## Contents

**Acknowledgements** vi

**Notes on Contributors** vii

**Introduction**

*Nadia Marzouki*

1 Evangelicals in the Arab World: The Example of Lebanon

*Fatih Kaoues* 13

2 Purifying the Soul and Healing the Nation: Conversions to Evangelical Protestantism in Algeria

*Nadia Marzouki* 28

3 Religious Mobilities in the City: African Migrants and New Christendom in Cairo

*Julie Picard* 43

4 Pentecostal Judaism and Ethiopian Israelis

*Don Seeman* 60

5 Ambiguous Conversions: The Selective Adaptation of Religious Cultures in Colonial North Africa

*Heather J. Sharkey* 77

6 Converts at Work: Confessing a Conversion

*Loïc Le Pape* 98

7 Being a Black Convert to Judaism in France

*Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot* 115

8 Converting to ‘Mormonisms’ in France: A Conversion Both Religious and Cultural?

*Chrystal Vanel* 139

9 Participating without Converting: The Case of Muslims Attending St Anthony’s Church in Istanbul

*Benoît Fliche* 162

**Conclusion: What Matters with Conversions?**

*Olivier Roy* 175

**Index** 188
Introduction

Nadia Marzouki

The political transformations that have taken place in the Arab world since December 2010 have triggered numerous debates concerning religious freedom. Similarly, polemics around the right of Muslims to wear headscarves or to eat Halal food have been prominent in countries like France and Italy for more than a decade. These controversies about religious freedom on the northern and southern sides of the Mediterranean have been the object of many valuable studies. Most of the existing scholarship, however, emphasises the controversial aspects of the transformation of national religious landscapes. Moreover, it tends to examine controversies about headscarves and minarets in Europe, and breaking the fast of Ramadan in North Africa, as separate and unrelated phenomena. As such it reproduces the well-established assumption according to which there is a complete disconnection between what happens on each side of the Mediterranean. By contrast, this book was born out of a curiosity about the non-controversial aspect of religious change, and for the interconnectedness of processes and debates that take place in the countries of the Mediterranean region. While the study of public debates about religious changes is crucial, it is important not to lose sight of the concrete human experiences and everyday practice which these changes entail. Converts and members of religious minorities are often aware of the fears and anxieties their affiliations cause in the broader national context. But the way in which they envisage and live out their own religious practice is often strikingly uncontentious. They do not define their practice as a means to upset the dominant national culture or political order. Given the gap between the public’s perception of religious change and believers’ own understanding of their lives, this volume seeks to go beyond the common assimilation of the practice of conversion within a controversial or revolutionary act.
Religious Conversions in the Mediterranean World

of protest or secession. The book also insists on the numerous resemblances between the everyday practice of converts and members of religious minorities in places as different as France, Algeria, Lebanon and Israel. No matter how different these contexts may be, individuals face similar challenges, resort to analogous arguments and modes of reasoning, and attempt to cultivate comparable forms of emotions.

This project originates in a conference we organised at the European University Institute, in March 2011. The conference – entitled ‘Converts as Commuters’ –, aimed at analysing the difference between present and past conversions. This book has been completed within the framework of the Religiowest programme funded by the European Research Council. Historically, religious conversions have been essentially of two forms: individual and collective. Social sciences have primarily focused on collective conversions, to the extent that they have had massive, visible and long-term consequences for national and international politics. Scholars have amply examined collective conversions from the perspective of power, domination and identity. They have shown how, during a specific period of time, a hegemonic power might coerce populations into converting to its own religion (as in the Muslim conquest of the seventh and eighth centuries, the Spanish Reconquista and colonialism in Latin America). In this narrative, the paradigm of *cujus regio, ejus religio* requires a common religious belonging for people of a shared polity, and entails a strong push for converting subjects to the rulers’ religion. As for individual conversions, they represent a minor place in the social scientific study of conversion: scholars have essentially approached individual conversions as idiosyncratic instances which illustrate or challenge widely accepted theories about collective conversion.

Contemporary movements of conversion challenge previous understandings of religious change. Although conversions now seem to take place at once at the individual and mass levels, they do not necessarily form collective movements. Conversions occur in all directions, and people do not always convert to the religion that has been dominant in a particular context or tradition (as shown by cases such as young Europeans now converting to Islam, Algerian and Moroccan Muslims converting to Evangelicalism, the breakthrough of Pentecostalism and Mormonism in Africa, and self-conversion to Judaism).

The sociology of religion has thoroughly studied many of the forms of contemporary religious change that conversions manifest. Notably, scholars of religion have extensively examined the individualisation of faith, the crisis of established Churches and denominations, and the emergence of a global religious market (Beyer 1994; Casanova 1994; Stark 2011). The
complexity of trends, whereby withdrawal towards fundamentalist practices and makeshift syncretism coexist, has also been widely discussed.

