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Breaking the Mold

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Swimming in Other Streams

Alternative Currents in Dallas's Religious Traditions

BY J. GORDON MELTON

There are two ways of looking at religion in the state of Texas. In the first instance, we begin with the singular dominance of Texas by just three religious groups—the Southern Baptists, the United Methodists, and the Roman Catholics. Their membership accounts for about half of the state's population, with a few additional groups—the Churches of Christ, the National Baptists (three groups), the African Methodists (three groups), the Presbyterians, two Lutheran groups, the Episcopalians, and several Pentecostal groups—filling out the next tier of religious Texans. One could tell the story of Texas religion by limiting the account to these dozen groups and do very little, if any, injustice to it.

Additionally, this approach reflects the reality of religion at the national level, where over half of the American population has chosen to be members of a mere twenty-five Christian denominations, each of which has at least one million members. Upon examination they are seen to represent the current spectrum of Christian belief and practice. Their position is strengthened by considering the forty additional denominations that have at least 100,000 members and which also present the same spectrum of Christian theology, social stances, and public behavior. The worldview represented by the 25 big denominations is identical to the worldview held by the additional 900+ Christian denominations in America, which together include between 70 and 80 percent of the American population.[1]

This "gurwhara," or throne for the holy book, is a centerpiece in a Sikh temple in Dallas.

That being said, there is a second, and I would argue, far more interesting way of viewing American religion in general, and Texas religion in particular, which focuses on its diversity. America is home to more than 2,000 different religious groups, some 1,000 Christian denominations and another 1,000+ non-Christian groups, including some 300+ groups that use Christian language and symbols, but in ways not recognized by the larger Christian churches. Falling into that category are, for example, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Latter-Day Saints, both of whom profess a set of unique doctrines that alienate them from the main stream of Christian organizations, and the Christian Scientists and the Unity School of Christianity, which use Christian language but who pour into that language such distinct meanings that it makes any dialogue with more traditional Christians difficult.[2]

Defining the Religious Fringe

Defining what one might consider alternative religion, or the fringe of the religious community, is a questionable task at best, but in this case, given the super majority now possessed by the traditional Christian community, one can more easily find a position within that community from which to view the rather distinctive alternative religious streams flowing parallel to it, always with a possibility, however slight, of merging into the mainstream in the future as have previous alternative streams. From that perspective, a set of Christian groups that have attempted to redefine the mainstream of the Western Christian tradition, beginning with its complex trinitarian view of the Godhead, make up the first alternative stream of Texas religion. And beginning with the majority Christian community as the mainstream, one can begin to see all of the alternative currents of religi-

osity flowing alongside it, each offering the public other waters upon which to sail their ship of faith.

By far the most visible alternatives are now found in the streams of the world's religions that have come to Texas in recent decades from Asia in the form of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and the several smaller world religious traditions such as Sikhism, Taoism, and Jainism. Judaism, the first non-Christian religion established in the state, has a unique place that defies most of the insider-outsider ways of looking at American religion. Joining the non-Christian alternatives on the religious landscape are the more homegrown varieties of the Western Esoteric tradition. Esotericism, a form of religion that continues the Gnosticism of first-century Mediterranean culture, received a new beginning in the seventeenth century and now claims a large, if largely invisible, following in the West under such names as Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, Spiritualism, ritual magick, and Neo-Paganism.

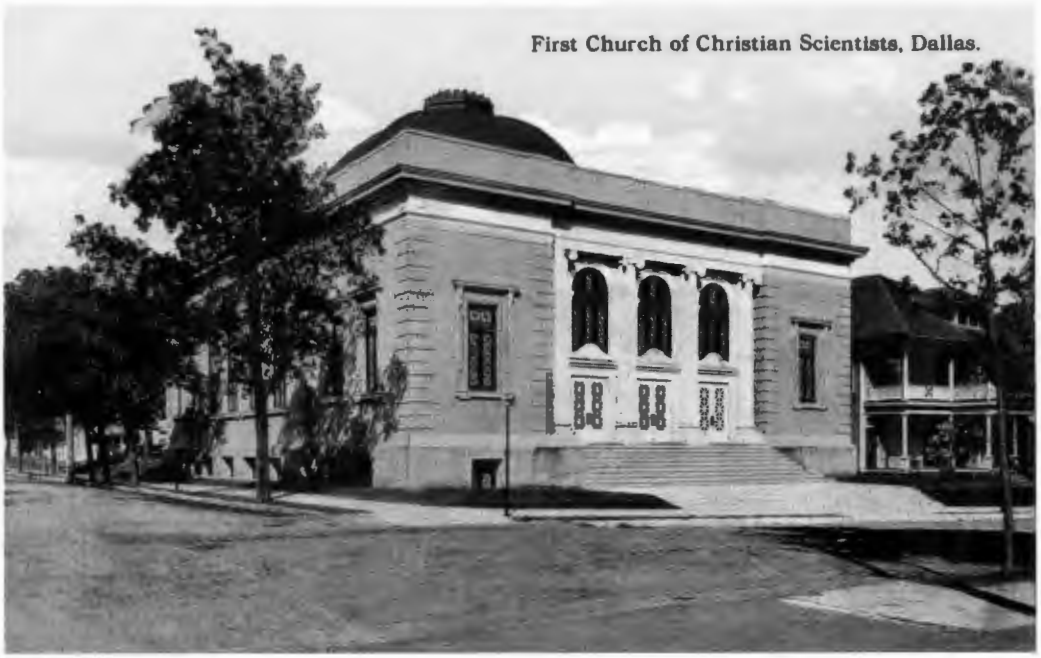
Finally, defining the "religious" alternatives would be incomplete without some mention of the most radical of options, the atheists, those who deny the existence of any deity, and wish to construct a largely secular society. Going under names such as freethinker, secularist, and humanist, the non-theists represent a very different approach to religion, many wanting nothing to do with the spiritual realm in any way. Others have moved to an accommodation with religion—affirming its positive qualities of promoting personal serenity, building community, and supporting altruistic ideals—while eschewing its supernatural dogmas, tendencies toward authoritarianism, and superfluous regulations.

