bible School and
other events
- Special Classes taught by our
Pastor

FELLOWSHIP & SERVICE

- Youth Activities
- Family Events
- Adult Fellowship Groups
- Women's Groups

support one another as Christians in the world. When people are new to our church, they are invited to join the Breadbreaker Program in which they become part of a group of twelve people who meet monthly at someone's home for dinner, Bible study and conversation. In this way they learn to know other people, become known and cared for by the others, and become connected to each other as part of a large family. We also have Bible study and fellowship groups for youth, for men, and for women which are encouraged for everyone to attend. Additional groups are for music and choirs, for altar care, and for community service projects at hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, and homeless shelters. Everything we do in the church is connected to and flows from the love of Jesus. "We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) Our people find meaning and purpose in their Christian faith, there is joy and excitement in their participation, and they reach out to invite and include other new residents and non-attending people from the community in our worship and Christian fellowship.

The congregation is nationally affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, but is responsible for and manages its own life and ministry. The pastors do not run or control the congregation. Rather they are advisors to an elected lay president and other officers, together with more than seventy-five people serving on nine committees that cover the whole spectrum of the congregation's mission and ministry. Consequently, the life of the parish is governed by a creative partnership of pastors and people working together to put the faith and love of Christ into responsible expression. Ultimately, our goal is not to add numbers to our rolls, but to add people to the Body of Christ and assist them in becoming functioning Christians who live in this world

as Christ's representatives and extensions of his ministry. Accordingly we seek not to be static, but to be dynamic. Perhaps that will help you understand the motto we live by: "Grace Lutheran Church—a Glowing, Growing, and Going Church."

Beautiful Savior's Worship in Bridgeton, Missouri by Pastor Paul T. Prange

Beautiful Savior's worship is located in Bridgeton, a northwest suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. There are 500 members, representing all ages. This mixture of ages is one of the strengths of the congregation. The Pastor is Paul T. Prange, who began his ministry at Beautiful Savior in October, 1978.

Beautiful Savior's worship style is varied. On two Sundays of the month, the liturgy is highly formal. Music is provided by an organ, and the Pastor chants the liturgy. On another Sunday, music is played on a piano, accompanying contemporary tunes. On still another Sunday, musical accompaniment is by guitars.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 31, the Youth Group led the worship which featured a drama written by one of the Youth Counselors. Pentecost Sunday is one of the "Red" Sundays, when members are encouraged to wear some red clothing. The congregation's annual anniversary observance and Reformation are also red Sundays. On those days, there is a sea of red, symbolizing the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people.

For the past fifteen years, a group of a dozen people has met each Tuesday morning at 6:01 for Bible study and prayer. Adjournment is promptly at 7:00 a.m. to enable participants

to begin their work day. Wednesday evening is Confirmation instruction for seventh and eighth graders prior to the Rite of Confirmation in the Spring. On Thursday, the Choir Chimes and Adult Choir meet for rehearsal. An annual Vacation Bible School is held in the summer, featuring Bible study, music, crafts, and recreation.

Beautiful Savior is one of the charter members of the Bridgeton Community Helping Ministry, an organization of congregations which provides assistance for needy families. The first Sunday of the month is Food Sunday, and donations are forwarded to the Helping Ministry. The Helping Ministry is currently in the process of organizing an employment service for those seeking work.

The only additional staff person is a part-time secretary. The various programs of the congregation, such as Sunday School, Evangelism, and Social Ministry, are all directed by volunteers from the congregation. Their willingness to contribute their talents is the backbone of the congregation.

***Our Savior Lutheran Church
in Raleigh, North Carolina
by Rev. Lawrence Lineberger***

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Raleigh, North Carolina serves a transient population in a fast-growing high-tech oriented community. Lutherans are not indigenous to this part of the country as it was originally settled by English and Scotch immigrants. Consequently, most people with Lutheran convictions move into our city because of employment opportunities and are most susceptible to transfer and professional relocation. Our congregation numbers about 550 (475 communing

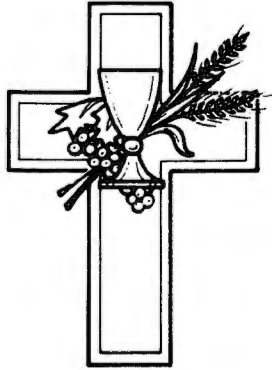
members and seventy-five children). We typically receive about fifty new members each year via transfer from sister congregations (usually in the mid-west and north) and adult confirmation. Thus, our rate of transiency is about ten percent each year.

Worship is the center of parish life. Our average Sunday attendance throughout the year is about 300. This number rises to 500-600 for Christmas and Easter and drops to lows of 250 or so in the summer. We offer two worship experiences each Sunday at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. Our worship style is traditional and liturgical. There is a strong music program with an adult choir, a children's choir, bell ringers, a brass group, a woodwind group, and a contemporary ensemble (guitars). These musicians are all members of the congregation and volunteers. Only the Music Director receives compensation.

There are two full-time called church workers on staff. A deaconess who serves primarily with youth and education ministries, and myself, the ordained pastor.

Christian education is a primary focus. We offer Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. There are classes for all ages, including two or three adult classes. Typically, sixty to eighty adults attend each Sunday. There is a mid-week school of religion on Wednesday evenings offering classes for adults and children (grades five to eight, preparatory for the Rite of Confirmation). Also, several Bible study groups meet each week at the church, or in homes. One small group meet at a doughnut shop early before work.

