

## РОЗДІЛ ВОСЬМИЙ

# НОВІ РЕЛІГІЙНІ ТЕЧІЇ В КОНТЕКСТІ ПОСТМОДЕРНОЇ РЕЛІГІЙНОСТІ

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### ПОСТМОДЕРНІ ДУХОВНОСТІ, МОДЕРНІ СЕКУЛЯРИЗМИ ТА ДОМОДЕРНИЙ КОНСЕРВАТИЗМ В НОВІТНІХ РЕЛІГІЙНИХ РУХАХ

Відома британська соціолог релігії Ейлен Баркер розглядає три типи /етапи розвитку нових релігійних рухів в постмодерну епоху: постмодерні духовності, модерні секуляризми та домодерний консерватизм.

Ще донедавна в теоретичному релігієзнавстві вважалося, що найважливішим процесом релігійного життя сучасного суспільства є його секуляризація. Нині намічається тенденція надавати найвищий пріоритет процесу диверсифікації (урізноманітнення). За останні десятиліття значно збільшилась кількість способів виявів релігійності і духовності. Багато в чому це зумовлено тим, що в сучасному глобалізованому суспільстві інформаційний обмін відбувається значно швидше і в більших обсягах, ніж будь-коли в історії людства. Істотно зросла індивідуальна мобільність. Цінності все більше схиляються в бік не традиційно спільнотних, а в характерний для ліберальної ідеології бік власного вибору. Виразно зростає диверсифікація навіть в середовищі традиційних релігій.

В секуляризмі, як явищі НРТ, дослідниця виокремлює три його різновиди – "жорсткий" ("ідейний атеїзм, жорстке заперечення"), "апатичний" (індивід живе насиченим життям, в якому немає місця навіть думці про Бога чи надприродне) та м'який (про релігію згадують тільки в переломні життєві моменти та стикаються з її проявами в певних соціальних заходах). Оглядаючи модерні та постмодерні за своїм характером НРТ, А.Баркер констатує, що вони настільки різні в своїх проявах, що майже неможливо робити щодо них якісь узагальнення.

Дослідниця описує масмедійний феномен підкреслення інаковості учасників НРТ, обов'язкового висвітлення їх релігійної приналежності, наприклад у випадках, коли такі індивіди задіяні в злочинах чи самогубствах, що створює імідж кримінальності та агресивності НРТ. Хоча насправді рівень злочинності в них зазвичай нижчий, ніж в середньому в соціумі чи навіть в традиційних конфесіях.

Користуючись соціологічним інструментарієм, А.Баркер виводить показову таблицю ідеальних типових відмінностей між модерною релігійністю і постмодерною духовністю (спіритуальністю). Ця нова духовність, яку раніше часто називали Нью Ейдж, багато запозичує зі Східних релігій, зокрема індуїзму та буддизму, однак можна віднайти в ній корені й дохристиянського, особливо гностичного містицизму. Різноманітність тут хитається від духовного кристаловидіння та неоязичництва до НЛЮ-культів.

Безодня між фундаменталістськими (для них характерний жорсткий дуалізм, акцент на букву вчення, а не на особистий досвід) і постмодерними виявами духовності вражає. І хоча обидва ці спрямування відносяться до НРТ, це майже у всьому протилежні сторони цього явища. НРТ, які віднесені до модерного секулярного спрямування, лежать десь посередині між цими полюсами.

Основною різницею між модерним і постмодерним напрямками є концепція Божественного як трансцендентної духовної істоти для модерну і концептуалізація

божественного як універсальної життєвої сили чи енергії в людині і в природі для постмодерну. Нові релігії, що ґрунтуються на християнських вченнях (фундаменталізм та модерн), ідеологічно базуються на історизмі, креаціонізмі, есхатологізмі, в той час як для нової духовності характерний циклічність часу, релятивізм і власний досвід; замість жорсткої дихотомії спрямування на холізм.

Чинником такої зміни автор зокрема називає нову економічну модель відносин – від релігій періоду індустріальної праці, де релігійна мораль мала забезпечувати виробничу дисципліну, відбувся (принаймні в розвинених країнах) перехід до суспільства споживацтва, яке всіляко відкидає стороннє штучне регулювання своєї поведінки.

