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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Michael T. Cooper

Welcome to volume three issue two of *Sacred Tribes Journal*. Our second volume of 2008 features three articles on religious movements, three book reviews and a movie review. In addition, we have included a report on a recent consultation on new spiritualities. The articles are of special note. Each gives descriptive accounts of religious movements both in the United States and abroad. Two of the articles are written by emerging scholars of religion and *Sacred Tribes Journal* is proud to publish the first articles of their promising careers.

The volume begins with an article on vampire religion co-authored by David and Kiara Falk. David Falk is an Master of Divinity candidate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School researching Egyptian Gnosticism and is also completing an MA in Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology and Languages. Kiara Falk is a MA student at TEDS researching the vampire hysteria during the Enlightenment. Their article analyzes a recent survey focused on practitioners of vampirism. After discussing the demographics and trends of the religion the Falks do a comparative study of vampirism and contemporary Paganism. The article concludes with information about various vampire religions found on the Internet. The Falks' descriptive article makes a nice contribution to the study of this emerging religious movement.

Our second article describes a new religious movement in Korea. The author, Seung Min Hong, is a Korean student studying at Trinity

Graduate School. He is currently completing a MA in Communication and Culture with a focus on religious studies. Hong's article describes two sects whose focus of worship is Kan Jeung San, a self-proclaimed incarnate god. This Korean movement with nationalistic tendencies has grown to over seven million adherents since 1974. Of the two sects, Jeung San Do is the most active in propagating beliefs with seven religious houses in the United States. Hong asserts that understanding this movement will help in understanding the religious climate of Korea and her people.

Finally, Harold Netland makes an important contribution in understanding Zen Buddhism. Netland is Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has lived much of his life in Japan. Among his publications are *Encountering Religious Pluralism* (InterVarsity Press, 2001); *Globalizing Theology* (Baker Academic, 2006) edited with Craig Ott; and *Spirituality Without God? Buddhist Enlightenment and Christian Salvation* (Paternoster, forthcoming) written with Keith Yandell. Netland addresses the issue of the impact of globalization and modernization on a religious movement. With particular focus on Buddhism's transmission to the West, he uses the example of D.T. Suzuki and his ability to contextualize Zen. The article clearly suggests that religions are influenced by cultures as well as influenced by those who are leading them. In order to understand religion in a globalized context, it is insufficient to simply know about religious history, we must also know about the people who are practicing religions, the cultures where they emerge and their leaders.

Also included in this volume, two books were reviewed. *Beyond the Burning Times* was edited by one of our senior editors, John Morehead and co-authored by another, Philip Johnson. The book is a dialogue between Johnson and Gus diZerega, a Gardnerian Wiccan. *Religious Literacy* is an important book on the issue of what Americans do not know about religion. Over time and due to particular factors, Americans



have become ignorant of the majority religion, Christianity, as well as minority religions in the United States. We have also included a movie review. In light of the Falksø contribution on vampire religion and the recent release of *Twilight*, we thought it appropriate to give some attention to the block buster.

Our volume concludes with a report on the Trinity Consultation on Post-Christendom Spiritualities held last October on the campus of Trinity International University. The consultation attracted religion scholars from around the globe while approximately 130 participants engaged the topics both live in the lecture hall and virtually over the Internet. Participants came from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States. We have included links to the ten plenary addresses on the volume three issue 2 table of contents web page.

Please note that we do accept unsolicited articles of top quality in the area of new religious movements and spiritualities. After reading our contributor's guidelines, you can send such manuscripts to me at [mcooper@sacredtribesjournal.org](mailto:mcooper@sacredtribesjournal.org). *Sacred Tribes Journal* is currently soliciting articles for an upcoming volume focused on the academic conversation between evangelicals and Mormons. If interested in contributing to this volume please contact John Morehead at [johnwmorehead@msn.com](mailto:johnwmorehead@msn.com).

We hope you enjoy the latest volume of *Sacred Tribes Journal*. If you have comments about the articles or other content on [www.sacredtribesjournal.org](http://www.sacredtribesjournal.org) please feel free to contact me.



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