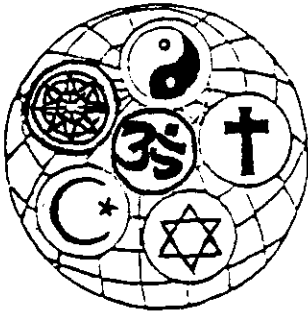


Geography of Religions & Belief Systems



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EDITOR'S NOTE Greetings to all of you as you prepare to meet the vernal equinox. Yes, springtime is just around the corner for those of us in the mid-latitudes and beyond, and it will not come a minute too soon. Here in Slippery Rock we have been experiencing record low temperatures the past two weeks! More important than the weather is the good news that there will be more GORABS newsletters. As with the proverbial breath of fresh air brought by the spring season, so was the message that I received from my dean recently. He will financially support the "improvement" of the GORABS newsletter format (we need to do something), and the increased printing/postage costs for four issues per academic year.

So, now I must call upon you, the readers of GORABS, to help me out. First, we need to draft a new masthead and your contributions are welcome. The symbol for GORABS should represent both geography and religion equally well. Send me your designs. Also, I need more input from you. Please send me your vitae so that I can highlight individual members, and send me news of meetings, papers you are presenting, projects that you are working on and any news concerning the teaching of the geography of religion at your institution. At some point, I hope we can determine how many departments offer such a course. The GORABS specialty group can also become a clearinghouse for syllabi for such a course. **PLEASE KEEP ME INFORMED** Finally, we accept short essays for inclusion in the newsletter. They should be 1-1.5 single spaced pages and include a map (if possible). I am looking forward to your submissions.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE Surinder Bhardwaj, as the chairperson of the AAG Specialty Group GORABS, sends us this message. He teaches in the Department of Geography at Kent State University.

In a few weeks several of us will meet in Atlanta. I look forward to that reunion as a member of the GORABS specialty group of the Association of American Geographers. Our group is, as yet, young, relatively small, but (we all know) closely knit; and we are growing. It may take a while for our specialty group to articulate its culture, but individual papers and the panel session on empirical and theoretical issues will help us pool together several ideas that we as a group could use as building blocks for the future. My recent trip to India (December 1992-January 1993) convinced me more than ever before that there is need for understanding the relationships between religious beliefs, and the broader environment--biophysical, and socio-cultural alike. Intertwinement of religious symbolism with political institutions, and ethnic and national identity articulation process in South Asia, and in the now independent republics of the Former Soviet Union, should provide an arena for major research projects. We as a group, and as individuals, should be seeking funding for such research.

Some of us who met at the last IGU meeting at Washington D.C. had agreed to take steps toward organizing a GORABS-like IGU Commission on religions and belief systems. We should take some concrete steps at Atlanta toward bringing that idea to fruition. Thanks to Professor R. Henkel from the University of Heidelberg, we have over a dozen names of potential members in different countries.

The AAG provides opportunity to the Specialty Groups at the annual meetings to recognize colleagues "who have excelled in the profession". May I propose that the

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GORABS establish an award (perhaps to be called the "David Sopher Award") to honor one or two colleagues selected by an honors committee. We should also recognize a selected student for presenting an excellent paper at an AAG meeting or publishing a paper in a refereed journal. These are some of the matters we should discuss at Atlanta. In the meantime my best wishes. I look forward to meeting you in Atlanta.

AAG ANNUAL MEETING IN ATLANTA April 6-10, 1993 is the annual meeting of the AAG where GORABS members have traditionally met and shared their research and concerns for the field. This year, as at many past meetings, we plan several paper sessions and a panel discussion. Also, we now have an official business meeting. Please plan to attend! After the meeting we will meet in the hotel lobby with any other interested colleague for an evening out in Atlanta. So, if you do miss the business meeting, plan to meet in the Marriott Marquis lobby after the meeting. At that point we will determine where to go for dinner.

The following section describes events of interest in Atlanta. Since we already published the specifics of the GORABS session in the last newsletter, I will mention only the day and times for those sessions here. Other events will be given in more detail.

GORABS BUSINESS MEETING The GORABS Business Meeting will be held from 7-8 pm on Friday evening, April 9th. Check your meeting program for location. The following is the tentative agenda for the meeting.

1. Approval of the 1992 minutes,
2. GORABS elections for the 1993-4 year,
3. guidelines for development of GORABS (substantive issues to address, technical matters, award programs),
4. IGU study group,
5. GORABS as a forum for discussing curriculum development for GORABS courses,
6. Developing relationships with other AAG specialty groups or other organizations,
7. Any new business.

