

THIRD EDITION

EXPERIENCING
THE WORLD'S
RELIGIONS

Tradition, Challenge, and Change

MICHAEL MOLLOY

EXPERIENCING THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Tradition, Challenge, and Change
Third Edition

MICHAEL MOLLOY

T.L. Hilgers,
principal photographer



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For Kathy, Peggy, and Tom,
Robert, Katie, and John,
merry companions
on the same journey.

Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change

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Preface

Religions are ways of looking at reality, and they strongly shape both individuals and cultures. Religions are also value systems that shape decisions. We therefore cannot understand the turbulent modern world without taking its religions into account. Our contemporary world seems constantly on the verge of catastrophe. Yet—through the internet, television, immigration, and travel—it also offers new potential for people to grow close. For both reasons we need to understand each other’s values and points of view—we need to study one another’s religions.

There is also a reward for readers of this book beyond becoming good citizens of the world. It is quite wonderful for students to learn about world religions, because the religions lead to so many unexpected places and interesting people.

This book encourages readers to experience the religions of the world directly, even in their own communities. Luckily, even small communities have places of worship and meditation, which invariably welcome students who are interested in experiencing them. Every city has festivals, services, dances, or concerts sponsored by a variety of religions, and museums display religious art. Through the experience of various religions, students will discover not only the fascination of religion, but the beauty, as well, of poetry, art, music, architecture, and dance.

This edition owes a big debt of gratitude to students and teachers who have given me their recommendations. I made hundreds of changes to make the material more readable and to make connections with modern life. I have added material on indigenous religions, on Sunni Islam, and on Vajrayana Buddhism. Although the focus of this book is on major, living religions, I have also added material, as requested, on Greco-Roman religions, as background to Christianity, and on contemporary Zoroastrianism. I thank all of you who gave me your time and helpful advice.

Because I wrote this book for beginners in the study of religion, five aims guided me:

1. *Offering the essentials.* What would a person seeking to be an informed world citizen want to know about the major religions? This book tries to present that essential content, then point to places, texts, and people through whom more can be discovered.
2. *Clarity.* I often think of the ironic axiom, “When you see the spark of ambition, water it.” Students almost always come to a course in world religions with eagerness to learn. But their initial enthusiasm can be drowned in waves of details, presented in academic language. I try to give the essentials in the clearest language that I can. Maps, photos, definitions, and timelines are added for additional clarity.
3. *Showing the multidisciplinary nature of religions.* A religion is not just a system of beliefs. It is also a combination of ways in which beliefs are expressed in ceremony, food, clothing, art, architecture, pilgrimage, scripture, and music. This book tries to make the multifaceted expressions of religion clear. The photographs have been chosen to help achieve this goal.
4. *Experience.* Religions are better understood through firsthand experience. I hope here to encourage students to imagine and seek out direct experience of religions both at home and abroad. Each chapter begins with a possible First Encounter and then includes a personal experience later in the chapter; these two sections have similar goals.
5. *Blend of scholarship and respect.* This book necessarily presents religions from an academic point of view. At the same time it tries to show its empathy for the thoughts and emotions of people who live within each religious tradition.

Supplemental materials are available to help students and teachers. They include:

- Print *Study Guide* by Richard Curran Trussell. This study guide contains chapter Learning Objectives; summaries; fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, and short-answer questions; possible paper topics; interreligious comparisons; and reflection exercises. It may be ordered separately or packaged at a discount with *Experiencing the World's Religions*.
- Online Learning Center (OLC) available at www.mhhe.com/molloy3. For each chapter, the OLC contains multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions (all different from the Study Guide for even more opportunities to master chapter content); electronic flash cards of key terms; fun crossword puzzles that further help students learn key terms; and internet links to sites that provide even more material for study.
- Using the registration codes provided with *Experiencing the World's Religions*, teachers and students have access, through the OLC, to *PowerWeb: World Religions*. *PowerWeb: World Religions* provides more

than sixty supplementary readings on the religions presented in *Experiencing the World's Religions*. These readings are meant to provide a glimpse of current events and changes that take place in contemporary religion and the broader world.

