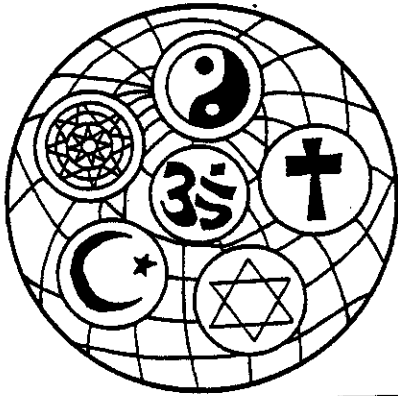


# Geography of Religions & Belief Systems



Editor: Carolyn V. Prorok  
Slippery Rock University  
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies  
Email: CVP@SRUVM.SRU.EDU  
Phone: (412) 738-2384

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Although it is late in the semester, it isn't too late to prepare this edition of the winter newsletter. You should be receiving it just as you turn in your final grades for the term. If you are an international colleague, or not teaching, then hopefully you are preparing for a well-deserved break from business as usual. In this issue I will present a summary of the GORABS panel discussion at the Atlanta meetings, and review the IMAGE BANK for Teaching World Religions. In addition, I am throwing down the gauntlet, if you will, to challenge our readers to send me some reviews. Popular and professional books, films useful for the classroom, or other teaching materials can be reviewed. Don't forget to send topical essays too (hard copy and wp/disk).

As you can see, we are still playing with the masthead. We changed the font again, and the symbol was redrafted for neatness. I am happy to thank Jason Dacko, a student aide in the SRU Cartography Lab for his fine work. If you have any suggestions or comments concerning this layout or presentation style of the newsletter, drop me a line. Also, since we just finished celebrating Geography Awareness Week in November, I was reminded of the idea of promoting GORABS in some fashion at the next one. Brainstorm some ideas. Finally, do not forget to send me information on courses related to the geography of religions that you teach (including a copy of your syllabus). We are still trying to compile a list of places where we can find such courses. Best wishes for the New Year.

## GORABS FEATURE ESSAY

The following is a summary of the GORABS Panel Discussion at the 1993 AAG Annual Meeting in Atlanta. It is based on notes taken by Lee Faro of Portland State University. Lee is GORABS' student representative. If I have misrepresented anyone's comments, be sure to let me know.

Last year, GORABS members gathered to discuss where we have been and where we might go in terms of our project. The panel included; Surinder Bhardwaj, Robert Reed, Richard Jackson, Lee Faro, Gisbert Rinschede, Robert Stoddard and Carol Prorok. Other GORABS members and guests joined us for a stimulating afternoon of discourse.

Bob Reed indicated that he hates to offer prescriptions for others. Instead, he would look to students for the measure of our success. When he first

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## GORABS REVIEW CORNER

C.V. Prorok; Last summer I had the good fortune of being a participant in the NEH Institute, Beyond Texts: Teaching Religion and Material Culture, held at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. As an element of the institute experience, we used the IMAGE BANK for Teaching World Religions. It is a wonderful resource. If you are interested in purchasing all or part of the IMAGE BANK, it is housed and administered from Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions (42 Francis Avenue, Cambridge MA 02138).

The Image Bank for Teaching World Religions is the brainchild of Richard Carp, chair of the Department of Art at Northern Illinois University. It evolved out of the "Berkeley-Chicago-Harvard Program: Religion in the Liberal Arts--Towards a Global Perspective." Richard and Jana Carp developed and compiled over 5,500 slides of religious phenomena

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## Feature Essay

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offered the Geography of Religion course at Berkeley, only 15 students enrolled. Today the course typically attracts 125 students per session, and Bob believes this is where opportunity lies for the sub-field. He suggests our strength is topics and themes not treated in other disciplines on our campuses, and student response to our work is valuable.

Surinder warned us not to ape social theories. We should focus on the plurality of spiritualities and take into account such topics as religion and health, the manipulation of religious symbolism for political agendas, and the contexts within which various religious groups act.