Мабуть, єдиною важливою рисою для всіх НРТ є те, що ці групи часто сприймаються з підозрою і страхом й дискримінуються через свої справжні чи уявні вірування та практики. Також їм закидають ірраціоналізм, що стало причиною поширення абсолютно ненаукової концепції "промивання мізків" для пояснення зміни поведінки людини, яка потрапила в НРТ.

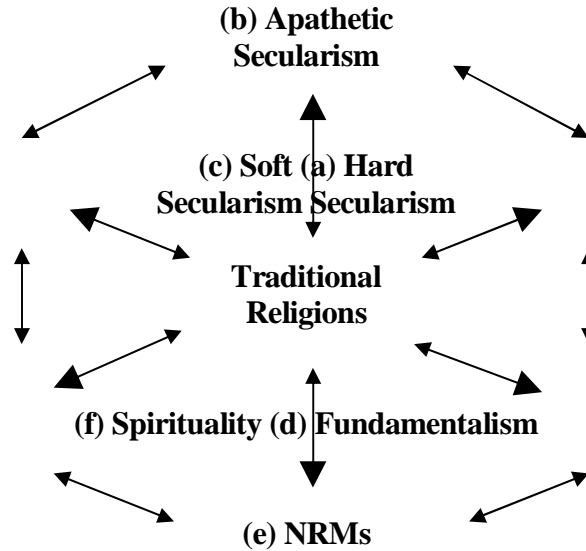
В той же час, попри окремі винятки, прихильники НРТ в основному є законопослушними й мирними членами соціуму, різноманіття якого вони збагачують самим своїм існуванням.

***Eileen BARKER***

I would like to begin by proposing that it could be helpful to exchange the theory that the most significant process relating to the religious scene in contemporary society is 'secularisation' for one which considers a process of 'diversification' to be of crucial significance. Barring the use of guns (a possibility which, unfortunately, cannot be altogether ignored), it is possible to argue that we are seeing (and can expect in the foreseeable future to continue to see) an increasing variety of ways in which citizens will be religious, experience spirituality, and/or address (or ignore) questions of ultimate concern – questions such as 'What is the meaning of life?' 'Is there a life after death?' 'Is there a God?'

Several explanations for this increasing diversification can be found in the structure and culture of both modern and post-modern societies. These include increased mobility and a changing occupational structure; our grandchildren no longer live in the same location or follow the same occupation as our grandparents did and they are, therefore, likely to have different life experiences and, thus, may not be satisfied with those answers to questions of ultimate concern that seemed to satisfy their grandparents. Migration, travel and the mass media, particularly the growth of the Internet, have opened up a whole new vista of potential beliefs, life-styles and practices. There has, furthermore, been a gradual, but steady spread of a culture that values individual choice over community loyalty, that emphasises consumerism rather than production, and respects personal experience rather than patriarchal authority. Innovation rather than tradition is revered in many quarters. And the fact that such changes are not universally appreciated merely serves to increase the potential for diversity.

Before turning to our three types in more detail, however, they should be placed within the larger context of the religious and secular scene, as schematically depicted in Figure 1. First, it should be recognised that there is an increasingly visible diversity *within* the traditional religions, which sometimes, but by no means always, leads to schisms. One very obvious example of massive change within a mainstream religion would be the changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. But there are many less visible changes taking place almost daily in most of the world religions with more or less impact on their institutions and their membership as well as on the wider social scene. One could, indeed, argue that change is the only constant.

*Figure 1: Religious Diversity*

Secularisation (as well as reactions to secularisation) is undoubtedly one of the processes that has been occurring in many parts of the contemporary world. But there is plenty of diversity here too. At one extreme, there is ‘hard secularism’. This is a ‘religious’ denial of the existence of God; it is the position found in Marxist ideologies and in Humanist groups; it is a position made visible in contemporary society through the pronouncements of journalists such as Christopher Hitchens or the British biologist Richard Dawkins.<sup>356</sup>

Hard secularism is very different from what might be called ‘apathetic secularism’, which is a situation in which the persons concerned simply do not think about religion – either positively or negatively. Religion just does not feature as part of the lives of soft secularists. Their interests may be their family, their work, their car, their football club or their favourite ‘soap opera’; they rarely, if ever, contemplate the existence of God or of life after death.

Then there is ‘soft secularism’. This could almost as well be termed soft religiosity. It is a religiosity that enters into one’s consciousness only occasionally – perhaps at such times as the death of a loved one. There is no strong antagonism towards religion; in fact there can be the idea that religion is a good thing – in its place. The institutionalised religions play a background role, and may even be welcomed at times of personal or national crisis. There might be a god, but not one who is of any great significance in everyday life. They may not believe in God, but that does not mean that they may not be prepared to use Him when necessary.