However, contemporary conversions pose a key challenge to the sociology of religion, to the extent that they cannot be reduced to a form of acculturation to the dominant power aimed at integration into the majority culture. Nor do they stem from the quest for an alternative collective identity. Rather, contemporary conversions reveal a search for ‘the religious’ in its purest form.

The present volume draws upon the same conceptual framework as the conference, but focuses solely on cases from countries from the Mediterranean area. Our approach, however, is neither exhaustive nor strictly comparative. Our purpose here is not to define anything like a Mediterranean type of conversion, or model of religious change. Just like the categories of ‘Muslim world’ or ‘Western world’, the notion of a homogeneous Mediterranean world must necessarily be questioned. We use the notion of the Mediterranean as a heuristic tool to reflect upon the processes of religious change in a non-essentialist and non-culturalist perspective. The methodological paradigm that informs this research is not that of area-studies – based on the assimilation of geographical areas with cultural and political patterns – but that of globalisation and interconnectedness. The Mediterranean area provides a unique site to critically engage with an assumption that is still prominent in the scholarship on religious change, according to which the region can easily be divided between its Judeo-Christian northern side and its Islamic southern side. The proliferation of communities of converts to Christianity in North Africa, and the growing rate of conversions to Islam in Italy, Spain or France reveals the inadequacy of this model and the urgent need for scholars to think beyond the narrow framework imposed by Area Studies. Processes of migration and mobility have made the systematic relations among religion, territory and culture far less obvious. The geo-strategic approach in terms of clash of cultures between the northern and southern sides of the Mediterranean, and the more civil approach based on notions of integration, tolerance, engagement and dialogue, both fail at accounting for the increasingly interconnected aspect of religious changes in this region. Notably, in Muslim majority countries such as Algeria or Turkey, the presupposition that Islamic norms determine all forms of individual and collective actions has become a major obstacle to the evaluation of new religious and cultural trends which significantly challenge traditional definitions of the nation. As Olivier Roy has noted, ‘[w]e should not try too much to define what the Mediterranean is’, but should rather perceive it as an “open sea”, not simply a lake that
stands in the middle, in between Europe and North Africa. ‘If it is open, then we have to be careful with the notion of “Middle”, because it supposes a circumference, a closed circle, Let’s open the circle’ (Roy 2009, p. 9). This is what this book seeks to do.

Based on a series of historical and ethnographical studies, this book shows how religious conversions to and from Islam, Christianity or Judaism in Mediterranean countries dramatically unsettle dominant understandings of nationalism, citizenship and secularism. Rather than provide an exhaustive and systematic comparison between northern and southern countries, we propose a few case studies that uniquely illustrate the process of globalisation and formatting of religious practice in Muslim and Western contexts. The relevant binary here is not between Muslim and non-Muslim, but rather between globalisation and the nation-state. While globalisation and the European construction increasingly undermine the model of the nation-state in the Mediterranean world, conversions reveal the capacity of religion to disrupt and unsettle previous understandings of political and social relations. Converts’ claims and practice are often met with the hostility of the state and the public in general (bans on the burqa, on minarets, on proselytism etc.) Converts are perceived either as traitors or as unconscious and weak tools of foreign manipulation. Through studies of controversies taking place over conversions in Algeria, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco or Israel, the book examines the challenges which conversions represent for how states traditionally deal with religious minorities. Not only do converts’ practices entail a questioning of common national understandings of what constitutes the proper meaning and place of religion. They also challenge the notion of a fixed boundary between religion and politics, or between religion and secularity. Indeed, most converts situate their practice beyond these common binaries, and propose a genuine vocabulary to describe their activity, their commitments and the new forms of covenants with which they identify.

The understanding of globalisation which informs this study of religious conversions, particularly in cases regarding conversions to Evangelical Christianity, draws upon sociological and anthropological studies which consider globalisation as a process simultaneously entailing ‘Westernizing homogenization’ and ‘indigenizing differentiation’ (Robbins 2004). All the studies proposed herein move away from the US-centred view that explains conversions as the result or expression of the stronger capacity of the US to export its culture and ensure its hegemony in different parts of the world (for a critique of the US-centred model of Evangelical globalisation, see Robert Wuthnow 2009). The book instead
demonstrates how Evangelical globalisation occurs through conversions yet simultaneously preserves some distinct features of, and merges into, local cultures. For example, contrary to a widespread misrepresentation of the success of Evangelical Christianity in Algeria, most Evangelical pastors and leaders of Christian communities are Algerians. While they may refer to references broadly inspired by some American media or Churches, their primary objective is to establish an Algerian Christianity. In Lebanon, there are deeper connections between Evangelical Churches and American missionaries; but the success of these Churches is due to their capacity to address members’ concerns and to adapt their teachings to the specificity of the Lebanese context. The depth of exchange and the level of reciprocity vary from one religion to another. As we shall see in this study, Evangelical Christianity shows a stronger capacity to merge with local cultures than Mormonism or Orthodox Judaism.