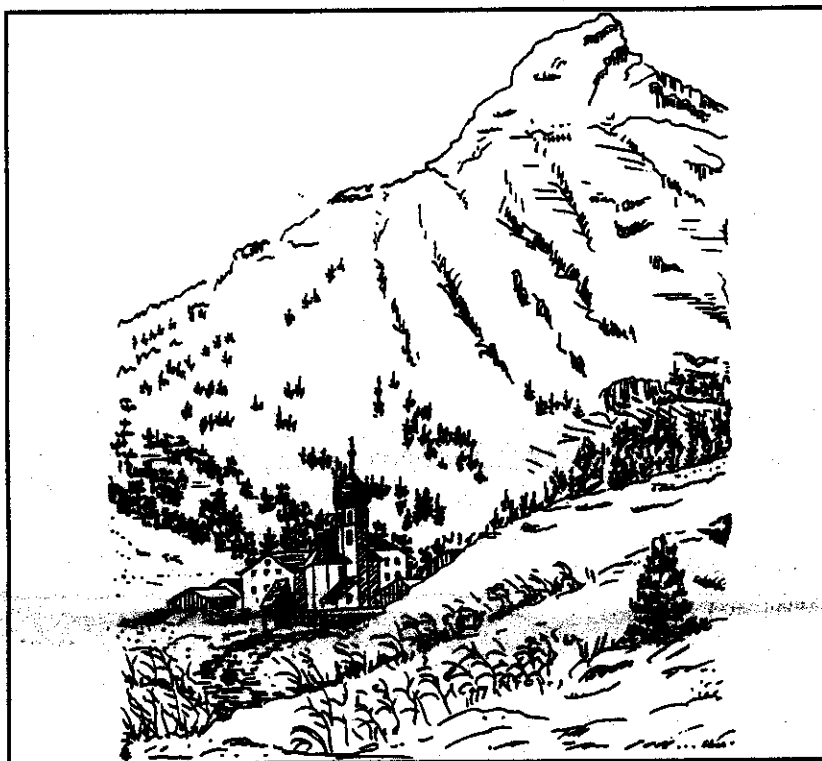
Richard Jackson reminded us that Sauer's notion of the cultural is central to our project. People, place, environment, and how religion organizes views of the world in cosmologies are important. We must look beyond the Eurocentric focus of much of our work. Dick suggest that we can accomplish much if we, 1) organize programs to bring together individuals to study the geography of religion in various places, 2) look at the diffusion of religions into areas where they never had had a foothold in the past, 3) focus on new sites that are religious or quasi-religious, and study how people define their holy sites, and finally, 4) study the secularization of religion and the ritualization of secular life. All of these in some way consider the ways in which people interact with their respective environments.

Lee introduced the notion of timeliness to our discussion. That is, with ethno-religious hostilities rising in the world, rapid development, and the transformation of the U.S. from a society dominated by Judeo-Christian adherents to one that is becoming a plurality of religious practices, Lee indicates that we, as geographers of religion, have much to offer in the way of scholarship and solutions to the tensions that arise during transformative periods.

Carol brought issues of gender to the discussion. As of yet, this dimension of religiosity, as it relates to human constructions of resource use, environmental interaction, and the social placement of

men and women, has yet to be pursued with any significance by geographers of religion.

Bob Stoddard believes we should try to develop themes and principals of religious behavior



that constitute our discipline in order to further justify the incorporation of the geography of religion in our curriculums and that of public schools. Bob emphasized our need to create a statement that defines our area of study.

Gisbert discussed the problems of misconception concerning our subject among our colleagues in public schools and at universities. He has already addressed this by authoring and editing a special volume of articles on the geography of religion for public school teachers in Germany.

Alan Gleason encapsulated the final note to our discussion with his cogent remarks on methodology. Since geography is not easily distinguished by subject, or even particular theoretical frameworks, then it is not surprising that our work is not distinguished by these things either. It is our body of results that marks us, and the question is, do we want it to stay that way?

## '93 AAR/AAA MEETINGS

Just before the thanksgiving holiday I attended the Academy of American Religion and the American Association of Anthropologists meetings in Washington, D. C. The meetings overlapped temporally and spatially; they were only a stone's throw from each other! I am listing here just a few of the papers offered last month that I know GORABS members would have enjoyed. Let us know if you attend other meetings with offerings of interest. We are always looking for information to propitiate GORABS members.

At the AAA meeting they had such inviting sessions as "Knowing the Earth: Native American Sacred Landscapes," which included the following: What is Sacred About Sacred Geography? by Deward E.

