

that occurred in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" (From "Opinions Concerning the Implementation of the Special Class-Struggle Involving the Suppression of Catholic and Protestant Illegal Activities According to Law," Tong Xiang, Zhejiang province, February, 1997).

Religion and the Growth of Democracy

This also suggests that people interested in democracy should attend more to religion. For example, the attention to China's courageous pro-democracy activists is certainly deserved, but it must be remembered that their following is quite small. Yet there is little attention to China's dissident churches, which at a conservative estimate number some 25 million (apart from 15 million in official churches) and are growing at 10 - 15% a year. The *Far East Economic Review*, in a 1997 cover story entitled "God is Back", reported one Beijing official as saying "If God had the face of a seventy year old man, we wouldn't care if he was back. But he has the face of millions of 20-year-olds, so we are worried." The rapid growth of the only nation-wide movement in China not under government control merits *political* attention.

RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Current Trends

Apart from the Balkan conflicts, the rise of Welfare in Turkey, the BJP in India, and the growth of radical Islamicism, the following religious trends also merit political reflection:

- (1) The rapid growth of charismatic Protestantism in Latin America, and the now companion growth of charismatic Catholicism. As Cambridge sociologist David Martin has shown, these indigenous developments are one of the largest religious changes of the century, produce personal reform, and provide a major impetus toward entrepreneurial activity.
- (2) The pattern of violence and warfare along the sub-Saharan boundary from Nigeria to Ethiopia. This traces a Christian/Muslim divide.
- (3) The rapid growth of Christianity in Korea (now 25% of the population), China (a minimum of 40 million, up from 1 million in 1980), Taiwan and Indonesia.
- (4) Tensions in Nigeria and Indonesia. There is widespread religious violence in the north and central regions of Nigeria, with several thousand dead in recent years, and fears that there could be a religious war. In Indonesia, rising religious strife precedes and has some separate dynamics from recent anti-Chinese violence: 100 churches have been burned in Java alone in the last 15 months, most of them *not* ethnic Chinese. It threatens to undermine what has been one of the world's best examples of inter-religious toleration and cooperation. In both of these regional powers there is the possibility of instability and violence that could spread far beyond the religious communities themselves.
- (5) The current exodus of Christians from the Middle-East -- some two million in the last five years. Currently some 3% of Palestinians are Christians compared to an estimated 25% fifty years ago. Similar movements have taken place out of Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq.
- (6) The emergence of Orthodoxy as a unifying symbol in Russia, the Balkans and parts of the former Soviet Union.
- (7) The increasing prominence of religion in the conflicts between India and Pakistan, now enhanced by nuclear weapons.