This volume draws upon an understanding of conversion that moves away from its stereotypical definition as a clean break, a whole rejection of a tradition and the wholehearted adoption of a new set of norms. The various cases studied herein demonstrate that, on the contrary, conversion can be partial, ambivalent and does not necessarily imply a full rejection of the convert’s past or former community. In Turkey, Muslims attend Christian churches without converting to Christianity. African migrants in Egypt assemble multiple layers of religious identification, rather than selecting a single one. The history of Protestant missionaries in Egypt reveals that most conversions were ambiguous, secret, and invisible. The chapters presented in this volume offer a description that breaks from the traditional Paulinian understanding of conversion as a clear rupture and as an integral adhesion to new rules and emotions. The cases studied also suggest how inadequate a classical social scientific approach is to the study of conversions. Converts are not necessarily easily recognizable. They do not fall into existing categories of social movements, political strategies or new religious movements. The widespread conception of conversion as an instrumental strategy appears as largely insufficient and inadequate. The approach to intentionality that informs most studies presented here seeks to move beyond the binary opposition between reason and revelation, or religion and politics. For example, in his study of conversions to Pentecostalism in Venezuela, David Smilde shows that although converts indeed decide to believe in order to respond to material issues of violence or substance abuse, the instrumental aspect of their practice does not make their practice less sustainable, valuable, or less religious. The notion of ‘imaginative rationality’ he refers to in order to describe Venezuelan converts’
intentionality ‘should not be taken here as a synonym for false, insincere or ungrounded’. Rather, the concept designates the ‘human’s ability to get things done by creating concepts’ (Smilde 2007, p. 13).

While converts in some cases describe their experience as an act of religious conversion, many others use this term with significantly more caution. They usually resort to other expressions, such as religious change, personal transformation, path to God, fellowship of Jesus, and personal liberation. Given the gap between the vocabulary utilized by believers and scholarly modelisation, many contributors to this volume propose new designations and original definitions of conversion. Heather Sharkey proposes a new definition of conversion that accounts for the very blurriness of the phenomenon under examination. Rather than seeing conversion as a clean break or a conscious change, she sees conversion as ‘turning in position, a change of condition, and […] a structural adaptation for a new purpose in life’ (Chapter 5). To describe the practice and discourse of African migrants in Cairo, Julie Picard prefers the expression ‘religious mobility’ to religious conversion (Chapter 3). In his examination of the processes by which individuals go public and reveal their new religion to their relatives and friends, Loic le Pape suggests that conversion is a codified linguistic form, a ‘grammar’, much more than a purely subversive or creative act (Chapter 6). Don Seeman shows how the case of Pentecostal Judaism and Ethiopian Israelis challenges fixed sociological categories like religion and ethnicity. He envisages the practice of Beta Israel Pentecostals from the perspective of mediation. Pentecostal Jews do not see themselves as having left Judaism, but they define their Jewishness as ‘mediated by Christ’ (Chapter 4). He proposes the notion of ‘a transaction of kinship’. The word kinship, Seeman argues, ‘is broad and flexible enough to encompass multiple phenomenologies of belonging that include but may not be limited to genealogical continuity, shared ritual commitment and the sense of shared history or destiny that modern Jews frequently invoke’. In this sense, kinship does not designate ‘a fixed status like citizenship but a negotiated quality of interactions over time’. The need to be recognised by others, to see one’s choice validated by others, is a central aspect of the activity of converts. From this perspective, conversion, Le Pape argues, is essentially a relational activity, oriented towards recognition, and one that can be captured only through the study of interactions. Benoit Fliche’s study of Muslims’ attendance of services at Saint Anthony’s Church in Istanbul shows the variety of forms that religious commitments can take. Individuals may regularly attend a church service, or even write notes to a Christian saint, without describing their activity as
a conversion (Chapter 9). As shown by Aurélien Gampiot in his study of Black Jews in France, the presence of different normative references (secularism, Orthodox Judaism, racial prejudices) against which they need to struggle to define their own identity does not allow us to think of conversion as a simple trajectory from a clear identity to a clearer one. Even though they deal with different practice, locations and periods, all the chapters of this volume contribute to a rethinking of the category of conversion and propose alternative descriptions that better capture the complexity and nuances of the phenomenon.