GORABS SPECIAL SESSIONS GORABS special sessions are scheduled for Saturday, April 10th. Beginning at 9:55am and running through to 5:00pm with only a break for lunch, GORABS sessions will be back to back in the same location. Check for this location in your meeting program. In addition to our sessions, a number of other sessions and individual papers may be of interest to you. They are listed here:

- 4/7 8:20 "Building the City of God: Nationalism, Regionalism and Modernity in Tunis," by Elizabeth A. Vasile.
- 4/7 8:0 "Political Manifestations in the Religious Landscape of Jerusalem," by Chad F. Emmett.
- 4/7 8:40 "Arab-Jewish Relationships in Ancient Times: The Case of Judea-Nabatea," by Bruce R. Crew.
- 4/7 2:30 "Geoarchaeological Reconnaissance of Mission Santa Cruz de San Saba Menard County, Texas: The Search for an Eighteenth Century Spanish Mission," by Greg C. Schlenker.
- 4/7 4:05 "Reconstructing Ngambo: Power, Faith and Custom on Zanzibar's Other Side," by Garth Andrew Myers.
- 4/8 8:00 Cultural Geography Specialty Group: Places for the Dead: Geographic Perspectives on North American Cemeteries. Chaired by Terry Jordan:
- "Gathering Places for America's Dead: How Many, Where and Why?," by Wilbur Zelinsky; "Beyond the Lychgate: Cemeteries as Mirrors of Community and Self," by James W. Darlington; "Missing Places or Open Spaces: Cemetery Relocation and Removal," by Barbara Ebert.



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- 4/8 1:30 "Religion and Migration: The Molokan Experience," by Susan Hardwick
1:50 "Jewish Social Service Agency, US Immigration Policy and Jewish Emigration from the Former Soviet Union," by Mikaela Kagan.
- 4/8 3:25 Geography of the Bible Specialty Group: Geography of the Bible. Chaired by John Mather:

"Foods of Ancient Israel: Dietary Evolution and Famine Sustenance," by William Dando; "Deborah--Prophetess and Applied Climatologist," by John Mather; "Holy Light Theological Society, Geography in the Letters to the Seven Churches in Apocalypse," by Jonathan J. Lu; "Concept in Context: Spiritual Lessons in Physical Settings," by D. Kelly Ogden.
- 4/9 8:00 "Building a Community in the Sunbelt: The Jewish Population of Sarasota, Florida," by Ira Sheskin.
- 4/9 11:15 "How to Separate the Serbs, Croats and Muslims of Yugoslavia," by Branko Colakovic.
- 4/9 3:45 "Observations of the Southwest by French Secular Clergy, 1850-1912," by Nancy N. Hanks.
- 4/10 8:00 Religion. Chaired by Miles Richardson:
"Cluster and Consolidation: Parish Planning for the Future," by Carol Cameron; "Patterns of Membership Decline in Mainstream Protestant Churches, 1980-1990," by Roger Stump; "Religious Pluralism in America: A Forty Year Perspective," by Peter Halvorson and William Newman; "The Appalachian Regional Commission's Health Demonstration Areas: A Case of Federal Intervention in Regional Health Care," by Craig Laing; "Black Christ" Sites in Honduras, Central America: Some Attributes of their Distribution," by Miles Richardson and William Davidson.
- 4/10 2:30 "A Godly Landscape is Hard to Find: Religion and Migration Among Three Mennonite Colonies in North America," by Glen Lich.
- 4/10 3:45 "Residential Segregation in a Metropolitan Area: Jewish Neighborhoods in Chicago," by David J. Meltz.

RECENTLY COMPLETED DISSERTATIONS AND THESIS The following information was culled from the AAG publication, Graduate Programs in Geography in the U.S. and Canada:

Dissertations:

Cohen, Shaul Ephraim. The Politics of Planting: Israeli-Palestinian Competition for Control of Land in the Jerusalem Region. 1991 University of Chicago.

Emmett, Chad F. The Christian and Muslim Communities and Quarters of the Arab City of Nazareth. 1991 University of Chicago.

Hennayake, Shantha K. Interactive Ethnonationalism: Explaining Tamil Ethnonationalism in Contemporary Sri Lanka. 1991 Syracuse University.

Mills, James. Spiritual Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Burial Mound Sites in the Upper Mississippi River Basin and the Practice of Feng Shui in East Asia. 1992 University of Minnesota.