### GORABS FOCUS ON:

Rana P. B. Singh

Rana is Reader of Geography (assoc. prof.) in the Department of Geography at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India. He can be reached at: No. B 29/12A Lanka, Varanasi, UP, 221005, India. He completed his graduate work in Geography at BHU in 1974 and has taught there from 1977-80, and 1983-present. In addition, Rana has served as Japan Foundation Fellow in Geography at Okayama University, and Visiting Professor of Geography at Virginia Polytechnic I&SU and Karlstad, Sweden. This past summer he lectured on "Geography of Religions and Pilgrimages in India" at various universities in Europe (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Switzerland). Rana has published a voluminous amount of material on sacred geography in India. You can write to him and ask for more information. Given limitations of space, the following is only an example of the kind of work Rana is doing: "The Image of Varanasi: Sacrality and Perceptual World in Hindu Codification," National Geographical Journal of India, March 1988 34:1:1-32. Recently he edited the three volume collection titled, Festschrift to Arne Naess: Environmental Ethics and Power of Place, National Geographical Society of India, publication #40, 1993. Included are papers such as; "Sacred Space Reconsidered" by O.F.G. Sitwell, "Nature in Hindu Mythology, Art and Architecture" by Amita Sinha, and "Musso Kokushi and the Cave in Zuisen Temple" by Norris B. Johnson.

Walker (U. of Colo/Boulder); Taos Sacred Geography and Religious Practice by Sally T. Greiser (Historical Research Assoc.) and Richard Deertrack (Taos Pueblo); Multiple Land Use Conflicts and Blackfoot Sacred Sites by Brian Ok Reeves (U. Calgary) and Curly Bear Wagner (Blackfoot Tribe); and Preserving Sacred Landscapes: Management of Hopi and Tewa Esoteric Knowledge by David Carmichael (U Texas-El Paso) to name a few. Some interesting titles in other sessions included; Nature and Society in Nazi Cosmology by Charles McKhann (Whitman C); Shaping Space, Shaping Possibilities: Urban Gardens in Japan by Thomas Hardy (Tamagawa U); and Imagined Homeplaces: Village Fetes and the Invention of Community by Elizabeth Evans (U New Hampshire). AAR members met with the Society of Biblical Literature, and between the two programs, there was an even greater feast of sessions and papers. For example, the Religion and Ecology Group offered For the Love of Nature: From Stewardship to Fellowship by Richard L. Fern (Yale) and Into the Watery Depths: An Eco-feminist Account of the Value of 'Wetlands' by Sharon Betcher (Drew U). The Japanese Religions Group sponsored: Contemporary Buddhist Environmentalism, East and West by Kenneth Kraft (Lehigh U); Confucianism and Ecology: Resources for an Anthropocosmic World View by Mary E. Tucker (Bucknell U); and Japan's Relation to the Environment: Aesthetics or Ethics? by Thomas Kasulis (Ohio S.U.). Other papers included; Moabite Toponymy by Burton MacDonald (St. Francis Xavier U); Empirical and Normative Reflections on Deep Ecology's Appropriation of Native American Spiritualities by Bron Taylor (U Wisconsin-Oshkosh); Sacred Space as Spiritual Autobiography: Howard Finster's 'Paradise Garden' by Stephen Prothero (Georgia S.U.); Religious and Moral Visions of the 'Ancient Forest' Conflict in Oregon by Samuel Porter (Emory U.); Islamic Architecture and Sacred Space in Comparative Perspective by John Renard (St. Louis U); and finally, one of our members, Thomas Tweed (Dept. of Religious Studies, U of North Carolina-Chapel Hill), gave an excellent paper entitled; Diaspora Nationalism and Cuban Immigrants: Landscape, Architecture, and Ritual at a Shrine in Miami.

## Review Corner

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from around the world. According to the colorful brochure; It provides annotated images of people, religious figures, rituals, symbols, art, material artifacts, and religious architecture. From the Paleolithic to the present, from Christianity in Papua New Guinea and Confucianism in California to Giotto and Borobudur, from Carnival in Brazil to coiling Pueblo pots in Colorado, the IB offers images of religion in everyday life.

Many of the slides are professional reproductions from the private collections of such noted scholars as Victor and Edith Turner, Diana Eck, Karen M. Brown, and Marija Gimbutas. Others are reproduced from public collections like the Smithsonian or Harvard's Peabody Museum. I reviewed more than three fourths of the collection and was impressed with the quality and the slide selection, given space limitations and material availability.