This hybrid and difficult to categorize dimension of conversion makes it all the more threatening for the state that is at a loss about how to control, contain, or legislate for it. In places as different as Israel and Algeria, conversions pose a similar challenge to dominant nationalist narratives and to existing regulations. The dilemma of Israeli policymakers and jurists in the face of Feres Mura (i.e. descendants of Ethiopian Jewish converts to Christianity) shows the limits of the efficiency of the traditional divide between religious and secular, or between Judaism and Christianity, on which modern Israel is based. Ethiopian Jews and Beta Israel Pentecostals do not seek recognition as an established community:

They hold to a narrative in which faith defines every public and private decision and should also define public institutions [...] Moreover, they insist that they do so as Jews, though the contours of the cultural imaginary render them structurally invisible to ordinary Israelis, for whom Judaism and Christianity represent a binary that is still nearly absolute. (Chapter 9)

Fatiha Kaoues interprets conversions to Evangelical Protestantism in Lebanon as an attempt at going beyond the sectarian organisation of society and politics:

Converts opposed to inherited religious identity as supposedly inauthentic affirm their determination to stay masters of their own fates and in control of their own destiny. In this respect, Protestantism asserts the autonomy of the subject whose direct relationship with God, alone and with the Bible introduces a new way of believing that no longer admits a social order determined by a clerical hierarchy. (Chapter 1)

Similarly, Chrystal Vanel shows how the strong response triggered by the project of constructing a Mormon Temple in Le Chesnay in France has exposed the ambiguity of French secularism (Chapter 8).
Although the challenge that converts represent for dominant narratives of the nation-state (based on secularism, Public Judaism or sectarianism) has clear political implications, the practices that are examined in this volume do not correspond to social or political movements. The critique of dominant narrative that informs converts’ identities does not necessarily lead to an endorsement of political groups or ideas that aim at unsettling law and policy. Moreover, the deep concern converts have with how they are perceived by the broader society – either for fear of alienation or out of need for recognition – often prevents them from openly organising as political parties or resistance movements. The way in which converts engage with the political realm is therefore more oblique and ambivalent. Their religious activity and discourse often entails a millenarian type of belief in an upcoming redemption of the nation and a dramatic transformation of politics. This millenarian project, however, remains intimately ingrained in a religious endeavour of purification of the soul and cultivation of new emotions.

Independently from the differences of contexts, motives, policy, and history that are examined in this work, the practice of conversion reveals an ambivalent process that simultaneously aims at rejecting and finding religion. A recurrent theme of the discourse of converts is the critique of a certain state of religion as too focused on rules and prohibitions, on dogma, or on tradition. Opposing this ossified form of religion, converts seek something that they describe as truer, more sincere, and more authentic. Algerian and Lebanese Christians reject the notion of religion as din (an Arabic term for religion suggesting adherence to a set of doctrines), and speak instead of freedom and fellowship of Jesus. Pentecostal Jews describe themselves as believers, rather than as adherents to a religion. But despite this attempt at downplaying religion as a constraining framework of practice and ideas, the development of a new orthodoxy and a new orthopraxy (in other words a new religion) is inherent to the achievement of a successful conversion. Such is the paradox that converts must struggle with: their choice to convert is born out of a rejection of religion in favour of religiosity, but the cultivation of a new, purer religiosity always bears the risk of leading back to the creation of a new religion. To a large extent, the dilemma of revelation versus institution that converts face epitomises the very dilemma that is at the heart of any religious practice.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I (Chapters 1–4) examines the legal and policy challenges that conversions represent for the nation-state. Chapter 1 (by Fatiha Kaoues) studies the ambiguous relation of Evangelical Lebanese converts to national understandings of the
relationship between religion and politics. To a large extent, conversion to Evangelicalism expresses Lebanese converts’ attempt to distance themselves from the nation’s religious traditions and sectarian politics. In a society where interpersonal relations are marked by a high level of conflict, and where the middle class is getting poorer, the insistence of the Evangelical ritual of building a ‘community of love’ is increasingly appealing. Rejecting Shiite theology’s focus on suffering, Maronite piety’s concern with fault and guilt, and, most of all, the politicisation and radicalisation of Islam, Lebanese Evangelicals praise themes such as compassion, forgiveness, and love. However, conversions are not a purely reactive phenomenon, based on the rejection of local religiosity. They are also oriented towards the recasting of a new relationship between religion and citizenship. In a country where citizenship is defined by religious identity, conversion is, if not an instrument, at least a catalyst of a process of re-imagining these sectarian politics.

In Chapter 2 (by Nadia Marzouki), practices of conversions to Evangelicalism are explained from the perspective of a competition between state and society over the meaning of the nation and of citizenship. Analysis of the ordinance passed by the Algerian government in 2006 in order to criminalise proselytising shows that state officials have essentially perceived conversion as a threat to the authority of the state and to the unity of the nation. On the contrary, converts’ narratives and practices suggest that, through conversion, newborn Christians seek to escape the state’s attempts to render all religious practice legible. Through a tight correlation between the purification of the individual’s soul and the purification of the nation, Algerian Evangelical Christianity expresses a significant interest in, and commitment to, the future of the nation.

Chapter 3 (Julie Picard) examines the case of the many African Christian migrants who currently live in Cairo. Whether they are political refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants, they change their religious practices during this migration experience. Due to the long and ancient presence of Christianity in Egypt, they are able to continue practicing their religion. While migrants’ attachment to Global Christian identity gains in intensity due to this context of exile, African Evangelical migrants are also able to build strong relations with the broader Egyptian society, in particular through the Evangelical Coptic community. This chapter studies the African-Egyptian networks through which African migrants attempt to make their religious practice possible, and how this encounter affects Egyptians’ perception of Christianity.