Raffan, James. Frontier, Homeland and Sacred Space: A Collaborative Investigation into Cross-Culture Perceptions of Place in the Thelon Game Sanctuary, Northwest Territories. 1992 Queen's University

Retallack Marshall, E. Joan. The Anglican Church and Socio-Political Change: Implications for an English-Speaking Minority in Quebec. 1991 McGill University.



Master Theses:

Birch, Troy Cottle. Proposed Seismic Multi-hazard Reduction Plan for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Educational System's Released Time Seminaries in the Salt Lake Valley. 1991 University of Utah.

Dorval, Guy. La geographie de la mortalite a Quebec au XIXe siecle: Le cas des protestants ensevelis au cimetiere Mount Hermon, Sillery, 1848-1883. 1991 Universite Laval.

Dwyer, Claire. Response to State-funded Muslim Schools in the United Kingdom: A Study of the Discourses of Race and Nationalism. 1991 Syracuse University.

Galanes, Luis Roberto. De Toluca A Chalma" History, Legends, Pilgrimages, and Mexican Catholic Images. 1991 Louisiana State Universities.

Greiner, Alyson. Geography, Humanism, and Plain People in Missouri. 1992 University of Missouri, Columbia.

Hill, Sharon. Perception and Reality of Wisconsin Amish-Mennonite Travel and Visitation Patterns. 1991 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Tucker, Jeremy. The Role of Cosmology in Societal Change: The Development of Indigenous Agricultural Technology Within the Rastafarian Movement of Jamaica. 1992 York University.



St Mary Magdalen

NEW GORABS MEMBERS The GORABS specialty group of the AAG extends a warm welcome to O.F.G. Sitwell, Dep't of Geography, University of Alberta.

FOCUS ON: Adrian Cooper, Birkbeck College-University of London, UK

Adrian's full address is as follows:

4 Estuary Drive, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9TL, Great Britain

Adrian completed his PhD in 1991. His dissertation is entitled Landscape, Place and Personal Attitudes Towards Christian Commitment, University of London. Adrian also has a review article coming out in AREA, published by the Institute of British Geographers. It considers some of the key themes for debate within religio-geographical literature. Adrian has contributed to our newsletter a number of well-received essays, and today he sends to us an essay entitled, "A Need to Reflect Upon Progress So Far." Here, our British colleague challenges us to think about 'where we are at' as a subfield of cultural geography and he suggests directions for our future work.

GORABS FEATURE ESSAY A Need to Reflect Upon Progress So Far
by Adrian Cooper

Over the past few years, the quality and diversity of religio-geographical research has increased to an unprecedented degree. In the light of this recent growth in our mutual interests, I believe it is now time to reflect upon this progress, to take stock of recent achievements, to consider in detail where our work stands alongside our colleagues in other fields of cultural geography, and to think about some of the ways in which religio-geographical work may become applied and developed alongside other disciplines in cooperation with religious leaders and groups of individuals. In other words, following our recent period of growth, I believe we would be wise to consolidate our development through careful thought and debate.

First of all, I believe there is a need to seriously discuss the theoretical foundations of religio-geographical research, and to find ways of comparing and contrasting the current diversity of substantive interest. One possibility here would be through the metaphor of text. That is, an appreciation of places, landscapes and their interpretations which accommodate their plurality of meaning. Debate upon this vast topic remains in its infancy among other cultural geographers, in that it is limited in at least two important ways. First, many of the examples considered in that broader debate among cultural geographers are restricted by concentrating on elitist cultural production alone: novelists, poets, and landed gentry for example. Yet so much of the recent religio-geographical debate has gone beyond those elitist restrictions by considering the ways in which ordinary people form and develop spiritual responses to specific places and landscapes. Recent AAG papers from Prorok, Weightman, Bhardwaj and others include many such examples. Clearly therefore, there are opportunities where geographers of religion can now offer important contributions to the debate among other geographers in developing a credible theoretical foundation to current substantive work within cultural geography as a whole.

However, there is a second way in which the broader debate among cultural geographers who consider the use of text as a theoretical tool remains restricted. Quite simply, they almost invariably ignore change. Their conceptions of places and landscapes, through the metaphor of text, frequently lose sight of the fact that such texts change, either as a consequence of change among the people and communities for whom such texts are important, or as a consequence of the fact that the places and landscapes themselves may change. Again, papers presented over the last few years by geographers of religion at the AAG meetings, and elsewhere, have abounded with examples where relationships with places and landscapes of religious significance can, and do, change in different degrees for different groups and individuals. Surely, having produced this valuable material, it is now time to actively share it with other geographers and other academics with interests similar to our own. Through such activity, the important religio-geographical research and results from the last few years would not only offer significant value to that more broadly-based audience, but it would also be challenged, refined and further enhanced as a prelude to a further period of religio-geographical development.

