

A Global Resurgence of Religion?

by
Assaf Moghadam

Paper No. 03-03

August 2003

Contact:

Assaf Moghadam holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD) degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he is slated to begin his doctoral studies in international relations in the spring of 2004. In 2002-2003, he has been a consultant for the Weatherhead Initiative project, "Religion in Global Politics."

assafm@hotmail.com

Written as part of the third Weatherhead Initiative project, "Religion in Global Politics."

The author would like to thank James Clem, Monica Duffy Toft, Samuel Huntington, David Little, Pippa Norris, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Shah, and Jessica Stern for their helpful ideas and comments on this project.

Published by the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.
Copyright by the author.

The author bears sole responsibility for this paper. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the WCFIA or Harvard University.

Publications Chair, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs

Robert Paarlberg

Publications Manager, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs

Amanda Pearson

Submission procedures: Weatherhead Center affiliates are encouraged to submit papers to the Working Paper Series. Manuscripts are assessed on the basis of their scholarly qualities—the extent of original research, the rigor of the analysis, the significance of the conclusions—as well as their relevance to contemporary issues in international affairs. Manuscripts should range between 25 and 80 double-spaced pages and must include an abstract of no more than 150 words. We request that each paper be submitted in both electronic format and a hard copy. The electronic format should be on a disk in a standard word processing application (WordPerfect or Microsoft Word preferred) or as an email attachment.

Please submit hard copies and disks to Amanda Pearson, Box #10, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1033 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, and address all email attachments to apearson@wcfia.harvard.edu.

Orders: Working Papers are available for \$7.00 each, plus \$1.00 for shipping and handling, from the Publications Office, 1033 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

**WEATHERHEAD CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
1033 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138
TEL: 617-495-4420
Fax: 617-495-8292
www.wcfia.harvard.edu**

ABSTRACT

In recent years and decades, a widespread assumption that the world is experiencing a global rise of religion has persisted. Yet, the hypothesis of a "global resurgence of religion" has not been tested by means of empirical evidence. This study uses statistical time series and cross-country data to test the hypothesis of "a global religious resurgence," and to assess its scope.

To address this question, the study examines global trends in religious adherence, and measures change of religious behavior and values over time in a multitude of countries spanning across six continents. The study identifies seven criteria by which the degree of religiosity among a certain population can be measured, using time-series and cross-country data. The study also examines other global religious trends, including a comparative overview over the relationship between religion and state in most countries, scanning variables such as the performance of religious parties in elections; preferential treatment of religions; countries with an official state religion; references to religion in constitutions; and countries under Sharia law.

The study concludes that there is ample evidence that the argument of a "global resurgence of religion" can largely be sustained, with the notable exception to this trend being the post-industrial countries—where the trend towards secularization itself, however, is far from consistent.

Introduction

In recent years, the belief that the onset of modernity leads to a decline in religious belief—a theory known as the secularization thesis—has been challenged by what seems to be a revival in religious adherence and behavior in large parts of the world. Proponents of the belief that religion is resurgent cite several examples as evidence of a religious revival that at first glance seems global in scope, including the dramatic rise of Islam in the Middle East, South East Asia, Central Asia, and elsewhere; the steep increase in the number of Christians in Africa and Latin America; and the wave of religious violence and terrorism.

The purpose of this paper is to test the hypothesis of “religious resurgence” by citing statistical data that goes back as far as 1980. The goal is to examine whether there is indeed a resurgence of religion and to outline its extent. To examine these issues, this study identifies trends both in global religious adherence, as well as in change of religious behavior over time in a number of countries. Statistics on global religious adherence summarize the main variables of change in religious membership among the major religions, namely natural growth and conversion. An examination of global religious adherence can help identify which religions are growing, and which religious can be said to be in decline, when compared to others.

Data on religious adherence alone, however, are no sufficient indicator of the strength of religiosity of members of a particular religious group or country. Hence, the second major part of this report attempts to identify trends in religious behavior and values in various countries, as opposed to the number of religious adherents. In order to gauge the degree of religiosity among a certain population, several indicators of religious behavior and values have been identified, according to which degree in religiosity will be measured and compared. To help identify which regions—and which types of countries—tend to experience a change in religiosity, individual countries that have been examined have been categorized according to regions, as well as according to their status of development.

The study will also provide a comparative overview over the relationship between religion and state in a large number of countries. Several variables will be scanned, including the performance of religious parties in elections; preferential treatment of religions; countries with an official state religion; references to religion in constitutions; and countries under sharia law.

The findings of this study suggest that while in fact a process of religious resurgence affects most states in the world, there are some notable exceptions to this process, as a result of which the religious revival is not truly global in scope.

Trends in Religious Adherence

In attempting to assess religious trends over time, it is useful to divide the task into two. The first task is to conduct an analysis of religious adherence over time. The second task is to attempt to measure change in religiousness over time, i.e. change in both religious values (such as belief in God) and religious behavior (e.g., attendance of religious services). While a change over time in religiousness seems to be a better indicator of whether religion is resurgent or declining in a particular country or region, identifiable data on religious behavior and values over time is most telling when combined with data regarding religious adherence. Hence, the first part of this paper will provide an overview over trends in global religious adherence over time, and will focus in particular on the decade from 1990 to 2000. For the purposes of this paper, global trends in religious adherence are examined by looking at the numerical expansion of adherents of the major religions of the world. The numerical expansion, in turn, is a number composed of both natural population growth, to which the number of conversions into or out of the particular religion is either added or subtracted, depending on the direction of conversion.

The use of statistics involving as large a number as the global population, and as complex a topic as universal religious adherence, is not without problems. The seemingly straightforward categorization of religions into large denominations such as Christians, Muslims, or Jews is a first problem. Certain sub-groups within these larger denominations may not be considered true adherents by many of their supposed coreligionists. Cases in point for Christianity include the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but also the numerically more significant community of Latin American Christians who consider themselves Catholic, but practice other spiritual practices.¹ In 2003, a decision by the Israeli government to help thousands of Ethiopian Falash Mura immigrate to Israel sparked some controversy among Israeli Jews, many of whom consider the Falash Mura Gentiles.² In Islam, many Sunni extremists regard Shi'ite Muslims as

¹ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 86.

² Most members of the Falash Mura officially converted to Christianity following political coercion or natural disasters. Many among them, however, continued to observe certain aspects of Jewish tradition in private. See Dan

heretics, and not as Muslim.³ A second problem inherent in religious statistics is the tendency by some states, as well as some religious bodies, to provide inflated numbers of adherents. A related problem is that Western as well as Muslim societies, for example, tend to claim every citizen as church members or Muslims, respectively. Thirdly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to abandon some religions. In some European countries, for example it is difficult to remove oneself from official registers of the various state churches.⁴ Fourth, a rise in numbers of religious adherents is not necessarily equivalent to resurging religious behavior and values. In this respect, Philip Jenkins reminds us that the growth of Islam in Indonesia, “purportedly the world’s most populous Muslim country,” has primarily been the outcome of political factors. After the 1960s, Jenkins writes, “failure to acknowledge any religion on official identity papers immediately raised suspicions about a person’s possible seditious attitudes, and as a result, millions were now inspired to declare themselves Muslims.” Finally, it should be added that religious statistics should be viewed with particular caution when they are projected into the future, given the problems described above as well as the obvious element of uncertainty with regard to future developments.

The World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE) contains the most complete information on global religious adherence, and in the second edition of the encyclopedia this data is updated to the year 2000, and projected until 2050 (assuming current trends continue). According to the WCE, in the year 2000 Christianity remained the largest religion in the world with roughly 2 billion adherents, or 33% of the global population. That number includes the various affiliations of Christianity, of which Roman Catholicism forms the largest segment (17.5% of the global population in 2000).⁵ Islam and Hinduism are the second and third-largest religions, respectively, based on the number of adherents, with some 1.19 billion adherents (19.6% of the global population) and 800 million adherents (13.4%), respectively in mid-2000. Chinese Folk Religion

Izenberg, “Government Decision on Falash Mura Corrects Historical Injustice – Activist,” *Jerusalem Post*, 21 February 2003, 5A.

³ Examples include the Pakistani-based organization Sipah e Sahaba, and its military wing Lashkar e Jhangvi. For more on these groups, see Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP),” The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), ICT Web site, last accessed 19 March 2003, www.ict.org.il/inter_ter/orgdet.cfm?orgid=57, and “Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan, Terrorist Group of Pakistan,” South Asian Terrorism Portal Web site, last accessed 19 March 2001, www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/Ssp.htm. On Lashkar e Jhangvi, see “In the Spotlight: Lashkar I Jhangvi” Center for Defense Information (CDI) Web site, last accessed 19 March 2003, www.cdi.org/terrorism/lij.cfm.

⁴ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 86.

⁵ For more information on the other Christian affiliations, see the paragraph on Christianity below.

and Buddhism, according to WCE, are the fourth- and fifth-largest religion, with the number of adherents estimated at 385 million (6.4%) and 360 million (5.9%) in mid-2000.⁶

As to the change in religious adherence over time, the World Evangelization Research Center (WERC) has identified several trends that are updated to mid-2002, and projected to 2025.⁷ According to this data, which is confirmed in the WCE, in 2002 Islam is the fastest-growing religion (2.11% growth rate), followed by Sikhism (1.84%) and Hinduism (1.54%). Christianity witnessed a rather low rate of growth in mid-2002 with 1.27%. By the year 2025, according to WERC's projections, the percentage of the world population that adheres to Islam is projected to rise, from 19.9% in 2002, to 22.8% in 2025. The percentage of the global population that adheres to the various streams of Christianity is expected to remain relatively unchanged.

Global Trends in Religious Adherence, 1900 – 2025, by Religions

	Year: 1900	1970	mid-2000	Trend	mid-2002	2025
GLOBAL POPULATION						
Total population	1,619,626,000	3,696,148,000	6,055,049,000	1.22	6,203,789,000	7,823,703,000
GLOBAL POPULATION BY RELIGION						
Christians	558,132,000	1,236,374,000	1,999,564,000	1.27	2,050,616,000	2,616,670,000
Muslims	199,941,000	553,528,000	1,188,243,000	2.11	1,239,029,000	1,784,876,000
Nonreligious	3,024,000	532,096,000	768,159,000	0.80	780,557,000	875,121,000
Hindus	203,003,000	462,598,000	811,336,000	1.54	836,543,000	1,049,231,000
Buddhists	127,077,000	233,424,000	359,982,000	1.04	367,538,000	418,345,000
Atheists	226,000	165,400,000	150,090,000	0.24	150,804,000	159,544,000
New-Religionists	5,910,000	77,762,000	102,356,000	0.94	104,280,000	114,720,000
Ethnoreligionists	117,558,000	160,278,000	228,367,000	1.30	234,341,000	277,247,000
Sikhs	2,962,000	10,618,000	23,258,000	1.84	24,124,000	31,378,000
Jews	12,292,000	14,763,000	14,434,000	0.81	14,670,000	16,053,000

Source: "Status and Trends in Global Mission as Revealed by the Annual Christian Megacensus, AD 1800-AD 2025," World Evangelization Research Center. <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>

⁶ According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, the global population of non-adherents ("nonreligious") is larger than that of adherents to both Buddhism and Chinese Folk Religionists. However, in this paper, the nonreligious population shall not be regarded as a 'religious bloc,' and hence Chinese Folk Religionists and Buddhists are mentioned here as adherents of the world's fourth- and fifth-largest religions, respectively. For the complete statistics on global adherence, see "Global Adherents of the World's Nineteen Major Distinct Religions; With 48 Related Major Religious Blocs, and a Grand Total of some 10,000 distinct and Different Other Religions, Quantified at 7 Points in Time over the Period AD 1900-2050 Assuming Current Trends Continue," in David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). The Table is also available online at the Website of the World Evangelization Research Center, 2001, last accessed 28 March 2003, <http://www.gem-werc.org/gd/wct-1-2.pdf>.

⁷ "Status and trends in global mission as revealed by the annual Christian megacensus, AD 1800 –AD 2025," World Evangelization Research Center (WERC), last accessed 28 March 2003, <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>.

CHRISTIANITY

Today, about a third of the global population are Christians—a percentage that has remained remarkably stable throughout the 20th century. Today, roughly two billion Christians⁸ render Christianity the largest religion in the world. Christianity remains the most universal religion too, as Christians form the majority in two-thirds of the world’s countries.⁹

Roman Catholicism remains the strongest stream within Christianity, accounting for slightly more than half of all Christians in 2002. According to the WERC, roughly 25% of all Christians in 2002 are either Protestant or Orthodox, with 351 million and 217 million adherents, respectively. Independent Christians make up over 400 million of all Christian believers, and some 80 million Christians are affiliated with the Anglican Church.¹⁰

While in 2002, Europe (including Russia) hosts more Christians than any other continent (an estimated 537 million, vs. 490 million in Latin America, 352 million in Africa, and 320 million in Asia). WERC projects that by 2025 both Latin America and Africa will inhabit more Christians than Europe. In particular, it is estimated that by 2025, one out of four Christians will live in Latin America. In contrast, one out of eleven Christians will reside in North America.¹¹

⁸ According to recent statistics, the number of Christians inhabiting the earth in mid-2003 was 2.07 billion. David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27.1 (January 2003).

⁹ David B. Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., 3.

¹⁰ See “Status and trends in global mission as revealed by the annual Christian megacensus, AD 1800–AD 2025.” Available on the website of WERC, last accessed 28 March 2003, <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>

¹¹ See “Status and trends in global mission as revealed by the annual Christian megacensus, AD 1800–AD 2025.” Available on the website of the World Evangelization Research Center (WERC), last accessed 28 March 2003, <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>.

Trends in Christian Adherence, 1900 – 2025, by Christian Streams and Regions

GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY	1900	1970	Mid-2000	Trend	Mid-2002	2025
Total Christians as % of world	34.5	33.5	33.0	0.05	33.1	33.4
Unaffiliated Christians	36,489,000	106,268,000	111,125,000	0.65	112,575,000	125,712,000
Affiliated Christians (church members)	521,643,000	1,130,106,000	1,888,439,000	1.30	1,938,041,000	2,490,958,000
Church attenders	469,303,000	885,777,000	1,359,420,000	1.04	1,387,834,000	1,760,568,000
Evangelicals	71,726,000	93,449,000	210,603,000	1.72	217,896,000	327,835,000
Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neocharismatics	981,000	72,223,000	523,767,000	1.87	543,578,000	811,552,000
MEMBERSHIP BY 6 ECCLESIASTICAL MEGABLOCS						
Anglicans	30,571,000	47,501,000	79,650,000	1.34	81,799,000	113,746,000
Independents	7,931,000	95,605,000	385,745,000	2.17	402,641,000	581,642,000
Orthodox	115,844,000	139,662,000	215,129,000	0.52	217,371,000	252,716,000
Protestants	103,024,000	210,759,000	342,002,000	1.36	351,362,000	468,633,000
Roman Catholics	266,548,000	665,954,000	1,057,328,000	1.24	1,083,708,000	1,361,965,000
MEMBERSHIP BY 6 CONTINENTS, 21 UN REGIONS						
Africa	8,756,000	117,069,000	335,116,000	2.62	352,886,000	600,526,000
Asia	20,759,000	97,329,000	307,288,000	2.12	320,439,000	459,029,000
Europe (including Russia)	368,210,000	468,480,000	536,832,000	0.08	537,656,000	532,861,000
Latin America	60,027,000	263,597,000	475,659,000	1.57	490,701,000	635,271,000
Northern America	59,570,000	168,932,000	212,167,000	0.81	215,633,000	235,112,000
Oceania	4,322,000	14,699,000	21,375,000	1.22	21,898,000	28,152,000

Source: "Status and Trends in Global Mission as Revealed by the Annual Christian Megacensus, AD 1800-AD 2025," World Evangelization Research Center. <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>

Annual Change: Christianity

Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of Christian adherents grew by an average annual rate of 1.36%. Within the Christian tradition, independent Christians and Christians affiliated with the Anglican Church had the highest growth rate, while the Orthodox Church had the lowest growth rate.¹² Roman Catholicism suffers from the highest number of conversions to other religions. Between 1990 and 2000, the annual average number of Roman Catholics who converted to another religion was 355,181. In contrast, the Protestant stream of Christianity gained, on average, a total of 341,161 members through conversion per year between 1990 and 2000.¹³

¹² "Global Adherents of the World's Nineteen Major Distinct Religions," in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

¹³ "Global Adherents of the World's Nineteen Major Distinct Religions," in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Christians Total	22,708,799	2,501,396	25,210,195	1.36
Roman Catholics	13,117,804	-355,181	12,762,623	1.29
Protestants	4,224,076	341,161	4,565,237	1.44
Orthodox	750,901	385,410	1,136,311	0.54
Anglicans	1,071,503	73,897	1,145,400	1.56

ISLAM

Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion. In 2003, roughly 1.26 billion people—about one fifth of all global inhabitants—were Muslims.¹⁴ In 1900, only about 12% of the world’s population (199 million people) adhered to Islam. The number of Muslims worldwide in the year 2025 is estimated at 1.78 billion, and the percentage of adherents to Islam to the total global population is expected to rise to almost 23%. Islam has also witnessed a geographic expansion, with significant Muslim communities present in over 200 countries.¹⁵

The overwhelming majority of the 1.2 billion Muslims belong to the Sunni branch of Islam (84%), while Shi’ites account for about 14%.¹⁶ These ratios have remained stable throughout the 20th century, but are expected to change slightly, noticeable in a drop of the percentage of Sunnis, and a slight increase in the percentage of Muslims who are Shi’ite.¹⁷

The countries with the largest Muslim population are Indonesia (170 million Muslims), followed by Pakistan (136 million), Bangladesh (106 million), India (103 million), Turkey (62 million), Iran (61 million), Egypt (54 million), Nigeria (48 million), and China (37 million).¹⁸

Annual Change: Islam

At 2.13% average annual growth between 1990 and 2000, Islam has the highest growth rate among the major religions. This high growth rate is obtained both through natural growth (in excess of 21 million per year in the 1990s), as well as through a very high number of conversions

¹⁴ Barrett, et.al., “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003.”

¹⁵ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3.