Chapter 4 (Don Seeman) explores the complex situation of Ethiopian Jews and Pentecostal Israelis in Israel. 'While nominally secular, Israeli
law and practice also acknowledge the complex, possibly inextricable relationship between ethnic, religious and national or genealogical forms of imagining what it means to be a Jew in the modern world’, Seeman explains. ‘The demography of Israel has been changing through mass immigration (especially from the USSR and Ethiopia) as well as strong foreign missionary efforts. In the Ethiopian case, tens of thousands of individuals who immigrated into Israel over the last two decades were considered by the state to be descendants of converts to Orthodox (or Protestant) Christianity. Therefore the state sought to normalise their case, as officials saw it, by encouraging these Ethiopians to undergo a state-sponsored “return to Judaism” program that reunited ethnic and religious grounds of identification. Yet this has remained contested and conflictual at both the policy level and the level of everyday, vernacular experience of Ethiopians. Moreover, a smaller but even more challenging group of Ethiopians, from the state’s point of view, have begun, with other Jewish Israelis, to embrace various forms of Messianic Judaism and charismatic Christianity in Israel – making a frontal collision with the state’s basic imaginary almost inevitable’.

Part II of this volume addresses the ambivalent relations of converts with the broader society.

Chapter 5 (Heather Sharkey) addresses the question of what it meant to convert in North Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. British and American Evangelical Protestant missionaries arrived in the Islamic societies of North Africa imagining conversions in which public professions of faith would gain confirmation through ceremonies of baptism and the growth of official Church membership. But in fact, formal, large-scale, or family conversions seldom occurred, except, arguably, in parts of Egypt among Coptic Orthodox communities who were already Christian. By the late nineteenth century, circumstances were compelling Evangelical Protestant missionaries to change their ideas and expectations about what conversion and Christian identity could mean. In this process, missionaries began to acknowledge that conversions could be partial, private, and unknowable to others in addition to being incremental in nature. Using examples from Egypt and, to a lesser extent, from Sudan and the Maghreb, this chapter considers the nature of ‘ambiguous conversions’ and argues that they were a significant consequence of missionary encounters as well as an important aspect of religious and cultural landscapes. Sharkey argues also that such ‘ambiguous conversions’ depended on factors of mobility – or the lack thereof – including the ability of individuals to change home or job, to reconfigure circles
of families, neighbours, and friends, or to transcend communal and national boundaries.

Chapter 6 (Loïc Le Pape) demonstrates how, in the French secular context, religious conversions are often perceived by the broader French public as threatening, abnormal events. It examines the numerous challenges converts must face when they publicly confess their conversion, and how, in turn, this public confession unsettles established norms regarding the separation between public and private spaces. Based upon the examination of a sample of converts’ narratives, this study shows how converts strive to inscribe their story in a secular (or, more accurately, to use the French term, a laïque) context. In order to do so, they often insist on their commitment to confining their new religious practice to the private sphere and on the fact that their conversion results from a free, autonomous decision and not from coercion. Ironically, in the French laïque context, a successful conversion is a conversion where the individual seems to have changed almost nothing.

As shown in Chapter 7 (Aurélien Gampiot), the physiognomy of Judaism in France has recently changed, owing to the presence of African and West Indian converts. Their motivations and life experiences are diverse and can be analysed as betraying the need for a new construction of ‘Blackness’ through the Jewish religion. This field of study proves especially rich when it comes to investigating the identity reconstruction of these ‘new Jews’ and their coexistence with their fellow Jews, mainly Ashkenazis and Sefardis. How are Black Jews perceived in France, both within the Jewish communities and in the wider French society? How is the issue of visibility addressed in their efforts towards integration in both spheres?

Chapter 8 (Chrystal Vanel) examines the presence of two forms of Mormonism in France. In this country, to reconcile belonging to France and to the Church of Latter-day Saints (as the Mormon Church is officially known) is not an easy task. The strong American identity inherent in Mormonism often seems incongruent with French culture. French Catholics have proven reluctant to welcome the soon-to-be-erected first French Mormon temple. The Latter-day Saints Church nevertheless has a relatively strong presence in France (with more than 50,000 members), whereas another ‘Mormon’ offshoot, the Community of Christ, only has around 70 members, most of whom are Tahitians, for whom religious identity often constitutes a tenet of their Tahitian culture.

Based on an ethnographical study of Saint Anthony’s Church in Istanbul, Chapter 9 (Benoît Fliche) analyzes Muslim attendance at Christian places of worship in Turkey. Visiting a church to pray is not easy
or natural for Muslims, especially because of the state policies concerning religion and the widespread representation of Christians as ‘missionaries’. In spite of this context, somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 people visit Saint Anthony’s Church each day, and most of them are Muslims. They do not come to visit as tourists, but in order to pray, or to light candles. Importantly, these Muslims neither intend to convert, nor define themselves as Christians. They offer an intriguing case of participation without conversion.