But as we reflect upon the progress of the last few years, there are further themes to think about apart from our potential contributions to theoretical debate. Because, for me, one of the most mature and important points to arise from recent religio-geographical work has been the recognition that no single research method has a monopoly in providing a comprehensive insight into its substantive interests. Such maturity however, lies in stark contrast to some of the journal articles which have been produced in recent years of other cultural geographers, where the innocent student could be forgiven for thinking that certain specific methods were the definitive approach to geographical study.

But having shown that many different methods can legitimately approach religio-geographical research, I wonder if we can't move beyond this initial eclecticism to create opportunities where geographers of religion could cooperate on single projects where more than one research method is used. The cooperation of researchers with interests in quantification alongside others who concentrate on ethnography or various forms of phenomenological method for example, could hold important potential for two reasons. First, it could produce religio-geographical work with a 'well-rounded' quality, which in one research report or paper, could embody an illustration of how different methods can legitimately approach a single focus for research attentions. Secondly though, it could also show the recommendations, as well as the limitations, of divergent research strategies as they are brought into close juxtaposition. When, eventually, those cooperating geographers move on, to produce further work on their own, or with others again, they and their readers will surely gain a more comprehensive understanding the scope and limits of specific research methods regarding their suitability for still further application and refinement.

The final point which I want to raise in this short essay seeks to challenge GORABS readers still further, beyond the context of purely academic research and scholarship. From the many fascinating conversations I have had with geographers of

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religion over recent years I remain absolutely convinced that there is great potential for current religio-geographical expertise to be applied within religious groups as a contribution to assisting them with their own problems and projects. Of course, there will almost inevitably be the initial 'raised-eyebrows' from them, and questions like "what can geographers offer to religious groups?" But once our case has been stated, and the quality of our work has been appreciated, I am sure there are projects and opportunities out there in the so-called 'real world' which will prove to be intriguing challenges to the religio-geographical progress made over the past few years. And through such challenges of course, our theoretical, methodological and substantive interests will become further refined and further consolidated.

So as we think back over the recent progress made by geographers of religion, I believe we would be wise to seriously reflect upon three broad questions. First, let us look deeply at the theoretical foundations to our work. What can we offer to other cultural geographers? And what can we draw from them? Second, let us ask how our use of various research methods can be enhanced. Are there opportunities where two or more geographers of religion can cooperate using quite different methods to study a particular problem? Of course there are! And finally, having developed an important ability to offer a distinctive and credible contribution to understanding religious problems, why don't we go out there and apply that understanding to the benefit of specific communities and religious groups? If we do, we will not only raise our collective academic profile within geography, but we will also find that the awareness we have of our own academic potential will be significantly enhanced. And from that period of self-questioning and reflexion, we may look forward to further years of growth in the quality and quantity of religio-geographical enterprise.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNY-ALBANY: A message from Roger Stump at the Department of Geography and Planning, Albany NY 12222: "I would like to suggest that this group set aside some time to discuss the development of one or more edited volumes of our work. I have in mind something similar to the special issue of the Journal of Cultural Geography, but with a clearer editorial focus and in book format. It should not be difficult to find a scholarly or university press interested in publishing a collection dealing with some aspect of the geography of religion. ... The specific focus of such a volume will obviously be shaped by the research interests of potential contributors, but a number of possible themes come to mind: religion in the cultural landscape; pilgrimage; regional variations in religious patterns in pluralistic societies; diffusion of religious groups. An alternative approach would be to develop a series of papers all based in some way on data from the 1990 survey of churches and church membership. ..."

special note from the editor: I apologize to Roger for not publishing his suggestion earlier (he gave this to me a long time ago). My delay is based solely on misfiling his letter. Roger's suggestion is as relevant today as it was then, and I hope that we can act on it. Now that we have a business meeting and panel discussion venue at Atlanta, Roger's suggestion should be a central feature of our discourse.

UNIVERSITE BLAISE PASCAL: A message from Daniel Dory at the Departement De Geographie, 29 boulevard Gergovia, 63037 Clermont-Ferrand Cedex, France: "Thank you very much for sending me the newsletter 'Geography of Religions and Belief Systems.' Since I work in geography of religion in France, where it is a very marginal subject, I have enormous difficulties to ... receive ... useful information from abroad. ... Concerning my own work, I already published a paper on Africa (in French ...), and a special issue an international journal of sociology of religion, ... which should normally appear in summer. If you need some information or publications from France, I will do my best in order to be useful ..." Daniel Dory is looking forward to meeting GORABS members by correspondence. He is more easily reached at the following address: Chateau De La Roque, 33240 Saint Germain La Riviere, France.