¹⁶ For full data, see “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

¹⁷ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

¹⁸ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_islam.html.

to Islam. Each year between 1990 and 2000, an average of 865,000 persons converted to Islam. Hence, in the 1990s, one in every 25 ‘new’ Muslims was a convert. The Shi’a stream of Islam experiences a higher growth rate than the Sunni stream.¹⁹

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Muslims Total	21,723,118	865,558	22,588,676	2.13
Sunnis	18,214,974	465,783	18,680,757	2.08
Shias	3,029,003	313,863	3,460,000	2.30

HINDUISM

In mid-2003, about 850 million Hindus lived in the world, constituting some 13% of the global population—a ratio that has remained relatively constant since 1900, and is projected to remain relatively constant until at least 2025 (12.5%).²⁰

The countries with the highest proportion of Hindus are Nepal (89%), India (79%), Mauritius (52%), Guyana (40%), Fiji (38%), Suriname (30%), Bhutan (25%), Trinidad and Tobago (24%), Sri Lanka (15%) and Bangladesh (11%)²¹, and Hindu communities exist in at least 114 countries.²²

The countries with the largest Hindu populations are India (780 million), Nepal (17.4 million), Bangladesh (12.6 million), Indonesia (4 million), Sri Lanka (2.8 million), Pakistan (2.1 million), and Malaysia (1.4 million).²³ Nepal is the only officially Hindu state.

Annual Change: Hinduism

The average annual growth of Hinduism in the decade between 1990-2000 was a high 1.69%, a percentage attributed solely to natural growth. Through conversion to other religions, Hinduism lost on average over 660,000 adherents per year in the same time frame. Among the

¹⁹ See “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4; see also WERC, “Status and trends in global mission as revealed by the annual Christian megacensus, AD 1800 –AD 2025.”

²⁰ See Barrett, et.al., “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003,” and “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

²¹ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_hindu.html.

²² Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3.

²³ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_hindu.html.

major religions, this is the highest number of defections.²⁴ Percentage-wise, during the 1990s, for every 20 Hindus born, 1 Hindu converted to another religion.

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Hindus Total	13,194,111	-660,377	12,533,734	1.69
Vaishnavites	8,026,116	-478,522	8,704,638	1.74
Shaivites	3,435,964	-118,836	3,354,800	1.7

BUDDHISM

Within a century, the number of Buddhists in the world tripled. In 2003, approximately 371 million Buddhists inhabited the earth, a number that corresponded to about 5.9% of the global population. In 1900, there were 127 million Buddhists worldwide, or 7.8% of the total population at that time. Hence, while the actual number of Buddhists has risen in the course of the past century, the percentage of Buddhists among the world population dropped, since the global population more than tripled between 1900 and 2000. The WERC estimates the number of Buddhists adherents in the year 2025 at 418 million, which would correspond to a drop of the percentage of Buddhists from 5.9% of the total global population to 4.8%.²⁵

The countries with the highest percentage of Buddhists are Thailand (95%), Cambodia (90%), Myanmar (88%), Bhutan (75%), Sri Lanka (70%), and Tibet (65%). In terms of actual numbers, the countries with the largest Buddhist populations are China (102 million), Japan (89 million), Thailand (55 million), Vietnam (50 million), and Myanmar (42 million).²⁶ Buddhists are known to be present in at least 126 countries.²⁷

²⁴ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

²⁵ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

²⁶ List compiled by Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_buddhist.html.

²⁷ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3.

Annual Change: Buddhism

The number of Buddhist adherents rose by 3.6 million, or 1.09%, in the decade between 1990 and 2000. Four percent of this growth is due to converts from other religions, through which an approximate average of 156,000 people have joined Buddhism annually.²⁸

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Buddhists Total	3,530,918	156,609	3,687,527	1.09

JUDAISM

In mid-2003, the number of Jews worldwide was estimated at about 14.8 million.²⁹ This number corresponds to 0.2% of the world population. The number of Jews is expected to increase slightly to over 16 million Jews (0.2%) in 2025. The percentage of Jews to the total population dropped sharply from 0.8% in 1900 to 0.4% in 1970, 0.3% in 1990, and 0.2% after 2000.³⁰

While Israel is the only state in the world where Jews constitute a majority, more Jews live in the United States than in Israel (5.8 and 4.8 million, respectively). In addition, 600,000 Jews live in France, 550,000 in Russia, 400,000 in the Ukraine, 360,000 in Canada, 300,000 in the United Kingdom, 250,000 in Argentina, and 130,000 in Brazil.³¹ Over 130 other countries have sizeable numbers of Jews.³²

Annual Change: Judaism

Among the major religions, Judaism has the slowest rate of growth, at 0.91% per year between 1990 and 2000. In the same time frame, Judaism lost a significant number of its adherents—estimated at over 70,000 people on average each year—through conversions from Judaism to other religions.³³ The number is significant, as the average natural increase of

²⁸ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

²⁹ See Barrett, et.al., “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003.”

³⁰ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

³¹ American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>.

³² Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3.

³³ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

adherents to Judaism in the 1990s, namely 195,000, is not even three times the number of defectors. It is worthwhile comparing this trend to the Hindu figures: despite a very high number of defectors from Hinduism, the number of born Hindus is still almost 20 times higher than the number of converts). As a result of the extremely low ratio of natural growth to conversion (approximately 2.8), the number of Jews in 2025 is expected to be only slightly higher than it is today. Only Shintoism, a religion that experiences negative growth, and Jainism have a lower natural growth/conversion ratio.

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Jews Total	194,962	-70,447	124,515	0.91

OTHER RELIGIONS

Chinese Folk Religion: There is no consensus on the number of adherents to Chinese folk religions (also called Chinese traditional religions). Estimates range from 150 million³⁴ to 379 million³⁵ adherents. Either number would render Chinese folk religion one of the five largest religions. At the beginning of the 20th century, WERC estimates that adherents to Chinese folk religions accounted for almost a quarter of the global population, namely 23.5%. That percentage has fallen today to between 4% and 6.5%, depending on the estimates. That percentage is expected to continue to decrease.³⁶

Sikhism has some 24 million adherents today (0.4% of the world population), and is the predominant religion in the Indian province of Punjab, where over 60% of the population are Sikhs. The annual average growth rate between 1990 and 2000 for Sikhism was 1.87%.³⁷ Of the 23 million Sikhs, about 19 million live in India, 500,000 in the United Kingdom, and 325,000 in North America.

³⁴ According to GeoHive Global Statistics for the year 1994, last accessed 1 November 2002, http://212.204.253.230/global/religion_top.php.

³⁵ According to *World Almanac and Book of Facts 2000* (Mahwah, NJ: PRIMEDIA Reference Inc., 1999. [Source: *1999 Encyc. Britannica Book of the Year*], 695.

³⁶ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

³⁷ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_sikh.html.

The *Baha'i* faith was estimated at between 5 and 7 million adherents in mid-2000—a significant growth since 1900, when there were less than 10,000 Baha'is. The number of Baha'is is expected to increase to over 12 million adherents over the next quarter century. India is the country with the largest Baha'i population (1.7 million).³⁸

Adherents of *Confucianism* were estimated at 6.3 million in mid-2002. Between 1990 and 2000, an average of 11,000 people left Confucianism and took on other religions, further lowering an already low natural growth rate.³⁹

Jainism is usually estimated at less than 5 million adherents. The religion is almost entirely confined to India and to ethnic Jains.⁴⁰ It suffers from an extremely high rate of conversion to other religions.

Shintoism has a negative growth rate of -1.09 percent, owing to a high rate of conversion from Shintoism to other religions (on average, 40,527 conversions annually between 1990-2000, compared to an average annual natural growth rate of 8,534 over the same period).⁴¹

The number of adherents of *Taoism* was estimated at 2.6 million in mid-2000, up from 375,000 in 1900. It grows at an annual percentage rate of 1%.⁴²

The number of Taoists in the world is about as large as the number of *Zoroastrians*, estimated at 2.54 millions, up from 108,000 in 1900. Unlike Taoism, Zoroastrians have an annual average growth rate of 2.65%, owing both to a higher rate of natural growth as well as a much larger rate of conversions from other religions to Zoroastrianism than to Taoism.⁴³

Rastafarians and those who study them report a resurgence of interest in the Rastafarian faith, according to Leonard E. Barrett, who authored the book “The Rastafarians.” He estimates that there are 800,000 Rastas worldwide, and more than 2 million if one counts the lifestyle, rather than merely the faith.⁴⁴

³⁸ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.; and Adherents.com, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_bahai.html.

³⁹ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

⁴⁰ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents, last accessed 28 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html#Jainism.

⁴¹ “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Leonard E. Barnett, *The Rastafarians* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1997).

Annual Change: Other Religions⁴⁵

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Chinese Folk Religionists	3,801,126	-85,578	3,715,548	1.02
Sikhs	363,677	28,961	392,638	1.87
Bahai's	117,158	26,333	143,491	2.28
Confucianists	55,739	-11,434	44,305	0.73
Jains	74,539	-39,588	34,951	0.87
Shintoists	8,534	-40,527	-31,993	-1.09
Taoists	25,397	-155	25,242	1
Zoroastrians	45,391	13,080	58,471	2.65

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001

NON-RELIGIOUS AND ATHEISTS

Numbers regarding the Non-religious and Atheist populations are widely diverging, depending on the source. Non-religious, according to GeoHive Global Data, include “persons professing no religion, nonbelievers, agnostics, freethinkers, [and] dereligionized secularists indifferent to all religion. Atheists, according to the same source, include “persons professing atheism, skepticism, disbelief, or irreligion, including antireligious (opposed to all religion).”⁴⁶

The number of non-religious is estimated at between 780 million⁴⁷ and 924 million.⁴⁸ The number of Atheists is estimated at between 150 and 239 million⁴⁹ Hence, the percentage of people in the world who profess no religion is at least 12% (and may be as high as 15%), while that of Atheists can be assumed to be at least 2.4% (and may be as high as 4%)

Not surprisingly, the percentage of the global population that is either non-religious or atheist has risen sharply since 1900, when only 0.2% of the global population were non-religious, and an even smaller number atheist.

⁴⁵ For additional information, including on other religions, see “Global Adherents of the World’s Nineteen Major Distinct Religions,” in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

⁴⁶ Source: GeoHive Global Statistics, available online at http://212.204.253.230/global/religion_top.php.

⁴⁷ According to WERC, estimated for 2002, see <http://www.gem-werc.org/wct-10-2.pdf>.

⁴⁸ According to GeoHive, estimated for 1994, see at http://212.204.253.230/global/religion_top.php.

⁴⁹ According to WERC and GeoHive, respectively.

Annual Change: Non-Religious and Atheists⁵⁰

Annual Change, 1990 – 2000				
	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Conversion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Non-religious	6,639,206	-535,106	6,104,106	0.83
Atheist	1,315,322	-876,227	437,095	0.30

SUMMARY OF GLOBAL RELIGIOUS ADHERENCE

The above discussion shows that of the major religions, Islam is clearly the world's "fastest-growing religion." While today one out of five people in the world are Muslims, it is estimated that within a half-century, one out of four people will adhere to Islam. No other major religion is experiencing a similar rise of its global share of adherents. In fact, only the Baha'i and Zoroastrian faiths are experiencing a similar rate of growth, although their combined estimated numerical strength in mid-2000—less than 10 million adherents—represent only a fraction of the roughly 1.2 billion Muslims who were estimated to live on the globe at the turn of the century.

While Islam is experiencing an immense rate of growth based on both a high rate of natural population increase as well as a high number of conversions into Islam, Christianity as a whole is suffering from a large number of defections, and its overall share of the global population has been steady throughout the 20th century at between 33 and 34%, and is estimated to remain relatively unchanged until 2050. The Hindu faith faces a similar outlook. Due to an immense number of defections, Hindus are estimated to constitute roughly 13.2% of the global population in 2050—a negligible decline from 13.4% in mid-2000. Buddhism and Judaism suffer from slow growth based on a low rate of population growth, which in the case of Judaism is worsened by an extremely high number of defections.

Trends in Religious Behavior and Values

The discussion in the previous part of this study shows that based on absolute numbers of adherents alone, all the major religions (except for Shintoism) are experiencing an increase in the actual number of their adherents—a development clearly tied to natural population growth. As has also been seen, when looking at the number of global religious adherents as a percentage of

⁵⁰ "Global Adherents of the World's Nineteen Major Distinct Religions," in Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 4.

the global population over time, it becomes obvious that the picture is less clear-cut, and that while some religions are growing stronger when compared to other religions, other religions are in comparative decline, or are simply static.

Figures of global religious adherence, however, tell only part of the story. Clearly, the attempt to measure a “resurgence of religion” requires more than a glimpse at changes in religious adherence based on natural population growth and conversion rates. In fact, reaching conclusions about a change in religiousness through an examination of statistics that merely reflect a demographic growth of a particular population is a trap that should be avoided. In order to arrive at a clearer picture of whether religion is becoming stronger or weaker in certain parts of the world, quantitative aspects of religious adherence should be accompanied by a qualitative approach that measures change in religious behavior and values in a variety of countries, and over a period of time. Cross-country data is crucial if one wishes to reach conclusions about religious trends that occur across the globe. Meanwhile, identifying time-series data is crucial because change in religious behavior and values—and hence any resurgence or decline in religion—is a process, rather than an event taking place at a particular point in time.

MEASURING RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR AND VALUES - METHODOLOGY

What renders the task of measuring change in religiousness more difficult is the relative lack of systematic and reliable cross-country and time-series data. This dearth is particularly apparent for countries in the Middle East and Africa. However, there do exist two sources of religious statistics—the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and the *World Values Survey*—from which data on religious behavior and values can be extrapolated, and which form the core of the present analysis on whether—and where—religion is resurgent.

Contrary to what its title suggests, the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE) contains religious statistics on most religions practiced throughout the world, although its statistics on Christianity go into the most detail. The WCE describes statistics of what it calls a ‘megacensus,’ a collection of empirical religious data collected through a vast investigation by churches and religious workers around the globe. It is based on an annual census undertaken by Christian denominations and agencies, in which approximately “10 million church leaders, clergy, and

other Christian workers of every description” compile an annual report, while filling out statistical questions.⁵¹

The *World Values Surveys* (WVS), on the other hand, review socio-cultural and political change in more than 65 societies on six continents. Surveys have been conducted on a representative national sample of at least 1,000 people in each of the 65 societies. Building on the European Values Surveys (EVS) first conducted in 1981, two additional ‘waves’ of the WVS were conducted in 1990-1991, and 1995-1996. A fourth wave of global surveys, from 1999-2001, was recently completed. According to the network of scientists carrying out this project, this “investigation has produced evidence of gradual but pervasive changes in what people want out of life.”⁵² The questions included in the surveys include a set of questions on religious values, which are used in this paper to reach conclusions about a change in these values over time.

In order to reach a better understanding of how religious values and behavior have changed over time, several criteria—one drawn from the WCE, and six drawn from the WVS—have been identified. They are as follows:

1. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares to “believe in God.” Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. Respondents were asked to respond to the question “Do you believe in God?” Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who answered this question in the affirmative. A rise in this percentage over

⁵¹ The 10 million questionnaires are then collected and received at home offices and headquarters. After limited circulation to senior staff, most are placed in archives. The data continues to pour in year by year, and forms the basis of the World Christian Encyclopedia. The megacensus is not a single coordinated endeavor, but consists of thousands of separate, decentralized, uncoordinated censuses. The World Christian Encyclopedia is not the authorized report of the megacensus, as it is backed up by other major sources. The subject matter of the census is the previous year’s activities, its events, demographics, achievements, failures, numbers, and statistics; it covers a vast range of local, national, continental, global, ethnic, ethnocultural, linguistic, and urban-rural contexts. For more information on the megacensus, which is likely the world’s largest single detailed enumeration, see David B. Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vi-vii.

⁵² The World Values Survey is a “worldwide investigation of sociocultural and political change. It has carried out representative national surveys of the basic values and beliefs of publics in more than 65 societies on all six inhabited continents, containing almost 80 percent of the world’s population. The World Values Surveys grew out of a study launched by the European Values Survey group (EVS) under the leadership of Jan Kerkhofs and Ruud de Moor. In 1981, the EVS carried out surveys in ten West European societies; it evoked such widespread interest that it was replicated in 14 additional countries. The WVS has given rise to over 300 publications, in 16 languages. The project is being carried out by an international network of social scientists, with local funding for each survey. Furthermore, the project is guided by a steering committee representing all regions of the world. Coordination and distribution of data are based at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan, under the direction of Ronald Inglehart. “World Values Surveys,” Official Website of the World Values Surveys, University of Michigan, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu>.

time (i.e., in between “waves of surveys”) signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.

2. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares God to be “important.” Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. Respondents were asked to respond to the question “How important is God in your life?” by ranking their answers from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important). Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who ranked the importance of God between 6-10. A rise in this percentage over time signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.
3. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares to have been “raised religious.” Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. Respondents were asked to respond to the question “Were you brought up religiously at home?” Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who answered this question in the affirmative. A rise in this percentage over time signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.
4. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares religion to be “important.” Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. Respondents were asked to respond to the question “How important is Religion in your life?” Answers to this question ranged from “very” and “rather” to “not very” and “not at all.” Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who answered this question with “very” and “rather.” A rise in this percentage over time of people who responded that they believed religion to be (either “very” or “rather”) important signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.
5. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares to find “comfort in religion.” Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. Respondents were asked to respond to the question “Do you find that you get comfort and strength from religion?” Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who answered this question in the affirmative. A rise in this percentage over time signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.
6. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares to attend religious services regularly. Data for this criterion was obtained from the WVS. In Christian countries, respondents were asked to respond to the question “Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend church these days?” In non-

Christian countries, the term “church attendance” was replaced by “religious services.”⁵³ Answers to this question ranged from “More than once a week,” “once a week,” and “once a month” to “specific holidays,” “once a year,” and “never, or practically never.” Change was measured in the percentage of respondents who answered this question with “once a month,” “once a week,” or “more than once a week.” A rise in this percentage over time signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.

7. Change over time in the percentage of a population that declares itself to be either atheist or nonreligious. Data for this criterion was obtained from the 2nd edition (2001) of the WCE. Change was measured in the combined percentage of respondents who labeled themselves as either “nonreligious” or “atheist”. Contrary to the other criteria, a drop, rather than a rise, in this percentage over time signifies that religion is ‘resurgent’ with regard to this criterion.

The criteria described above shall in no way be understood as all-encompassing in their characterization of change in religious behavior and values. Most certainly, one could think of measuring change in religiousness by means of other criteria. However, as helpful as other criteria may be, such data are difficult to obtain, and in some cases do not exist. In seeking out the above seven criteria, an attempt was made to a) find those criteria that are clearly religious in character and b) that can be applied to most religions in the world, especially to the major religions. As a result of the attempt to identify criteria that are strictly religious in character, I have opted to refrain from tracking responses to questions such as “Do you believe in heaven,” “Do you believe in hell,” or “How often, if at all, do you think about the meaning and purpose of life?”⁵⁴ Due to the lack of a clear definition of what “religion” entails, answering any one of these questions in the affirmative would provide no sufficient indication in this case as to whether a person has strengthened his/her religious beliefs. Hence, the importance of religion, the belief in God, or the attendance of religious services seem to be more useful indicators.