Note

1. The term laïque here describes a context defined by a strong conception of the separation between politics and religion. This strongly separatist conception of secularism calls for pushing all visible religious symbols out of the public space. While it is often argued that this is the prevailing understanding of secularism in France, this conception does not account for the reality of legal arrangements of secularism in France. For a detailed analysis of the difference between common representations of French laïcité and legal and judicial implementation of laïcité, see Koussens (2010). For a historical analysis of the development of French laïcité, see also Jean Bauberot (2004).

Bibliography

Index

A
acculturation, 179–83
African Evangelical churches, in
Cairo, 50–3
African immigration, see also Blacks
and religious diversity in Egypt, 43,
44–7
African pastors, 53
Al Azhar, 48
Algeria
Arab Spring, 33–4
Black Decade, 33, 34
Christian millenarianism, 36–40
Constitution, see Algerian
Constitution
Protestantism in, see Protestantism
salvation vs. religion, 34–6
Algerian Constitution, 29–33
Alliance Israélite Universelle, 116
ambiguous conversions, 77–91, 184
Christian-to-Christian conversion,
85–7
Hebrew Christians, 81–3
secret believers, 83–5
transient Christians, 87–9
American Board of Commissioners for
Foreign Missions (ABCFM), 14
American Evangelicals in Egypt, 79
American Presbyterians, 80, 84
American Reform Judaism, 67
American University of Beirut (AUB),
19
Amitié Judéo-Noire, 132, 133
Anglo-American Evangelical
Protestantism, 80–1
Anta Diop, Cheikh, 124
Apophatic Mormonism, 151
Arab Baptist Theological Seminary
(ABTS), 16, 17
Arab Spring, 33–4
Ariel, Yaakov, 83
Artillery of Heaven (Makdisi), 15
Assemblies of God, in Lebanon, 17–18
Association of Algerian Muslim
Ulamas (AAMU), 32
‘Avenir 46’, 143

B
Badr, Habib, 19–20, 21–2
baptism, in Lebanon, 17
Bar-Mitzvah, 69
Baugh, Helen Duff, 22
Benigni, Roberto, 123
Berger, Peter, 108
Bernheim, Gilles, 116, 134
Berque, Jacques, 33
Bertrand, Louis Auguste, 141
Beta Israel, 63–8, 118
Pentecostals, 65–6, 73, 74–5
Bible women, 87
‘black church’, 48
Black Decade, Algeria, 33, 34
Black Jews
Fraternité Judéo-Noire impact on,
132–4
The Black Jews of Africa: History,
Religion, Identity, 124
Blacks, see also African immigration
conversion to Judaism, in France,
115–36
identity reconstruction, 124–9
sense of identity in, 123–4
Book of Acts, 37
Book of Mormon, 139, 140, 148
CofC members usage, 153
Books without Borders, 88
‘born-again’ phenomenon, 176
Bouissou, Jean-Christophe, 151–2
Bowman, Matthew, 149–50
British and Foreign Bible Society
(BFBS), 80
archives of, 87
distribution of Bibles, 88
British Anglican Church Missionary
Society (CMS)
mission of, 80
Bruder, Edith, 124
Burgat, François, 13, 32–3

C
Cairo
African Evangelical churches in, 50–3
Evangelical Protestantism
dynamism in, 47–50
religious mobilities in, 43–56
Catholicism, 98
conversation with converts to,
100–1
Cerullo, Morris, 69–72
Channel North Africa, 38
chapels, 142
Chidiaq, Asad, 15
Christ de la Nouvelle Alliance (CNA),
51
Christian millenarianism, 36–40
Christian-to-Christian conversion,
85–7
Church of Beirut, 14
Church of Christ, 139
Church of the Fish, Istanbul, 165
circumcision, 125
circumcision, Jewish contexts, 63
clerics, 103
Cohen, Martine, 129
colonialism, 32
colporteurs, 87
Community of Christ (CofC), 151, 152
American, 153
French, 153
perspectives on ethical issues, 155
Concordat, 99
Consistoire central israélite de France,
117
Constitution, see Algerian
Constitution
contemporary conversions, 176–8
converting instructor, role of, 105
converts
attitude towards religion, 183–5
Black, 129–32
capacity to face criticism, 107
Catholicism, conversation with,
100–1
competences of, 105–7
and French laïcité, 109–10
and institutions, 102–5
interactions with friends/relatives,
105–8
LDS, in France, 140–50
narratives, 106
speeches, 102
stages for, 103–4
Coptic Evangelical Church, 79
Crypto-Christians, 85
Cuche, Denys, 129
culinary traditions, African, 125
culture
disconnection, conversions and,
179–83
religious, see religious culture
curse of Ham, 128

