

contingent being (*ibid*) and that 'the creation is external to the creator, and has its own reality and even a measure of independence, though these are derivative and limited' (p. 35). Here one wonders what has become of Aquinas's view of divine simplicity, according to which God is in no genus and according to which there is in him no *compositio* of form and matter, *suppositum* and nature, essence and existence. One also wonders what has happened to Aquinas's assertion that there are many non-contingent beings and that God operates in every operation. It is, indeed, true that Aquinas refers to God as *ens*. But since he believes that 'There is a God' must logically be distinguished from propositions like 'There is nothing the matter', he could hardly do otherwise. It looks as though Macquarrie would have him say that God is nothing, for he tells us in Chapter XIII that 'God is being and God is nothing' (p. 172). But this is either logically nonsensical (for reasons derived from philosophers like Frege and Russell), or it means what Aquinas means when he asks us to distinguish between God and his creatures without denying the existence of God.

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THE ELEMENTARY FORMS OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS LIFE by Roy Wallis.
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. Pp x + 156. £12.50.

The title of the book might encourage the reader to imagine that here is an extension of Durkheim's classic, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Durkheim brought up to date at last! This is certainly not the case and the title is misleading. Nowhere is Durkheim's book mentioned but on occasions when the author refers to the grand master he is to be congratulated on the fact that he rejects vulgar Durkheimianism and in particular a crude reading of his functionalism, not least in connection with the role of religion where it is held to play an integrating role in society.

If Professor Wallis's new book does not excite Durkheimian scholars, it should certainly be welcomed by those who are fascinated by new religious movements—by what are commonly referred to as sects. There are others of course who are not fascinated. For them such movements as Scientology, Krishna Consciousness, the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organisation, the Church of Eductivism, Syanon, *est*, the Children of God, T.M., and a host of others, are obscure, bizarre, and redolent of madness. This book will in no way change their opinions: it will probably confirm them. Strangely enough, sociologists are somewhat divided about such vagaries. The social reality of the phenomena cannot be denied. But not all that is real in this sense is significant. It is a common charge today that sociologists all too readily run after trivia and overlook what is crucial. The debate can hardly be settled here. At least it can be generally accepted that the recent upsurge of strange religious movements is a reflection of society's uncertainty about its basic values, virtues and achievements. Professor Wallis, and his mentor, Dr. Bryan Wilson, spend much of their professional labours in fishing in dark waters in attempting to make clear the currents at work in such groups and in providing answers to basic questions—what are the social conditions which give rise to these irrational outcomes?—why are such groups in many cases, but clearly not in all, so ephemeral? The professionals wade in where others have little wish to tread.

What Roy Wallis has done in presenting yet another book on sectarianism is to be commended on a number of counts. There are as many sects as there is sand on the sea-shore and he has very wisely limited himself to religious movements which have arisen or accelerated since the 1960s. He has also avoided getting embroiled in the age-long and now tedious wrangle (started by Weber) of what constitutes a sect or cult in contrast to a church. He does not attempt an extensive typology by which all sects or movements can be classified. And he sees the impossibility of simplified explanations which will fit all sects at all times. Nevertheless, he is rightly impelled to say something

about explanation.

Nor is he free from offering a typology. It is a relatively simple one. There are two basic or ideal types, which are never completely met. One centres on the rejection of worldly values and ideas: the other typology makes the acceptance of them central. The first involves movements which tend to be millenarianist, call for great sacrifices on the part of their followers, intellectual or emotional, in encouraging them to deny conventional living. In this group one finds amongst others, Moonies, the Children of God, the People's Temple. Those who are world-affirming stress the need for personal improvement and do not ask members to abandon their occupation or domestic lives. Examples are T.M., Silva Mind Control, Scientology, *est* (Erhard Seminar Training). The first type, which seems more 'religious' than the second, has its roots in Christianity and is often associated with asceticism. The second is more eastern in flavour, having some association with Buddhism and Hinduism: its main thrust is towards pseudo-psychology and project goals which are related to success in this world, be it material, emotional, or 'spiritual'.

Wallis feels prompted to posit a third category, in some way in between the two, which he calls world-accommodating. It is both non-worldly and world-accepting (rather like traditional Catholicism?) and indeed the main example that he refers to but does not comment on to any extent is that of neo-Pentecostalism, especially American Catholic Pentecostalism. Wallis does not develop this third category, examples are few, but it promises to be a useful way of looking at certain religious movements.

Rightly the author moves beyond typology and attempts to show how these movements were fed by the disintegration of the counter-culture of the early 1960s. The hippies, surfers, drop-outs, drug addicts, saw the bankruptcy of their position and the failed idealist revolution left them stranded, and so, middle-class as so many of them were, they turned to emerging religious movements, mainly world-denying in nature. If the secular fails, try the 'really' religious or embrace techniques which allow one to become a mental or emotional virtuoso. Although Wallis does not try to give the present state of play of the movements—whether they have declined, and if so why—he does bring home vividly factors that explain the varying fortunes of the movements and the internal changes that have occurred in some of them as a result of external influences.

The assertion that the market situation determines recruitment to the new movements is hardly a theory but it is a convincing factor. Emphasizing one of the main characteristics of the market—its precariousness—Wallis not only accounts for the fact that almost overnight certain movements became widespread but that they then quickly decayed. The numbers of recruits tended to dry up as the economic recession set in in the early 1970s. Some groups stagnated or went out of business, others had to modify their world-rejecting demands. And the world-affirming kind, for example Scientology, were able to adjust themselves internally to the new demands and so keep in business. Wallis gives detailed accounts of the internal changes in the Human Potential Movement, T.M., and Synanon.

To the instability of the market has to be added the instability of leadership. Nearly all the groups in question depended upon charismatic leadership. Such is the hypnotic effect of leaders on members that they readily follow them even if the leader calls for a hundred and eighty degree turn in ideology. The death of a leader can alter the course of a movement, and two dynamic personalities can divide a group. Social cohesion which is necessary for persistence can only be achieved at times through considerable cost to the original ideals of the movement.

It is a pity that such a worthwhile book should have its value offset by the poor quality of the printing (or typing?), especially in the light of its cost.

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