- Instructor's Resource CD-ROM. This CD-ROM contains Concepts and Strategies for Teaching World Religions; for each chapter, it also contains Lecture Supplements, Video Resources, Internet Resources, a test bank of Multiple-Choice Questions and Essay Topics, a Computerized Test Bank that allows teachers to create exams easily and store grades in a gradebook, and PowerPoint slides, organized by chapter and section.
- Teachers have free access to McGraw-Hill's *PageOut* course management system at www.pageout.net. *PageOut* is a powerful way to build online course materials. Tests can be created and administered online using all the items from the test bank. Teachers can include links to the OLC and its many study tools. And teachers can add their own material for a truly customized web site.

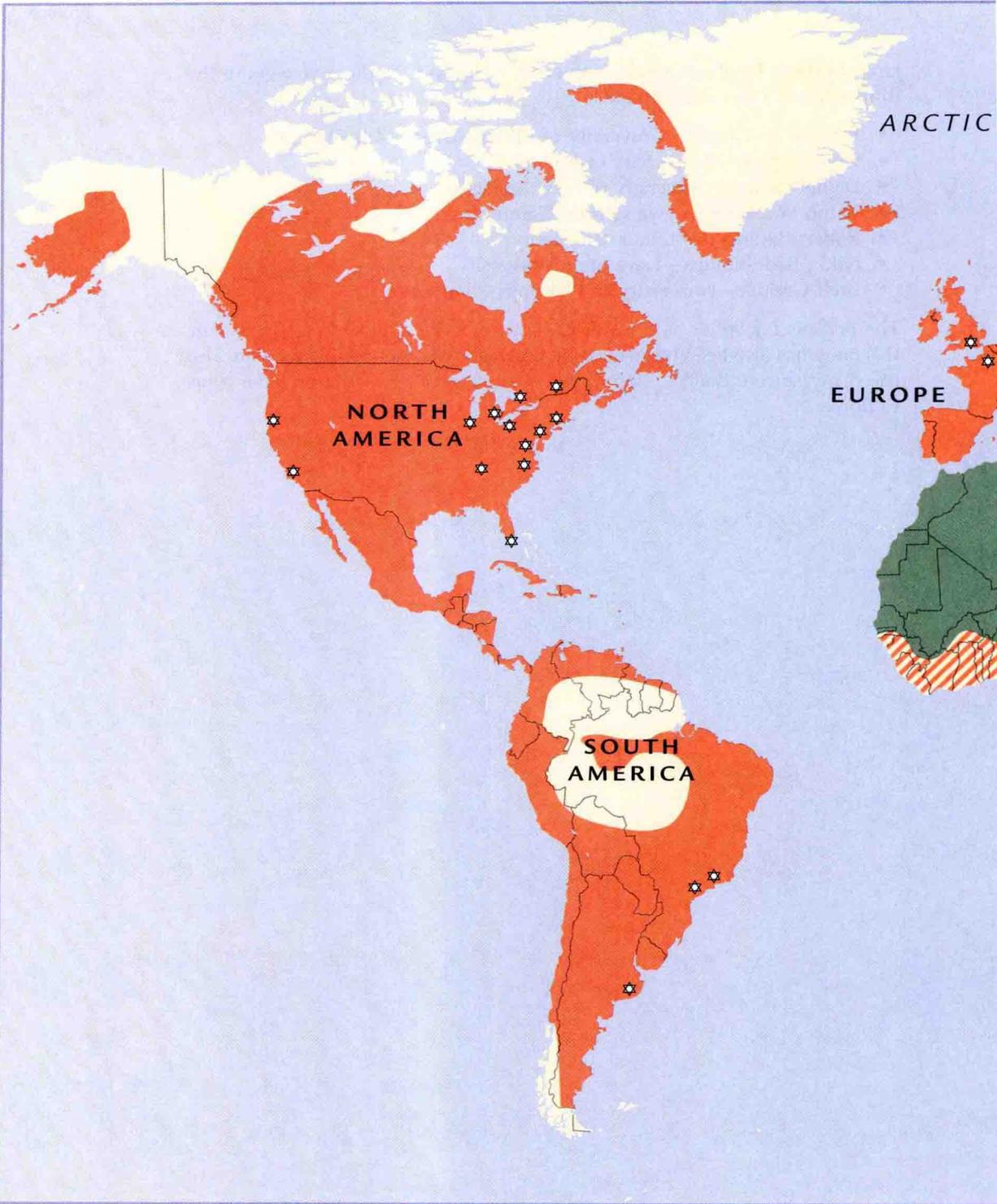
Many teachers have shared their insights with me—I am simply passing on the torch. I am particularly grateful to Lucy Molloy, Walter Daspit, Sobharani Basu, Abe Masao, Winfield Nagley, and David Kidd. It is a joy to recall the influence of their unique personalities. Thanks to Thomas Hilgers for many fine photographs. I am grateful to the East-West Center for a grant that early on assisted my studies in Asia. Several monasteries were kind in allowing me to share in their life: Songgwang-sa in South Korea, Engaku-zan in Japan, St. John's Abbey in Minnesota, and St. Andrew's Abbey in California. I remain indebted to the late Alden Paine, whose encouragement at Mayfield was a model of kindness. Thanks to Jon-David Hague, my editor at McGraw-Hill, for his availability and help; to Brian Pecko for his photographic research; to Robin Mouat for her fine illustrations; and to Marie Deer, my copy editor.