Turning to the lower part of Figure 1, more obviously religious are a number of religions/movements/groups to which the terms, cult, sect and/or new religious movement might be applied. Social scientists have used the terms cult and sect in a non-pejorative, technical sense, distinguishing them from church and denomination according to whether or not they are in tension with the rest of society and how universalistic or exclusive they are in their theological claims.<sup>357</sup> In popular parlance, however, such terms have come to mean ‘religions that I don’t approve of’, which is not very helpful for our understanding of what they are really like – which is why the term ‘new religious movement’ (NRM) has come to be used by scholars in recent years. This is not without its own problems, however. Some NRMs are not new, some are not particularly religious and few are movements in any strict sense of the word. Furthermore, the term NRM is used both to refer to religions that are new to a particular society, although they may have been around for centuries (even millennia) in

<sup>356</sup> See, for example, Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, New York: Hachette, 2007; and Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*. - Boston, 2006.

<sup>357</sup> See, for example, Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002, 5th edition.

another society, and to refer to religions that are more fundamentally new – with new beliefs, new organisations, or a new membership. Islam, Buddhism and Shinto could be cited as examples of the first understanding of new religions as they have become more visible in most of Europe; while Scientology, the Unification Church, ISKCON, The Family International, the White Brotherhood or Vissarion's Church of the Last Testament – and, perhaps, 19<sup>th</sup> century religions such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists might be identified as the second type of NRM. It is these latter manifestations of religion and/or spirituality with which the rest of this paper is primarily concerned – that is, with those that have appeared on the religious scene in their present form within the last 100 years or so – rather than the traditional religions of migrant populations.

The first point to make is that one cannot generalise about the new religions. They are genuinely diverse, differing from each other in every conceivable way: in their beliefs; the traditions from which they drew their inspiration; their practices; their organisation; their leadership; their life-styles; their financial situation; their attitudes towards women and children – and towards the rest of society.

Some have hit the headlines because of the horrific tragedies with which they have become associated. Many still remember the suicides and murders of members of the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana in 1978; the FBI's siege and eventual storming of the Branch Davidian's compound in Waco, Texas in 1993; and, moving to Europe, the suicide/murders of members of the Solar Temple in 1994/5/7. The murder and harm caused to commuters through the release of sarin gas on the Tokyo underground by members of Aum Shinrikyo in 1995; and the Al Qaeda suicide terrorists who flew into the twin towers on 9/11 2001 brought about a further, international awareness of the deadly potential of certain new religions.

Terrible though such tragedies are, however, they have been restricted to no more than a score or so of the new religions, and at Inform,<sup>358</sup> an organisation founded in 1988 with the support of the British government and mainstream churches, we have information about over 4000 organisations, around 1000 of which can be classified as NRMs currently active in the UK alone. Most of these are perfectly peaceful and their members are no more (possibly less) likely to commit any criminal offence than members of the population at large. When they *do* commit a crime, however, they tend to be far more visible than 'ordinary' members of the mainstream population. And visibility is often mistaken for typicality. Consider, for example, how one might have brought to one's attention a newspaper headline declaring that a cult member has committed suicide. One might notice such an announcement three or four times in a year, remember the suicides of the members of Heavens Gate in California in 1997, and start to wonder what it is about cults that leads their members to kill themselves. One might not, however, immediately recognise that we are unlikely to see a headline announcing that a member of the Orthodox Church has committed suicide, yet the rate of suicide among the Orthodox population might be twice as high as that among the cult members – which could then lead us to ask the question: 'What is it about the cult that *stops* its members from committing suicide?'<sup>359</sup>

Let me now turn to the three variations mentioned in the title of this paper, starting with the concept of 'pre-modern conservatism', many manifestations of which have arisen as a reaction to both modern secularism and post-modern spirituality. Although originally the term 'fundamentalism' referred to the American Protestants in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century who wanted to return to what they considered to be the fundamentals of Christianity, the term is now applied to a wide range of religions that claim to follow the Pristine Truths of Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis. While seeing fundamentalism as a hybrid between a new religious

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<sup>358</sup> [www.inform.ac](http://www.inform.ac)