The Alternative Streams in DFW History

What would become Dallas was settled in the 1840s, and Dallas County was created in 1846, just a year after Texas joined the Union. Meanwhile, Fort Worth opened as an Army outpost to the West a mere three years later. Methodists moved in with the early settlers, the first area congregation, now known as Webb Chapel United Methodist Church, being formed in 1845, just as Methodism split and work in Texas came under the aegis of the newly created Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A Fort Worth District of the Texas Conference was designated in 1852. Soon afterwards, the Presbyterians and the Restoration movement arrived.[3] The first Episcopal service was held in Dallas in 1856. But the real growth of Dallas's religious community would come during the decade immediately after the Civil War beginning with the founding of First Baptist Church (1868), the Norwegian Lutheran church, several African-American congregations, and the first Congregational church (1877). Roman Catholic settlement came a little bit later, there being only one Catholic family known to be residing in Dallas in the years immediately after the war. But steady growth through the next quarter of a century justified the formation of the Diocese of Dallas in 1890.[4]

While mainstream Christianity was by far the largest segment of the religious community, its total membership represented only a small minority of the population, a situation that prompted multiple activities among the different denominations aimed at converting members of the larger public to Christianity and recruiting them to church membership. That the majority of residents were religiously unattached also provided space for additional new religious movements to emerge. The first of these new movements would be the Seventh-Day Adventists with their emphasis on the approaching end of the social order and demands that worship be on Saturday (the Sabbath) rather than Sunday. The SDAs would find ample support in and around Dallas and eventually locate their college in nearby Keene, Texas.

The real growth of an alternative religious community, however, would wait until the 1890s. The newly organized Church of Christ, Scientist, popularly known as Christian Science, for example, opened work in Galveston at the end



The Neoclassic design of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Dallas, which opened in 1912, was inspired by the mother church in Boston.

of the 1880s, and showed its first signs of support in Dallas a few years later. A salesman traveling through the city in 1896 reported to the *Christina Science Journal* that the work was "growing both in numbers as well as consecration." The Church of Christ, Scientist, was one of several churches that advocated a "spiritual" (i.e., allegorical) approach to Bible interpretation. Christian Scientists affirmed all of the more familiar Christian language and symbols, while pouring very different meanings into both. From her own experience of bodily healing, founder Mary Baker Eddy had discovered God as the only reality, while denying any metaphysical reality to evil, and went on to expand upon her initial revelation in a new book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, that would come to stand beside the Bible as an authoritative text for believers.

Christian Science would build a strong organization headed by Eddy and administered from its headquarters in Boston. Those who opted for a more decentralized approach to the metaphysical Christianity she had originally advocated created a parallel movement known as New Thought, the most successful New Thought group being the Unity School of Christianity based in Kansas City. Unity, building on the readership of its two magazines, *Unity* and *Daily Word*, found some initial support in Texas in the 1890s but would wait until after World War II to show significant prosperity.

A century before Eddy, seer Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), the son of a Swedish Lutheran bishop, claimed contact with the angelic world, maintaining that its inhabitants had taught him a new spiritual meaning to the words of Scripture. Based upon that esoteric knowledge, he founded the Church of the New Jerusalem, the first new religious body to migrate to the new United States after the American Revolution. By the 1890s it had found its way to Texas and to Dallas, the first believer of note being former Methodist minister Leonides Lantz. After being deposed by the Methodists, Lantz issued a Swedenborgian manifesto in the form of seven new articles of faith, which he published in 1889 in *The Galveston News*. A state Swedenborgian organization was founded the next year.

The small Church of the New Jerusalem would almost immediately be thrown into a crucial role in the state, being organized coinci-

The First Unitarian Church of Dallas constructed its first church at the southeast corner of Commerce and Pearl in 1901.

dentally with the People's Party, a populist movement that would become the most successful third party movement in Texas political history. The party organized in Dallas on August 18, 1891, and chose as its candidate for governor, former judge Thomas Nugent (1841-1895), another Methodist turned Swedenborgian. Presenting a straightforward moral appeal to his cause, he was able to claim 25 percent of the vote and establish the party's place as a genuine option for people ready to forsake the dominant Democrats.[5]

Today Dallas and Fort Worth are home to a broad array of Esoteric and metaphysical groups that have grown out of the tradition pioneered by the Swedenborgians and Christian Scientists. Most remain small and largely invisible on the landscape, operating out of rented and borrowed facilities, although readily accessible to individuals who are drawn to their esoteric teachings. Included are such groups as the Triangle Lodge of the AMORC Rosicrucians (the largest Rosicrucian group in America), the Dallas Study Group affiliated with the Theosophical Society of America, the Texas Local Council Covenant of the Goddess (one of the more visible Wiccan groups in North Texas), and the several recently formed Spiritist churches founded by immigrants from Brazil.

