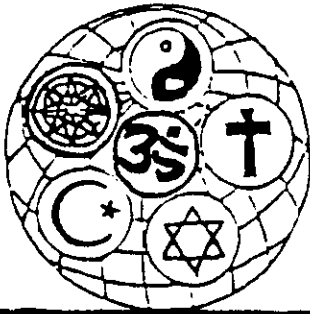


# Geography of Religions & Belief Systems



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The most important order of business for the working group is getting enough signatures on the petition for creating an AAG Specialty Group for GORABS. At the Miami meeting I will bring the petitions that are already signed. We can plan to have someone involved in the group to manage the acquisition of new signatures before, during and after the special sessions. I believe that this is the year we will officially be recognized! We should have a planning meeting during the conference as well. Since the first special session is on Sunday, this meeting can be arranged and announced there. A notice about the arrangements will be placed on the notice board for individuals who do not make it to the Sunday special session. We can also plan a breakfast, lunch or dinner get-together if anyone is interested. In addition, I would like to ask interested members of the working group to submit essays to be published in the newsletter. Share your ideas. We are looking forward to them! Finally, I would like to correct an error in the last editor's note. I indicated that Barbara Weightman was at CSU-Chico. She is really at CSU-Fullerton.

## MIAMI AAG, 1991

Interest in religious themes appears to be growing in that more and more papers are being presented with a GORABS topic. Over 30 presentations (listed here) may be of interest to our group. Some are in special sessions devoted to GORABS while others have a religious theme or population involved in the research.

## SUNDAY, APRIL 14

- 10:50 pm Ira M. Sheskin; The Jews of South Florida
- 11:05 pm James M. Blaut; Where Was the Garden of Eden?
- 01:30 pm Susan Hardwick; Geographer as Ethnographer: Migration  
Decisions of Russian Old Believers
- 01:45 pm Miles Richardson; Geophagy in Latin America: Diffusion?  
Independent Invention? Or Something Else?
- 04:40 pm Adrian Cooper; Geography, Metaphor and Spiritual Commitment
- 04:55 pm Gisbert Rinschede; Forms of Religious Tourism
- 05:10 pm Carolyn V. Prorok; Hindu Temples in Selected Urban Centers  
of Anglo-America and Western Europe

- \* 5:10 pm Alyson L. Greiner; The Power of Place: Geographic Perspectives on the Amish in Missouri
- 05:25 pm Robert R. Reed; Antipolo: Modern Transformation of a Philippine Pilgrimage Center
- 05:40 pm Joseph J. Hobbs; Religious Beliefs and Touristic Developments on the Landscape of Jebel Musa ("Mt. Sinai"), Egypt
- 05:55 pm Robert H. Stoddard; Religion and Territoriality

MONDAY, APRIL 15

- 08:30 am Janet Valenza; Creation and Dissolution of Place: "Taking the Waters" in Texas
- 09:00 am Eileen M. O'Brien; Where is (Was) the Garden of Eden?
- 01:00 pm Bruce R. Crew; The Nabatean Geographical Domain During Intertestamental/New Testament Times: Part II
- 01:20 pm Karel Bayer; The Bible: The Message of God as Art - Art as the Message of God
- 01:40 pm Mildred M. Walmsley; The Apostle Paul's Fourth and Final Voyage
- 02:00 pm Jonathan J. Lu; Tell it Not in Gath (II Sam 1:20)
- 02:50 pm Jim Norwine; A Postmodern "Critique of Pure Reason"
- \* 2:50 pm Tim Unwin; Continuity in Early Medieval Viticulture: Secular or Ecclesiastical Influences?
- 03:05 pm Alfred Hecht; General Society Income of Religious Minorities: The Mennonite Case
- 03:20 pm Barbara A. Weightman; Sacred Landscapes and the Phenomenon of Light
- \* 3:20 pm Ran Aaronsohn; An Agricultural School and Pioneer Settlement: Mikveh-Israel in 19th Century Palestine
- 03:35 pm Surinder M. Bhardwaj; Geography and Religion: Themes Beyond 2001
- 03:50 pm Mohammad Hemmasi; Spatial Diffusion Processes and the Geographical Study of Religions
- 04:40 pm Yossi Katz; The Failure of Jewish Settlement in Western Canada
- \* 4:40 pm Darrel L. McDonald; The Native American Church Land Trust: Sacred Gardens in Texas

