

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

in Boulder, Colo., Cox, a Harvard theologian, suggests, however, that there is "something different about the current wave of interest in Eastern spirituality."

Unlike the New England transcendentalists, today's young "seem more interested in *practice* than in doctrine." The average American "spiritual pilgrim" today is not an intellectual; he chants or does yoga before going on to philosophy, if he goes on at all; many Hare Krishna followers are working-class youths who joined up mostly to rid themselves of drug habits. In general, Americans are culturally ill-prepared for Eastern ideas, writes Cox. Many interpret the Buddhist "attitude of detachment," for example, as the "legitimization" of "free-floating irresponsibility"; they detach themselves from the world but not from their own egos.

But the challenge from the East has ended the Judaic-Christian "cartel on the religious market," Cox says, and may help to revive some neglected aspects of Western religious tradition. The Eastern emphasis on direct spiritual experience may encourage Western denominations to reaffirm their own belief that "faith must spring from real encounter" and inject a "long-needed corrective to the stern neo-orthodox suspicion of religious experience."

The Minister As Exemplar

"The Hero and the Minister in American Culture" by E. Brooks Holifield, in *Theology Today* (Jan. 1977), P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

As the American folk hero has evolved, so has the image of the ideal Protestant minister, writes Holifield, an associate professor of church history at Emory University.

"Folksiness," fervor, and the expression of rural populist values were expected of the frontier preacher. Later, as more Americans moved to the cities in the 19th century and adopted genteel ways, they wanted pastors who were "learned and refined." With the rise of industrial giants like Andrew Carnegie and John J. Rockefeller came a preference for the "prince of the pulpit," the "forceful orator," who could "hold, move, and sway vast congregations." During the Progressive era when the great tycoons were discredited as "robber barons," congregations expected the minister to be a "man of social vision, a reformer." After World War I came a "managerial revolution" in America, and pastors with executive talents were sought.

Today's Protestant clergymen have inherited the burden of all these stereotypes, Holifield contends, and many pastors feel pressured by their congregations to conform to one or more of them. Rather than succumb to this pressure, clergy should look beyond it and soothe parishioners' private anxieties—which may be its source. In the future, he adds, the growing number of women clerics may itself cause many churchgoers to "readjust their traditional images of the minister."