Metaphysical Christianity offered one alternative to mainstream religion in Dallas and Fort Worth, but a more skeptical approach to Christian orthodoxy also appeared in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Surprising to many who experience the state as an integral part of the Bible Belt, Texas was an early site for organized Unbelief, which flourished in the German colonies of the Hill Country in the 1850s. The first national freethought organization, the National Liberal League, was founded in 1876 and soon had chapters across the United States. An affiliate society was organized north of Dallas in Denison, previously a site for periodic Freethought activity, as early as 1880.[6]

The tradition fostered by the National Liberal League is now represented in the Dallas region by a number of groups that exist across a spectrum from anti-religious atheism to religious humanism.[7] Although many that reject the existence of a deity also reject religion, through the twentieth century several organizations emerged that have affirmed what they see as the virtues of religion (the American Humanist Association, the American Ethical Union), especially the promotion of a moral life and the nurturing of community. While most advocating such a pro-religion stance adopted the label humanist, increasingly

self-identified atheists have begun to take a look at the value of religion.[8] A pioneering group in that endeavor is the North Texas Church of Freethought, founded in 1995, whose members see themselves as non-theists, but who also want to promote the positive aspects of church life. While similar groups have emerged nationally and internationally in recent years, the Dallas-based church was the first.

Not ready to be fully identified with the more extreme position taken by atheists and freethinkers, Unitarians espoused a Christianity that discarded the trinitarian deity of the mainstream churches while seeking a more simplified approach to understanding salvation and the central role of Jesus in the Christian life. They found common cause with the Jewish community, and in the spring of 1899, Daniel Christian Limbaugh took the opportunity to describe the Unitarian position at a gathering held at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas. That meeting became the catalyst for the formation of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas.[9]

The Twentieth Century

North Texas entered the new century with the religious community dominated by the mainstream of Protestant Christianity, but the harmony of that world would soon be shattered by the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which had one of its major originating points at First Congregational Church in Dallas. The congregation was pastored by Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921), a colleague of Fundamentalist evangelist Dwight F. Moody, and author of the notes for the *Scofield Reference Bible*, the primary biblical text used by American Fundamentalists.[10] During his tenure as the church's pastor (1883-1895), he absorbed the dispensational approach to biblical interpretation developed by Irish minister John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), and during his second term as pastor (1903-1905) he worked on his notes for the Bible, finally published in 1909.[11]

Scofield would set the stage for the emergence of J. Frank Norris at First Baptist in Fort Worth beginning in 1909; Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952), who became the pastor of First Congregational Church[12] (now the Scofield Memorial Church) in 1921 and the founder of the Evangelical Theological College (now Dallas Theological Seminary), one of Fundamentalism's most enduring educational institutions; and John R. Rice (1895-1980), founder of the Sword of the Lord Ministries. Each of the three, like Scofield, emerged as national spokespersons for the movement while creating the image of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex as a major center of the most conservative wing of Protestant thought.

While Fundamentalism would split most of the Protestant mainstream denominations in the 1920s and 1930s, no one saw it as a fringe movement. That was not the case with the other dissenting movement that challenged mainstream churches in Texas through the early twentieth century—Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal movement, centered upon its advocacy of the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the evidence of that experience demonstrated in the believers' speaking in an unknown tongue, began in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901 but spread quickly to Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Its founder, Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929), moved to Texas in 1905, and following his initial success in Houston, Pentecostal churches popped up around the state.[13] The movement emerged in Dallas in 1909 when F. F. Bosworth (1877–1958) moved to town from the Christian communal city of Zion, Illinois, and opened the first Pentecostal church. Bosworth was an excellent orator who had had an impactful personal experience of divine healing, which had attracted him to Pentecostalism. As pastor of the new church, he especially emphasized healing as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecostal movement set itself over against the older churches by its insistence that the miraculous experiences described in the New Testament as so essential to the first century

church were available today. Meanwhile, most mainstream Protestants believed that miracles had occurred in biblical times to assist the church in its formative years but subsequently had largely ceased to exist. Mainstream Protestants were also offended by what they viewed as the Pentecostals' very disorderly style of worship, which they saw as breaking the decorum that characterized their own worship.