<sup>359</sup> In a court case in Lyons on 4 October 1996 in which the Church of Scientology was being held responsible for the suicide of someone who had been associated with the movement, Massimo Introvigne pointed out that the rate of suicide among French policemen was greater than that amongst Scientologists.

movement and a traditional, conservative religion, one definition used by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby in their extensive Chicago project on the subject is that fundamentalism is:

A process of selective retrieval, embellishment, and construction of ‘essentials’ or ‘fundamentals’ of a religious tradition for the purposes of halting the erosion of traditional encroachments of secular modernity.<sup>360</sup>

While the term fundamentalism has come to be associated with fanaticism and even violence and/or terrorism (as with the Islamist suicide bombers), by no means all fundamentalist groups, or even most fundamentalist groups, are violent. We could call the Jehovah’s Witnesses a fundamentalist group, but they are certainly not violent – indeed, they are imprisoned in several countries because they refuse to bear arms. Although it holds to what most Christians would consider unorthodox views on sexual love, the Family International considers itself fundamentalist in its beliefs and its members are as law-abiding as most other citizens.

Fundamentalist groups may cut themselves off from the rest of society in one way or another. Children in the Exclusive Brethren are now commonly educated in special Brethren schools, and the women are expected not to work for a living once they are married, and at all ages they cover their long hair with a scarf when they are in public; when I am invited to a Brethren home, I have to eat in another room because of their understanding of I Corinthians 5:11,<sup>361</sup> and other New Testament verses that they see as fundamental to their faith.<sup>362</sup> They deplore many of the changes in modern and pre-modern society – at the moment they are particularly upset at the thought of same-sex marriages. Their religious beliefs are ‘fundamentally’ at the core of their family-based life (they have an exceptionally low divorce rate).<sup>363</sup> All Brethren (including children) are expected to attend the meeting houses for some kind of worship and fellowship most days of the week. But, at the same time, according to most conceivable criteria, the Brethren as a group are exemplary, hard-working, tax-paying citizens.

Moving from the pre-modern to the post-modern end of our new religions continuum, we find groups that are sometimes referred to as part of the new spirituality or, less frequently now than 20 years ago, the New Age movement. They tend to borrow significantly, though not exclusively, from Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism and, occasionally, though to a lesser extent, Shinto, but one can also trace some of their roots to Western mysticism and esotericism and parts of the Gnostic gospels. We cannot go through all the characteristics associated with such groups, but it should be stressed that the diversity here can be quite amazing, ranging from divination through crystals to NeoPaganism and UFO-cults. I would, however, like to indicate briefly how they differ from the more fundamentalist or traditionally conservative religions of the Book, using, once again ideal types in the Weberian sense as illustrated in Table 1.

<sup>360</sup> Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* // University of Chicago, 1995: 6.

<sup>361</sup> But now I have written to you, if any one called brother be fornicator, or avaricious, or idolater, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, not to mix with [him]; with such a one not even to eat.

<sup>362</sup> Examples are: “[The] Lord knows those that are his; and Let everyone who names the name of [the] Lord withdraw from iniquity.” (II Timothy 2:19); “Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers; for what participation [is there] between righteousness and lawlessness?” (II Corinthians 6:14). “Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, saith [the] Lord, and touch not [what is] unclean, and I will receive you; and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith [the] Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:17-18). I have taken these quotations from John Nelson Darby’s translation, which does not differ substantially from the King James’ version.

<sup>363</sup> Gary D. Bouma, “The Brethren: An Investigation into Marriage and Family Relations Among the Exclusive Brethren in Australia,” 2006.

Table 1 *An ideal typical distinction between Scriptural religiosity and spirituality*<sup>364</sup>

|                            | <i>Religiosity (of The Book)</i> | <i>Spirituality</i>                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>The Divine</i>          | Transcendent & Particular        | Immanent & cosmic                  |
| <i>Source</i>              | Without                          | Within                             |
| <i>Time</i>                | Temporal/historical              | Eternal/a-historical               |
| <i>Change</i>              | Lineal: past/present/future      | Cyclical: then/now/then            |
| <i>Organisation</i>        | Institutional                    | Individual                         |
| <i>Communication</i>       | Vertical hierarchy               | Horizontal networking              |
| <i>Relations</i>           | Controlling                      | Relating                           |
| <i>Social Identity</i>     | Group/community                  | Individual/commune                 |
| <i>Distinctions</i>        | Dichotomous: Them/us             | Complementarity: Us (them=them/us) |
| <i>Origins</i>             | Creation                         | Creating                           |
| <i>Knowledge</i>           | Dogma/revelation                 | Experience                         |
| <i>Source of Authority</i> | Scripture/authority              | Self/mysticism                     |
| <i>Control</i>             | External authority               | Internal responsibility            |
| <i>Sex/gender</i>          | Male/(female)                    | Feminine~(masculine)               |
| <i>Perspective</i>         | Analytical                       | Holistic/syncretistic              |
| <i>Anthropology</i>        | Man in God's image               | Humans as part of Nature           |
| <i>Theodicy</i>            | Evil/sin                         | Lack of attunement/balance         |
| <i>Life after death</i>    | Salvation/Resurrection           | Reincarnation/transmigration/Mokṣa |