A ministry of caring reaches toward the less fortunate in church and community. We participate with other Lutheran congregations in this area in the support of a shelter for the



homeless, transitional housing, and food pantry. We also sponsor and work with a refugee family (Montegnard people from the hill country of Vietnam) enabling them to become functional in the American culture.

Our church is downtown, fifty-five years old, with limited parking and no opportunity for additional facilities. Significant growth is hindered by our transiency and distance. Our membership is widely scattered and many drive twenty-five to thirty minutes one way. Consequently, we have sponsored two Lutheran mission churches in outlying suburban communities. One of those churches, established in 1980 now has a membership of about 1,000. The other only began last year and is already serving about 300 members.

The life of our church is vibrant as people of faith reach to find comfort and spiritual nurture in an increasingly secularized and materialistic culture. The Gospel of God's love and forgiveness in Christ speaks with clarity and relevance to persons burdened with overwhelming challenges, stresses and losses. Affluence and upward mobility do not provide everything needed for the journey of life. Personal fulfillment and hope for the future are rooted and grounded in a life of faith, prayer and Christian service. Our church strives

to provide this grounding in faith, remaining faithful to our Lutheran Confessional roots, yet finding ever new ways to communicate the changeless Christ to a changing world.

***Bethany Lutheran Church in
Alexandria, Virginia
by Rev. Karl Schmidt***

It is Sunday morning, and about 225 people are gathered for worship in the high vaulted nave of Bethany Lutheran Church. They look up at the large triangular brick wall with three small triangular stained glass windows, each depicting one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. In front of the wall they see the fifteen-foot cross suspended above the altar.

Who are these people gathered here? What are their lives like? How does religion fit in?

There is Cecil, who spends five or six days a week at his job on Capitol Hill (working on the staff of the U.S. Congress). By the time he gets home late in the evening, his children are asleep. He believes that God has called him to serve through his job, and he also believes that God has called him to serve his family. But he feels that he is neglecting his family and is frustrated because he hasn't been able to balance his job and family lives. Dare he give up his prestigious job in order to spend more time being husband and father?

Near the front is Phyllis, a widow and a lifetime Lutheran. She has a confident faith in the Lord, and it shows in her calmness, her joy, her concern for others. If you need a listening ear, Phyllis always has one!

Sitting toward the back is Betty, a high school sophomore whose face and posture suggest

that she is carrying the whole world on her shoulders. She was abused for several years. She has no confidence in herself, and still has trouble believing that God or anyone else cares about her. But something keeps bringing her here: she seems to sense that this place, with God and God's people, is where she can find relief from her inner pain.

Ted and Connie sit next to the side aisle. They have been married about five months. Each of them grew up in a church (in different cities—and neither one in this church). At college each of them fell away from church and adopted the non-religious lifestyle of the majority of their fellow students. It was in college that they met and fell in love. In preparing for their wedding, they came to realize that they needed, and wanted, God's blessing on their marriage. The pastor who officiated at their wedding had several sessions with them during the months prior to the wedding. In those conversations about marriage, he included the need for spiritual nurture through the Word of God and the

need for them to be involved in the community of God's people. So they are here each Sunday, together reconnecting with their childhood faith and seeking to apply it to their adult lives.

There are as many stories as people. These 225 persons range in age from two weeks to ninety-three years. Some are poor, several are wealthy, most are middle class. Some dropped out of high school, some have graduate degrees, most are college graduates. They come from all across the United States and from several other countries. Both political parties are represented. But there is a surprising unity among them. In varying degrees they all love the Lord, trust the Lutheran witness of the Gospel, believe that they are called to care for one another and to reach out to help others—all of this in response to Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose for all, and through whom they will be together in eternity. They are here this morning to be touched by Him—the touch of new life, peace, and strength for whatever this week will bring.

Further Reading on Religion in the United States

Selected Books and Articles

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Selected Web Sites

American Studies Web: Philosophy and Religion

This link leads to Georgetown University's detailed meta-index of useful links for American Studies students.

<http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/philos.html>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This web site introduces the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and their congregations. It also gives details of upcoming events and resources.

<http://www.elca.org>

Islamic Resources Server

The Islamic Resources Server provides information about Islamic beliefs, resources, community events, businesses, and organization. Also includes announcements of conferences, other guides to Islam on the Internet and computing resources.

<http://sparc.latif.com>

Pluralism Project

Developed by Diana L. Eck at Harvard University, this web site supports the study and documentation of the growing religious diversity of the United States, with a special view to its new immigrant communities. This project is studying the radical changes that have taken place in the American religious landscape over the last thirty years.

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralism>

The Religious Society of Friends

The Society of Friends web site gives, among other things, detailed information on their religious background, a number of Quaker organizations and their meetings as well as on writings on or about historical and contemporaneous friends.

<http://www.quaker.org>

Catholic Online

Catholic Online provides current and historic information on the U.S. and international Catholic Church.

<http://www.catholic.org>

Palo Alto Orthodox Jewish Resources

Operated by a team of volunteers, these pages reflect on the religious life of Palo Alto Orthodox Minyan in Palo Alto, California. Historical background information, a schedule of services, and a calendar of events are some of the items accessible from this web site.