In 1912 Bosworth sponsored what became one of the more famous events in early Pentecostal history, when he brought female healing evangelist Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844–1924), who had recently aligned with the new movement, to Dallas. She preached daily for several months, with many reporting healing and many others falling into a trance-like state during the services. The event not only led to the growth of the church in North Texas, but thrust Bosworth into the national spotlight of the rapidly expanding movement.[14]

Simultaneously, Pentecostalism attracted support from within the African-American community, and as early as 1910, a small group of women in Fort Worth organized a prayer meeting which would evolve into the Love Chapel Church of God in Christ (1921). The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) was one of the original Pentecostal denominations, and the Dallas area one of its original homes, as its founding bishop, Charles H. Mason (1864-1961), had appointed Dallas Elder E. M. Page as the first Overseer of Texas in 1907.[15]

While African Americans found a home in COGIC, white Pentecostals in the state operated under several names, such as Apostolic Faith, but eventually most joined in the formation of the General Council of the Assemblies of God (1914). Texas actually had the largest contingent at the founding gathering held at Hot Springs, Arkansas, and among those invited to join the national leadership of the new denomination would be F. F. Bosworth. Rather than accepting the invitation, however, he took the occasion to make public what had become a major problem with the emergent movement. For while Bosworth was an enthusiastic exponent of the view that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were alive and functioning in the contemporary church, he dissented from what had almost become the defining belief of the movement, that speaking in tongues constituted visible evidence that a believer had experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For years he had seen the healing gift at work, and quite independently of speaking in tongues. He published his views in a pamphlet. Now at odds with the larger movement, he withdrew from the Assemblies and soon afterwards from his Dallas pastorate to pursue his career as an itinerant healing evangelist.

The movement would continue sans Bosworth. It would operate on the fringe for several generations, but as its initial fervor calmed and the more mainstream churches got used to its presence, it was slowly welcomed into the mainstream, a rare occurrence for groups with such charismatic origins.

Both of the main alternative streams of the religious life—the metaphysical approach of Christian Science and Swedenborgianism, and the more skeptical approach of Unitarianism and Freethought—continued to grow even as the population of North Texas expanded through the early decades of the century into the years of World War II and beyond. The teachings initiated by Mary Baker Eddy would find new life in the 1940s with the founding in Dallas of what was known as the Unity Church of Practical Christianity by Rev. Ruth Gillespie, Unity like Christian Science being open to female leadership. In 1968 Donald Curtis (1915-1997), one of the most popular New Thought ministers, moved to Dallas from Los Angeles and founded the Science of Mind Church and Institute. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Gillespie retired and her Unity congregation merged with his church, the new congregation becoming known as Unity Church of Dallas. Under Curtis's leadership, the church grew to some 1,000 members, aided by his popular radio ministry.[16]

At present Unity has a half dozen congre-

gations in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, with Religious Science (another New Thought denomination now organized as the Centers for Spiritual Living) having an almost equal number of congregations and as many as a dozen additional independent New Thought churches also serving the area.[17]

The Religious Fringe Post-1965

Legal changes nationally in 1965 would alter American religion in ways completely undreamed of by those who framed the new immigration law, the changes being motivated by the more immediate need to build an international coalition that would back the United States in Vietnam. Countries of Southern and Southeastern Asia, insulted by the American ban on Asian immigration in place since 1924, demanded a change as part of the terms of their sharing in the growing hostilities. The new law put the ring of Asian countries stretching from India and Pakistan to Japan and Korea on the same immigration quotas enjoyed by European nations. The quotas would be filled annually from the moment they were implemented, among the first to benefit being a then obscure Hindu spiritual teacher—A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977), the founder of the Hare Krishna movement (officially the International Society for Krishna Consciousness or ISKCON), who happened to be in the United States on a tourist visa when the legislation came into effect.

Dallas and Houston were made ready to receive the new immigrants from Asia with the opening of Houston International Airport in 1969 and the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport (DFW) in 1973. DFW grew to be the third busiest in

The Islamic Center of Dallas opened in the wake of large immigration from Southeast Asia in the 1970s.

North America with Houston close behind as the tenth, and both immediately began receiving flights from India carrying people with their new resident visas. Those seeking to make their home in the United States have tended to settle within fifty miles of their arrival point in America, and to find a home in developing parts of the local urban complex. Indian Americans tended to settle in the Dallas suburbs immediately south of DFW (Irving, Arlington, and Grand Prairie) and to the northeast (Plano, Richardson, and Garland).

The new wave of Asian immigration had two consequences. First, a number of religious teachers ready to introduce the American public to Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism arrived as part of the immigrant population. While most of these teachers made their home on the West Coast, they began to build a national following and form groups in metropolitan centers across the country. They were assisted by the coincidental coming of age of the Baby Boom generation, which made far more young adults available to the job market than it could absorb. The "Street People" of the early 1970s, those not received into the job market, provided an immediate pool of prospective recruits to the many new religious groups formed by the Asian teachers. The Street People also help create a burst of growth for some relatively new homegrown religions, most formed in the aftermath of World War II, a few earlier.

The Dianetics movement, for example, formed in the early 1950s out of Wichita, Kansas, was one such homegrown religion. Originally a pop psychology movement, it morphed into a religious movement as its founder L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986) discovered a spiritual element in his explorations of the human psyche. The result was the Church of Scientology, founded in 1954. The initial Dallas congregation formed a mere two years later, its first meetings being held in the downtown YMCA. While dealing with the ups and downs of the national church in subsequent decades, the congregation has experienced steady growth and opened its new large "ideal org" building in Irving in 2009.