That said, the approach taken here is not without problems. The first problem relates to the completeness of the data. At times, for example, a particular question that appears in the

⁵³ Ronald F. Inglehart, Chair, Steering Committee of the World Values Surveys, e-mail correspondence with the author, 20 March 2003.

⁵⁴ Other survey questions that were only partly religious in nature and hence not included as criteria for change in religious behavior are, for example, questions on the meaning of life, belief in good and evil, belief in life after death, belief in a soul, and belief in sin.

World Values Surveys has not been posed in a particular country. Chinese respondents, for example, were asked whether religion is important to them; yet, no data was available with regard to the percentage of Chinese respondents who said they believed in God. As a result of such omissions, it was in most cases impossible to identify the trends on all of the seven criteria for each and every country. For some countries, little data existed, and hence only one or two of the seven criteria provided any hints with regard to the trend in religiousness discernible in that particular country.

The second problem relates to the time series aspect of the measurement. Not in all three WVS “waves” analyzed here (1981, 1990-91, 1995-96) were respondents confronted with the survey questions that are the basis for the seven criteria of religious behavior used in this study. In Britain, for example, data for the question “Do you believe in God” is available for the first (1981) and second (1990-91) waves, but not for the third wave. For Australia, meanwhile, the same data is available for the first and the third (1995-96) waves, but not for the second wave. As a result, the resurgence of religion is measured over time (as it should be), yet the time period examined is different in Britain (1981-1991) from what it is in Australia (1990-1996), and this problem persists in many other cases. To alleviate this problem, I will in each case indicate the time frame for which a resurgence or decline in religion has been noted.

A third problem relates to particular geographic areas, which are underrepresented in the WVS, and for which data is extremely scarce. The only African countries for which useful data from the WVS were available are South Africa and Nigeria. For most African and Middle Eastern countries, the only criterion that could be measured was the change in the percentage of the population that is nonreligious or atheist. As far as the Middle East is concerned, however—a region that is both traditional and predominantly Islamic—that percentage is often negligible, and so is the change in this percentage over time. In Africa too, few people describe themselves as nonreligious, or even Atheist, and the change in the percentage of this small population is minuscule. Hence, secondary sources are more heavily relied upon to draw conclusions about the status of religiousness in Africa and the Middle East.

In the present study, religious trends have been labeled resurgent, declining, static, or inconclusive. For each criterion, the trend over a particular period of time has been assessed. Following the individual assessment of each of the seven criteria for each country, the predominant trend has been identified based on those individual criteria that were available for the country in question. Conclusions have then been drawn over whether a country is

experiencing religious resurgence or decline; whether there is no apparent change in the religiousness ('static'); or whether no clear conclusion can be made ('inconclusive') because of opposing trends suggested by the individual indicators.

TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR – BY REGION

Looking at the results of the examination of changes in religious behavior, certain regional trends crystallize, and will be described in the following:

NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA	
Country	Religious Trend
United States	Resurgent
Canada	Declining

UNITED STATES

Based on the seven criteria used to measure religious change, religion in the United States is slightly on the rise. Although the nonreligious and atheist population has been on a steady rise (from 1.3% in 1900 to 9.4% in 2000), U.S. citizens continue to be firm believers in God. Over 93% of U.S. respondents said that they believed in God in 1997, an even higher percentage than in 1990. In the course of the 1990s, the U.S. population is also considering religion to be increasingly important, and a larger number is being brought up in a religious fashion. Between 1990 and 1997, U.S. citizens not only believe religion to be more important (4.36% increase), but also find more comfort in religion (82.9% in 1997 vs. 80.3% in 1990). That said, there has been a slight drop, close to 3%, in church attendance in the United States since 1981, suggesting that most U.S. citizens likely subscribe to a more personal, individualized form of faith. Hence, most indicators available for the United States point at an increase in religiosity in the United States.

The findings in this study seem to be largely confirmed by a variety of other sources. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, for instance, cites “numerous polls” as saying that Americans are the most religious people in the “industrialized world.” It cites a 2002 Pew Forum survey

according to which about 41% of Americans attend a religious service weekly (compared to 27% in Britain, 21%, in France and 4% in Sweden), according to the forum’s 1997 survey.⁵⁵

CANADA

As regards Canada, all indicators examined here suggest that religion has been on the decline. Between 1981 and 1990, less and less Canadians believed in God (over 5% decline) or in the importance of God (4.5% decline). Canadians found less comfort in religion (4.5% decline), and cut down on their church attendance by over 5%. Meanwhile, the percentage of the nonreligious and atheist population grew by 9% in the past 30 years.

LATIN AMERICA

LATIN AMERICA	
Country	Religious Trend
Argentina	Resurgent
Brazil	Resurgent
Chile	Inconclusive
Mexico	Inconclusive

Conventional wisdom has it that the Latin American continent is witnessing an increase in religiosity, manifested in large part by the meteoric rise in pentecostalism throughout Latin America.⁵⁶ According to the WCE, between 1970 and 1990, Latin American Pentecostals increased their share of the continent’s population from 4.4% to almost 27%—corresponding to a numerical increase by over 100 million people within two decades.⁵⁷ To quote the *Christian Century*, “not since the mass baptisms of Latin American Indians by the conquering Spanish in the 16th century has Latin America witnessed a religious conversion of such magnitude.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ John Blake, “‘Under God’ or Not? No Easy Answers in America; Religious Heritage a Subject of Debate,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 29 June 2002, 1B.

⁵⁶ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 161-84.

⁵⁷ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 14.

⁵⁸ Penny Lernoux, “The Fundamentalist Surge in Latin America,” *Christian Century*, 20 January 1988, 51. Also available at the website “Religion Online”, last accessed 29 March 2003, http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/researchd.dll/showarticle?item_id=927.

The findings of the present study confirm a sharp rise in religious behavior for two out of three of Latin America's largest countries, Argentina and Brazil. Unfortunately, sufficient data to reach any conclusions about Colombia, the second among Latin America's three most populated countries, and for most other Latin American countries, was unavailable. For Chile and Mexico, data was available, yet revealed no clear trends. Six out of seven indicators for both Argentina and Brazil show a clear trend towards religious resurgence. The only indicator that suggests an increase in secularization in both countries is a rise in the nonreligious/atheist population, which characterizes not only Argentina and Brazil, but in fact all of Latin America.⁵⁹ The picture for other Latin American countries is unclear, as the only indicator available for those other countries is an increase in the nonreligious/atheist population—which, in the case of Latin America, is not very revealing.⁶⁰

As far as belief in God is concerned, Argentines, Brazilians, and Chileans in recent years topped an already extremely high level of divine belief. Between 1990 and 1997, belief in God rose from about 90% to 94% in Argentina, from 98% to 99% in Brazil, and from 94% to 97% in Chile. Similar results are achieved with regard to the “importance of God”, as well as the percentage of the population that said it had been raised religious, with an increase of an already high percentage in both criteria apparent in all three countries.⁶¹ While Argentines and Brazilians find more comfort in religion towards the end of the 1990s, that percentage dropped slightly in Chile. The same is true for church attendance, which in both Argentina and Brazil rose by 3.6%,⁶² yet dropped in Chile, albeit by a very small percentage (1.7%). As far as importance of religion is concerned, a similar trend was apparent, with the percentage increasing in Argentina and Brazil (by 4.3% and 3.4%, respectively, between 1990 and 1997), while falling for Chile (by 4.3%).

⁵⁹ Between 1970 and mid-2000, the percentage of the Latin American population that declares itself either nonreligious or atheist rose from 7 million (or 2.5% of the Latin American population in 1970) to almost 19 million people (or 3.6% of the Latin American in 2000).

⁶⁰ As has been seen, Argentina and Brazil also experience a rise in the nonreligious/atheist population, yet all other indicators clearly show an increase in religiosity—hence, no conclusions can be reached about the other countries at this time.

⁶¹ From 1990 to 1997, the percentage of respondents who agreed that religion was important rose in Argentina from 77.84 to 83.04%, in Brazil from 94.95 to 97.13%, and in Chile from 88.0 to 88.6%. With regard to the question of having been raised religious, figures in the same time period increased in Argentina from 80.14 to 82.3%, in Brazil from 75.48 to 77.02% , and in Chile from 78.13 to 82.6%.

⁶² In Argentina, this 3.6% rise refers to the time period between 1981-1997, while in Brazil this rise refers to the decade of the 1990s only.

WESTERN EUROPE

WESTERN EUROPE	
Country	Religious Trend
Belgium	Declining
Britain	Declining
Denmark	Inconclusive
Finland	Resurgent
France	Declining
Germany	Declining
Iceland	Declining
Ireland	Resurgent
Italy	Resurgent
Netherlands	Declining
Norway	Declining
Spain	Inconclusive
Sweden	Inconclusive
Switzerland	Declining

Overall, Western Europe shows a trend towards what could be termed secularization, although the trend is not entirely uniform. In some instances, change in religiosity in Western Europe has proven elusive. Of the fourteen Western European countries that have been examined in this study, eight (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Britain, and Iceland) have shown signs of a decline in religiousness. Three countries (Finland, Ireland, Italy) appeared to experience a rise in religiosity, while no conclusions could be reached for Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark because of contradictory trends.

Belgium, France, and Switzerland showed the clearest signs of secularization, with none of the criteria measured indicating an increase in religiosity. In Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Britain, and Iceland, most criteria measured indicated a trend towards secularization,

although some criteria indicated the opposite.⁶³ In Germany, for example, respondents suggested a heightened importance attributed to both God and to religion, even though all other indicators showed a decline of religious behavior and values.

Ireland and Italy, two predominantly Catholic countries, showed strong evidence of an upward change in religious values and behavior, despite the fact that both countries have experienced a moderate rise in the nonreligious/atheist population.⁶⁴ In Finland, somewhat surprisingly, four criteria suggested a rise in religious belief, whereas only one criterion showed a decline.

A closer look at the data for church attendance by the World Values Surveys suggests that European societies have drastically decreased their church attendance, at least since the 1980s.⁶⁵ Analyzing the results of the European World Value Survey (EVSSG), Grace Davie, Lecturer at the University of Exeter, calls Europeans an “unchurched” people, rather than secular because, as she argues, the marked drop in religious attendance (especially in the Protestant north) has not resulted in a decline of religious belief.⁶⁶ Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris add that in Europe, “despite gradually emptying pews, the disparities in religiosity within European societies remain marked, depending upon historical traditions and the power of the church.” Making a similar point as Davie, they argue that in Europe, “a distinction needs to be drawn between behavioral indicators like habitual attendance at church services, which has fallen, and religious values and beliefs, which may persist.”⁶⁷ The present study confirms these previous findings by Inglehart and Norris, and Davie.

⁶³ In Germany, the criteria that indicated a decline in religiosity were the percentage of nonreligious/atheist, the percentage of people raised religious, the degree of comfort people found in religion, and church attendance. In the Netherlands, the criteria that indicated a secularization were the percentage of nonreligious/atheists, belief in God, importance of God, and church attendance. In Norway, a decreasing percentage of people were raised religious and believed that religion was important, and church attendance was in decline as well. In Britain the three criteria supporting the theory that religion is in decline is the percentage of nonreligious/atheists, as well as a decrease in the belief in God, and the importance of God.

⁶⁴ In Italy, the percentage of the combined nonreligious and atheist population rose by 1% between 1990 and 1997. In Ireland, the figure rose by 0.4% in the same time frame.

⁶⁵ According to the present study of the WVS, the decline in church attendance (at least once a month) is highest in Spain (almost 16% between 1981 and 1997); Switzerland (13% between 1990 and 1997); Germany (a 9% drop in the former West, and an 11% decline in the former GDR between 1981-1990); the Netherlands (9% between 1981 and 1990). Church attendance is also in decline in Belgium, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland.

⁶⁶ Grace Davie, “Europe: The Exception that Proves the Rule?,” in Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*, 68.

⁶⁷ Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality & Cultural Change around the World* (Cambridge University Press, 2003, forthcoming); Chapter 3: Religion, Secularization and Gender Equality, 2, available on the website of Pippa Norris, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris.shorenstein.ksq/ACROBAT/risingtide/Chapter%203.pdf>.

RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE, AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE, SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE	
Country	Religious Trend
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Resurgent
Bulgaria	Resurgent
Czech Republic	Resurgent
Estonia	Resurgent
Hungary	Resurgent
Latvia	Resurgent
Lithuania	Resurgent
Poland	Declining
Russia	Resurgent
Slovakia	Resurgent
Slovenia	Resurgent
Ukraine	Resurgent
Yugoslavia	Resurgent

According to this study, signs of a resurgence of religion are nowhere clearer than they are in Russia and Eastern Europe. Except for Poland and Bosnia, all other Eastern and Southeast European countries examined here—including Russia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia—have left little doubt that religion is clearly on the rise.

While religious values and behavior in these regions are clearly on the rise, Russia and Eastern Europe especially are grappling with dwindling populations. These opposing trends highlight the need to distinguish between numerical trends of religious adherents on the one hand, and changes in religious behavior on the other.

RUSSIA

As the indications leave little doubt, Russia is showing clear signs of a religious resurgence. In fact, all seven criteria by which change in religious behavior and values are measured here confirmed that Russia is experiencing what could be called a religious revival. Since 1970, the nonreligious/atheist population has been on steady decline, from 52% in 1970 to 33% in 2000. Further, the percentage of this population is projected to decrease even further, possibly reaching the 20% mark in 2025. Between 1990 and 1997, belief in God has risen from 35% to a whopping 60%, while belief in the importance of God has climbed to 43% in 1997, up from 25% in 1990. More people have been raised religious in Russia in 1997 (20%) than at the beginning of the decade (18%), and 8.39% more Russians believed religion to be important toward the end of the 1990s, when compared to 1990. "Comfort in Religion" has also sharply increased within this time period, from less than 27% to over 46%. Finally, more and more Russians attend church services more regularly in 1997 than they did in 1990.

EASTERN EUROPE

Based on most of the criteria by which change in religious behavior and values is examined here, Eastern Europe has been undergoing a clear process of religious revival throughout the 1990s.

Since the mid-1990s and until 2000, a decline in the percentage of people who profess to be nonreligious or atheists has been noted in all Eastern European countries that have been examined, including in the Czech Republic (from 39.3% to 36.9%); Estonia (39.8 to 36%); Hungary (12.5 down to 11.6%); Latvia (35.8 down to 32%); Lithuania (14.5 down to 12%); Poland (3.5 down to 2.5%); Slovakia (16.2 down to 14.3%); and the Ukraine (17.3 down to 14.9%).

In the three Eastern European countries that were included in the WVS survey on belief in God, a drastic rise could be witnessed of respondents who answered this question in the affirmative. In Hungary, the percentage of believers in God jumped from 44% to 58% from 1981 to 1990, even prior to the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In Belarus, the number of people who believe in God nearly doubled over the course of the 1990s, from 36% to 68%, while in Latvia this figure almost quadrupled, from 18% to 67% in the same time period. Similar trends held true when it came to the importance of God, where there was a sharp rise in all three countries.

From 1990 to 1997, an increasing number of respondents from the three Baltic countries, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, said that they have been raised religious, as is true for respondents from Belarus. Importance of religion in the Baltic countries increased by an average of 12%, and by 23% in Belarus. “Comfort in religion” increased by almost 500% in Latvia, from 9.97% of respondents indicating comfort in 1990, as opposed to 49.42% in 1997. In Belarus, double the respondents found comfort in religion in 1997 (47.8%) than they did in 1990 (24.4%). Finally, according to the WVS, the downward trend in church attendance that is apparent in Western Europe has not been noted in Latvia and Belarus, where the average percentage increase in church attendance between 1990 and 1997 was almost 10%, or in Hungary, where the increase between 1981 and 1990 was over 6%.

One of the very few outliers in Eastern Europe is Poland, where people seem to find less comfort in religion towards the end of the 1990s than they did at the decade’s beginning (66.8%, vs. 77.4% in 1990). That said, in recent years the Poles have believed religion to be more important than in 1990—in fact, the 26.6% increase in people who believe religion to be important in 1997 is significant. Similarly, in this highly religious country, over 96% said that they have been raised religious in 1997, only 1 percentage point less than 1996.

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

In all four Southeast European countries for which sufficient data was available, a resurgence of religion similar to that in Russia and Eastern Europe could be identified.

Since the mid-1990s, less and less Yugoslavs have declared themselves either nonreligious or atheist, as a percentage of the population (down from 30% in 1990, to 29.1% in 1995 and 28.7% in 2000). Religion is also on the rise in Slovenia and in Bulgaria. In Slovenia, more people believe in God and think that God is important. They also believe religion to be more important, and say that they find more comfort in it, although they attended church less often in 1997 than in 1990. Among Southeast European countries it is in Bulgaria, however, where religion seems to have surged most. Six out of seven criteria indicate that Bulgarians’ religious beliefs are on a steady rise.

CENTRAL ASIA AND CAUCASUS

CENTRAL ASIA AND CAUCASUS	
Country	Religious Trend
Armenia	Resurgent
Azerbaijan	Resurgent
Kazakhstan	Resurgent
Tajikistan	Resurgent
Turkmenistan	Resurgent
Uzbekistan	Resurgent

Central Asia and the Caucasus is another region where religion is clearly resurgent. In the course of this study, the central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have been examined, along with Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus region. While none of the above countries have been included in the World Values Surveys, the one piece of data that is available—the percentage of the population that professes to be nonreligious or atheist—is significant. Not only is the trend identical, namely a drop in this percentage across all the above mentioned countries, but this drop has been acute in all cases.

Between 1970 and mid-2000, the nonreligious and atheist population, taken together, has been on a steady decline in all six countries. In Kazakhstan, the percentage dropped from 54% in 1970 to 40% in 2000, and is projected to continue falling to 34% in 2025. In Tajikistan, the percentage dropped from 34% in 1970 to 14% in 2000, and is projected to drop an additional 7% within the next quarter century. In Turkmenistan, the nonreligious/atheist population dropped from 35% in 1970 to 10% in 2000, and is estimated to reach 4% in 2025. As to Uzbeks, 42% declared themselves nonreligious or atheist in 1970, 22% did so in 2000, and only 15% are expected to do so in 2025.

In the Caucasus region, Armenia has experienced an extremely sharp decline in its nonreligious/atheist population, from 61% in 1970 to 13% in 2000, and an estimated 5% in 2025. Finally, in Azerbaijan, the corresponding numbers are 34%, 11%, and 6%.