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

- 09:15 am James W. Darlington; The Distribution, Site, and Situation of Manitoba Graveyards
- 02:50 pm Robert G. LeBlanc; The Americanization of the Franco-American Clergy
- 03:05 pm Claude W. Curran; Mt. Shasta, California and the I Am Religion
- 03:20 pm Chad F. Emmett; Religious and Refugee Quarters in Nazareth
- 03:35 pm Costantino Caldo and Daniela Santos; Sanctuaries and Altitude: Marian Worship in the Alps
- 03:50 pm Surendra P. Mathur; Global Phenomenon of the Miracles of Sathya Sai Baba
- 04:55 pm Jeanne Kay; Geography and Mythos: Or, Joseph Campbell Meets Preston James

\*presentation is occurring in another session at the same time as the previously described paper





RELIGIO-GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY

by Adrian Cooper  
University of London

In my earlier essay (GORABS, Spring 1990), I outlined the principle features of my research within a parish in Suffolk County, England. In this essay, I will outline the ways in which the substance and implications of that research has been accepted by some of the local Church Councils to form the basis of their ecumenical policies for 1990 and 1991. As such, this essay confirms the point that religious geography can make a distinctive, credible and sustained contribution to the public policy decisions of Church Councils and other Christian leaders.

In developing my research in the parish, I frequently met and conversed with many of the local ministers. On the basis of their interest and enthusiasm for my work, I became elected as Vice-President of the Felixstowe and District Christian Council in January 1989, and confirmed as its President in January 1990. From that position of influence, I developed three projects, based on my research, which have subsequently been accepted on a local interdenominational basis. Each project responded to the fact that public places within the parish have previously been neglected by local church groups for Christian out-reach projects.

The planning of the first project focused on public places in the Felixstowe town center as possible venues for the ecumenical proclamation of Christian belief. In cooperation with the Felixstowe Public Library, a suite of information stands were designed and located in the library foyer. The stands contained posters explaining the fundamental canons of Christian belief, and included two shelves of Christian videos, purchased by the local churches, which explained Christian belief more fully. Throughout 1990, the demand for borrowing these video tapes from the library consistently exceeded their supply. Follow-up surveys consistently showed that the tapes were being borrowed both by devout Christians as well as by nominal Christians or individuals who rarely, if ever, attended church services. The use of the library as a venue for this project was therefore an important 'vehicle' through which to contact these individuals, and to sufficiently stimulate their interest in Christian belief to borrow a tape about it.

In asking local people for their reaction to the project one of the principle causes of encouragement was the favorable public reception given to the use of a place other than a church or a chapel for Christian statements of faith. Many of these individuals agreed that the project, "brought the local churches out of their 'shell' and into the public arena." By conceiving and developing the project through a direct attention to the nature of public place, the foundation was laid for its sustained success to date.

The second project was equally addressed directly to the nature of public place, and to the way it had previously been neglected by local

churches. Specifically, the project involved presenting a large scale open-air ecumenical out-reach service on Felixstowe beach in July 1990. The project attracted the active involvement of eight local churches from Felixstowe and its surrounding villages, and consisted of items of music, drama, rap, personal Christian testimony and congregational singing. Although the project was developed as a 'one-off' event, it was received with considerable enthusiasm by local Christians, and with respect from parishioners who abstain from Christian commitment. As with the library/video project therefore, the service demonstrated the possibilities of using public places as venues for successful Christian initiatives. Both projects also provided acceptable locations for ecumenical projects involving the local churches without individual groups bearing the burden of hosting the events within their own buildings or grounds.