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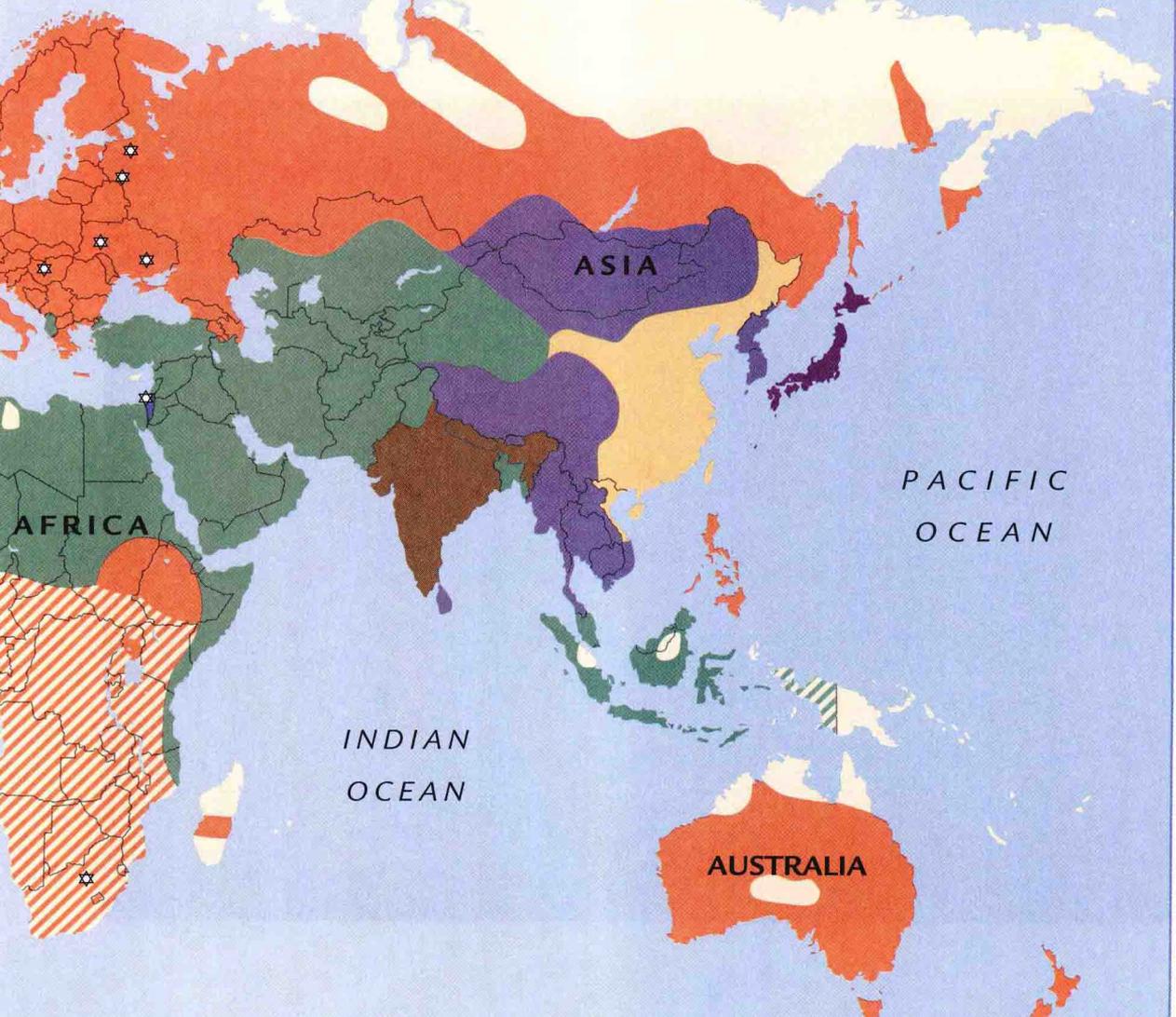
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The book is far better as a result of their reviews. Although it is a truism, this book has also been influenced by hundreds of other people who are also owed my sincere thanks. They planted in me seeds that I hope have come to flower.