<http://www.jewish.org>

Voices in Education

America's economic, national and international security demand quality education. The size and diversity of the country's educational system, however, make the effort toward world-class education for all a continually challenging and often controversial endeavor. What follows is a sampling of recent commentary from a variety of sources.

President William J. Clinton

[W]e will never get to our one America in the twenty-first century unless we have both equality and excellence in educational opportunity. We have to give every American access to the world's best schools, best teachers, best education. And that means we have to have high standards, high expectations and high levels of accountability from all of us who were involved in it. [. . .]

This year, on the International Math and Science Tests given to fourth and eighth graders, for the first time since we began a national effort to improve our schools over a decade ago, our fourth graders—not all of them, but a representative sample, representative of race, region, [and] income—scored way above the national average in math and science—disproving the notion that we cannot achieve international excellence in education.

Excerpted from the President's address to the National Association of Black Journalists. Chicago, Illinois: July 17, 1997.

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

[S]tudents' proficiency in science and math is up about one grade level compared to what it was a decade ago. One reason we have been behind

countries such as Japan is because that nation's public schools always have put extremely heavy emphasis on science and math. We still have a long way to go.

Also, I don't think we can discount the diversity factor we have in this country. We're a nation of many cultures, creeds and influences. And what seems important among one group or location may not be a priority elsewhere. In countries such as Japan, where there is little diversity in the culture, it is easier to motivate students toward common goals.

Excerpted from "Raising the Standards." *The American Legion Magazine* (April 1997): 60.

Gerald W. Bracey

The biggest threat to the American educational system may come not from within our schools but from the depth of our divisions over what exactly they should accomplish and how best to get them to accomplish it. And our divisions will not be healed as long as we ignore the history of the accomplishments that have already been made. We should begin improving our schools by appreciating how well they have, in most places and at most times, done so far. [. . . U]ntil after World War II, it was assumed that no more than twenty percent of American youth could handle a college curriculum at all. Now sixty-two percent of all high school graduates enroll in college the following fall.

Gerald W. Bracey is author of *Setting the Record Straight: Responses to Misconceptions About Public Education in the United States*. His statement was excerpted from "What Happened to America's Public Schools?" *American Heritage* (November 1997): 52.

Peter Schrag

Mixed reports don't make for good headlines, and qualified good news undermines the sense of crisis essential both to liberal demands for more money and to conservative arguments that only vouchers and other radical solutions will do. High school completion rates—now roughly ninety percent—and college graduation rates are the highest in history. One in four adult Americans has at least a bachelor's degree—the highest percentage in the world (and the percentage keeps getting higher). A larger percentage of twenty-two-year-olds receive degrees in math, science, or engineering in the United States than in any of the nation's major economic competitors. [. . .] Because of reforms instituted in the 1980s, more American high school students than ever before are taking four years of English and at least three years of math and science. [. . .] A growing number of people, in the name of world-class standards, would abandon, through vouchers, privatization and other means, the idea of the common school altogether. Before we do that, we'd better be sure that things are really as bad as we assume. The dumbest thing we could do is scrap what we're doing right.

Peter Schrag is the author of *Paradise Lost: The California Experience and the American Future*. His opinion was excerpted from "The Near-Myth of Our Failing Schools." *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 1997): 72.

Gary R. Galluzzo

The privilege for parents to choose their child's education is probably an inevitability in the not-too-distant future. [. . .] Certainly, schools supported by vouchers or charter schools provide opportunities to explore alternative arrangements,

which are sorely needed on the education landscape. The idea of choice also provides options beyond selecting the school, and they compel me to wonder where the choosing stops.

[. . .] If I can choose the school, I should be able to choose the curriculum the school offers. [. . .] If parents can choose the school, can they choose the teachers with whom their children will study? And if they find that they don't like one or two teachers, can they choose different ones in October? [. . .] If choice is our future, then what is it that makes our nation or any state in the Union a commonwealth? What will bind us together other than the pursuit of choice? [. . .] What happens when individual, ideological pursuit is the game, and our children are the pieces we move about? [. . .]

Choice will only create a new set of problems to solve in a new arena, and it too will be as tyrannical as the current monopoly on compulsory education without choice, just in different ways.

Gary R. Galluzzo is dean of the Graduate School of Education, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. His comment was excerpted from *The Washington Post* (Nov. 17, 1997): A23.

Stephen J. Trachtenberg

If, as Americans, we are now part of an international economy [. . .] and if that international economy values most of all the literate, self-driven worker who, seated at a computer console of some kind, continuously monitors the work processes in which he or she takes part [. . .] then the schooling that encourages participation and initiative rather than rote learning is also the schooling that helps each of us and all of us to survive economically.

Stephen J. Trachtenberg is President of George Washington University, Washington, D.C. This extract was excerpted from an address to The Secretary's Open Forum of the U.S. Department of State, Nov. 3, 1997.

Steve Wulf

What makes a good school? There are no stock answers, like wardrobe or testing or size. But there are some universal truths. A good school is a community of parents, teachers and students. A good school, like a good class, is run by someone with vision, passion and compassion. A good school has teachers who still enjoy the challenge, no matter what their age or experience. A good school prepares its students not just for [standardized aptitude tests] but also for the world out there.

Steve Wulf is a *Time Magazine* senior writer. His statement was excerpted from "How to Teach Our Children Well." *Time* (Oct. 27, 1997): 64.