Meanwhile, the first group of Krishna devotees under the guidance of Swami Prabhupada came to Dallas in 1970 and a year later purchased a former church building in a residential section of East Dallas. Prabhupada came to town in 1972 for the formal installation of the deities. Through the next decade, the center became one of the most important in the country, especially with the opening of its parochial school (termed the "gurukula") in 1971. Many of the most dedicated followers from around the country sent their children to Dallas to be raised and educated as Krishna devotees.[18]

Centers of the other new religions of the 1970s would open in Dallas, some coming and going, others prospering. ECKANKAR, for example, a representative of the Indian Sant Mat tradition, developed a small group in Dallas in the wake of the popularity of the books of founder Paul Twitchell (d. 1971) on reincarnation and astral travel. Twitchell had regularly appeared in Dallas in the 1960s, leading the organization's annual Southwest Seminar. The local group continues to the present as the ECKANKAR Center of Dallas, with its base in Carrollton.[19]

Even earlier, in the 1950s, the Unification Church, the most well-known and controversial of the new religions that came to prominence in the 1970s, began to develop in the 1950s with founder Korean evangelist Rev. Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012) sending Ms. Young Oon Kim (1914-1989) to lead what was at the time called the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC). Under her leadership, centers developed in San Francisco, Denver, and Washington, D.C. Then in 1963, she resigned as the president of HSA-UWC and named an American, Gordon Ross, as her successor. Unificationists were especially sensitive to political issues in both Korea and the United States, and the coincidence of the leadership transition in HSA-UWC with the assassination of President Kennedy greatly affected it. Only two months after Kennedy's death, Ross left San Francisco and began pioneering the church in Dallas.

That congregation continues to the present as the Dallas Family Church, a reflection of the transformations that HAS-UWC underwent to emerge in the new century as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.[20]

Among the more notable representatives of the Western esoteric tradition are the modern Wiccans, followers of the ancient religious faith of pre-Christian Europe, which they see as an Earth-based nature religion. Best known for their practice of witchcraft and magic, they emerged across the United States in the 1960s. And amid the earliest centers of Wicca in America we find a Dianic coven formed in Dallas in the late 1960s by Margan McFarland and Mark Roberts. The Wiccans are a polytheistic religion, but privilege the Goddess, and the Dianics (who look to the goddess Diana as her primary embodiment) emphasize the feminist implications of their religion, although the Texas coven made it clear that it was not a separatist women-only coven and included both men and woman among its membership and leadership.[21] Wicca is also a decentralized movement that welcomes grassroots leadership and now consists of numerous independent covens. Some have affiliated with one of the national Wiccan organizations like the Covenant of the Goddess, the Texas Council having been organized in 1995.

Wiccans have tended to keep a low profile, and although there are more than a dozen "covens" (local groups) in the Dallas Metroplex, they are almost invisible to the larger public. Individual witches will on occasion allow themselves to be interviewed by local media, and some participate in various events such as the Dallas Psychic Fairs, while a few groups sponsor periodic open circles at which they provide contact points for those seeking to learn more about Goddess religion.

World Religions in the Metroplex

Islam

Even as a number of Asian teachers joined the spectrum of homegrown teachers of new religious movements, many lay believers of Asian religions migrated to the United States and once established searched for the means of reproducing the worship environment of their homeland near their new residence. By the end of the 1970s, they were ready to found a variety of new and very different worship centers. And while immigrants have arrived from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, those from South Asia (India and Pakistan) formed the largest groups and took the lead. This observation is particularly important in terms of the establishment of Islam in North Texas. Islam is often identified with the Middle East—Saudi Arabia where it originated, along with Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, the Muslim countries that have been most in the news. However, the largest segment of the American Muslim community traces its heritage to India and Pakistan (some 40 percent) and the second largest group consists of African-American converts (some 30 percent), leaving fewer than 30 percent originating from the various Middle Eastern countries.

Several Muslim worship centers vie for the title as the oldest mosque in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Most frequently cited is the Islamic Society of Denton, which opened the first masjid built in the state of Texas in 1981. The Islamic Center of Austin had opened in 1977, but it inhabited a building previously used for other purposes. Actually, however, the history of Islam in America in general and Texas in particular is a far more interesting story.

Islam had already began to spread to the South, to the African-American community, by

The North Texas Mosque in Richardson is now one of several in the North Central Texas region.

the 1930s, in the form of the Moorish Science Temple, led by African-American prophet Noble Drew Ali, and the Ahmadiyya Movement of Islam, a Muslim revitalization movement that came to America from India in the 1920s. These two earliest movements were followed by the Nation of Islam that permeated the country in the 1950s. The first mosque in Dallas seems to have been Mohammad's Mosque No. 48 of the old Nation of Islam, which dates to 1968. It would experience the changes that led to the dissolution of the Nation of Islam in the years after the death of its founder Elijah Muhammad (1897-1975), follow the lead provided by his son Warith D. Muhammad (1933-2008), and reemerge prominently in 2002, when it adopted a new name. The Dallas Masjid Al-Islam had by that time integrated into the growing Sunni Muslim community of Texas.[22] Today there are more than sixty mosques in the DFW Metroplex.