While it is unfortunate that data from the World Values Surveys is not available for most countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the trend towards religiousness has been widely

reported. According to Georgi Derluguan and Anara Tabyshalieva, a process of evangelization has followed the declaration of religious freedom in Central Asian countries. Protestantization has been most successful in Kazakhstan, followed by Kyrgyzstan. Christianization also takes place among Uzbeks. “Today,” they write, “it is possible to speak of thousands of Kyrgyz and Kazakhs converted to Protestantism, a phenomenon that has clashed with the common belief that all native people must be Muslims. There are religious tensions between the groups. Generally speaking, the process of Christianization in the northern part of Central Asia competes with the Islamization of the southern part. This is further complicated by ethnic divisions that often parallel religious groupings.”⁶⁸

In some countries the euphoria over the return of religious freedom after the collapse of the Soviet Union is tempered by the fear of a possible spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments are alarmed by the activities of the Wahhabi sect in the Fergana Valley—an area shared by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan where Islam has always been deeply rooted.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the Southern Center for International Studies believes that the revival of Islam in parts of Central Asia has been a largely peaceful process. The issue, however, has gained international attention because of the actions of a few radical Islamic groups, in the Southern Center’s opinion. One such group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), is fighting to overthrow the secular Uzbek government and control the Fergana Valley, where Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan meet. Over the past several years, the IMU and other Islamic militant groups have waged periodic battles with the Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik militaries. Similarly, Russian troops continue to battle Islamic militants in Chechnya.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Georgi Derluguan, and Anara Tabyshalieva, “The ‘Religious Factor’ in Central Asia and the Caucasus,” Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Washington, DC, June 1997. Available at the website of the Center for Political and Strategic Studies, last accessed 10 November 2002, <http://www.cpss.org/casianw/perca0697.txt>.

⁶⁹ “Central Asia: Worries about Islam, *Economist*, 21 February 1998, 40.

⁷⁰ “Russia and the Former Soviet Republics in Transition; Lesson 4: Society, Culture and the Environment,” Southern Center for International Studies, World in Transition Series. Available at the website of the SCIS, last accessed 29 March 2003, http://www.southerncenter.org/ru_feb01_lesson4.pdf.

AFRICA

AFRICA	
Country	Religious Trend
Nigeria	Resurgent
South Africa	Resurgent

Africa proves problematic in terms of ‘measuring’ religious change. The first problem is that only two African countries—South Africa and Nigeria—are included in the World Values Surveys’ first three waves. The second problem is that the data available for the African continent—namely the *World Christian Encyclopedia*’s figures on the nonreligious and atheist populations—proved useless to reach conclusions about religious change in Africa. In nearly all African countries for which data on the nonreligious and atheist population was gathered—Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe—the combined nonreligious/atheist population is minuscule (in most cases below 0.5%), as is the change in this population over time. The one exception is South Africa.

Nigeria and South Africa were the only two African countries that were included in the first three waves of the WVS, and both countries show signs of a strengthening of religious belief—South Africa more strongly so than Nigeria, despite a slightly increasing percentage of the nonreligious/atheist population from 0.7% in 1970 to 2.6% in 2000. Other measurements show clear signs of religious resurgence in South Africa: Belief in God rose from an already high 94.5% in 1981 to an even higher 98.1% in 1997; more South Africans believed that God was important (87.3% in 1981 vs. 92.3% in 1997); more South Africans believed that God was raised religious (86.9% in 1990 vs. 88.6% in 1997); 6% more South Africans believed religion to be important in 1997 than they did in 1990; South Africans found more comfort in religion in 1997 than at any time since the 1980s (88.5% in 1997 vs. 79.4% in 1981); and finally, church attendance increased by no less than 23% between 1981 and 1997.

Nigerians are known to be a very religious people, and hence conclusions about changes in religious behavior among Nigerians should be made with great care. It is difficult to argue, for example, that a recorded 'decline' in the importance of God from 98.9% in 1990 to 97% in 1997 really indicates that religion is becoming less important—the importance which Nigerians attributed to God could hardly have risen higher. Similarly, the recorded increase in the population that has been raised religious from 93.5% in 1990 to 94% in 1997 hardly suggests unambiguously that the country experiences a surge in religion. Yet, a more complete picture of those criteria for which data is available suggests that despite what is already an extremely high level of religiosity, a slight trend towards even higher degrees of religious belief can be discerned, since most of the data suggest just that. Importance of religion in Nigeria, for example, has increased by over 4% between 1990 and 1997, and church attendance has also slightly increased.

While one would be hard-pressed to generalize about a resurgence of religion in all of Africa based on data available for two African countries, there is a widespread agreement among scholars of religion that religion in Africa is indeed on the rise, despite the fact that data to substantiate this assessment is difficult to obtain. It is clear that Africa experiences a boom in Roman Catholicism, Pentecostal Christianity and indigenous Christian churches. At the same time, Islam is a strong force in many parts of Africa. It is the main religion in the Maghreb, and is advancing relatively quickly in Nigeria and other countries.

Christian religious institutions in Africa do not only supply religious services, but help in providing health care, education, social support, finding marriage partners, assisting with overseas travel, business and employment. The typical Christian today is not a European, but rather an African or a Latin American. In Africa, there is a particular emphasis on wealth and health churches that seem to resonate with traditional African belief. According to David Martin of the London School of Economics, Nigeria and Zimbabwe are the two African countries where the Evangelical influence is most likely to continue.

Measuring by numbers, the percentage of Africans who subscribe to Christian beliefs has increased from roughly 40% to about 46% during the last quarter of the 20th century.⁷¹ Africans have been highly receptive to Catholic missionaries, which helped increase the number of Catholics in Africa from an estimated 16 million in 1955 to 120 million African Catholics at the

⁷¹ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 13.

turn of the century. In Tanzania, the rise of Catholicism has been particularly dramatic, with the number of Catholics having grown by 419% since 1961.⁷²

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND SOUTH ASIA

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, SOUTH ASIA	
Region / Country	Religious Trend
Middle East	Inconclusive, due to lack of data; Suspicion: Resurgent
Southeast Asia	Inconclusive, due to lack of data; Suspicion: Resurgent
India	Declining

For the same reasons that it is difficult to measure religious change in Africa, it is also difficult to measure religious resurgence or decline in the Middle East, as well as North Africa and South Asia. Not only are few Middle Eastern, North African (Maghreb), and South Asian countries included in the WVS, but the little data that is available does not provide real insight into the complex phenomenon of religious change in these regions. As in Africa, change over time in the percentage of the nonreligious/atheist population is negligible. Most countries in the Middle East and North Africa are almost exclusively Muslim, with the Muslim population usually accounting, according to WCE figures, over 95% of the population.⁷³ There are several countries whose population is almost entirely Muslim, namely 99.5% or more. These countries

⁷² Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 58.

⁷³ According to figures from the World Christian Encyclopedia, the Muslim population constitutes the following percentage of the overall population in mid-2000: in Algeria, 96.7%; in Egypt, 84.4%; in Iran, 95.6%; in Iraq, 96%; in Jordan, 93%; in Morocco, 98.3%; in Saudi Arabia, 93.7%; in Syria, 89.3%; in Tunisia, 98.9%; in the United Arab Emirates, 75.6%; and in Yemen, 98.9%.

include Bahrain, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara, and Yemen.⁷⁴

It should also be kept in mind that in some parts of the traditional Middle East, feelings or expressions of secularization are not only rare, but sometimes chastised. In addition, the lack of a democratic political culture in the Arab Middle East and the persistence of autocratic, and sometimes totalitarian rulers in some Middle Eastern countries render efforts at conducting meaningful polls in those areas difficult, perhaps futile. Due to the persistence of religious traditionalism in the Middle East, it is also difficult to identify certain trends and reach any conclusion as to the change in religious behavior. Olivier Roy, for instance, argues that even if one would attempt to measure a resurgence of religion in the Middle East based on the number of mosques that are being built in a certain region, such numbers would not necessarily provide accurate indications of a change in the number of worshippers. Sometimes, Roy suggests, mosques are built in new neighborhoods solely in order to appear as more religious than other neighborhoods, although de facto the mosques could remain empty.⁷⁵

A systematic and reliable way of measuring religious change in the Middle East and North Africa still needs to be found, and may require many more years to materialize.⁷⁶ That said, a vast literature does exist covering the across-the-board recognition that religion is resurgent in the Middle East in the form of what is often labeled Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, Islamism, and so on. Islam surged rather dramatically in the late 1970s, manifested in General Zia ul-Haq's coup d'état in Pakistan in 1977 and in the Iranian Revolution. According to John Esposito, unlike earlier Islamic revivals, the re-emergence of Islam in the 1970s was deeper and more profound than earlier revivals, and it "encompassed both the personal and private sphere. The personal aspect of the Islamic revival," according to Esposito, "is reflected in increased emphasis upon religious observances (mosque attendance, Ramadan fast, outlawing of alcohol, and gambling), religious programming in the media, the proliferation of religious literature, the rebirth of the Muslim Brotherhood, the rise of new Islamic associations, the success of Muslim student associations in university elections, and the vibrant dawah (missionary) movements which seek not simply to convert non-Muslims but to

⁷⁴ Figures obtained from the website of Adherents.com, last accessed 29 March 2003, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_islam.html.

⁷⁵ Olivier Roy, email message to the author, 31 October 2002.

⁷⁶ Several experts on Islam, religion, and the Middle East contacted by the author with regard to ways in which religious change in the Middle East can be measured were unaware of how such change can be measured.

“Islamize” the Muslim population, i.e. to deepen their knowledge of and commitment to Islam.”⁷⁷

Over twenty years after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, revolutionary Islamic doctrine and groups have become the principal opposition force across the Middle East. In most countries in the Middle East, organized religious forces challenge the current rulers. Two recent examples include the November 3, 2002, election victory of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP)—a party with an Islamist outlook—that won a clear majority, capturing 34% of the vote and 363 of the 550 seats in the parliament; and the November 2002 crackdown on Islamic militants in Jordan, which focused on the southern city of Maan.

SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

As regards South Asia, the present study has not been able to reach any conclusions. As far as measuring religious change in Afghanistan and Pakistan are concerned, problems similar to those in the Middle East and Africa arise. The two countries are not included in the WVS, and the WCE’s statistics are inconclusive. In 2000, the Muslim population in Afghanistan and Pakistan comprised 98.1% and 96.1%, respectively. According to the WCE, the nonreligious/atheist population in Afghanistan during the entire 20th century was 0%, while in Pakistan it was 0% until 1970 and thereafter changed to 0.1%—clearly, figures that are not very revealing. Afghanistan has recently witnessed the fall of one of the most religious regimes of modern times—the Taliban regime—and it is simply impossible to forecast the direction that religious behavior will take in the foreseeable future.

In the Southeast Asian countries of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, no data was available to reach any conclusions about religious change. According to some reports, however, some countries in South East Asia undergo a Muslim religious revival. Singapore, for example, apparently witnesses a growing Islamic religiosity, manifested by a rising enrollment in madrasas.⁷⁸ Indonesia, the country with the largest number of Muslims in the world, is defined by a growing Islamic identity: there has been an explosion in the number of Islamic schools, businesses, civic groups, and media outlets. Some 75% of Indonesians want Islam to play “a very large role” in society and government policy, according to a survey by the U.S. State Department.

⁷⁷ John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 11.

⁷⁸ Lee Kim Chiew, “The Reawakening of Islam,” *Straits Times* (Singapore), 22 March 2002.

INDIA

According to the criteria used here to measure change in religious values and behavior, India is experiencing a moderate decline in religious behavior and values. The clearest indications of a decline in religious behavior is found in the decreasing figures of attendance of religious services in India—down by almost 16% between 1990 and 1997. A more subtle, almost unnoticeable decline has also taken in the population that finds comfort in religion, which dropped by less than 1% from 1990 to 1997. In these seven years, the importance of religion in the eyes of Indians has fallen by 3.4 %, as did the percentage of Indians who were raised religious (down by 5.28%). However, in 1997 more Indians thought God to be important than in 1990 (83.4% vs. 73.7%).

EAST ASIA

EAST ASIA	
Country	Religious Trend
China	Resurgent
Japan	Inconclusive
South Korea	Static

CHINA

The People's Republic of China is undergoing a significant process of religious resurgence. According to two variables that could be identified, namely change over time in the nonreligious population, as well as the importance of religion, religion is on the rise in the world's most highly populated country. According to the WCE, the nonreligious/atheist population in China decreased steadily over the last three decades, from 59.3% in 1970 to 50.3% in 2000. It is projected to decrease further to 48.1% in 2025. As far as the importance of religion is concerned, within 7 years, from 1990 to 1997, importance of religion climbed significantly from 3.6% to 14.2%.

The case of China presents significant statistical difficulties, making it impossible to ascertain the exact number of Chinese religious adherents. Estimates of the number of Chinese

Christians, for example, range from 20 million to 100 million.⁷⁹ Despite these difficulties, the religious revival in China has been widely reported in the press, as well as in academic writings. *Boston Globe* reporter Indira Lakshmanan writes that there is a “dramatic rise in the number of Chinese who are embracing faiths, especially Christianity, according to official figures and independent groups.” As many as 15 million people belong to the official Protestant church and as many as 10 million to the state-sanctioned China Patriotic Catholic church—up from 830,000 and 3 million, respectively, in the 1950s, according to Yang Huilin, director of the Institute for the Study of Christian Religion at People’s University in Beijing.⁸⁰ The number of underground Christians—“those who refuse to join approved churches that demand loyalty to the state above God and teach a watered-down version of the creed”—is believed to be double the number of members of the official church, according to religious scholars. Lakshmanan writes that the Christian population may already exceed the Communist Party’s membership of 50 million.

Buddhism is China’s largest faith, but Protestantism is the fastest-growing, with an estimated 2 million Chinese being baptized every year, “according to independent scholars and ministers” in China.⁸¹ There also seems to be a revival in some Chinese provinces of traditional folk religion, as reported in *Newsday* in August 2001. Quoting “researchers,” the article says that in the last decade, some 1,200 temples were built in Shaanxi province alone.⁸²

Tu Weiming, professor of Chinese history at Harvard University, adds that China is thoroughly open to Christian evangelicalism. Departments of religion have been established at major universities; scholars holding PhD’s in Christian studies are beginning to make their presence known; and there are reports about the election of Christians to leadership positions in villages and township enterprises.⁸³

⁷⁹ According to the Chinese government, some 20 million Chinese worship on government-registered churches. As Philip Jenkins points out, this number should be considered the absolute minimum, since it fails to account for unapproved congregations and private house churches. The U.S. Department of State, meanwhile, provides a figure of 100 million Chinese Christians, a number that Jenkins believes to be too high. Jenkins, *The New Christendom*, 70.

⁸⁰ Indira A. R. Lakshmanan, “China Cracks Down on Growing Faiths,” *Boston Globe*, 2 March 2002, A8.

⁸¹ Indira A. R. Lakshmanan, “China Cracks Down on Growing Faiths,” *Boston Globe*, 2 March 2002, A8.

⁸² Edward Gargan, “The Temples of Bloom; Chinese Revive Folk Tradition,” *Newsday*, 19 August 2001, A8.

⁸³ Tu Weiming, “The Quest for Meaning: Religion in the People’s Republic of China,” in Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*, 93-94.

SOUTH KOREA

Figures on nonreligious/atheists, and data on church attendance in South Korea suggest that religious behavior and values have not changed significantly in the past decade. Between 1990 and 2000, the nonreligious/atheist population remained almost steady, increasing only by 0.2% to reach 1.6% in 2000. Meanwhile, church attendance remained almost unchanged, dropping by 1% only between 1981 and 1997.

While the World Values Survey and the World Christian Encyclopedia fail to provide an unambiguous picture about the status of religion in South Korea, data available from other sources, as well as press reports, suggest that South Koreans have become increasingly religious. A study by Don Baker published in the *Harvard Asia Quarterly* found that there has been a great upsurge in religion in South Korea in the last decades. In 1964, only about 3.5 million South Koreans, out of a total population of almost 28.2 million (or 12% of the total population), noted a religious affiliation on government census forms. The main religions in Korea are Buddhism, Protestantism, and Catholicism. By 1983 more than 15.5 million South Koreans, close to 40% of a population of over 39.6 million, responded in the affirmative when their government asked them if they professed faith in any particular religion—more than a four-fold increase over the number of believers two decades earlier. In the 1990s, that number increased to between 47% (in 1997) to 54% (in 1991) percent of the total population of South Korea, with the size of the self-proclaimed religious population having risen from less than 16 million to between 21 to 23 million in a little more than a decade. According to a 1997 Gallup poll cited by Baker, almost half of those who said they had no religious affiliation at that time confessed to have previously regarded themselves Christians or Buddhists. “In addition,” Baker writes, “many of those who say they are not now nor have ever been members of religious organizations nevertheless participate in religious activities such as shamanistic rituals or the activities of some of Korea’s new religions without considering their participation a signal of religious orientation. Clearly, by the end of the twentieth century, religious organizations and religious activities had become important features of the Korean cultural landscape.”⁸⁴

Evidence that South Korea has become a more religious society can be found, in Baker’s opinion, in architecture: “Excluding shaman shrines, the government counted 10,366 buildings used for religious rituals in 1962 and 58,896 in 1993. For example, the number of Buddhist

⁸⁴ Don Baker, “Looking for God in the Streets of Seoul: The Resurgence of Religion in 20th Century Korea,” *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 5.4 (Autumn 2001). Available at the website of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/haq/200104/0104a002.htm>.

temples in South Korea rose from 2,306 in 1962 to 7,244 by 1980. By 1993 there were 10,632 registered Buddhist temples in South Korea, a more than four-fold increase in three decades. The figures are even more remarkable for Protestant churches. There were 42,598 Protestant churches in South Korea in 1993, more than six times as many as the 6,785 which existed in 1962. Catholics are not able to establish new churches as quickly, primarily because of a shortage of priests. Nevertheless, there were 844 Catholic churches in Korea in 1990 compared to only 313 in 1965. Even the small new indigenous religion of Won Buddhism expanded from 186 worship halls in 1972 to 404 in 1993.”⁸⁵

Christianity is the most resurgent among the religions practiced in South Korea. According to Philip Jenkins, some 10-12 million South Koreans—about a quarter of the population—are Christians, compared to 300,000 Christians in 1920.⁸⁶

VIETNAM

In addition to the People’s Republic of China and South Korea, a rise in religious activity has also been apparent in Vietnam. In the U.S. State Department’s Report on Religious Freedom for 2002, the authors acknowledge that “participation in religious activities throughout the country continued to grow significantly.”⁸⁷

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA	
Country	Religious Trend
Australia	Declining
New Zealand	Declining

The present study concludes that a decline in religiosity can be witnessed both in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, belief in God fell from 79% to 75% between 1981 and 1997, while ‘Importance of God’ fell by 6.8 % to 50% in 1997. Australians have also shown to become slightly more “unchurched” over time, to borrow Grace Davie’s phrase. Church

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 71.