Jeffrey R. Young

New technologies could take over many of the instructional duties that now define professors' jobs, according to faculty members who are peering into the future. Some of them are alarmed by what they see, while others are encouraged.

Among the latter are faculty members—joined by some administrators—who expect that teaching will become more efficient, and that students will benefit, as parts of the professor's job are taken over by multimedia software, recorded lectures and other high-tech tools.

Professors could end up having more time to do the things they do best, these people suggest.

Others—even some faculty members who use technology in their classrooms already—worry that professors will be left on the sidelines. Publishing companies and brand-name universities, they fear, could team up with a handful of well-known scholars to market lectures, and even entire courses on CD-ROMs and World Wide Web sites. The quality of education, these critics say, could erode [. . .] "Doing away with human contact would be disastrous," says Mary Burgan, general secretary of the American Association of University Professors. She says she's afraid administrators see technology as "a cheap, quick fix" for complex problems in higher education.

Jeffrey R. Young writes for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. His opinion was excerpted from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* web site at <http://www.chronicle.com/colloquy/97/unbundle/background.htm>

Jason Chervokas & Tom Watson

The [Inter]Net is both helping and changing the home-schooling movement in America. [Home schooling is the educational alternative in which parents/guardians assume the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Recent figures show that between 750,000 and one million school-age children are being educated at home.] Because it makes educational resources more easily available, the Net dramatically increases the access to information for students learning at home. But because it makes community-building easy, the Net is helping to foster communities of

home-schooling families that could go a long way toward building a consensus among this very disparate group on curriculums and teaching techniques.

In short, these communities are building alternative school systems and facing and solving the problems of community schooling not from a government mandate, top down, but from the ground up. [. . .]

Whether or not home schooling is a good idea remains a topic of intense political and social dispute. Is it better for students to be taught in a socially uncontrolled environment according to a government-mandated curriculum? Or is it better for students to be educated at home or in small communities of like-minded, nonprofessional educators?

Jason Cervokas and Tom Watson write for *Cyber Times*. Their statement was excerpted from "Internet is Nurturing Home Schooling." *The New York Times on the Web* (Sept. 5, 1997): <http://www.nytimes.com>

Marianne Means

Vouchers raise enormous constitutional questions about the potential violation of our traditional separation of church and state. They reduce rather than enhance accountability since unlike public schools, private institutions are free to pick students and expel them at will, [and they] are subject to only minimal public scrutiny and have no obligation to pluralism, financial diversity, democratic control or even standard academic [levels . . .].

[T]here are good public schools all over the country in middle- and high-income neighbor-

hoods. A voucher-driven federal raid on scarce school funds would be a terrible thing. Meanwhile, inadequate public schools would be further weakened as the best students escaped to private entities and left only the poorest, most troubled students behind.

Marianne Means writes for Hearst Newspapers. This opinion was excerpted from "The Wrong Choice About Schools." *The Orlando Sentinel* (Aug. 25, 1997): A-11.

Richard Lacayo

Of the fifty-two million schoolchildren in America, fewer than eight million attend private or parochial schools. Of those, fewer than 20,000 are using vouchers to help cover their tuition. And only two cities, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Cleveland, Ohio, use tax dollars to supply the vouchers. [. . .]

Supporters [of vouchers] ask why the poor should not have the same chance at private schools as the better-off. Though it's too soon to tell whether most voucher-supported students perform better academically in a private school, no one needs a study to show that most private schools are safer and more orderly. For inner-city parents, vouchers can represent salvation from a system in perpetual disrepair, even if they offer just a fraction of poor children a way into the lifeboat of private schooling.

Richard Lacayo is a *Time Magazine* senior writer. His statement was excerpted from "They'll Vouch for That." *Time* (Oct. 27, 1997): 73.

"Voices in Education" was compiled by Charlotte Astor, who is a *U.S. Society & Values* editor.

Grading U.S. Education

by William Peters

In the last twenty-five years, there has been a steady decline in the scores of U.S. students on standardized tests used to measure college and university applicants. Some observers see in this another indicator of the failure of U.S. education.

Not so, argues Gerald Bracey, a leading scholar of U.S. education. Bracey points out that a much larger percentage of total U.S. secondary school students is now taking these tests. Twenty-five years ago, the group tested represented the top quarter of U.S. secondary school students. Today, more than sixty percent of secondary school students go on to college or university the following academic year. Most of these students are taking these tests. We are testing a much broader range of our students, so of course the average score has gone down.

Does this mean that U.S. colleges and universities are now accepting students who have no place in these institutions? No. Facile assumptions that the students of twenty-five years ago represented something of an educational golden era are not borne out by standardized graduate school admission tests, by employer experience or by educational success rates, Bracey says. Bracey and other analysts argue that the examples above demonstrate both the simplistic assumptions which have led many to conclude that U.S. education is in deep trouble, and the kind of more detailed analysis which is required to fully understand the current situation.

There are pockets of real trouble, and they get a lot of visibility. Some schools in poor districts of major cities are seriously failing their students and communities. The context of unemployment, family disintegration, community decline and violence is having an undeniable

and destructive impact on community schools. In some rural districts, rapid technological and economic change has translated to rapid demographic change, in turn challenging the traditional education funding sources for schools in these areas.

Society's expectations of whom we educate are also changing. In 1950s America, society accepted an educational structure in which fewer than half of total students earned even a secondary school diploma. Our labor market, with lots of pent-up demand for industrial production, had an abundance of opportunities for semi-skilled labor. Today's employment picture is vastly different, and so are the educational needs and expectations of students and communities.