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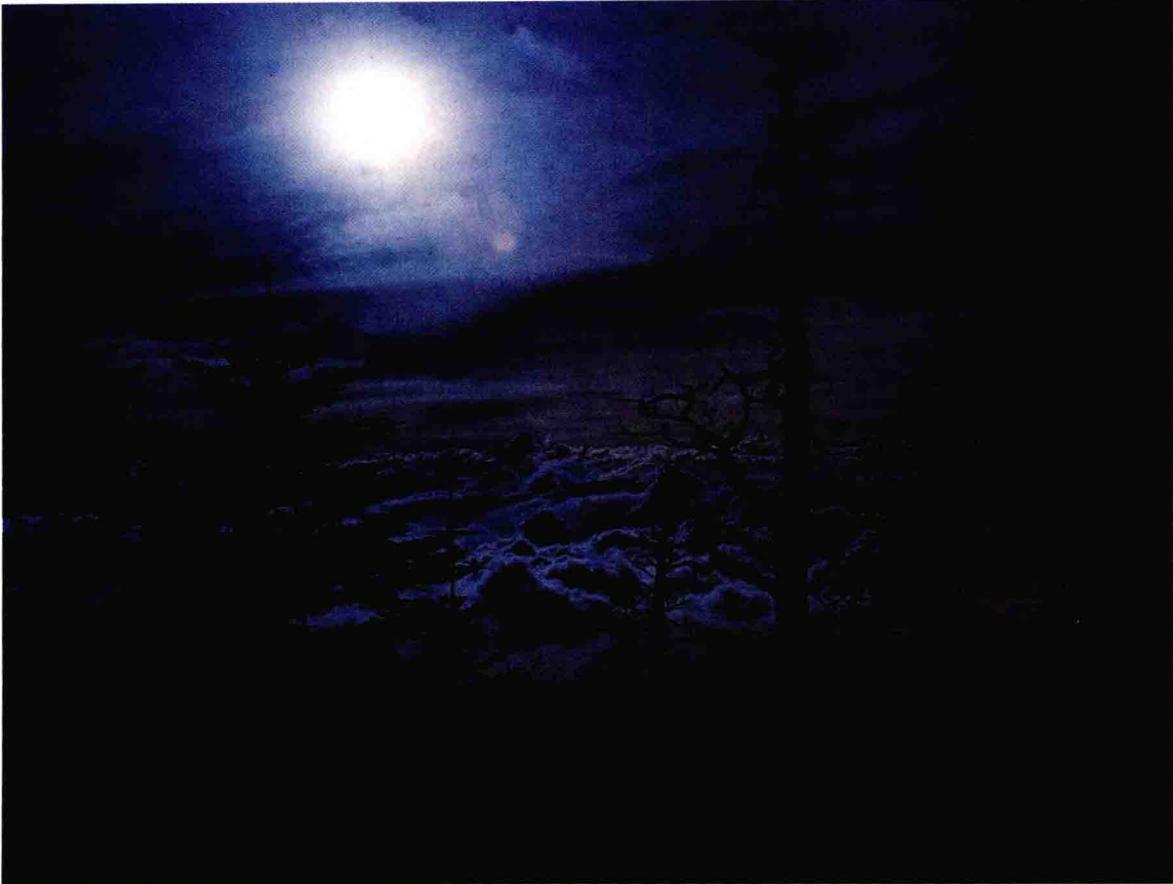


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INDIAN OCEAN

AUSTRALIA

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|  ISLAM |  CHINESE RELIGIONS |
|  HINDUISM |  SHINTO and BUDDHISM |
|  JUDAISM |  NATIVE RELIGIONS |
|  CHRISTIANITY and NATIVE RELIGIONS | |



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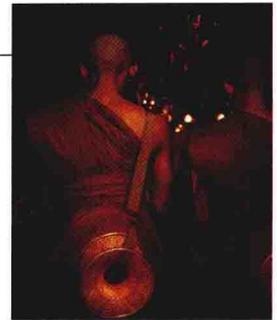
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