D
Damascus Gate, 74
Darby, Michael, 82
Davies, Douglas, 150
debate, over Feres Mura controversy,
72–5
Dib, Saïd, 21
Directorate of Religious Affairs, 163
dispensationalism, 20
diversity, religious, see religious
diversity, in Egypt
doubts, 106
Duguet, Raymond, 141
Durkheim, Emile, 103

E
Ebstein, Monique, 116
economic migrants, 45
Eglise Protestante d’Algérie (EPA), 32,
33
Egypt
agitation against Christian in, 90
building religious identity in, 53–5
Christ de la Nouvelle Alliance in, 51
Christian-to-Christian conversion,
85–7
Missionary churches, 46
Muslim associations in, 46
religious diversity in, African
immigration and, 43, 44–7
territorialisation in, 55
Egyptian Islamic nationalism, 89
Elinski, Bill, 17, 18
ethical issues
CofC perspectives on, 155
ethical monotheism, 61
Ethiopian Jews, see Beta Israel
Ethiopia
North American groups, 68–72
Pentecostalism in, 65–6
Evangelical Christian missionaries, 13–25, see also Protestantism
aim of, 14
Evangelical Fellowship of Egypt, 51
Evangelical Protestantism, see Protestantism
evangelical theory of language, 81
exopraxy, 165

F
Fahmy, Ahmed, 84
faith communities, 176
Falasha, see Beta Israel
fanatic conversion, 111
fear, of conversion
in Republic of Turkey, 163–4
Feres Mura controversy, Israel, 60
debate over, 72–5
NACOEJ and, 68
Finlay, Reverend Graham, 17
Four Freedom Agreement, 45
France
Black Jews in, 134–6
Blacks conversion to Judaism in, 115–36
converting to Judaism in, 116–17
converting to Mormonism in, see Mormonism, conversion, in France
Jewish population in, 124
LDS Church membership in,
growth of, 142
LDS converts in, 140–50
religious landscape, 98
RLDS Church in, 151
Franco-Judaism, 116
Fraser, Robert, 88
Fraternité Judéo-Noire (FJN), 115,
135–6
on African kosher food stores, 126
impact on Black Jews, 132–4
French laïcité, 98
converts and, 109–10
French Revolution, 116
friends, converts interactions with, 105–8

G
Geiger, Abraham, 61–2
Goffman, E., 100
Grammar, of conversion, 100–2
Great Commission of Christianity, 14
Grubin, David, 123
Guide for the Perplexed, 123

H
Hammond, Mary, 88
Hasluck, Frederik, 165
Hebrew Christians, 64, 81–3
language skills, 83
Hervieu-Léger, Danièle, 122
Hocking Report, 91
Hofmeyr, Isabel, 81
Holocaust, 126–7
Hoskins, Bob, 17, 18
hypotheses, conversion process, 100–2

I
identity reconstruction, Black converts’
elements of, 124–9
illuminated conversion, 111
immigration, African, see African immigration
institutions, religious
converts and, 102–5
role/contribution of, 105
Islam
Algerian Constitution on, 29–33
ambiguous role of, 22
conversion process in, 104
Jacobin, 33
protection, Algerian Constitution and, 30–1
Islamism, 13
Algerian, 33
Israel
Feres Mura controversy, 60, 61,
72–5
LDS Church academic presence in, 141
Reform Jews in, 67–8
Istanbul
St Anthony’s church, Muslim attending, 162–72

J
James, William, 89
The Jewish Americans, 123
Jewish Voice International (JVI), 68, 69
Jews, 60–1
circumcision, 63
Ethiopian, see Beta Israel
French Black, see Blacks
Hebrew Christians, 64
North American, 68–72
recalcitrance of, 62
recognition as, causes of, 117–23
Reform, in Israel, 67–8
Russian Orthodoxy and, 74
sense of identity in, 123–4
theological limits of, 75
Judaeo-Arabic of North Africa, 82
Judaeo-Tunisian, 82
Judaism
Blacks conversion, in France, 115–36
converting, in France, 116–17
history of, 124
Orthodox, 67–8

K
Krim, Mustapha, 34–5

L
laïcité, 98, 143, see French laïcité
laïque, French state, 98
Law of Separation, 110, 132
LDS Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), 152–3
academic presence in Israel, 141
converts in France, 140–50
growth of membership, in France, 142
Lebanese Baptist Convention, 17
Lebanon, 14
Assemblies of God in, 17–18
Baptism in, 17
mainstream Evangelical Churches, 15–16
Pentecostalism, 17–19
Protestantism in, 14–15
Protestant missions in, impact of, 19–21
legal statutes, 45
Lemieux, Cyril, 101
Life is Beautiful, 123, 127
London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews, 64
I’shem gerut, 63
Lubavitch, 71