Perhaps one of the most important distinctions between the two poles of pre-modern and post-modern is the believers' conception of the Divine. For a movement or individual near the religiosity pole, the Divine is seen as a transcendent Spiritual Being or personal God, distinguishable from the believer, although possibly also dwelling within him or her. For the spiritually oriented post-modern type, the divine is more likely to be conceptualised as a universal life force or energy, or, less abstractly, 'the Divine Spark' may be perceived as 'the God within' – an integral part of each human individual, who will, in turn, be conceptualised as an integral part of nature and/or of the cosmos.

With the traditionally religious, there is belief in a creation myth and an eschatological faith in an eventual end time. The world is likely to be divided into dichotomous distinctions (them and us; before and after; good and bad; male and female; godly and satanic). Truth and morality tend to be absolute and are known through God's revelation in Scripture and/or through some charismatic prophet. Human beings are considered inherently sinful and in need of special means, such as God's grace, to receive salvation. Following death, the body is resurrected into heaven - or damned to hell - possibly after a period in purgatory.

For the spiritually oriented post-modern type, time tends to be perceived as basically cyclical, tied to the seasons and a natural cycle of birth, growth, death and rebirth. Truth and morality are likely to be seen as relative to the context rather than as absolute, universal laws or commandments. Concepts such as sin and guilt are alien; yin and yang complementarity and balance are stressed with, perhaps, a greater (rebalancing) emphasis on the feminine and on an awareness of environmental issues. Considerable value is placed on personal experience and personal responsibility.

It needs to be stressed that these distinctions are ideal typical caricatures. The two clusters of characteristics are unlikely to be found unambiguously together in reality. It is perfectly possible for actual groups and/or individuals to be closer to one pole on some characteristics and

<sup>364</sup> This distinction is elaborated in Eileen Barker, "The Church Without and the God Within: Religiosity and/or Spirituality?" Pp. 23-48 in *Religion and Patterns of Social Transformation*, edited by Dinka Marinović Jerolimov, Siniša Zrinščak, and Irena Borowik. - Zagreb, 2004.

to the other pole on others, but I suspect the distinctions are recognisable to anyone who has spent time studying the diversity of new religions.

Then, between the pre-modern and the post-modern one can find new religions that might be labelled 'modern' in a number of ways. Several of these belong to what is sometimes referred to as the human potential movement, one of the most important of these being the Church of Scientology. In such movements, the members are likely to be achievement oriented, not rejecting, but accepting the goals of modern society. Indeed, Bryan Wilson wrote that Scientology was precisely the kind of religion that one might expect to find reflecting the preoccupations of a modern, secularized society in which individuals exhibit a greater concern for self-development and psychic well-being than for other-worldly salvation.<sup>365</sup>

It is interesting to compare Wilson's analysis of Scientology with his and Karel Dobbelaere's later analysis of Soka Gakkai International in which they argue that this Buddhist new religion is 'in tune with the times' in so far as its members have a radically different experience of life from those engaged in the extractive or manufacturing industries of producer societies. With the shift from an economic structure in which the goals of a production-oriented economy 'demanded a moral order in which the work ethic had a central role',<sup>366</sup> to one in which a consumer economy 'demanded the abandonment of the regulation of personal comportment'.<sup>367</sup> 'Ideals of duty to the state, or action for the corporate good, were subordinated to the search for personal fulfilment and the desire to enjoy life to the full.'<sup>368</sup> The image of a personal God was increasingly replaced by the idea of an impersonal force or spirit; and the rewards came to be sought in *this world* – and/or, via reincarnation, in the next life, but still in this world – rather than through salvation in some other world.