⁸⁷ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “International Religious Freedom Report 2002,” Vietnam, last accessed 22 March 2003, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13916.htm>.

attendance between 1981 and 1997 dropped by 0.3% in this period. In addition, in the last three decades, the nonreligious/atheist population of Australia and New Zealand increased from 6.1% in 1970 to 16.2% in 2000 in Australia, and from 3.5% to 13.6% in New Zealand.

TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR – BY STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT

The above analysis shows that change in religious behavior and values is correlated to some extent with geographic regions, at least in some cases. The clearest signs of a religious resurgence can be identified in Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus region. Based on an analysis of two of the three most highly populated countries in Latin America—Argentina and Brazil—a religious resurgence also seems evident in Latin America. China, which hosts about 20% of the world’s population, is also showing signs of a religious resurgence, as has been shown, although additional data unavailable at this point would be helpful in order to make an even stronger case. The only two African countries for which relevant data was available, South Africa and Nigeria, also show signs of a religious revival. And although a strengthening in religious behavior could not be proven for the Middle East and South East Asia due to a lack of systematic data for countries in these regions, there is a strong suspicion that these two regions as well experience a rise in religiousness.

The clearest signs of a decline in religiosity can be identified in Western Europe, and Australia, although this phenomenon is not universal, as mostly Catholic countries in Europe seem exempt from this trend. On the North American continent, signs of strong persistent religious values and behavior in the United States have not been evident in Canada, a by far more secular society than its neighbor.

The above findings urge an examination of change in religious behavior based on a country’s status of development, in addition to one based on region. The following table summarizes trends in religious behavior and values based on the status of development of the countries examined above. The categorization of the countries has been adopted from the 2002 Human Development Report, which classifies countries into three categories: OECD, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Developing Countries.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ “Countries in the Major World Aggregates,” *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, available on the Website of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), last accessed 29 March 2003, 271, http://www.undp.org.np/publications/hdr2002/18_cntryclassf.pdf.

OECD COUNTRIES		CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE AND CIS		DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	
Country	Religious Trend	Country	Religious Trend	Country/Region	Religious Trend
Australia	Declining	Armenia	Resurgent	Argentina	Resurgent
Belgium	Declining	Azerbaijan	Resurgent	Brazil	Resurgent
Britain	Declining	Belarus	Resurgent	Chile	Inconclusive*
Canada	Declining	Bosnia-Herc.	Resurgent	China	Resurgent
Denmark	Inconclusive*	Bulgaria	Resurgent	India	Declining
Finland	Resurgent	Czech Rep.	Resurgent	Mexico	Inconclusive*
France	Declining	Estonia	Resurgent	Nigeria	Resurgent
Germany	Declining	Hungary	Resurgent	South Africa	Resurgent
Iceland	Declining	Kazakhstan	Resurgent	Turkey	Declining
Ireland	Resurgent	Latvia	Resurgent		
Italy	Resurgent	Lithuania	Resurgent		
Japan	Inconclusive*	Poland	Declining		
Netherlands	Declining	Russia	Resurgent	Middle East	Resurgent***
New Zealand	Declining	Slovakia	Resurgent	So. East Asia	Resurgent***
Norway	Declining	Slovenia	Resurgent		
South Korea	Static**	Tajikistan	Resurgent		
Spain	Inconclusive*	Turkmenistan	Resurgent		
Sweden	Inconclusive*	Ukraine	Resurgent		
Switzerland	Declining	Uzbekistan	Resurgent		
United States	Resurgent	Yugoslavia	Resurgent		

* Data for these countries was available, yet no clear trend was discernible

** Data available, but no change in religious trend discernible

*** Data was not available, but religious resurgence is strongly suspected throughout these regions

The classifications of the above countries into three categories suggest a number of correlations: first, in OECD countries, religion seems, by and large, to be in decline. In eleven out of the eighteen OECD countries observed (61%), religious decline is the dominating trend. In

only four countries (22%) signs of religious resurgence can be found. In Denmark, Spain, and Sweden, the available data was inconclusive—in those countries, opposing trends exists.

There is extremely strong evidence showing that Russia, former Soviet countries and members of the former Eastern bloc are witnessing what is probably the strongest religious revival of all of the countries examined. With the exception of Poland (which, to be sure, is still a highly religious country), all nineteen countries examined in this category seem to undergo a religious revival.

Unfortunately, the lack of data for most developing countries does not allow for a conclusive assessment of the status of change in religious values and behavior in developing countries. In most countries for which some data was available, religion seemed to be on the rise, namely Argentina, Brazil, China, Nigeria and South Africa. Argentina and Brazil together inhabit roughly 215 million people⁸⁹, roughly 40% of the continent's estimated 519 million inhabitants in 2002.⁹⁰ Nigeria and South Africa, meanwhile, account for some 20% of the African population, while the Chinese population accounts for roughly one third of the Asian, and one fifth of the global population in 2002. Hence, the countries for which a rise in religious values and behavior was identified are rather dominant players in their respective regions, and it would therefore be surprising if a religious resurgence in those countries would be an isolated incident, and not part of a more general trend in their respective regions. According to this study, religious behavior and values seem to be in decline in India and Turkey. Besides in Africa, a lack of adequate data is most apparent in the Middle East and in Southeast Asia, yet it is there that evidence of a religious resurgence—difficult to measure as it is at present—is widely recognized due to such phenomena as the strengthening of Islamist parties (such as in the Palestinian Authority, Algeria, Jordan, and other countries), a rise in religious violence, or the proliferation of religious ideas in the media, literature, textbooks, etc.

What crystallizes then is a general trend in which religious resurgence seems to affect a majority of countries certainly in the former Eastern Bloc, but most likely also in much of the developing world, in particular large parts of Latin America, Africa, East Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East. In contrast, the strengthening of religious behavior and values discernible in the former Eastern bloc countries and much of the developing countries does not apply, by and large, to OECD countries. While a religious decline was not universal to developed countries,

⁸⁹ According to the CIA World Factbook 2002. Available online at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook>.

⁹⁰ According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, 2002.

this trend seems to apply to the large majority of the OECDs. Within the OECD countries, it is the more traditionally religious countries—the predominantly Catholic countries of Italy and Ireland, as well as the largely Protestant United States—that are exempt from the general trend towards secularization in the West.

Relations Between Religion and State: A Comparative Survey

The preceding discussion of the status of religion has focused on two major aspects of the global religious upsurge: first, on global adherence to religion based on natural population growth and conversion rates; and second, on a demonstrated strengthening or weakening in religious behavior and values of *individual* adherents to a particular religion. Little has been said thus far about manifestations of the strength of religion in the public sphere. In this part of the study, five variables will be introduced that provide some insight into the relationship between particular religions on the one hand, and states on the other hand. They are as follows: first, the faring of religious parties in elections over time; second, official or unofficial favoritism by a state of particular religions, based on a preferential allocation of financial aid; third, references to either a particular religion, or to religion in general, in constitutions or quasi-constitutional documents; fourth, countries in which one or several religions are defined as state religions; and fifth, countries whose legal systems are partly or entirely guided by Shari'a law, the Islamic religious law. The collection of time-series data for most of the above-mentioned variables—with the exception of the first variable—was beyond the scope of this paper. For the last four variables, the relationship between religion and state described in this chapter should be regarded as a survey in a particular point in time, namely the year 2002, rather than an analysis of a trend over a period of time. The lack of time-series data in the following discussion will be compensated by the large number of states that have been included in the cross-country survey, in particular for the last four variables.

RELIGIOUS PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

The first variable discussed in this section is an examination of how religious parties have fared in elections since the beginning of the 1990s. The section will focus mainly on those religious parties that tend to attract only the adherents of the religion that they represent—examples include Islamic parties and Jewish religious parties in the Middle East. These parties, by and large, also tend to advocate a more intimate, and sometimes symbiotic relationship

between the state and the religion that they represent. The section will not survey the performance of those parties that tend to attract both members of the religion that they nominally represent, as well as members of other religions. Examples include the various Christian Democratic parties of Europe. In addition to attracting members of various denominations, these parties also tend to accept the principle of separation between church and state.⁹¹ In many ways, they are merely nominally religious. In the following, any reference to “religious parties” will apply to the former category only, and not to Christian Democratic parties.

When tracking the performance of religious parties, which seek to advance the status of their own religion—oftentimes to the detriment of those who are either adherents of other religions or secular—one needs to exercise caution when drawing conclusions. Elections in the Middle East and North Africa, a region that features a large number of religious parties, are oftentimes marred by pre-election violence and other means of intimidation that have the potential to skew elections in various directions. In November 1995 in Egypt, for instance, over 25 people were killed, and about 1,000 activists linked to the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested in the weeks leading up to the November 29 parliamentary elections. In other countries, religious parties that have been regarded as threatening political or regime stability have been banned, as happened to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria in the June 1997 parliamentary elections. Other religious parties decided to boycott elections, as did the Muslim Brotherhood in the November 1997 elections to Jordan’s House of Representatives. For these reasons, a rise or drop in the percentage of votes for religious parties over a period of time does not necessarily represent a strengthening or weakening of that religious party.

Too often, elections in the Arab and Muslim Middle East are held in which candidates vie for seats in powerless assemblies, which often are but a rubber stamp for the directives of authoritarian leaders. One such weak institution is the Kuwaiti *majlis al-umma*, the National Assembly of 50 representatives, where three elections were held in the course of the 1990s. In the first election of October 6, 1992, the franchise was restricted to 13% of the population. Since national law prohibits political parties, the representatives are characterized by a loose political or religious identification. In the 1992 elections, 19 (or 38%) of those voted into the assembly identified themselves with Islamist groups. In the next elections held on October 8, 1996,

⁹¹ Most Christian Democratic parties state explicitly that both Christians as well as non-Christians are welcome to join their party. See, for example, the mission statement of Germany’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Chapter 1, Sections 1-2, available on the CDU website, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://www.cdu.de>.

“Islamists” won 16 seats, or roughly 32% of the seats in the *majlis al-umma*. In the July 1999 elections, that number rose to 20 seats, or 40%.⁹²

Since June 1993, three parliamentary elections were held in Morocco. In the first two of these elections, Islamist groups gained a negligible amount of seats. In the most recent elections of September 2002, however, the Islamist Justice and Development Party gained 42 out of the 325 seats (roughly 13%) in the *Majlis al-Nuwab* (Assembly of Representatives).

In 2002, two countries have made headline news due to stunning electoral victories by religious parties: Turkey and Pakistan. Throughout the 1990s in Turkey, Islamic parties have been a force to be reckoned with. In the October 1991 parliamentary elections, the Welfare Party (*Refah*) won 17% of the votes. In the next parliamentary elections it won plurality, gaining 158 of the 550 seats in parliament before being brought to court and subsequently outlawed by Turkey’s constitutional court in January 1998. In the April 18, 1999 elections, *Refah*’s successor, the Virtue Party (*Fazilet*) gained 111, or 20% of seats in parliament. In May 1999, Turkey’s chief prosecutor, Vural Savas, opened a legal case against the Virtue Party, arguing that it was the continuation of the banned Welfare Party. The Virtue Party was eventually banned on June 22, 2001.⁹³ On November 3, 2002, the Justice and Development Party—created on what remained of the prohibited Welfare Party, gained 34% of the popular vote and 363 seats—nearly two-thirds of all seats—in the Turkish parliament.⁹⁴

In Pakistan, a coalition of six religious factions called the *Mutahida Majlis e Amal* (MMA) scored an unprecedented victory in Pakistan’s parliamentary elections in 2002. Winning sixty-nine out of the 342 seats in parliament, the MMA became the third-largest party in

⁹² Information on the Kuwaiti elections, and on all subsequent elections surveyed in this section—unless cited otherwise—is drawn from “Election Watch,” a service provided by the *Journal of Democracy*. Election Watch “provides reports of recently decided and upcoming elections in developing nations and the post-communist world. Elections in non-democratic nations are included when they exhibit a significant element of genuine competition or, in the case of upcoming elections, when they represent an important test of progress toward democracy.” Much of the data for Election Watch is provided by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), a private, nonprofit education and research foundation that assists in monitoring, supporting, and strengthening the mechanics of the electoral process worldwide. Election Watch appears annually in the first issue of the *Journal of Democracy*. The issues of Election Watch published between the years 1990 and 2000 are available on the Internet. See “Election Watch,” last accessed 29 March 2003, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/election_watch.
⁹³ “The Court of Constitution Banned Virtue Party,” *Latest News From Turkey*, Press Office of the Permanent Representation of Turkey to the EU No.8, 25 June 2001, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://www.turkey.be/En/turkey/last%20news/Lnft-8.pdf>.

⁹⁴ For more on the Islamist movement in Turkey, including on the Welfare and Virtue parties, see Nilufer Narli, “The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA Journal)* 3.3 (September 1999), last accessed 28 March 2003, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a4.html>. For an analysis of the November 2002 elections in Turkey, see Soner Cagaptay, “The November 2002 Elections and Turkey’s New Political Era,” *MERIA Journal* 6.4 (December 2002), last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/index/journalindex.html#TURKEY>.

Pakistan's National Assembly. Never before the 2002 elections had religious parties gained more than 9 seats. In addition, in the 2002 elections, the MMA gained a majority in two out of four Pakistani provinces.⁹⁵

Not in all countries have religious parties scored electoral successes. In Yemen, for instance, the trend for Islamist parties has been downward. In the two elections to the *majlis al-nuwaab*, the House of Representatives that holds 301 seats, the fundamentalist *Islah* party won 62 (20%) and 55 (18%) seats in the April 1993 and April 1997 elections, respectively. The next elections are scheduled for April 27, 2003.

Between 1989 and 1997, Islamist parties have suffered losses in elections to Jordan's 80-seat Lower House, the House of Representatives (*Majlis al-Nuwaab*), yet it is important to add that the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the party of the Muslim Brotherhood, has boycotted the most recent elections of November 1997. Number of seats for Islamist parties have dropped from 33 seats (41%) in November 1989—the first multi-party elections since 1956—to 16 seats (20%) in 1993, down to 12 seats (15%) for independent Islamists in November 1997.

In Algeria, Islamist parties have suffered electoral losses due in large part to a government ban of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). In the early 1990s, the FIS gained a large percentage of seats in both municipal, regional, and national elections. In the June 12, 1990 municipal and regional elections, FIS won 53% of the vote. In the December 1991 national elections, FIS won 188 out of 430 seats in parliament (43%). FIS was banned before the June 1997 national elections, and two smaller Islamic parties won a combined total of 27% of the seats. The combined strength of Islamic parties within parliament deteriorated even further after the May 2002 elections, when the moderate Islamic parties *Islah* and the Movement for a Peaceful Society (formerly *Hamas*) together won 20% of the seats.

Finally, in some countries there has not been any clear trend with regard to how religious parties have fared in elections. In Indonesia, for instance, support for the Muslim-based United Development Party alternated between 1992 and 1999. In 1992, the party won 16% of seats, and managed to seize 21% of seats five years later. By June 1999, however, its percentage of parliamentary seats fell to 18%.

In Israel, several religious parties reflecting both varying degrees of religiousness, but also different ethno-religious backgrounds, are competing for votes.⁹⁶ All of them fit into the

⁹⁵ Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (Harper Collins, 2003, forthcoming), Chapter 8.

description of religious parties used here. In the June 1992 elections, religious parties gained a total of 16 out of the 120 (13%) seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.⁹⁷ In the May 1996 and May 1999 elections, religious parties were able to gain additional seats in each election, winning 23 seats (19%) in 1996, and 27 seats (23%) in the 1999 elections. In the most recent elections of January 2003, however, the various religious parties lost 5 seats, and are currently holding 22 (18%) seats in the Knesset.

Finally, in at least two other elections no clear trend could be identified, since elections have been held only once, or on a very infrequent basis. In the Palestinian Authority, the first elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) took place on January 20, 1996. Independent Islamists won 4 out of the 88 seats in the PLC. In Bahrain, the first legislative elections in nearly 30 years were held in October 2002, with representatives affiliated with Islamists gaining almost half of the parliamentary seats, namely 19 out of 40.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF RELIGIONS BY STATES

Favoritism by a state of a particular religion usually manifests itself in two forms—the one being political support, the other being financial support. For the purposes of this report, the existence of preferential treatment of a particular religion over another is defined mainly through financial support, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Determining the existence of religious favoritism by a state can be a controversial undertaking, since favoritism may often be in the eye of the beholder. This is especially the case when favoritism is mainly expressed through political support, the existence of which is more easily deniable by a government or religious institution than financial support. An additional reason why this report focuses on financial support as proof that some religions enjoy more support than others is that data on financial allocations to a religious organization are more easily identifiable and quantifiable. That said, as an indicator of favoritism of a particular religion, political support, to be sure, shall in no way be regarded as less important than financial support. It is also important to keep in mind that favoritism through financial support does not mean that the religion favored by the government is the only religious organization or denomination that receives financial support by a state. In fact, in the majority of countries in the world, states allocate at least some amount of funds to several religions, rather than to a single religion only. Favoritism in the present context involves the allocation of funds

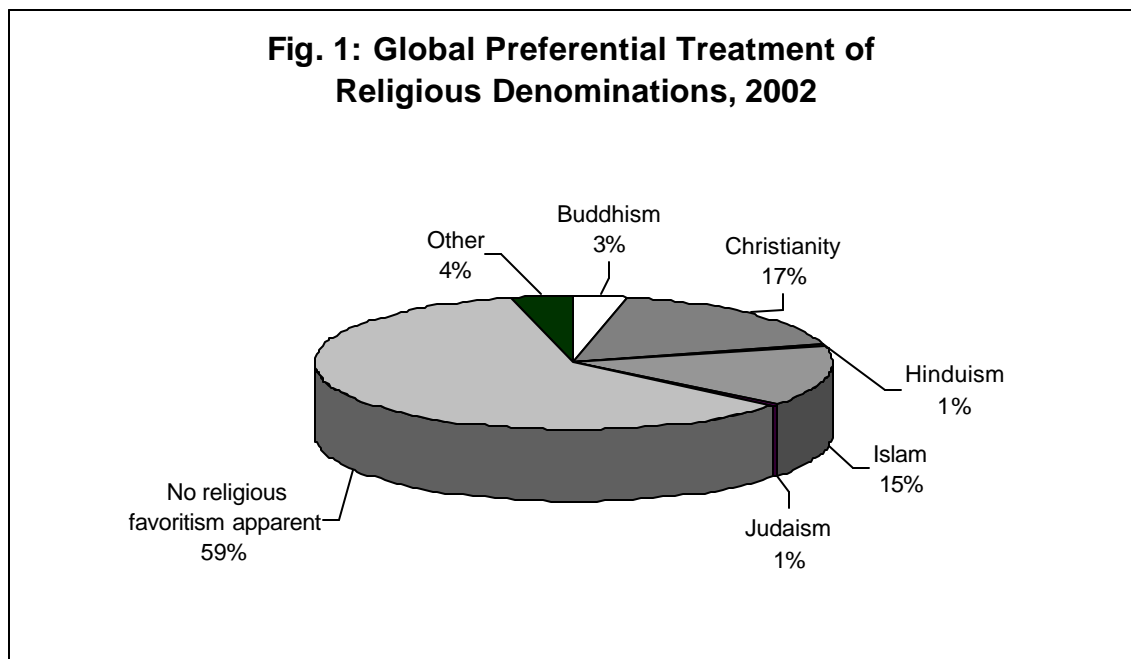
⁹⁶ “Election Watch” does not provide information on Israeli parties and elections. Election information with regard to Israel is provided by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, last accessed 29 March 2003, <http://www.mfa.gov.il>.