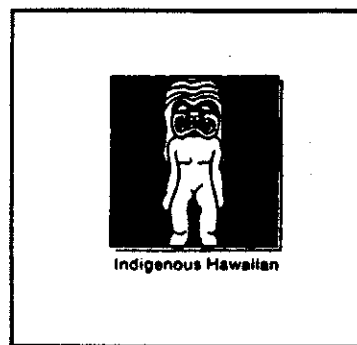
The IB is easy to access and use. All slides are indexed and identified on computer disks, which can be purchased for a nominal fee. Here, the user will find slides are organized into three major indices: a Traditions Index, a Geographical Index, and a Theme Index. Within the three indices are sub-indices such as; Traditions--Buddhism, Local Traditional Religions, Syncretic Traditions etc.; or, Theme---Artifact, Gender, Nature, Place, and Symbol etc. Within each of these sub-indices are recommended slide sequences that range from several slides to almost 400. Each slide or slide sequence can be accessed from any of the indices.

In addition, most of the slides have annotations written by the scholar. For those slides with annotations, an invaluable resource is at the fingertips of those who teach courses that incorporate the religious dimension of human life. But, a small proportion of the slides are not annotated, and I believe that this is the IB's major weakness. For example, a sequence of slides on Carnival in Trinidad includes an example of a Hindu family's private shrine. Users must refer to the author's book on Caribbean Festivals for clarification in using this sequence. Since the individual slide of the shrine is not explained in this context (Carnival), a potential user might be given to believe that the shrine or the family that owns it, has some role to play in the

celebration. Moreover, the series is marked as syncretic religion, thereby emphasizing the above-mentioned interpretation. I am well aware of the literature on the

creolization of Hinduism in the Caribbean, or conversely, the impact of Hinduism on non-Indian West Indians (it is nearly non-existent). Also, I happen to know the family that owns the shrine in the photo, and I am disturbed by the notion that individuals who do not know the region well (and after all, they are the likely consumers of this resource) will misrepresent the Trinidad Hindu experience in their classes. I still haven't learned why that particular shrine appears in a Carnival sequence. The family who own's it would be appalled to find out their shrine appears in a series about an event they find "unreligious" (the best euphemism that I can use to represent their perspective). This is not to say that syncretism hasn't taken place; it certainly has. But this image doesn't do the topic justice. My criticism here applies to only one slide in 5,500, and from that set that is not annotated. It is not meant to indict, but merely to instruct regarding one of the pitfalls in such programs. The Carps., however, did an outstanding job of developing the Image Bank, given the difficulties of working with so many people over such long distances.

As to the potential use of the IB by geographers; I recommend it highly. Since we are veteran travellers and shutterbugs, some geographers might think that IB can't offer them much. Don't believe it! I was able to supplement my collections with some very good images, and I also found great shots of some places that I might never get to (such as Papua New Guinea or Easter Island -- I keep thinking that if I just blink my eyes, tap my heels and turn around, that I can go anywhere I please; but nothing is ever for sure!). In my introductory thematic course next spring, I plan to use IB slides to illustrate human-environment interactions in places I haven't been to yet. You can buy one or all slides in a series. If you are interested in the IB, write to Harvard and ask for the computer index. You'll be amazed.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR; the following citations came across my desk this past month: Hot off the press, Susan Hardwick's book, Russian Refuge: Religion, Migration, and Settlement on the North American Pacific Rim, is published by Chicago: University of Chicago Press. In addition, her paper "Origin and Diffusion of Baptists and Penecostals in Russia and Ukraine" appears in The Pennsylvania Geographer, Spring/Summer 1993 31:1:3-13. C.V. Prorok just had her paper, "Creating the Sacred from the Ordinary," published in scholars (produced by the State System of Higher Education in Pennsylvania) Spring 1993 4:1:4-11. Also, C.V. Prorok and Mohammad Hemmasi (University of North Dakota, Grand Forks) will have their paper, "East Indian Muslims and Their Mosques in Trinidad: A Geography of Religious Structures and Ethnic Identity," published in the next issue of Caribbean Geography, 4:1:?. Also by Richard Carp, "Creating an Image Bank for Teaching World Religion: Challenging and Reifying Structures of Knowledge," in Issues in Integrative Studies 1992, 10:79-107.