The third and most ambitious project will take place between July-August 1991. This is the Felixstowe Christian Festival: a one week long Christian out-reach event drawing from the same inter-denominational cooperation as the other two projects. Significantly though, only the final 'Celebration Service' will be located in a church. All the other events have been deliberately located on the beach, in local parks, along the principle shopping streets and in a local school hall. Although such a project has never been attempted before in the Parish, it has already been entirely financed through the support of local Church Councils. The willingness of these Church Councils to contribute to this financing surely confirms their appreciation of using public places for Christian events.

In a clear and proven sense therefore, the sustained geographical debate concerning the nature of place, and of individual and group relationships with place, has been applied here to locate religious geography as the heart of public policy developments between church groups. In addition to being an important academic pursuit therefore, religious geography can also be applied to make a clear and successful contribution within the development of a parish community.

Adrian would appreciate any input or commentary from our readership.  
Adrian Cooper 4 Estuary Drive, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9TL Great Britain

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linda Neff, an interested GORABS working group member is doing research on war or military cemeteries. She would like to correspond with anyone interested in this topic. In particular, she is looking for new bibliographic sources. If anyone has information or an interest in this topic, Linda would like to hear from you. Her address is: 3102 Furman Lane #401, Alexandria VA 22306



St Mary Magdalen



**GORABS MAP FEATURE**

The following maps can be found in a variety of articles from the Fall/Winter (7:1) 1986 issue of the Journal of Cultural Geography. This issue is dedicated to GORABS topics and was edited by Roger Stump.

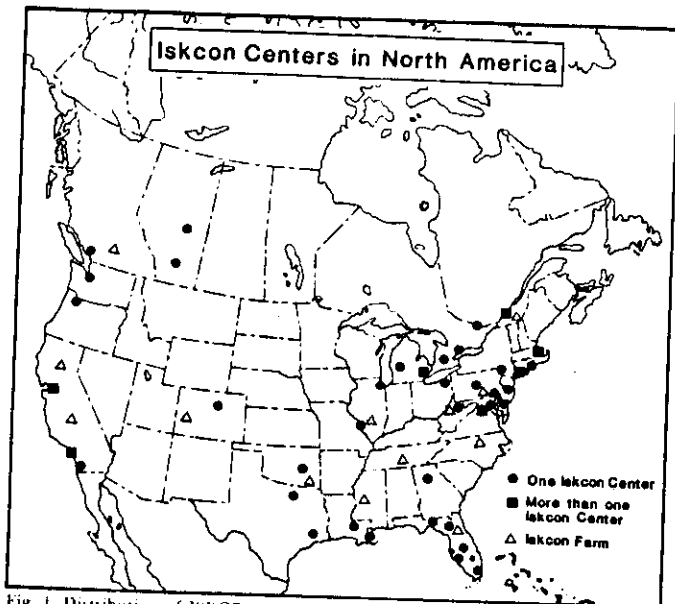


Fig. 1. Distribution of ISKCON Centers in North America. Source: Data compiled from "Special Issue," *Back to Godhead*, 1981, p. 30.



Fig. 4. Mrs. Grace Lemense (now deceased) standing before the Destree chapel near Namur, Wisconsin, 1982. (Source: Authors.)