M
Maadi Community Church (MCC), 48
Makdisi, Ussama, 15
Maronite Church, 15
Marriott, J. W., 140
Mathieu, Séverine, 122
Mayer, Stephanie, 140
McAlister, Melani, 39
Mead, G. H., 100
Mergui, Joël, 116
meshane habriyot, 133
‘migrant-pastors,’ 48–9
Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, 72
missionary churches, 46
The Missionary Enemy, 70
moderate Mormonism, 150
Mormon Church, 139
Mormonism, conversion, in France, 139–55
Apophatic, 151
LDS converts, 140–50
moderate, 150
success of, 141
Mount Sinai/Mount Moses, 54
Movement of Society for Peace (MSP), 32
Mula, Shlomo, 128
Muslim associations, in Egypt, 46
Mysteries of the Kabbalah, 123

N
narratives, converts, 106
National Protestant Church, 16
Nawar, Camille, 18
Nduwa, Guershon, 126, 128, 132, 136
Near East School of Theology (NEST), 16
vs. ABTS, 16
‘neo-pastors,’ 48–9
New Jerusalem, 139
Nile Valley
American and British Protestant missionaries in, 79
North Africa, religious culture in, 77–91
Christian-to-Christian conversion, 85–7
counting conversions, 78–81
Hebrew Christians, 81–3
secret believers, 83–5
North Africa Mission (NAM), 29
North American Conference on Ethiopian Jews (NACOEJ), 68
North American Jews, 68–72

O
O’Dea, Thomas, 139
Operations Moses and Solomon, 118
Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin, 54
Orthodox Judaism, 67–8
Ottoman law, 14

P
Pentecostalism
in Ethiopia, 65–6
in Lebanon, 17–19
Pentecostals, Beta Israel, 65–6, 73, 74–5
politics
and conversion, 32, 177
polygamy, 140
Pradaud, Martial, 143
proselytism, 20, 152
Algerian Constitution and, 30
Protestant Great Awakening, 14
Protestantism, see also Evangelical Christian missionaries
in Algeria, 29
Anglo-American, 80–1
and Beta Israel, 64
as deterritorialised religion, 55
dynamism, in Cairo, 47–50
in Lebanon, 14–15, 19–21
success of, 47
and urban mobilities, 47
publicisation, religious conversions, 111

Q
Quay, James, 90, 91
Quirin, Michael, 64–5

R
Rabbinic Judaism, 65
Ramadan, 35
Redeemed Christian Church of God, 51
Reform Jews, in Israel, 67–8
Refugees, see African immigration
Reid, Harry, 140
relatives, converts interactions with, 105–8
religion (din), salvation vs., 34–6
religious culture, in North Africa, 77–91
Christian-to-Christian conversion, 85–7
counting conversions, 78–81
Hebrew Christians, 81–3
overview, 77–8
secret believers, 83–5
religious diversity, in Egypt
African immigration and, 43, 44–7
religious freedom
limitations of, 31
religious identity
building, in Egypt, 53–5
religious institutions, see institutions, religious
religious modernity, 108
religious pluralism, 51, 53–4
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), 150, 151
Return to Judaism program, 60, 62–3, 73
Rigal-Cellard, Bernadette, 145–7
Russian Orthodoxy
Jewishness and, 74
Index 193

S
Sabbath, 67
Sabra, Georges, 22
salvation vs. religion, 34–6
Sanito, 152
Schindler’s List, 123, 127
Schmidt, Thierry, 153
Scottish Evangelicals, 81–2
secret believers, 83–5
secular age, 99
believers in, 108
religions in, 110–12
secularisation phase, French laïcité, 109
secularism, 163
secularization theory, 108
Segal, Samuel, 82–3
Sennett, Richard, 101
Shoah, see Holocaust
Siddur Kol Haneshamah, 133
Simon, Pierre-Jean, 128
Sitt El Habayeb, 22
slavery, 126
Smith, Joseph, 139–40
Spielberg, Steven, 123, 127
spiritual quest, motif of, 120–1
St Anthony’s church, Istanbul
Muslim attending, 162–72
Stark, Rodney, 142
Stonecroft, 22
Sudanese, 52, 53
eligibility for UNHCR refugee status, 45
T
Tabligh, 180
Tadesse, 60–1, 62, 63, 67, 69
Tahitian culture, 153–5
Tank-Storper, Sébastien, 105, 130
Taylor, Charles, 98–9
Tent of Praise Church, 24
territorialisation, in Egypt, 55
transient Christians, 87–9
transparency, 101–2
Tyrannies of Intimacy (Sennett), 101
U
Ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups, 62
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 44
partners of, 45–6
refugee status, Sudanese eligibility for, 45
Urabi, Ahmed, 84
urban mobilities
protestantism and, 47
V
The Varieties of Religious Experience, 89
W
Watson, Charles R., 90, 91
women
Bible, 87
Muslim, Missionaries and, 84
World Christian Trends, 85
World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), 51
Y
Yad La-banim, anti-missionary group, 70
Yosef, R. Ovadia, 71
Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), 90
Z
Zionism, 20
ziyaret (visits), 163