In addition to opening new mosques, in 1989 Metroplex Muslims joined together to found a charitable organization that raised money for people negatively affected by the unrest in Gaza and the West Bank. The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development based in Richardson, Texas, grew to be the largest Islamic charity (in terms of money raised) operating in the United States. A problem developed, however, as the money raised and sent to the Middle East was funneled directly to the needy by representatives of Hamas, the organization that controlled the West Bank and Gaza.[23] That problem became acute in 1993, when the United States declared Hamas a terrorist organization. In spite of that action, the foundation continued on its mission.

Then in the wake of the events of 9/11, the government designated the foundation itself as a terrorist organization and subsequently seized the organization's assets and closed it offices. In 2004, a

Dallas grand jury charged the foundation and five of its officers and employees with providing material support to Hamas. Though a first trial ended in a hung jury, a second trial resulted in guilty convictions in what became the largest terrorism financing prosecution in American history. The rulings that flowed out of the various courts' actions set a precedent in American law–those who donate funds to a known terrorist group are responsible for that terrorist group's actions.[24]

Hinduism

Hinduism appears to have come to Dallas initially in the 1920s as the California-based Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) led by Swami Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), one of the few Indian teachers to settle in America before the 1924 ban on Asian immigration. He developed mail-order lessons to spread his version of Hinduism based around the practice of Kriya Yoga. It was not until 1971, however, that a local

This image of the Goddess Durgha occupies a central place at the Hindu Temple in Irving.

Dallas area group began to form, a public lecture held on the fellowship's behalf at the Fairmount Hotel in Dallas being the catalyst for its formation. After meeting in rented facilities for many years, the group found a more permanent home in Irving in 1994.[25]

Through the 1980s, the new wave of Hindu believers from India who had begun arriving in the late 1960s had only the Hare Krishna temple at which to find worship that resembled what they were used to from their homeland. However, in 1981 a small group met and proposed creating a new temple that could serve the varied needs of the emerging Indian community. That proposal led to the founding of the D/FW Hindu Temple. In 1988 temple leadership purchased land in Irving, a site central to the Metroplex, and worship was initiated in a house located on the land while construction of a new temple commenced.

Hinduism is divided into three major traditions, the Vaishnavas (whose main deity is Vishnu), Saivites (whose main deity is Shiva), and Goddess worshippers (whose worship centers on Durga and/or Kali). Hare Krishna believers are, for example, Vaishnavas who focus upon one particular incarnation of Vishnu—Krishna. In contrast, the new temple in Irving was designed to provide space for worship in all three major traditions, and eventually it even provided space for some of the smaller traditions devoted to additional deities in the Hindu pantheon such as Gayatri Devi. In India, temples almost never mixed deities from the several traditions; however, in the United States, the mixed tradition temple has become commonplace.

Even as the Irving temple was being developed, devotees of Swaminarayan in the Dallas area had initiated gatherings and in 1989 found a vacant church building in Grand Prairie, Texas, which they purchased, renovated and opened as the first Swaminarayan temple in North Texas. The Swaminarayan movement is a Vaishnava movement that originated in the Indian state of Gujarat; it was, founded by a Krishna devotee, Swami Narayan (1781-1830), in the early nineteenth century. Before his death, he divided the movement into two factions, one serving the northern half of Gujarat and the other the southern. A third division developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. This third Swaminarayan group, the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (generally referred to simply as BAPS), is by far the largest segment of the movement in the United States (with more than a hundred thousand devotees), and has become known for building the largest Hindu temples in the Western world (including one in Houston).

The Grand Prairie temple is associated with the southern Swaminarayan group, known in the West as the Shree Swaminarayan Satsang Mandal. The BAPS organization has recently erected its own new temple in Irving, while the northern group has yet to open a temple in Dallas (though it has a large temple in Houston). In addition, one of the smaller splinters, the Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul, USA, has its only American center in Plano.[26]

Since the opening of the DFW Hindu Temple and the arrival of the Swaminarayan believers, a number of new Hindu temples have opened, most either in the suburbs south of the airport or in Dallas's northwest suburbs. The great majority of these new temples serve one of the three main Hindu traditions such as the Sri Ganesh Temple (aka the Hindu Temple of North Texas) in Plano, primarily a Shavite temple, though offering space for Vaishnavas and Goddess worshippers, or the Hindu Temple of Frisco, which is primarily a Vaishnava temple but with space for Shaivite and goddess worship, and even a *murti* (statue) of Sai Baba of Shirdi (d. 1918), a modern holy man who has developed a large following. In fact, in 2004, Sai Baba devotees in the Dallas Area opened a temple in Plano exclusively for the veneration of the saint.

In 1990, even as the Indian Hindu community was emerging and building its own temples, the original Krishna temple was being confronted with a crisis that threatened its very existence. A former student at the Dallas gurukula named

In Summary

The DFW Metroplex is now home to the full spectrum of the world's religions, and this essay has been but a first attempt to outline what the story of religion in the region might look like given the rich diversity to be found here. A dozen or so Christian churches organized their first Texas congregations in the immediate aftermath of the Texas revolution, and the Christian movement has continued to grow as the population has increased and decade by decade claimed a greater percentage of the residents among its members. By the mid twentieth century, Christianity could boast having half the population on its rolls, and it continued in an upward trajectory, now including some 75 percent. It has done so, of course, at the cost of dividing into literally hundreds of denominations. Meanwhile, in the decades following the Civil War, a variety of competing groups began to appear and to grow both in number and percentage of the population.