In addition, our expectations of who we educate are continuing to change. During the last fifteen years, well over half of the increase in educational spending has been directed at programs of "special education" for students whose physical, mental and emotional condition requires particular—often extra cost—support. These programs are very much in accord with the U.S. commitment to equal opportunity for all its citizens, but fulfillment of this commitment has come with a significant cost.

Fifty years ago, most primary and secondary [school] students in the U.S. spoke sufficient English to handle their basic educational needs. Today, it is routine that twenty-five percent of students enrolled in schools in some of our largest states (California, Texas, New York) do not speak sufficient English to handle basic instructional processes. In the schools of Los Angeles and some other large cities, the number of non-English speaking students approaches one half.

In addition, the range of first languages in some school districts is extraordinary. In one Washington, D.C. suburban school system, students come into the schools speaking some eighty-one languages. All of these students are entitled by law to public education. For these students, schools must provide not only the standard curriculum appropriate to their grade level, but also instruction in English which will enable them to function in those regular classes. And outside of the language needs, there are the diverse cultural backgrounds of these students and their parents. All of this constitutes a serious challenge to a healthy interaction between the schools, the students and their parents. Yet educators have long recognized that this interaction is one of the key factors needed for successful educational outcomes.

The above is not a litany of excuses for failing schools. But if we are to make the U.S. educational structure even more effective, as we must do, Bracey and others say, we have to view and understand the structure in its complexity. Our picture must acknowledge areas of difficulty and areas of achievement. And there are very substantial areas of achievement.

In the late 1940s, educators and policy makers assumed that no more than twenty percent of the populace could appropriately participate in higher education. Today, almost two-thirds of graduating secondary school students go directly on to college, and participation in adult and continuing education is continuously expanding.

More students are being educated to a higher level. Many schools are coping with an incredibly expanding knowledge base in creative and responsive ways. We should not despair, for instance, if we do not yet know exactly

how to make the most appropriate use of personal computers in our educational institutions. It helps to keep things in perspective. IBM introduced their PC in the early 1980s. It takes time to train to new technologies, and we are only now coming into a time when teachers know computers as well as do most of their students.

Schools in this country do present both good and bad news, and we must acknowledge both. But the Clinton administration argues that our efforts to correct the deficiencies must not imperil the comprehensive public education system which has been so vital a player in the shaping of our nation. Understanding that we are coping with extraordinary challenges with some real success should reinforce our willingness to provide the intellectual and economic resources to correct areas of deficit, and take advantage of the opportunities of technology to produce an education structure for all citizens which the U.S. needs and deserves.

William Peters is a *U.S. Society & Values* editor.

U.S. Higher Education in the Postwar Era: Expansion and Growth

by Theodore Marchese

[Social mobility—the intrinsic opportunity Americans possess to advance in their lives—is an underlying value in society. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more evident than in terms of the acquisition of knowledge. This snapshot, by a veteran observer, of postsecondary education in the second half of the twentieth century, clearly reflects its evolution and expansion, as well as the manner in which institutions like colleges and universities swiftly respond and adapt to changing social and economic needs.]

Roughly a half-century ago, at the beginning of the post-World War II era, the United States already claimed a well-developed system of higher education, with 1.5 million students enrolled on some 1,700 campuses across the country. It was a system with its own history. It encompassed universities that combined, under one roof, English-style undergraduate colleges with German-style graduate and research faculties. It had ended the hegemony of the classics by admitting practical studies such as agriculture and engineering to the curriculum in the 1860s, and coursework in business, health, and numerous other fields during the first four decades of this century. It had invented the course and credit-hour system in the 1890s as a means of encouraging transfer between institutions, and accrediting associations—run by the colleges themselves—to assure quality. And by the early decades of this century, the system had developed faculties to rival in intellect the best in the older European universities.

It should be noted that like their older counterparts, the newer American universities, even in 1945, were elitist, male, white and relatively aloof from society. Yet however uneven or parochial they were, these were the institutions that had educated for the nation the likes of Presidents Thomas Jefferson, John and John

Quincy Adams, Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt; poet Walt Whitman and novelist Henry James; pioneer education theoretician John Dewey and social activist Jane Addams; and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of the African American civil rights movement.

In the five decades since World War II, America rebuilt and greatly expanded participation in its system of higher education, by a stunning factor of ten, in an effort to make educational opportunity more open and accessible, fairer and more relevant. Government and industry came to see higher education as an investment in an educated workforce that would propel the nation to new levels of economic well-being and national security. Individuals came to see higher education as an indispensable investment in their own futures, as a route to social mobility and personal fulfillment. The combined result was a system that in fifty years ballooned from 1.5 to 15 million students, resulting in the world's first example of "mass" higher education. In the process, to accommodate this great change in scale, entirely new ways had to be found to govern colleges, finance campuses and students, and assure quality and accountability.

Postwar Foundations

Three events around the end of World War II set the stage for this growth. In 1944, the U.S. Government enacted the G.I. [Government Issue] Bill, which promised the nation's military men and women that at war's end, Washington would pay for them to attend college or a trade school. Millions of returning veterans, few of whom would have otherwise so aspired, chose to pursue higher education, flooding enrollments well into the 1950s. These mature, motivated young adults did well on campus, graduated into a host of occupations and professions,

and became as such a model of success that the very idea of college attendance, and its benefits, took on new salience for Americans.