CIES: Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden Street, NW, Suite 5M, Washington, D.C., 20008-3009: An announcement for the 1994-95 Fulbright Scholar

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Awards competition for faculty and professionals and the 1994-95 Advanced Research Fellowships in India competition. Competition opens March 1, 1993 and the deadline for submission of proposals is August 1, 1993. Both competitions are open to scholars from all academic disciplines. Write to the above address for more information and proposal guidelines.

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO AT MOSCOW: Laura Finnell is a graduate student in the Department of Geography at the University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843. She plans to study the historic dispersal of Eastern Orthodox Christianity in the former Soviet Union and a comparison of this dispersal with any current revival of interest in the faith. Anyone with information or assistance for Laura can contact her at the above address.

DIGBY STUART COLLEGE: A message from John Eade at the Roehampton Institute, Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PH, UK: The book, Contesting the Sacred; The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage, based on the interdisciplinary conference on pilgrimage in 1988 was published by Routledge in 1991. The book is edited by John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY: A message from David Seamon at the Department of Architecture, 211 Seaton Hall, Manhattan, Kansas, 66506-2901: "It was a great pleasure to receive my first issue of your "Geography and Religions and Belief Systems." The newsletters of the groups I have been a member of in the past have been, overall, dreary. It is wonderful to see vitality and sincere interest alive.... As you may know, my major research interest is phenomenological geography. In a department of architecture, I try to get design students aware of the crucial role that the physical and built environments play in human life. I also have a strong interest in sacred place and architecture. We publish a newsletter here -- the Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter--in which perhaps some of your readers would be interested. I enclose a description:

The winter 1993 issue of Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology marks the start of the newsletter's fourth year of publication. The issue focuses on "sacredness and environmental well-being" and includes book reviews, poetry, and essays by, among others, philosopher Robert Mugerauer, who reviews the work of phenomenologist of religion Mircea Eliade and the importance of his approach to studies of landscape and built form. The newsletter serves as a forum and clearing house for research and design that incorporate a qualitative, descriptive approach to architecture and environment. Scholarly and design work with an explicit existential-phenomenological or hermeneutical stance receives first priority. In addition, the editors provide information on other scholarly or popular writings that point implicitly toward phenomenological or hermeneutical discussions of architecture or environment. A major theme of the newsletter is a phenomenology of geopiety and sacred place/space. An annual subscription of 3 issues is \$7 (\$8 foreign). For further information contact David Seamon at the above address.

David Seamon also notes that our readers may be interested in the book that he and Robert Mugerauer edited, entitled Dwelling, Place & Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world, Columbia University Press, 1989.

special note from the editor: Due to space limitations I cannot include a review of the book Dwelling, Place & Environment here. Also, David gave me permission to reprint the article from the EG&AP by Robert Mugerauer. Both of these will appear in the next issue of GORABS.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT: A message from Ellen and Robert Cromley at the Department of Geography, Box U-148, Room 438, 354 Mansfield Road, Storrs, CT 06269-2148: "We would like to bring to the attention of your specialty group members that the Resource Publication Series of the AAG is seeking proposals for new monographs. The purpose of the RPS is to provide supplementary materials for use in undergraduate college courses...." You can write to Ellen and Robert Cromley for a set of guidelines for prospective authors.



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ALL GORABS MEMBERS (PAST AND PRESENT) WHO ARE NOT AAG MEMBERS NEED TO COMPLETE THIS FORM:

Please complete this form if you are not a member of the AAG and you are not a geographer, or if you are a geographer that does not live in the United States. In this way you can become a member of record in the Association of American Geographers Specialty Group named GORABS without also being a member of the AAG itself. Dues are \$5 for professionals and \$1 for students. If you reside in a developing country the dues fee is waived, however, we still request that you fill out this form for our records. If you are already a member of the AAG, you should simply check the GORABS line in the specialty group section. You should not fill out this form. Please send this form to Carolyn V. Prorok, Department of Geography, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock PA, 16057-1326; Fax: (412) 738-2098 and phone #(412) 738-2384. Thank you.

Name: _____ (family name first please)

Affiliation: _____ (school, company etc)

Address: _____

_____ (mailing address for
GORABS)

Phone #: _____ (include country code)

Fax#: _____

E-Mail: _____

Please list research interests:

Thank you.