In this initial attempt to assemble a picture of the present religious community and how it developed, we have been able to highlight only a few major trends and point to only a few incidents indicative of the many ways that the alternative religiosities have both contributed to the Metroplex's spiritual development and affected the status of religion on the national stage. I hope it will provide a foundation upon which future explorations can proceed.

Since few activities in which Americans engage reach the levels of participation claimed by religion, it is not surprising that it has been integral to the development of the region. Religious leaders from the mainstream churches have struggled to make society more closely conform to their ideals, while members of the alternative religions struggle to make place for themselves in the larger religious and secular realm, and those opposed to religion seek a voice with which they can offer their critique. Given the present situation we can but predict that a lively and interesting interaction between the various parts of the religious community will continue through the decade immediately before us. ■

NOTES

[1]For the basic statistics on American religion, see: Clifford Grammich et al, *2010 U.S. Religious Census: Religious Congregations & Membership Study* (N.p.: Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012); Eileeen W. Lindner, ed. *Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches 2012* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012); and J. Gordon Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religion* (Detroit: Gale/Cengate Learning, 8th edition. 2009).

[2]Much of the data from which this essay has been constructed has been gathered from research conducted in the DFW Metroplex beginning in 2010. During the past five years, I have attempted to visit many of the centers discussed below, especially those founded by Asian Americans since 1965, to gather their publications, and to track their presence on the Internet.

[3]The Restoration movement now exists as three denominations—the Churches of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

[4]Although there is a vast literature on the major Christian denominations in Texas, no one has yet attempted a history of Texas religion or even a history of Christianity in Texas. A few chapters in some of the general histories of Texas have begun to recognize religions as a topic to be included in the discussion of Texas' heritage. See, for example, John W. Storey, "Pagodas Amid the Steeples: The Changing Religious Landscape," in John W. Storey and Mary L. Kelley, eds. *Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History* (Denton, TX: North Texas University Press, 2008): 135-63.

[5]Wayne Alvord, "T. L. Nugent: Texas Populist," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* 57 (July 1953); Donna A. Barnes, *Farmers in Rebellion: The Rise and Fall of the Southern Farmers Alliance and People's Party in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984).

[6]Steven R. Butler. "The Infidels of Denison," *Legacies* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 32-49; and "Freethinkers: Religious Non-Conformity in Dallas, 1879-1904," *Legacies* 24, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 16-29.

[7]Stephanie Embree, "Atheist churches provide a community for Dallas nonbelievers," *The Dallas Morning News* (January 5, 2016). Posted at http://www.dallasnews.com/news/religion/20140808-atheist-churches-provide-a-community-for-dallas-nonbelievers.ece.

[8]Alain de Botton, *Religion for Atheists: A Non-believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2013).

[9]Wayne Gard, *Unitarianism in Dallas, 1899-1968* (Dallas: First Unitarian Church, 1973).

[10]*Schofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909).

[11]George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Charles

The Korean Buddhist Temple in Richardson is one of several Buddhist temples serving various Asian immigrant groups.

page of the nation's newspapers for a year. While still in Taiwan, Hon-Ming Chen (b. 1955) had founded Chen Tao, aka God's Salvation Church, a new religion combining Buddhism with elements of Taoism and Christianity. Then in the 1990s, he moved with many of his followers to the United States and settled in Garland in 1997. He seems to have chosen Garland because to his ear the city's name sounded like "God's Land," and once settled in Garland, he let the media in on some of the group's more unusual beliefs. Reporters soon discovered, for example, that they identified two young boys in the group as Jesus and Buddha returned to earth. That belief, however, faded in light of their announcement that they had chosen Garland as their place to view God's visible arrival on Earth and His assumption of human form, an event they predicted would occur on March 31, 1998, at Chen's home.

This prediction above all other beliefs focused the media attention on the group, not all of it flattering. The scrutiny pressed more firmly upon them as the March date arrived and God failed to appear. Then, after Chen publicly acknowledged that he seems to have misunderstood God's plans, the group began to dissipate. A number of members who had arrived in Texas had to return home as their tourist visas were running out. The remnant of the continuing community pulled out of Garland and relocated to New York, but it soon afterwards disintegrated and eventually Chen Tao disappeared altogether. Meanwhile, during the whole episode, the larger Buddhist community simply kept their distance.

Raghunatha published a lengthy essay, "Children of the Ashram: Breaking the Silence of ISKCON," in which he recounted the pervasive mistreatment he and other children had endured as students.[27] Over the next several years, similar stories from other Krishna gurukulas emerged. By mid-decade, the former students organized and began directly to confront the organization which was still in process of getting over its initial unbelief about what had occurred. The students now accused the school's leadership with a spectrum of crimes including regular beatings and canings, the denial of medical care, and sexual molestation. Even as criminal proceedings were initiated against their individual teachers and administrators, in 2000, the former pupils filed a civil lawsuit against ISKCON, having engaged a lawyer who had recently handled abuse cases against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas.