The second milestone development came in 1947. Noting the impressive academic achievements of the veterans already enrolled, a presidentially appointed commission proposed to President Harry S Truman the startling recommendation that not one-tenth but fully one-third of all youth should attend college, and that it would be in the nation's best economic and social interests to provide the necessary opportunities. In the years just after the war, therefore, the experiential and conceptual underpinnings for expansion were set firmly in place.

The third significant item was a widely-read report issued in 1945 by Vannevar Bush, head of the respected U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development. Bush, a physicist and dean at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, had mobilized wartime efforts to bring to battle radar, penicillin and a host of new weapons systems—most notably the atomic bomb. Acknowledging that so many of these successes derived from a foundation of basic research, Bush created the vision of science, in his words, as an “endless frontier” for the nation, investment in which would bring untold dividends in national security and social advancement.

Out of the war effort came a whole generation of top scientists committed to national security work, men (and some women) who moved back and forth between government service, national laboratories and the campus. In 1950, the U.S. Congress chartered the National Science Foundation and charged it with promoting research and development and the education of scientists. Fed by Cold War fears, U.S. Government-sponsored university research soon became quite a significant venture, with federal

expenditures exceeding \$1 billion by 1950. In subsequent years, public and private expenditures for university-based contract research—peer reviewed and competitively awarded, as Vannevar Bush had urged—rose to \$21 billion by 1996, doubtless with many benefits to the United States, but also to the great advancement of science itself within the university, and to the roughly one hundred institutions of higher learning that garnered ninety-five percent of these federal funds.

The Booming Sixties

In the 1960s, the higher education system underwent intense expansion and development. The immediate cause was the arrival at college doors of the “baby boom” generation—the heightened numbers of eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds born in the aftermath of World War II. These young men and women, often the sons and daughters of G.I. Bill beneficiaries, had lofty educational aspirations. As a result, between 1960 and 1970, college enrollments jumped from 3.6 to 8 million students, with aggregate expenditures rising from \$5.8 to \$21.5 billion. To accommodate this enrollment rise, existing universities and four-year colleges grew in size, helped by federal construction loans and high capital investment by the sponsoring states.

The most noteworthy development of the decade, however, was the emergence of a distinctive new institutional form, the comprehensive community college. “Junior” colleges, offering the first two years of instruction for students intending to transfer to baccalaureate (four-year) institutions, had been a fixture since the early 1900s. In the early 1960s, a new vision for such an institution—explicit community-relatedness, open-door admissions, and high status

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for vocational-technical studies—emerged. Soon, every community wanted its own “democracy’s college,” as community colleges came to be known. In the course of the decade, new community colleges opened for business at the rate of one per week—a total of 500 in ten years. Enrollments soared from 453,000 students to 2.2 million. Equally important was the fact that although two-thirds of the earlier enrollments were in programs designed for transfer to a four-year program, by the 1970s, eighty percent of all community college students were in shorter-term programs—preparing to be engineering technicians, health care workers, law enforcement officers, among dozens of occupations. If a community needed trained workers for a new plant, adult basic education, certificate programs for day-care workers, or English-language training for recent immigrants, its community college was there to respond.

The great expansion of existing institutions, combined with the creation of new ones, raised needs at the state level for new mechanisms of planning, governance and finance. As a result, in the 1960s, many states created high-level boards to govern or coordinate their burgeoning systems, with the role of overseeing a planned growth of public-sector higher education. A notable and influential model was California’s 1960 Master Plan, designed by Clark Kerr [president emeritus, University of California]. It specified that the top twelve percent of all California secondary school graduates would be guaranteed admission to the prestigious University of California, which grew or built nine campuses statewide to accommodate these numbers. The plan also stipulated that the top thirty percent would be guaranteed admission to a campus of the California State University, which eventually grew to twenty-two campuses; and that every secondary school graduate would be guaranteed enrollment at a local community

college (106 of which were eventually developed). To assure access for all students, public-college fees were to be kept as low as possible, with the state funding most of the costs of four-year university attendance. Community colleges, with their more frugal budgets, were financed one-third by the state, one-third by the sponsoring community and one-third from student fees.

Students and Markets

Through the mid-1940s, Washington’s role in higher education was restricted mostly to data gathering. Education at all levels, many believed, was a matter reserved to the states by the Constitution. Federal support would bring unwanted “intrusion” if not “control.” But after World War II, with national security interests coming to the foreground, support for university-level research increased. In the late 1950s, after the Soviet Union launched its Sputnik space probe, national defense was invoked as a reason to support the training of engineers, scientists, foreign-language specialists and various building programs.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a consensus emerged that special-purpose federal programs should be curtailed in favor of federal aid to students themselves, in support of the national commitment to equality of access without regard to accidents of birth. The Higher Education Act of 1965 and supplementary Education Amendments of 1972 created today’s system of student financial aid. It combines grants, work opportunities and loans to help full-time students meet the tuition and living costs of college attendance.

Significantly, the amount of aid for which a student qualifies was determined both by family income and the costs of the college of the student’s choice. In other words, a young man

or woman from a lower-income household might receive \$2,000 to attend a public institution (a state university), and \$10,000 to enroll in a private institution. The aim of this provision was to "level the playing field" between public and private higher education and provide every student with access both to the system in general and specifically to the college of one's choice. Additional broadening enactments in the late 1960s and 1970s forbade any college receiving U.S. Government allocations to discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin or handicap.