⁹⁷ The distribution of the 16 seats was as follows: United Torah Front, 4 seats; Shas, 6; National Religious Party, 6

by a state to a particular religion (and in rare cases to two religions) that is disproportionately high when compared to the state's allocation of funds to other religions, after the numbers of adherents are taken into account.

Most of the information appearing in the following sections, as well as all data that provides the source for the charts in this section, is drawn from the 2002 International Religious Freedom Report published by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the U.S. State Department, which includes summaries of the status of religious freedom in over 185 countries.⁹⁸

As Figure 1 illustrates, a majority of the world's states, almost 60%, do not seem to favor a particular religion over another through financial support. Most countries that do profess religious favoritism allocate a disproportionately high amount of funds to Christian denominations. Thirty-two states, roughly 17% of all states, provide such preferential treatment



to Christian denominations. Twenty-seven countries, or 15% of the countries in the world, have a bias in favor of Islam. Six countries (3%) favor Buddhism, namely Burma, Cambodia, South

⁹⁸ "International Religious Freedom Report 2002," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, 7 October 2002 [online: web], last accessed 24 March 2003. URL: <http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/irf/2002/>

Korea, Mongolia, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. One country each—Nepal and Israel—favor Hinduism and Judaism, respectively.

Included in the “Other” category of the above chart are Afghanistan, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Somalia—countries with more elusive trends regarding religious bias. Japan has been included in this category because two, rather than a single religion, are favored by the government, namely Buddhism as well as Shintoism. Mexico experiences some local preferential treatment of Christianity. In Somalia, Islam is favored only in those parts of the country where Islam is strongest, while in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam enjoy preferential treatment in parts of the country where the respective religion forms a majority. The category also includes Pakistan and Afghanistan, countries whose current political situations do not allow clear assessments of the status of religious favoritism.

Fig. 2 shows that in the majority of the thirty-two countries where various streams of Christianity enjoy preferential treatment, the Roman Catholic Church is the stream enjoying special status, followed by seven countries that favor Orthodox religious streams of Christianity, and four countries each that favor either Protestantism or non-defined Christian streams.

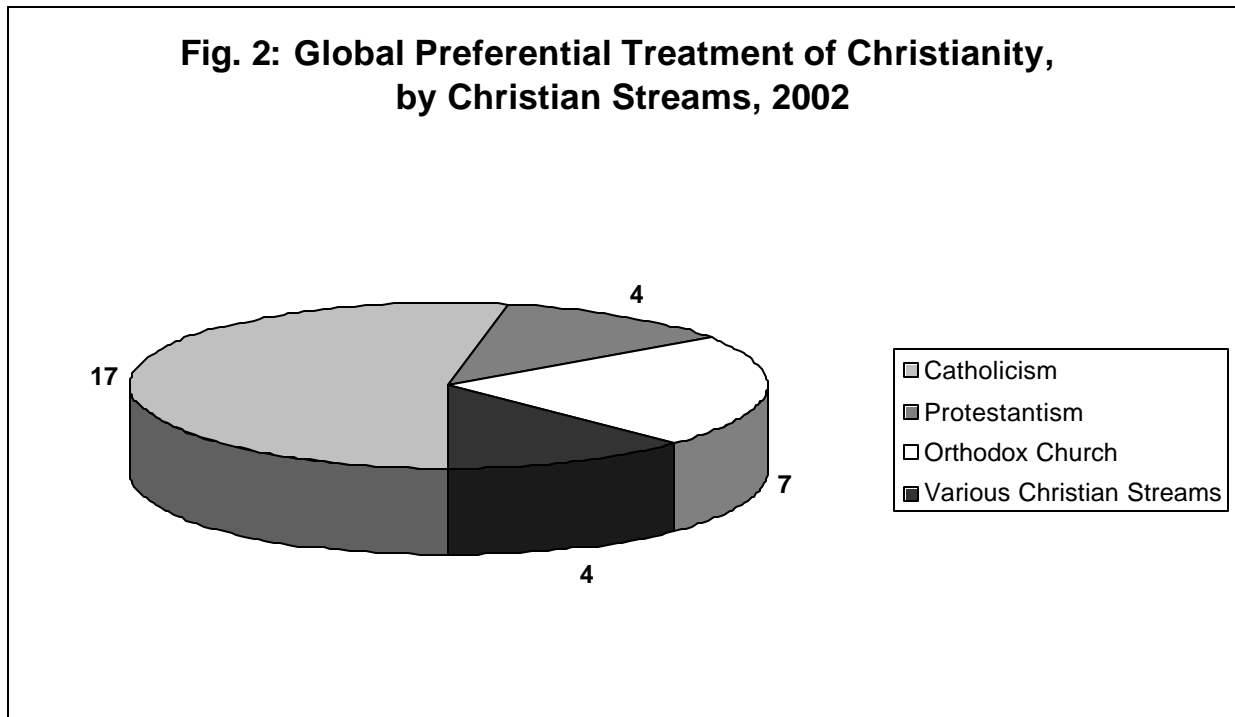


Fig. 3 offers a glimpse into religious favoritism in Western Europe, and shows that the majority of Western European countries do not seem to favor any particular religion through disproportionate financial support. Several Western European countries demonstrate a preferential treatment of the Catholic Church, including Italy, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, and Spain. Denmark, Iceland, and Norway have official policies of preferential treatment of Protestant streams of Christianity in place. In Denmark, for example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only Church directly subsidized by the government; in Iceland, the state directly pays the salaries of the 146 ministers of the Lutheran Church. In Norway, not only is the Evangelical Lutheran Church supported by the state, but a constitutional requirement holds that the Norwegian king and one-half of his cabinet belong to the Lutheran church.

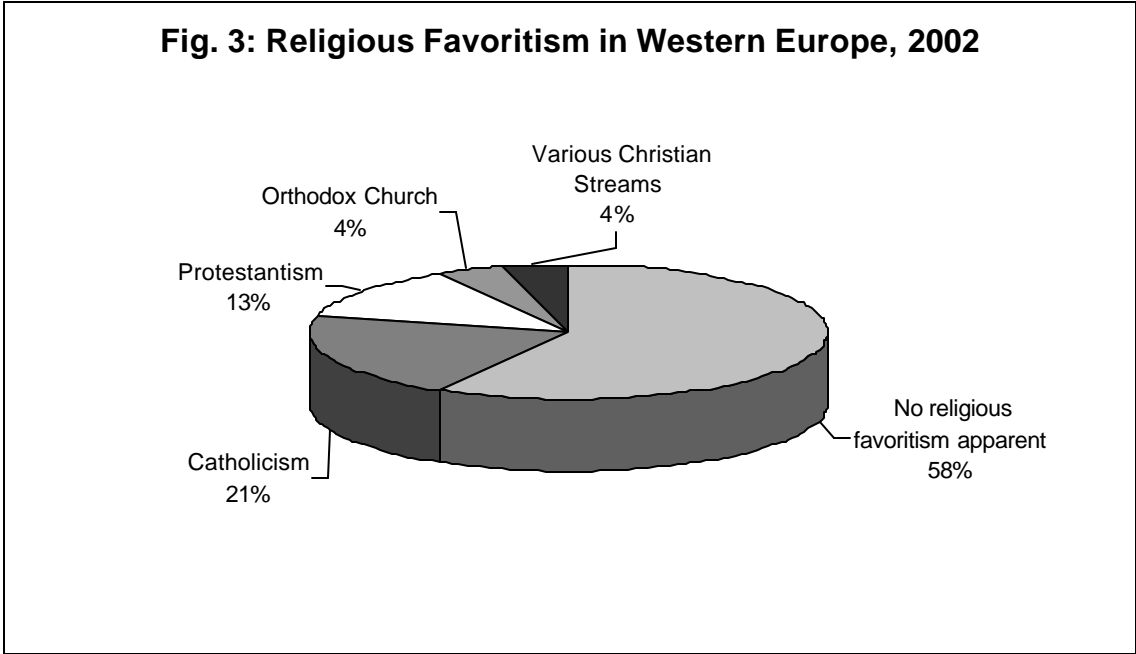
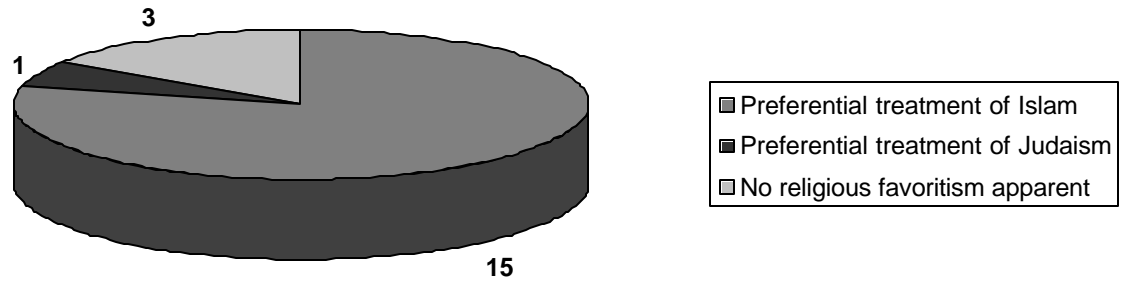


Fig. 4: Religious Favoritism in the Middle East and North Africa, 2002

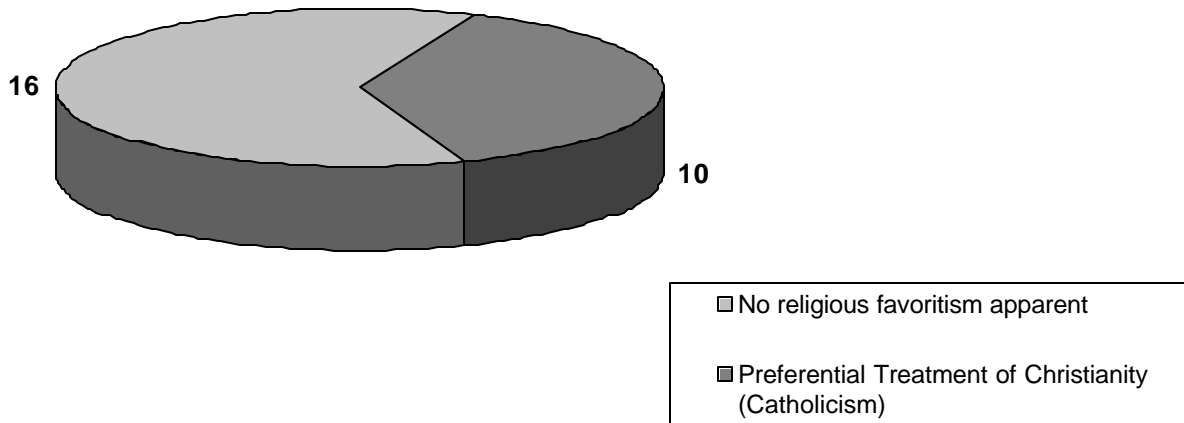


In Western Europe, the Orthodox Church enjoys preferential treatment in Greece, where the government subsidizes the Greek Orthodox Church, whereas other churches are self-supporting. In Switzerland, included in Figure 3 under “Various Christian Streams,” all cantons financially support at least one of the three traditional denominations, the Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, or Protestant denomination.

Fig. 4 clearly illustrates the predominance of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa, where Islam enjoys both financial and political support from fifteen out of the nineteen countries included in this category. There are four notable exceptions to the preferential treatment of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa, most obviously Israel and the occupied territories, where a pro-Jewish bias exists. The three other exceptions are Lebanon, Morocco, and Western Sahara.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the status of religious favoritism in 2002 in Latin America and East Asia, respectively. Hardly surprising, the Catholic Church enjoys preferential treatment in several Latin American countries, including some of the larger countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. Though the Catholic Church is the main church in the majority of the other sixteen Latin American countries, no favoritism could be identified in

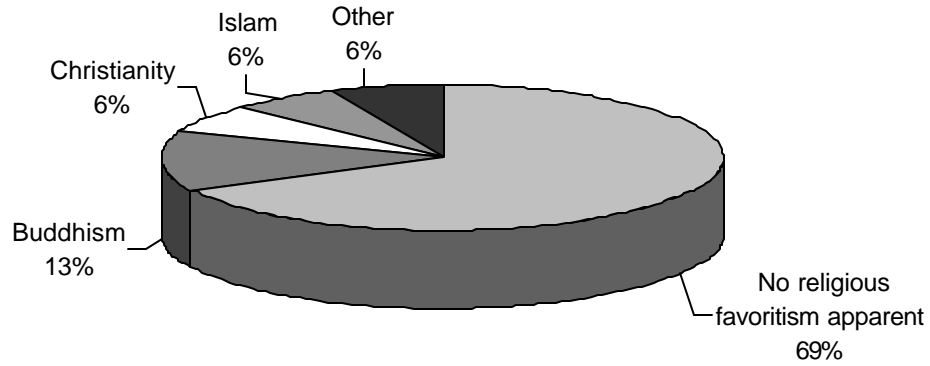
Fig. 5: Religious Favoritism in Latin America, 2002



the majority of Latin American states, including in Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In Brazil, for example, no state religion or favored religion exists. Religious groups are not obliged to register, and the law explicitly prohibits faith-based discrimination.

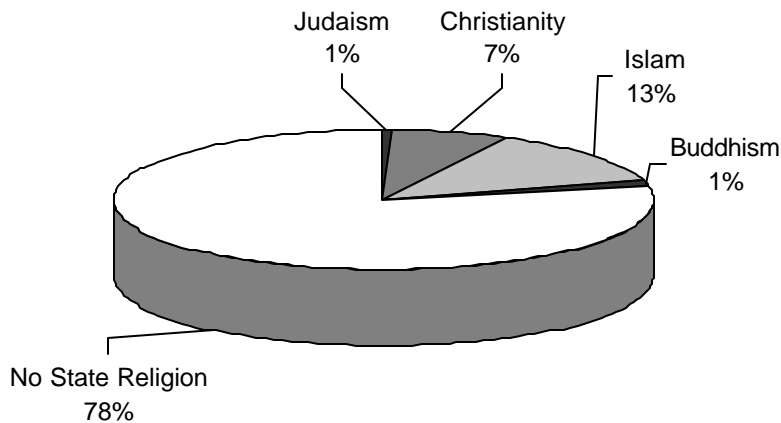
As Fig. 6 reveals, religious favoritism also exists in East Asia, although no one religion dominates the picture. Over two thirds of East Asian countries show no religious favoritism at all. Of the remaining third, Buddhism enjoys preferential treatment in Burma, Cambodia, South Korea, and Mongolia; Islam receives disproportionate state support in Brunei and Malaysia; and Christianity is the clearly favored religion in Nauru and Vanuatu.

Fig. 6: Religious Favoritism in East Asia, 2002



COUNTRIES WITH A STATE RELIGION

Fig. 7: Countries with a State Religion, 2002



One of the most obvious variables describing religion-state relations is a look at the countries that have a state religion. Based on data acquired from the State Department's 2002

International Religious Freedom Report, and illustrated in Fig. 7, forty-one countries (22%) have a state religion, and 141 countries (78%) do not have a state religion. Of the forty-one countries with a state religion, twenty-five (13% of all countries) declare Islam as the state religion, thirteen (7%) declare various Christian streams as a state religion, two (Buthan and Cambodia, 1%) declare Buddhism, and one state (Israel, 1%) declares Judaism as a state religion.

Of the twenty-five states that declare Islam the state religion, fifteen are located in the Middle East. Figure 8, in fact, shows that the overwhelming majority of states in the Middle East and North Africa declare Islam a state religion, with Israel being the notable exception. In its Declaration of Independence, Israel, which has no Constitution but a collection of so-called Basic Laws, describes itself as a “Jewish state.” The three Muslim-majority states in the Middle East and North Africa that do not declare Islam a state religion are Lebanon, Syria, and Western Sahara.

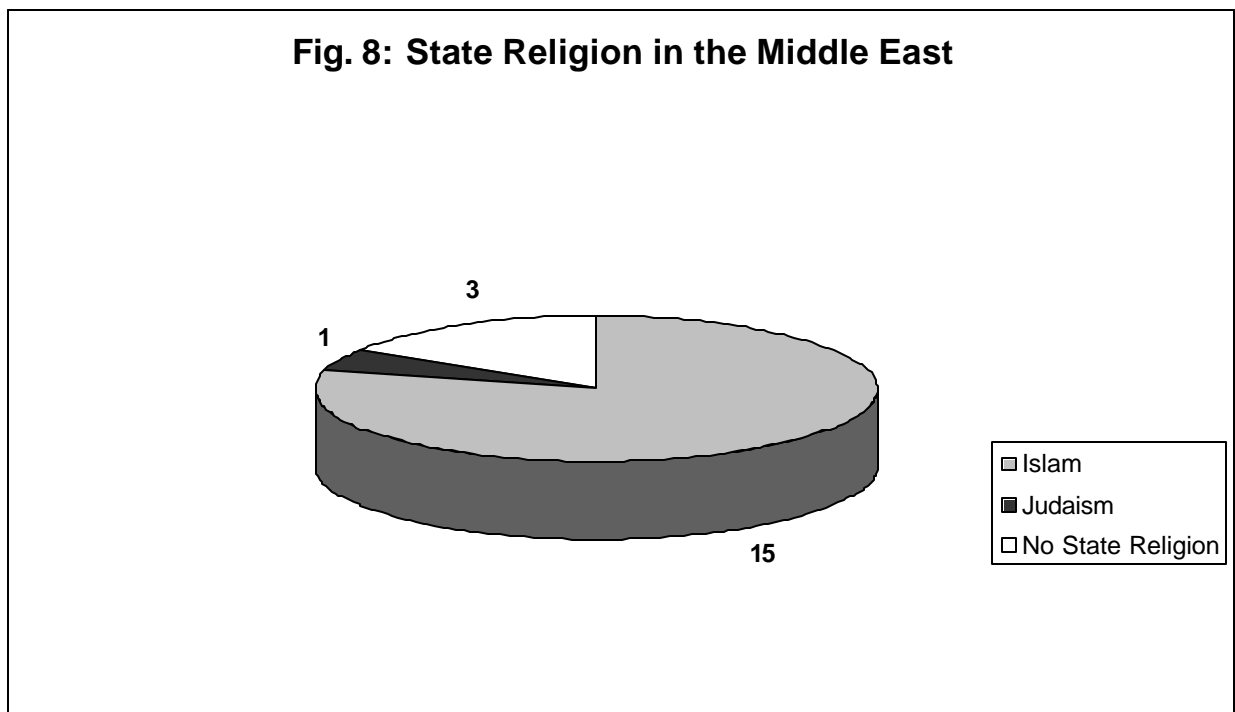


Figure 9 provides an overview over the Christian denominations that have the status of state religions in Western Europe. Eight Western European countries (a third of all Western European countries) have state religions. They are Liechtenstein and Monaco (Roman Catholic Church); Denmark, Iceland, and Norway (Evangelical Lutheran Church); the United Kingdom (Church of England and Church of Scotland); Finland (Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox

Church); and Greece. The latter describes in its Constitution the Eastern Orthodox Church as the “prevailing religion.”