Unlike the Catholic Church, which had attempted to suppress news about abuse, protect priests who had abused people, and pay off the abused to silence them, ISKCON responded by forming a Child Protection Office that began its own investigation of accused abusers, empowering knowledgeable scholars to investigate and report directly to it on the abuse, and seek to both address its past and reform its practice to prevent any future reoccurrence. The legal proceedings continued through the decade, and at one point threatened the entire movement, but in the end the cases were settled in such a way that the movement could both recover and meet the needs of the abused survivors. Through the process the Dallas temple survived, although, like other ISKCON temples, its constituency has changed from primarily American converts to first and second generation Indian Americans.[28]

Buddhism

Until the 1960s, American Buddhism was largely limited to Hawaii and the West Coast and consisted mostly of centers following the different forms of Japanese Buddhism. While a few Buddhists established themselves in various metropolitan areas across the nation, none found their way to Texas. That all changed in 1965, when immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Korea began relocating to the Lone Star State, and Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong took the lead in opening the first Buddhist temples in Houston.

Buddhism in Dallas was especially affected by the immigration of large numbers of Vietnamese Buddhists immediately after the end of the Vietnam War (1975), immigration quotas being briefly suspended to allow thousands of refugees to enter in mass. Also, to accommodate the new residents, the federal government developed a plan to place them evenly across the country, each state receiving an allotment based on its population size. The Vietnamese were relatively poor and it took a decade for them to settle in and begin to prosper. They opened the first Vietnamese Buddhist temple in Texas, Chua Buu Mon, in Port Arthur, in south Texas, in 1987. Currently, there are over 20,000 Vietnamese residing in North Texas, again concentrated in the same two areas that other Asians have made their homes. And thus it comes as no surprise that we find the main temples in Irving and Garland, with what is possibly the largest being Chua Dao Quang, one of the Garland temples.

Along with the Vietnamese temples, smaller groups of Buddhists of a variety of national backgrounds—Korean, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Burmese—have quietly settled in the Metroplex, and opened temples to meet the needs of their people—the language barriers serving as an obstacle blocking the formation of multi-ethnic multi-national Buddhist centers.

Over the last decades, Texas Buddhists have rarely broken into the news, although one group of Taiwanese Buddhists put Dallas on the front

L. Trumbell, *The Life Story of C. I. Scofield* (New York: Oxford University Press; 1920); B. Dwain Waldrep, *Lewis Sperry Chafer and the Development of Interdenominational Fundamentalism in the South,* 1900-50 (Auburn, AL: Auburn University, 2001); Robert L. Summer, *John R. Rice. . . Man Sent from God* (Murfreesboro. TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1980).

[12]First Congregational church withdrew from the national organization of Congregational churches in 1908 and has existed as an independent congregation since that time.

[13]James Goff, *Fields White unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1989).

[14]Roscoe Barnes, III, *F. F. Bosworth: The Man Behind Christ the Healer* (Newcastle-upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

[15]"History of Greater Love Chapel Church of God in Christ." Posted at: http://greaterlovechapel.com/who-we-are/church-history.

[16]Unity of Dallas. http://unitydallas.org/.

[17]The longest-lived New Thought church in the Metroplex is the Christ Truth Foundation of Fort Worth, originally founded in 1938.

[18]Sri Sri Radha-Kalachandji Mandir Hare Krishna Temple. http://radhakalachandji.com/#.

[19]ECKANKAR in Texas. http://www.eckankar-texas.org/site/centers/dallas/.

[20]Michael L Mickler, *A History of The Unification Church in America, 1959-1974* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993). See especially chapter 3, "Emergence of a National Movement," which is posted at: http://unification.org/ucbooks/Huca/Huca-03.htm.

[21]Mark Roberts, *An Introduction to Dianic Witchcraft* (Dallas: the Mother Grove, n.d. [1973?]). McFarland's journey to Wicca is discussed in Margo Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers and Other Pagans in America Today* (New York: Viking, 1979).

[22]Imam Khalid Shaheed, "Looking Ahead: Community Focus will Continue as Dallas Masjid Al-Islam," *The Dallas Morning News* (January 4, 2014). Posted at: http://www.dallasnews.com/news/community-news/white-rock-east-dallas/headlines/20140104-looking-ahead-community-focus-will-continue-at-dallas-masjid-al-islam.ece. In the 1980s, Louis Farrakhan would open a new Dallas center of his revived Nation of Islam, and give it the old name of Muhammad's Mosque No. 48.

[23]On Hamas, see Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) and/or, Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[24]Laura B. Rowe, "Ending Terrorism with Civil Remedies: *Boim V. Holy Land Foundation* and the Proper Framework of Liability," *Seventh Circuit Review* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 372-427.

[25]Dallas-Ft. Worth Meditation Group of Self-Realization Fellowship. http://srfdallasfortworth.org/.

[26]Raymond Brady Williams, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[27]Posted at: http://www.surrealist.org/gurukula/timeline/children.html. Retrieved December 15, 2015.

[28]On the Krishna saga, see Burke Rochford, Jr., *Hare Krishna Transformed* (New York: New York University Press, 2007)