The 1972 amendments went one step further to place a distinctive mark on American higher education. It awarded financial aid to the student, not the institution. In effect, all colleges, public or private, would have to compete for their enrollments. The hope was that a new, student-driven "market" for higher education services would compel schools to focus more on student needs. As enrollment growth continued through the 1970s, the effects of this change were initially small. But in the 1980s, as the size of the college-age population began to decline (the beginning of the post-baby-boom era), all types of colleges had to learn how to market themselves, simply to maintain their enrollments. In the years that followed, through today, highly-qualified students might receive literally hundreds of recruitment contacts when enrollment season begins, and even earlier.

Over time, then, the "postsecondary" marketplace was remade. A relative handful of prestigious universities and colleges, many of them private, assumed commanding niches that allowed them to admit just a small fraction (ten to twenty percent) of the able students applying. In another test of this resulting stratification, the top thirty colleges in the United States today enroll eighty percent of the minority students in

the country with standard aptitude test scores of 1,200 or above (out of a possible 1,600). At the opposite end of the market, marked by lower tuitions and near-open-door admission, a score of aggressive, entrepreneurial universities have sprung up. The newest, the University of Phoenix, Arizona, enrolls an astonishing total of 40,000 students at some two dozen sites across the American West.

Taking Stock

To foreign visitors, a remarkable feature of American higher education is the degree to which it is market-driven and free of central direction. Indeed, all institutions, large or small, public or private, compete with one another for faculty and administrative talent, research and foundation grants, legislative appropriations and alumni support, and overall public approbation and approval. In addition, larger institutions compete with one another through high-visibility athletic programs.

At the same time, U.S. institutions tend to be relatively dynamic and responsive to economic and social changes, at least as reflected by markets. Even without centralized manpower training, the supply and demand for such trained professionals as engineers, physicians and educators has remained roughly in balance. On the disappointing side, most observers sense that an enhanced responsiveness to students hasn't translated into fundamental improvements in the quality of undergraduate education itself. Nor will markets by themselves always reward a college's attention to deeper values, such as a broad-based curriculum or foreign language study.

That said, the system's overall record of accomplishment remains impressive. If an original goal was to provide equal access, it has been substan-

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tially achieved. Women, one-fourth of all enrollments in 1950, represent fifty-five percent of the student population at present. Today's enrollment of African-Americans (ten percent), Hispanic-Americans (seven percent), Asian-Americans (six percent), and Native Americans (one percent) approaches their percentages in the general population. Overall, seventy-seven percent of all eighteen-year-olds finish high school, and two-thirds of this group proceed to college.

Additionally, among two- and four-year public campuses, adult part-time enrollments are now in the millions and account for over forty percent of total enrollments. On many campuses, the median age is twenty-five to thirty. Today, thanks in part to degree-completion programs for people in their thirties and forties, fully a fourth of the U.S. adult population holds a college degree.

Perspectives

Visitors to these shores notice several other distinctive aspects of U.S. higher education. One is its sheer scale and cost. Fifteen million students attend some 3,700 postsecondary institutions, ranging from a few hundred students to 50,000 at state universities in Ohio and Minnesota. Aggregate expenditures for higher education now exceed \$200 billion a year—a mind-boggling 2.4 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), compared, for example, with the 0.9 percent of GNP [gross national product]* expended in the United Kingdom. Of the \$200

billion, about half represents the allocation of public money, the other half income from tuition and fees, sale of services, endowments, and voluntary giving (this last category alone totaled \$14 billion in 1995-96). A typical large research university (with a teaching hospital attached) has an annual operating budget of \$2.5 billion, enrolls 35,000 students, employs 4,000 faculty members and 10,000 support staff, raises \$150 million a year from private donors and boasts an endowment of over \$1 billion. The average public four-year campus charges \$3,000 a year in tuition and the average private college charges \$13,000 a year—with roughly half the students at each type of institution receiving financial aid.

The huge tuition differential between public and independent higher education particularly puzzles foreign visitors. How can the more expensive private sector institution survive? The tuition difference arises, of course, because the private college does not enjoy direct public support. In fact, however, to the student from a middle- or low-income family, the tuition differential may all but disappear through financial aid (with, perhaps, a larger loan to repay upon graduation). Still, the bargain of public higher education, and its availability in virtually every community, has brought to it most of the enrollment gains of the past decades: public colleges enrolled half of all students in 1945, and seventy-eight percent today.

Is the private sector doomed? Not at all. Private colleges prosper by offering distinctive curricula, more inviting campus environments, and often the prestige of their degrees. Many continue their appeal to founding constituencies, religious or ethnic. Private higher education tends to be more innovative, entrepreneurial and values-driven, and serves as a creative balance to state-controlled higher education.

* The net market value of the final goods and services produced by a nation's economy during a specific period is referred to by different terms for the British and U.S. economies. While for the UK it is referred to as GNP (gross national product), it is called GDP (gross domestic product) for the U.S. economy.

Another uncommon feature of the American college, both private and public, is the character of undergraduate studies. In the course of four years of study, the average student will devote about a third of the time to studies in a "major" (economics, physics, business and so on), one third to elective and supporting courses, and—mostly in the first two years—one-third to general education. The last of these represents the university's historic commitment to produce graduates who will study broadly; appreciate science, philosophy and the arts; learn the habits of democracy; and develop higher abilities to write, find and use information, think critically and work with others.