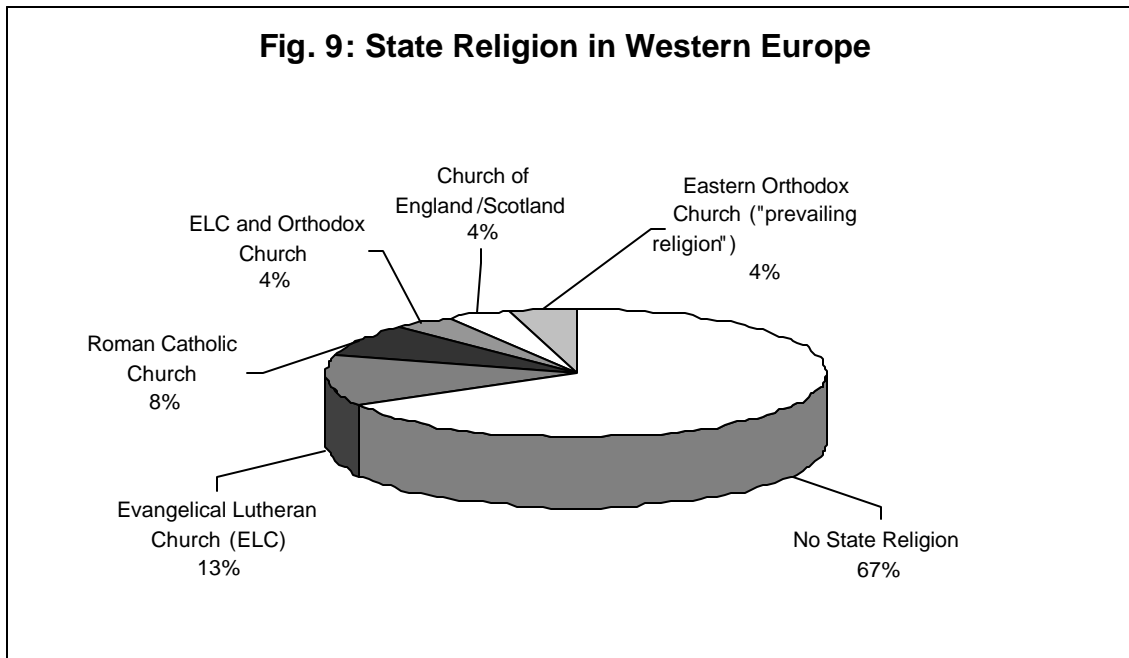
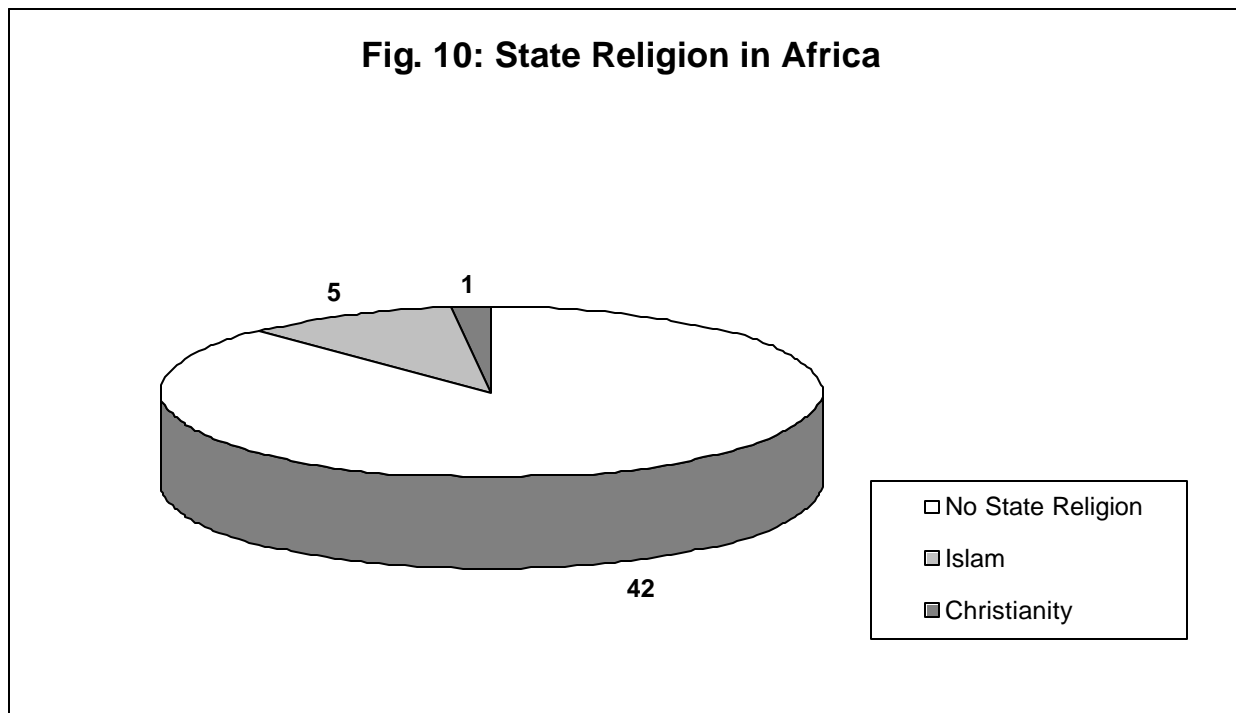


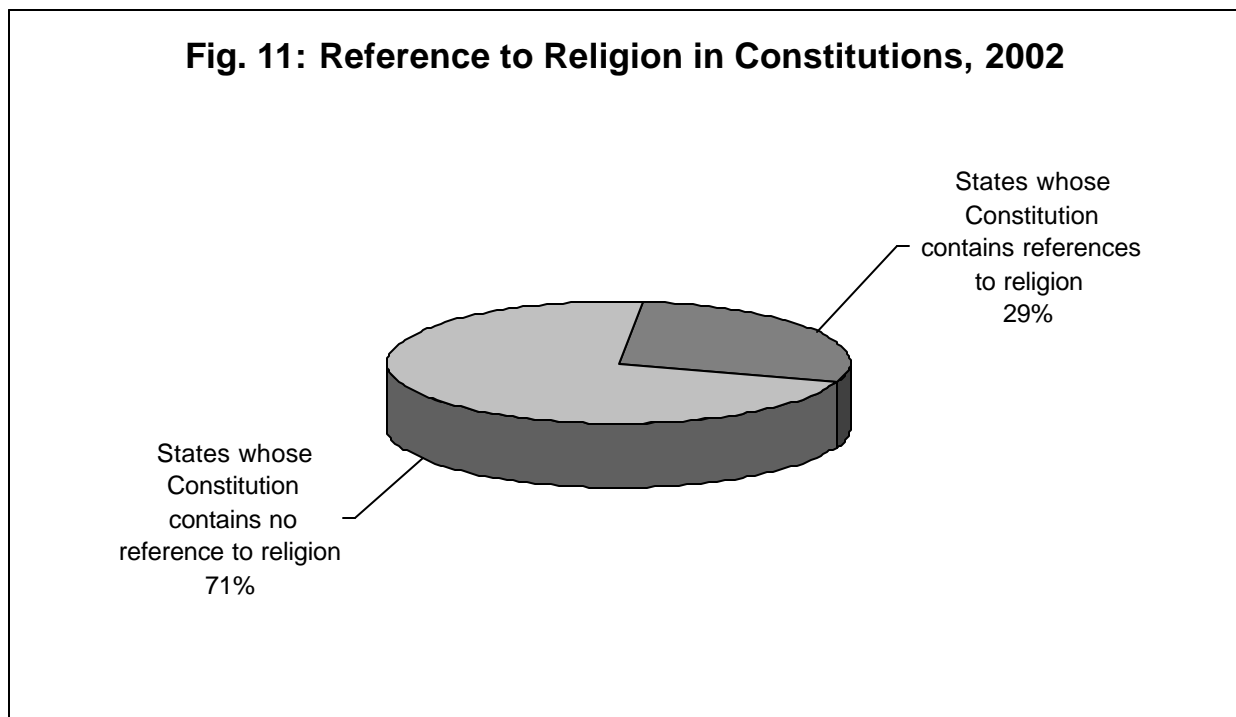
Figure 10 shows that five African states (Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan) declare Islam a state religion, whereas one state (Zambia) declares Christianity a state religion.



REFERENCES TO RELIGION IN CONSTITUTIONS

Another variable that can indicate the nature of the relationship between religion and state is whether the Constitution of a state—or quasi-constitutional documents in states that do not have a Constitution—contain a reference to religion. In all countries that have a state religion, such references are made, usually in the Constitution or other basic state document. However, religion may also be referred to in some Constitutions of countries that do not have a state religion. In the latter case, references are made either to specific religions, and at other times to religion in general, such as a reference to God. This section provides statistics of Constitutions that contain either references to a specific religion or to religion in general.

As Fig. 11 illustrates, in the large majority of countries of the world—over 70 percent—no reference to religion is made in their Constitutions or quasi-constitutional document. Religion is specifically mentioned in 53 countries (29% of all countries). In the previous section, we have seen that 41 countries have a state religion—we can conclude that 12 countries that do not have a state religion nevertheless make specific references to religion in their Constitutions. These countries are Andorra, Belize, Bulgaria, Georgia, Indonesia, Macedonia, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.



In Bulgaria, for example, specific mention is made of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, which is described in the Constitution as the “traditional” religion. In Georgia, the special role of the Georgian Orthodox Church is acknowledged in the Constitution, even though there is a clear separation of Church and State. In Sri Lanka, Buddhism is accorded “the foremost place,” yet Buddhism is not declared state religion. The Indonesian Constitution, meanwhile, contains a reference to God and declares that “the nation is based upon belief in one supreme God.” Similarly, the preamble to the Constitution of Belize states that “the nation of Belize shall be founded upon principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God.”

COUNTRIES UNDER SHARIA LAW

The final variable that will be examined in this section is states whose legal system is based either partly or entirely on Islamic religious law, known as the Sharia. As Fig. 12 illustrates, the legal system of approximately eleven percent of countries in the world draws at least in part from Sharia law. More precisely, seven countries are listed by the U.S. State Department as guided by Sharia law: Iran, Kuwait, the Maldives, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. In an additional thirteen countries (7% of the world’s countries) Sharia law is either one of several components of the legal system, or Sharia law is applied in only parts of the country. The thirteen countries ruled in part by Sharia law are Bahrain, Brunei, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Somalia, and the United Arab Emirates. In Nigeria, parts of the country are ruled entirely by Sharia law, while in Somalia, the judiciary in most regions relies on a combination of laws that also includes Sharia. In the remaining eleven countries, the nationwide legal system is based partly on Sharia.

Fig. 12: States Ruled by Sharia Law, 2002

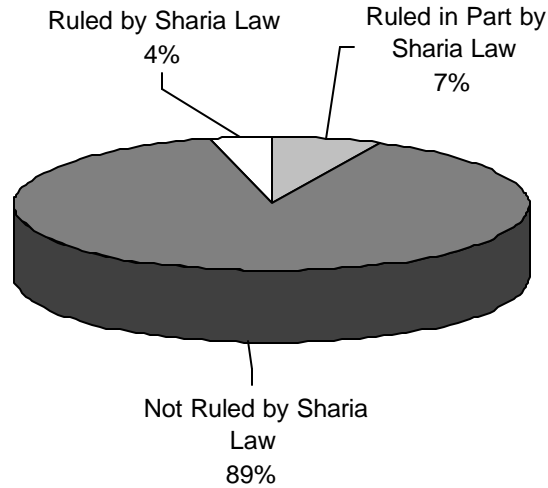
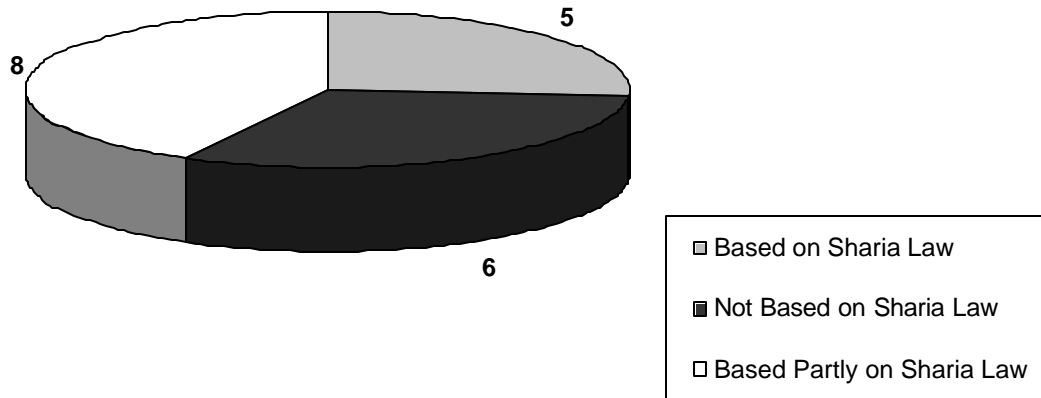


Fig. 13 shows that in the Middle East and North African region, the legal system of most countries is based at least partly on Sharia law. Only six out of the 19 countries included in this region have a legal system that does not contain elements of Sharia law. They are Algeria, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Western Sahara.

Fig. 13: Sharia-based Legal Systems in the Middle East



Other Religious Trends

In recent years and decades, a number of other religious trends have crystallized that have not been described in detail thus far. Several of these trends are discussed in the following.

SPIRITUALITY AND ‘RELIGION À LA CARTE’ IN THE WEST

Secularization in the OECD countries as a phenomenon can only be partly generalized. It has been shown that in some countries, religion continues to be a powerful force and is showing no signs of decline, most notably so in the United States. In addition, despite signs of secularization—such as a relatively high number of defections from Christianity, a disinclination to attend religious services, and other trends such as an increasing rate of intermarriages—there are also opposite signs suggesting a rise in ‘religious interest’ in the West. Such signs include, for example, an increased prominence of religious programs on television; a proliferation of religious books; a rise in Christian rock and gospel music;⁹⁹ the hiring of ‘spiritual consultants’ by some companies (e.g., Boeing, Xerox); and the spread of religion on the internet, oftentimes backed by venture capital (Internet sites such as Beliefnet.com or Spiritchannel.com come to mind). A higher number of people from industrialized countries are engaged in experiential religion and various forms of New Age—a rise in what arguably is a form of spirituality, rather than a form of organized religion. The apparent rise in spirituality vis-à-vis religion is reflected in a recent survey: A U.S.A Today/Gallup Poll in January 2002 found a general shift away from religious identity (50% of Americans called themselves religious vs. 54% in December 1999). But an additional 33% call themselves “spiritual, but not religious, vs. 30% in December 1999.¹⁰⁰ Examples of the spiritual, or experiential religions include a Buddhist meditation retreat, or the increasing importance of New Age. According to one estimate, one in three Americans is engaged in alternative health practices; in another example, the Clinton administration established an office on alternative medicine.

The attempt to reconcile these two seemingly opposing trends common in the United States and Western Europe—a decline in traditional religion on the one hand, and a rise in “spirituality” on the other—has been a major challenge for those who follow religious trends. Richard Higgins of the *Boston Globe* offers one explanation for this rise in spirituality. He writes that there are three major reasons for it: First, there is a large demand, both because of genuine

⁹⁹ Bonnie Erbe, “Don’t Believe Reports of His Demise,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 March 2002, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Charting Unchurched Territory,” *U.S.A Today*, 7 May 2002, 1D.

“increase in spiritual yearning,” but also because marketers of products and services are capitalizing on that yearning. Second, there is an emergence of a more flexible notion of spirituality that makes people feel freer to cross religious boundaries. Religion has splintered, “multiplied, cross-fertilized with pop culture, and been resurrected in new forms.” Third, there is a modern idea of self, which stresses personal experience and meaning over the fixed truths of traditional religion, and is “recasting the nature of the religious search for many Americans. While such an emphasis can give new meaning to ancient traditions, it also carries the risk that anything – dieting, bodybuilding, surfing the Net – can be viewed as something spiritual.”¹⁰¹ Higgins quotes author Winifred Gallagher, who sees a growing desire in many Americans to simplify their lives out of revulsion at blind ambition, workaholism, and consumerism. Higgins also mentions that the baby boom generation now hits midlife, and are thus prone to soul-searching, hence increasing the demand for spiritual goods and services.

Jack Miles argues that “Americans are particularly at ease with forms of religious expression that require little in the way of organizational commitment and impose little in the way of group identity... Church or synagogue or mosque membership...impose[s] a group identity and ... demands regular attendance, steady financial support and religious education of the young.” He argues that collective religious identity is weakened in the United States, while individual religious autonomy is strengthened because American culture separates religion and nationality. American identity remains the same, he writes, even if a change of religion takes place—this fact makes such a change considerably easier to undertake. He believes that this also simplifies the path toward apostasy, since it is easier to abandon religion than to convert from one religion to another.¹⁰²

Another phenomenon noticeable mostly in post-industrial societies is religious pluralism or, as it has also been referred to, “religion à la carte.” It involves what has been labeled a ‘religious marketplace’ that features religious competition among religions, as well as “the freedom on the part of the buyers (people) to pick and choose among the ideological wares that different religions proffer.”¹⁰³ Christian splintering is particularly common. According to the WCE, in 2000, the number of denominations throughout the world surpassed 33,820, with an

¹⁰¹ Richard Higgins, “Sold on Spirituality,” *Boston Globe*, Magazine Section, 3 December 2000, 19.