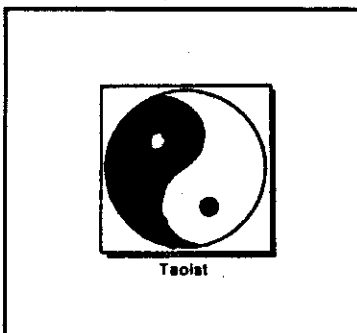
UNIVERSITE BLAISE PASCAL: Our colleague Daniel Dory recently edited a volume of Social

Compass: International Review of Sociology of Religion published by SAGE. It is volume 40:2, June 1993. In both French and English, it is titled "The Geography of Religions-Modern and Historical Perspectives" and you will find

the following papers: "Introduction" by D. Dory; "L'Ancien Testament a-t-il contribue a la territorialisation de la Suisse?" by J.L. Piveteau; "Sociological Implications of the Distinction Between "Locality" and "Extended Territory" with Particular Reference to the Old Testament" by S. Grosby; "L'Eglise orthodoxe et la diaspora hellenique" by M. Bruneau; "Gentrification as Secularization: The Sta-

tus of Religious Belief in the Post-Industrial City" by D. Ley and R.B. Martin; "Dana: Du concept religieux a ses manifestations pratiques en milieu bouddhique birman" by G. Lubeigt; "Peut-on chiffrer et localiser les religions en Chine?" by R. Breton; "Canadian Mormons in their North American Context: A Portrait" by D.R. Louder; "Introduction bibliographique a la geographie des religions" by D. Dory; "Some Reflections on the Question of Islam and Social Sciences in the Contemporary Muslim World" by M. Abaza; "Hypotheses sur l'Evolution de l'Islam transplante" en Europe" by C. Saint-Blancat.

CAYCE, S.C.: Elizabeth Whitaker, a new member of GORABS, writes to inform us of her plan to pursue an MLS at the University of South Carolina. Her study interests include "The Roman Catholic Church in the Southeastern U.S. since ca. 1940"; "Roman Catholic contemplative communities of women"; "Factors influencing growth and change in Roman Catholic communities of women since ca. 1965"; "pre-Christian cultural and religious factors influencing medieval European communities of women under vows, especially those of 9-10th century Germany." She would be happy to correspond with anyone who has similar interests, or if someone has any leads that she might follow, please let her know. Elizabeth can be reached at 111 Knox Abbott Dr., 104, Cayce, SC 29033.



### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Look for information in the next newsletter regarding GORABS sessions at the 1994 AAG Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Plan to be there! Although it is a little early to be thinking about 1995, I believe it's never too early to plan to give a paper at the national meetings. Or, think about organizing a session at the next regional meetings in your area. Let us know about it, and we will announce it in the newsletter!

## GORABS BYLAWS

Articles from the bylaws will be highlighted until the entire set of articles are published.

### Article III: Membership and Fees

The GORABS membership is open to all AAG members in good standing, subject to the rules of the AAG regarding membership in a specialty group. Membership in GORABS is on an annual basis concurrent with AAG membership. GORABS membership dues (regular \$5, student \$1 as of 1993) are incorporated into the AAG annual dues when paid according to the AAG deadlines. Membership fees are waived for persons from the developing countries. Membership includes full subscription price for the GORABS Newsletter.

## GORABS NEW MEMBERS

GORABS extends a warm welcome to its new members:

Robert V. Brady	Jackson, MI
Shaul Cohen	Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Anthony Favro	Syracuse University
David Feit	U. of Washington
Karl Forbes-Boyt	U. of Nebraska, Lincoln
Robert French	U. of Southern Maine
Leslie Hairfield	Morgantown, N. C.
Shelly Hannan	Bowling Green State University
Diane Hartley	Southern Oregon State University
Ken Hillis	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Camille Kirk	UC, Los Angeles
Gregory Knapp	U. Texas, Austin
Sharon Knight	Roosevelt U.
Matt Krigbaum	U. of Oregon
David Lashell	Redlands, CA
Deryck Lodrick	UC, Berkeley
Jack Maguire	U. of S. Carolina
William McBrayer	Ohio U.
John McCulden	Arlington, VA
Darrel McDonald	Stephen F. Austin S.U.
James Miller	Clemson U.
Cindy Newman	U. of Oregon
Karen Nygren	Eugene, OR
Brian Page	Arlington, VA
Steven Parkanaky	U. of Buffalo
Mark VanderSchaaf	Saint Paul, MN
Elizabeth Whitaker	Cayce, S.C.

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UNIVERSITY

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies  
 Editor: Carolyn V. Prorok  
 107 Spotts World Culture Building  
 Slippery Rock, Pa. 16057-1326