These authors, frequently pointed to as staunch upholders of the 'secularisation thesis', illustrate clearly how the desacralization of societal organisations may lead not to the disappearance of religion at a personal level, but to its persistence in forms more compatible with modern – or post-modern – society.

While it cannot be repeated too many times that new religious movements differ from each other in many radically different ways, it can still be recognised that one characteristic that they have held in common throughout history is that they have been treated with suspicion and fear and, quite often, have been discriminated against and/or persecuted for actual or alleged beliefs and practices. Frequently they are accused of being irrational – indeed this is one reason why the completely unscientific metaphor of brainwashing has often been drawn upon to explain why people would do something as otherwise inexplicable as converting to a new religion.

The antagonism is not altogether surprising. At the individual level, parents are quite likely to be upset when their offspring reject the values and perhaps the way of life that they had planned for their cherished son or daughter. At a more social level, those with a vested interest in preserving the status quo will tend to be on the defensive about novel alternatives.

Usually new religions are comparatively small, with limited power or status and as such present little or no real threat to the state. As already stated, there have been some violent acts perpetrated by small religious groups, but, to repeat, the numbers of groups involved is tiny compared to the number of new religions, and there are many more violent acts committed by members of old or no religions. This is not to say that violence or any criminal activity is not something that needs to be controlled – it is just to argue it is important to keep it in perspective, though different societies have diverse perspectives on such matters. Falun Gong was seen as a threat when it showed that it could mobilise thousands of people for a demonstration – something that the Chinese state felt should be its (the state's) prerogative alone. Other states not only allow, but celebrate the fact that non-violent demonstrations can occur in their countries.

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<sup>365</sup> Wilson, Bryan. 1990. *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society*.- Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid, page 217.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid, p. 218.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, p.219.

In so far as contemporary society has a post-modern nature, it is likely to be suspicious of pre-modern and possibly modern religious movements. In so far as state authorities are themselves pre-modern or modern they are likely to be concerned about the disregard for authority and the crossing or transcending of traditional boundaries of permissible behaviour by the more post-modern movements.

In so far as groups or movements have a religious or spiritual nature, they may have a stronger motivation underpinning their actions than those uninterested in such dimensions to their world view – although it cannot be forgotten that non-religious, including strongly atheistic, worldviews have provided the motivation for many sweeping changes in our not too distant history.

But all societies have laws to protect their citizens from criminal behaviour, and in my country (Britain) as in many other countries, it is a widely held opinion that it is a person's actions rather than their beliefs which should determine how they are treated by the law. In such countries, the members of new religions are just as liable, but no more liable, to be punished by the state should they be found guilty of criminal activity.

In so far as a new religious movement is innovative, this could present a challenge for both individuals and the society at large – it could present a real danger, a perceived danger – or it could be accepted as advantageous to either the individual or the state – or to both.

In assessing the challenges with which we are presented, I would suggest that we need laws that are made and enforced according to due process by a democratically accountable state – and we need accurate knowledge about the new religions – not ignorance, misinformation or defamatory labelling – all of which can, on the one hand, obscure those genuine dangers to which individuals and society need to be alerted, and, on the other hand, lead to the abuse of human rights of citizens who hold beliefs and wish to follow a lifestyle that differs from our own, but which can be perfectly compatible with – and even enrich – our ways of life in an increasingly diversifying society.

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### **НОВЫЕ РЕЛИГИИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ДУХОВНОЙ ЖИЗНИ ПОСТСОВЕТСКОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА РОССИИ**

В функционировании новых религиозных движений в постсоветской России можно выделить три периода (этапа).

**1-й период - 1991- 1993 г.г.** Он характеризуется бурным распространением, «триумфальным шествием» НРД по территории России. При этом следует учитывать факт возникновения и активного миссионерства новых религиозных движений в России еще в советский период. Правда, они тогда находились в полуправильном или нелегальном статусе, хотя некоторые из них (например, Церковь Божией Матери Державная) вели себя весьма активно, проводили богослужения, издавали книги и брошюры.

В рассматриваемый период отношение общества к возникающим типам религиозных образований в целом было толерантным, а нередко даже и позитивным. Во многом это объясняется реакцией на крушение идеологической и политической монополии одной партии, повлекшей за собой преодоление господствовавшего представления о религии, как пережитке прошлого, помехи на пути построения коммунистического общества. Возникновению и беспрепятственному распространению новых религиозных движений в России в немалой степени благоприятствовало и