¹⁰² Jack Miles, “Faith is an Option; Religion Makes a Comeback (Belief to Follow),” *New York Times*, 7 December 1997, 56.

¹⁰³ See, for example, William H. Swatos, Jr., and Kevin J. Christiano, “Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept,” *Sociology of Religion* 60.i3 (Fall 1999).

average of 10 new ones organized each week.¹⁰⁴ David Roozen of the Hartford Seminary in Connecticut believes that one reason for the rise of what he calls ‘salad bar religion’ is the decline of central religious authorities. There is more mingling among people of different religious backgrounds. In public schools across the United States today, children are becoming more familiar with the holidays, customs, and beliefs of other religions. People from all traditions intermarry and raise families.¹⁰⁵

Similarly, Richard Cimino and Don Lattin write in the *Journal of Demographics* that while numerous surveys show that Americans are as religious as ever, what is on the decline is American loyalty to particular denominations or traditions. “The old brand names—Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran—are falling away, and congregations are resorting to marketing studies before renaming their congregation to target specific groups of spiritual consumers. First Baptist Church becomes the Family Christian Center, while the Lutherans across town are reborn as Grace Community Church.” Behind this trend, Cimino and Lattin argue, is “the search for an experiential faith, a religion of the heart, not of the head...a religious expression that downplays doctrine and dogma, and revels in direct experience of the divine...”¹⁰⁶

RISE OF PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

The Pentecostal and the related Charismatic aspects of Christianity are spreading with enormous rapidity, reaching a current rate of about 19 million new members a year around the globe.¹⁰⁷ By 2000, the number of affiliated church members worldwide was estimated at 523 million people, 65 million of which were Pentecostals, 175 million Charismatics, and 295 million ‘neocharismatics’. By 2050, according to the World Christian Encyclopedia, over one billion Pentecostal believers are expected to inhabit the earth.¹⁰⁸ Members of the Pentecostal/Charismatic stream tend to be non-white (71%) and poor (87% living in poverty).¹⁰⁹

European Christians have largely rejected Pentecostalism, but were more accepting of the charismatic and neocharismatic waves. In Asia, by contrast, Pentecostalism has spread in vast numbers in Korea, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, and mainland China. Of the 523 million estimated Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians in 2000, an estimated 141 million lived in Latin

¹⁰⁴ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Higgins, “Sold on Spirituality,” 19.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Cimino and Don Lattin, “Choosing my Religion,” *American Demographics*, April 1999, 62.

¹⁰⁷ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 161-84.

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Barrett, et.al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 19.

America, where Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing evangelical group. In Latin America, Pentecostalism holds an emotional appeal among the poorer strata due to its emphasis on personal experience (f.ex., speaking in tongues, receiving ‘gifts’ of healing, and prophecy).¹¹⁰ Pentecostalism has been particularly successful in Brazil, where Pentecostal conversions peaked in the 1950s and 60s. Over a three-year period in the early 1990s, over 700 new Pentecostal churches opened in Rio de Janeiro alone.¹¹¹ An estimated 134 million Pentecostals/Charismatics live in Asia, and 126 million on the African continent.

THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

In late 1999, UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance Abdelfattah Amor reported a significant rise in religious extremism and intolerance throughout the world. He submitted a 23-page report to the General Assembly, which held that the growing religious intolerance should be viewed in the larger context of the economic, social, and political conditions that foster it.¹¹²

There are numerous examples where groups belonging to different religions are fighting each other, oftentimes vying for political power. Examples include the Muslim domination in parts of Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Cyprus has crystallized as a possible battleground between Greek Orthodox Christians and Turkish Muslims. In the Caucasus, Muslim Chechens fight Orthodox Russians, while Christian Armenians battle against Muslim Azerbaijanis. In South East Asia, Christian-Muslim violence has been acute in parts of the Philippines and Indonesia, particularly on the island of Maluku. Muslim-Christian violence has also plagued parts of Africa, including Nigeria, Kenya, Côte d’Ivoire, and other states. The list goes on and on.

Religious terrorism has turned into one of the most widespread and dangerous forms of terrorism today. In 1980, the U.S. State Department roster of international terrorist groups listed a single religious organization. In 1998, the U.S. Secretary of State listed 30 ‘most dangerous groups’, out of which fifteen were religious—Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist.¹¹³ According to

¹¹⁰ Penny Lernoux, “The Fundamentalist Surge in Latin America.”

¹¹¹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 167.

¹¹² Thalif Deen, “Africa At-large: Religious Extremism on the Rise, Says United Nations,” *Africa News*, 20 December 1999.

¹¹³ Quoted in Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 6.

Bruce Hoffman of RAND, “the religious imperative for terrorism is the most important defining characteristic of terrorist activity today.”¹¹⁴

Examples of religious or religiously motivated terrorism today abound. Some of the more well-known incidents include the attacks of September 11 as well as prior and subsequent attacks attributed to Al Qaeda, such as the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998; the attack on the U.S.S. Cole in October 2000; and the attack on a discotheque frequented by Westerners in the Indonesian island of Bali in October 2002. Religious terrorist attacks are far from limited to Islamic groups. For years, Irish Catholics have exploded trucks and buses in Britain, while the eclectic Aum Shinrikyo cult used Sarin nerve gas in its attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995. Sikh and Kashmiri separatists have planted car bombs in India, while Tamil and Sinhalese stage attacks against Sri Lankan and Indian targets. Religiously motivated acts of violence include the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995; the 1993 and 2001 World Trade Center bombings; the assassination of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish zealot; the June 1996 truck bombing of a U.S. air force barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; suicide bombings in Israel; or the massacre in November 1997 of 58 foreign tourists and four Egyptians by terrorists belonging to the Gamat al-Islamiya at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt. Here too, the list goes on and on.

Religious terrorist acts tend to be more fatal. According to Hoffman, citing a RAND-St. Andrews University Chronology of terrorist events, in 1995, 25% of the recorded international terrorist incidents were committed by religious groups, but their acts were responsible for 58% of the total number of fatalities recorded that year.¹¹⁵

David C. Rapoport observed that religion and violence fit together not only because there is a violent streak in the history of religion, but also because terrorist acts have a symbolic side and in that sense mimic religious rites.”¹¹⁶ Hoffman offers several reasons for a rise in religious terrorism, beginning with the end of the Cold War. In the post-Cold War era, he writes, “old ideologies lie discredited by the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist ideology, while the promise of munificent benefits from the liberal-democratic, capitalist state...fails to materialize in many countries throughout the world.” These changes engender a public sense of insecurity that affects the economically disadvantaged as well as the prosperous. The insecurity has been

¹¹⁴ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 87.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹¹⁶ David Rapoport and Yonah Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism: Religious and Secular Justifications* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), xiii.

deepened by other societal factors, including accelerated population growth, rapid urbanization and the breakdown of local services typically provided by the state (e.g. medical care, housing, social welfare, education, etc.).¹¹⁷

DISPLACEMENT OF RELIGIONS

Previously, the world's leading Catholic countries were France, Italy, and Germany. Today, they are Brazil, Mexico, the United States, and the Philippines. In addition, this study has shown that a major transformation is about to take place throughout the next decade, namely the shifting of the stronghold of Christianity away from Europe and North America, and towards Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. By 2050, it is estimated that Africans and Latin Americans together will constitute two thirds of the world's Catholics. According to Philip Jenkins, this strengthening of what he terms "Southern Christianity"—a Christianity that is "far more conservative in both beliefs and moral teachings" than Western Christianity—constitutes the "creation of a new Christendom" whose significance—including its effects on world affairs—is difficult to overstate.¹¹⁸

An additional 'displacement' can be witnessed with regard to Islam. One aspect of Islamic displacement relates to Muslim countries. Today, the biggest Muslim countries, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, are all situated east of the Indus. The second major trend relates to Muslim immigration to Europe. An estimated 12-14 million Muslim immigrants have settled in Europe, many of which reside in larger cities.¹¹⁹

The (Almost) Global Resurgence of Religion

RELIGIOUS DECLINE IN THE 'WEST' AND THE SECULARIZATION THESIS

Probably the most prominent theory that seeks to explain the decline of religion in the developed world is the secularization theory. As summarized by Swatos and Christiano, "the principal thrust in secularization theory... has been the claim that, in the face of scientific rationality, religion's influence on all aspects of life—from personal habits to social institutions—is in dramatic decline."¹²⁰ Science, technology and medicine have made life more

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 92

¹¹⁸ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4, 7.

¹¹⁹ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 178-181.

¹²⁰ William H. Swatos, Jr., and Kevin J. Christiano, "Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept," 209.

predictable and hence lessened the need of human beings for ‘supernatural assistance.’¹²¹ Secularization theorists also cite urbanization and rationalization as a reason why ‘the modern world’ has promoted secularization since, “by pulling individuals from villages in which they were subject to the close scrutiny of their neighbors into the anonymity of urban life, it has eased the pressure on individuals to participate in community religious rituals.”¹²² In Western Europe, meanwhile, modernization has been associated with the rise of the secular state, “shrinking the realm over which religious authorities held sway and creating nation-states in which religious organizations became just some of the many voluntary organizations which operated under the umbrella of state authority.”¹²³ The combined effect of these various defining features of the modernization process has been, according to this theory, a decline in the power and autonomy of religious organizations and in the frequency and intensity of individual religious activity.¹²⁴

The secularization theory is based on an idea first articulated by Max Weber.¹²⁵ In his seminal book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber wrote that “the emancipation from economic traditionalism appears, no doubt, to be a factor which would greatly strengthen the tendency to doubt the sanctity of the religious tradition, as of all traditional authorities.”¹²⁶ Beginning in the 1960s, the theory was espoused by scholars such as Peter Berger, Steve Bruce, and Rodney Stark, all of whom at some point in time believed religion to become extinct.¹²⁷

Data from the World Values Survey utilized in this study, as well as trends by the Eurobarometer,¹²⁸ generally support the main notion of the secularization thesis, since most

¹²¹ For a discussion of secularization as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and rationalization, see, for example, J.K. Hadden, “Toward Desacralizing Secularization Theory,” *Social Forces* 65: 587-611, and R. Finke, “An Unsecular America,” in Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 145-169.

¹²² Don Baker, “Looking for God in the Streets of Seoul.”

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Prior to Max Weber, there were a number of earlier proponents of the notion that humans will eventually discontinue their belief in religion. For early supporters of the notion of an “end of religion,” see Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P.,” *Sociology of Religion* 60.i3 (Fall 1999).

¹²⁶ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 36.

¹²⁷ Meanwhile, many of those scholars, such as Peter Berger and Rodney Stark, have sharply distanced themselves from the secularization thesis. In a recent book, Peter Berger writes that “the world today... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken.” See Peter Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: An Overview,” in Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999), 2. See also Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P.”

¹²⁸ Findings from the 1970-1998 Eurobarometer also suggest a decline in church attendance, and hence support the secularization thesis. See for example Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix: Political Activism Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapter 9, 6. The online version of the book is available at the website of Pippa

OECD countries in fact seem to experience a decline in religious behavior. The thesis, however, fails to apply to some OECD countries, including the United States.

Some scholars of religion reject the secularization thesis outright, including the aforementioned Rodney Stark. In an article aptly titled “Secularization R.I.P.,” Stark argues that the secularization theory should be rejected on two grounds, that of religious participation, and that of subjective religiousness. Stark argues that not only has American religiousness and church membership remained steady or risen, but in Europe too no “demonstrable long-term decline in...religious participation” has taken place. At the same time, Stark adds, “levels of subjective religiousness”—such as the belief in God—remain high. He argues that claims about a major decline in religious participation in Europe are “based in part on very exaggerated perceptions of past religiousness...[Religious] participation may be low today in many nations, but not because of modernization; therefore,” he concludes, “the secularization theory is irrelevant.”¹²⁹

RELIGIOUS RESURGENCE

According to the findings of this study, the majority of countries in the world, inhabiting a majority of the global population, is in the midst of a religious resurgence. The resurgence is most strongly affecting former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, China, and South East Asia.

It can be concluded that the former Communist countries and many of the developing countries are undergoing a religious resurgence, whereas the ‘developed world’ seems to be, by and large, on the path of secularization. Although a discussion of possible reasons for the strengthening of religion is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems clear that in the former Communist countries, including Russia, the Eastern European, Central Asian, and Caucasian states, the trend towards religiousness is clearly connected to the collapse of the Soviet Union, which preached and usually enforced secularization as an official policy in the former Warsaw Pact countries. By enforcing—sometimes violently—strict secularity, the Soviet Union may then have laid the groundwork for the current religious revival in virtually all countries that were under the Communist umbrella. In retrospect, Rodney Stark made a prescient comment in 1981, when he said that “repressive states seem to increase levels of individual deprivation and, in so

Norris, last accessed 15 November 2002,
<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris.shorenstein.ksg/ACROBAT/everyvoice/Chapter9.pdf>.

¹²⁹ Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P.”

doing, to fuel the religious impulse. In making faith more costly, they also make it more necessary and valuable. Perhaps religion is never so robust as when it is an underground church.”¹³⁰

What crystallizes then is the existence of a near-global resurgence of religion that is defied mainly in most, though not all, post-industrial countries. Some scholars of religion focus on this very duality. Martin Riesebrodt, for example, holds the view that secularization is a fact, just as is the resurgence of religion. He argues that any explanation of this dual phenomenon needs to acknowledge this apparent contradiction.¹³¹

Harvard Divinity professor and author Harvey Cox thinks along similar lines. He sees a vast mix of opposing trends—fundamentalism, secularization, and new forms of religion—around the world. Writing in the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Cox said that his tentative conclusion about religion is that “what we are witnessing is neither secularization nor its opposite (re-sacralization). Rather, it is a fascinating transformation of religion, a creative series of self-adaptations by religions to the new conditions created by the modernity some of them helped spawn.” According to Cox, the next century will be a “pluriform” one, where people will continue to look to religion for meaning, but will develop many new forms of it.¹³²

Similarly, Marc Gopin describes the contemporary era as characterized by an “unprecedented level of paradoxical religious movement.” Gopin believes that one possible explanation for these countervailing trends is the human need for both integration and for uniqueness.¹³³

Conclusion

This paper attempted to assess whether or not religion is becoming a stronger force around the globe. To that end, two separate trends were examined: on the one hand, changes over time in global religious adherence; and on the other hand, changes over time in religious behavior and values.

¹³⁰ Rodney Stark, “Must all Religions be Supernatural?” in B. Wilson, ed., *The Social Impact of New Religious Movements* (New York: Rose of Sharon Press, 1981), 175.

¹³¹ Martin Riesebrodt, “Secularization and the Global Resurgence of Religion.” Paper presented at the Comparative Social Analysis Workshop, University of California, Los Angeles, March 9, 2000, last accessed 1 September 2002, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/groups/ccsa/riesebrodt.PDF>.

¹³² Quoted in Bob Harvey, “Religion’s Transformation,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 December 1999, A3.

¹³³ Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

Changes in global religious adherence are connected to natural population growth and conversion, and a number of interesting trends are apparent. Accordingly, Islam is the fastest-growing religion, followed by Sikhism and Hinduism. The percentage of adherents of Islam will change from roughly 20% today to approximately 23% in 2025. Meanwhile, the percentage of the global population that is Christian (roughly 33%) is not expected to change in the near future. In the next several decades, Christianity will remain the most adhered-to religion in the world. Within Christianity, there is a shift of mostly evangelical adherents from Europe and North America to Latin America and Africa. Hence, a strictly numerical notion of religious resurgence should focus on Islam and Evangelism as the main contemporary examples of this phenomenon.

As far as conversions are concerned, Roman Catholicism and Judaism suffer from the highest number of conversions to other religions. Hinduism also loses adherents to other religions through conversions, yet maintains a high natural growth rate that offsets the high conversion rate. Among the major religions, Islam is gaining most adherents through conversions.

It has been argued here that trends in global adherence, by themselves, do not indicate change in religiosity. More instructive is the examination of change in religious behavior based on available data from the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and the *World Values Survey* that has been undertaken here. This study concludes that religion is indeed resurgent in a large number of countries that inhabit the majority of the global population. The marked exemption to this trend is the post-industrial world. Within the post-industrial world, religion seems to be on the decline in most countries, with the most notable exception being the United States. The secularization thesis, which argues that with the onset of modernization countries are becoming more 'secular', seems to apply, by and large, to developed countries. Another apparent trend in many OECD countries is that the decline in 'traditional' religion seems to be accompanied by a rise in a more individual, experiential form of religion referred to here as 'spirituality.' The trend towards secularization in OECD countries is manifested in a stark increase in the number of nonreligious or atheists, in declining loyalty to particular denominations, in a higher number of intermarriages, and other occurrences.

In contrast to OECD countries, a powerful religious revival seems to take place in Russia and the former Communist states in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Both Orthodox Christianity and Islam are growing forces in Russia and Central Asian countries. Religion is resurgent in some of Latin America's and Africa's most dominant countries,

suggesting that other countries on these continents are not immune to these same forces. There also seems to be a dramatic resurgence of religion in the Middle East and North Africa which, however, could not be demonstrated due to a lack of statistics on Middle Eastern countries. Finally, an awakening of religious values is noticeable in China, strengthening the assumption that repressive regimes (or formerly repressive regimes) further a rise in religiosity.

The religious revival has not been uniform in scope or form. In Latin America, Evangelism and Pentecostalism are the most strongly resurgent religious streams, and ‘religionization’ is mostly peaceful. In Africa and Asia, as well as in parts of South Eastern Europe, however, the upsurge in Evangelism is challenged by the rise of Islam, and is often accompanied by violent confrontations, such as in the Balkans, Nigeria, or Central Asia.

Several religious trends are discernible in various parts of the world. First, there is a notable increase in confrontations that are at least partly based on religion, pointing at an increased attraction of religious fundamentalism. These areas include South Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Cyprus, Central Asia and the Caucasus, South East Asia, and the Middle East. Equally, if not more disturbing, is that religious terrorism is among the most prevalent and lethal kind of terrorism today. Many terrorism analysts agree that religion has become one of, if not the main inciter of terrorist acts. Acts of religious terrorism have occurred in virtually all regions of the world.

Another overall trend is the apparent decline of ‘organized religion’ in the developed world, which is accompanied by a rise of a more individual form of religion in the Western hemisphere. This individualized religion emphasizes spirituality rather than ‘religion’ per se. Its rise is evidenced by, for example, higher sales of books on spiritual matters, or the continued attraction of New Age.

In sum, the above discussion has revealed that there is ample evidence that the argument of a “global resurgence of religion” can largely be sustained, with the notable exception to this trend being the post-industrial countries—where the trend towards secularization itself, however, is far from consistent.