Since much of a college's general education program is prescribed for the student, it inevitably raises questions of values. Faculties engage in endless debate as to what should be taught and learned. Some hold out for a canon of Western classics. Others argue for the inclusion of multicultural topics and voices. All the while, with the flood of new, often less-well-prepared entrants into college and increased student job-mindedness, it becomes more of a challenge for schools to maintain student (and sometimes faculty) enthusiasm for a broad base of electives. And so various innovations have been employed in teaching, curricula and technology to engage students and help them succeed.

Statistically, as the century winds down, U.S. institutions of higher learning annually award about 540,000 associate (two-year) degrees, 1.1 million bachelor's (four-year) degrees, 400,000 master's degrees, 76,000 professional degrees (in law, medicine, and other fields) and 45,000 doctorates. Among Ph.D.s, the biological and physical sciences, mathematics and engineering predominate: at leading universities, as many as fifty percent of candidates for those degrees are from outside the United States. Within graduate

schools overall, the growth area is at the master's level. A constant heightening of labor-market and student expectations has led to significant increases in master's-level studies in business, education and the health professions.

Across all levels of American higher education, the 1990s have witnessed an explosion in deployment of information technologies. Most campuses, and indeed several entire state systems, are "wired up." Entire libraries are on-line. Technology expenditures totaled \$16 billion in the 1980s, and the figure is expected to have doubled in this decade. On dozens of campuses, every student and faculty member now has his or her own computer (and often a web page). In thirty-five percent of all classes, professors and students communicate by electronic mail. The effects of all this on modes of instruction and on the character of student and faculty work are being intensely scrutinized.

One final development is a consequence of this technological revolution: a huge growth in distance education. Ninety percent of all U.S. institutions with enrollments of 10,000 or more now offer courses on-line. Coming on-line, too, are a number of brand new "virtual" universities, the best-known of which, the Western Governors University, [began] operations across eleven states in January 1998. Technology, even as it remakes the classroom, seems poised to remake the postsecondary marketplace, too.

Theodore J. Marchese is vice president of the American Association for Higher Education and executive editor of *Change* magazine.

The Essence of the Educated Person

by David Denby

[The definition of an educated person and the appropriate college curriculum to produce that person have been the subject of ongoing debate in the United States since the 1960s. Until that time, few questioned the notion that the study of the liberal arts and the classic works of Western civilization were the appropriate focus. But with a new consciousness of minorities, changing perceptions of the role of women, and the economic demands of the information age, many educational institutions across the United States are seeking to redefine, through their curricula, the definition of what it means to be truly educated. Columbia University, a prestigious American institution, had for many years offered a curriculum embodying the classic liberal education. David Denby, a graduate of Columbia, recently returned there to spend a year experiencing the school's revised liberal arts curriculum. What follows is an eloquent statement of the value of a liberal arts education.]

When we speak about an educated person, we refer to someone with a reading knowledge of Homer, Plato, the Bible—Old and New Testaments—and Shakespeare. These are absolutely essential to the Western tradition, as would be St. Augustine, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Newtonian physics and Darwinian biology. That would be the minimum. And, of course, from the United States perspective, the Federalist Papers and the Constitution—the writings of the Founding Fathers—would demand inclusion. Conservatives would embrace all of this as well, and would add Adam Smith and Frederick Hayek to the list of required readings. I would agree with that.

Taken as a whole, this body of work conveys both a sense of what a human being is and is capable of—in spiritual and ethical dimen-

sions—and also a definition of what a civil society ideally can be. At the same time, it reflects what the weaknesses and possible dangers to that civil society are. Moreover, these writings provide certain notions of what a self is—in a secular and spiritual sense. What a citizen is and what his or her duties and obligations are. And what the society's obligations are to its citizens. Those concepts are all central to what we are. That is the traditional view, and indeed, it is still absolutely necessary today.

To round out the essence of an educated person, we must include a knowledge of what the Americas were before the Europeans arrived, the contributions to American civilization from Latin America, the central traditions of black literature and intellectual life. The history of slavery, black emancipation, the civil rights movement—the writings of W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass and some contemporary contributions—all would be vital.

It is interesting and encouraging to me that when I talk to younger people about corporate careers, I am getting the sense that corporations want people of character. It is not just that you have to have certain technical skills. Much of that is job-specific, and can be learned very quickly if you have the readiness and the learning skills. But they want people of character, who can present themselves, make decisions, manage and be managed. All of the knowledge I have mentioned above forms character, and I don't see it becoming any less relevant as our society becomes more specialized and hi-tech. Anyone can punch numbers into a computer. But to run any kind of large organization, you need a much broader perspective. So when we speak about the training of an elite, and what employers are looking for in candi-

dates for positions of responsibility, the tradition of the educated person is as essential as it ever was.

They cannot always define it. We are talking about judgment, character, sensibility— notions that by their very nature are hard to quantify. Ultimately, it simply comes down to someone steeped in the tradition of the educated person.

recently immersed in the Western canon at Columbia University, a course of study he first took three decades earlier as an undergraduate at the college.

David Denby is film critic of *New York* magazine. He is the author of *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf, and Other Indestructible Writers of the Western World*. This book represents an account of a year spent

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