**THE ROADSIDE CHAPELS OF NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN**

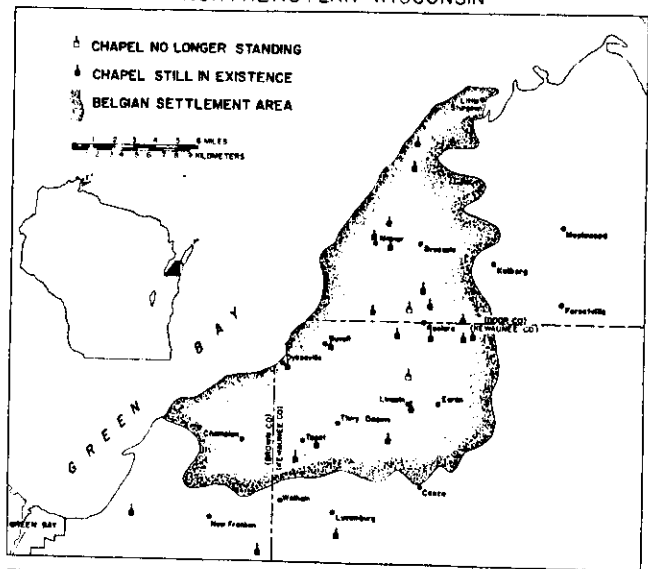


Fig. 5. Source: Field work, 1977-78.

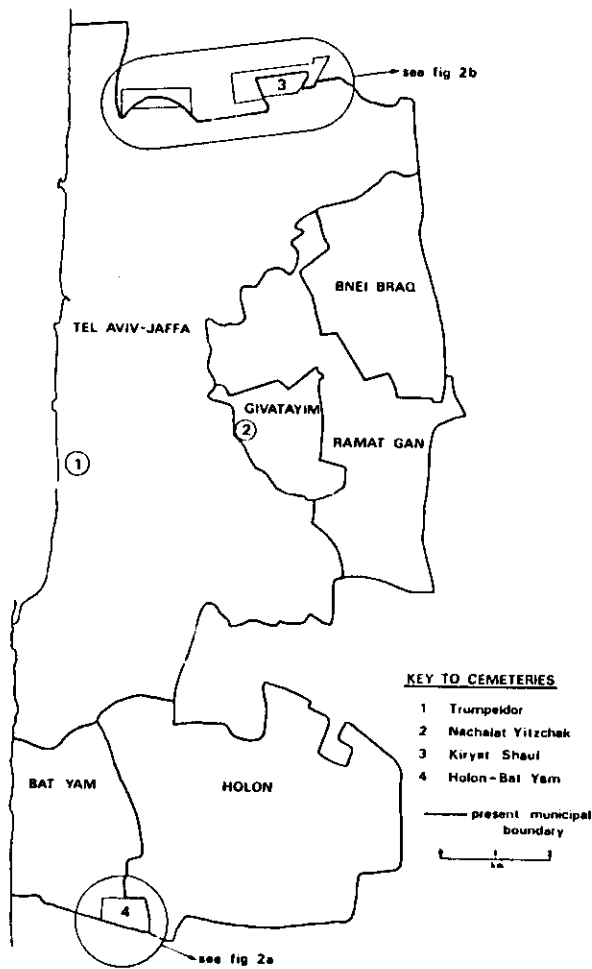


Fig. 1. Location of cemeteries in the Tel Aviv metropolitan region.

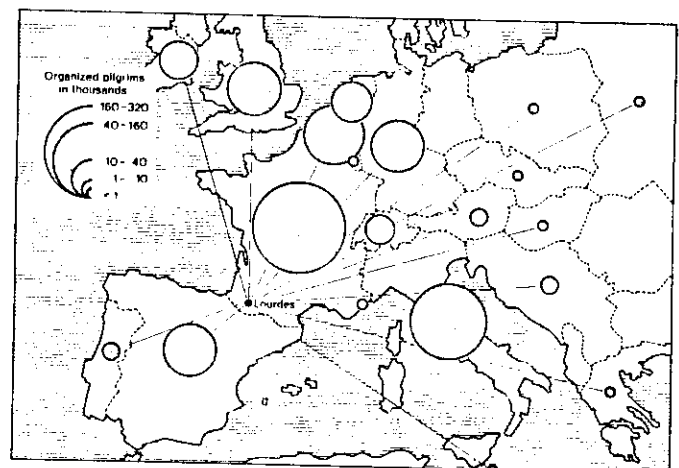


Fig. 4. European origins of the group-organized pilgrims to Lourdes, 1978. Source: Bureau de Presse des Sanctuaires, Lourdes.