

This Newsletter

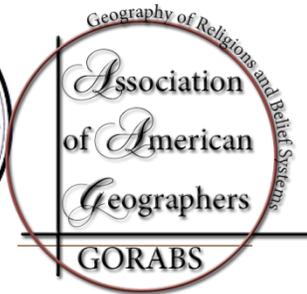
- Pages 2-3: Annual Lecture, Business Meeting & Sopher Award
  - 
  - Page 4: At-A-Glance Sessions
  - 
  - Page 5: GORABS Sessions and Abstracts
  - 
  - Page 32: Papers of Interest
  - 
  - Page 45: Member News
  - 
  - Page 49: GORABS online journal
- Please send comments, questions, letters, and newsletter submissions to

Garrett Smith  
 GORABS Secretary,  
 gsmith@kennesaw.edu

In this newsletter, you will find highlights on sessions and papers related to our **AAG meeting** in Tampa from April 8 - 12, 2014. Please remember to come to our **Annual Lecture** (delivered by **John Agnew**) and the **Business Meeting** (where the **Sopher Award** will be presented). You will also find announcements concerning our members in the **Member News** section.

**GORABS ONLINE JOURNAL**

We welcome papers about all religions and non-religious belief systems from all theoretical and methodological approaches. More details in this issue of the newsletter on p. 47.



The GORABS listserv is on JISCMail. To sign up, please use the following link:  
<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?AO=GEOGREL>

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS  
GORABS-SPONSORED SESSIONS**

**GORABS ANNUAL LECTURE**

**The Popes and the City of Rome during Fascism, 1922-1943**

**John Agnew, University of California, Los Angeles**

**Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in Room 23, TCC, First Floor**

**Organizer & Chair**

**Justin Tse, University of British Columbia**

**Session Description:** It has become popular in recent years to see the Fascist years in Italy as reflecting the relatively successful transformation of Italian society at the behest of its Fascist rulers. This reflects both the rehabilitation of Fascism in contemporary Italy and the "cultural turn" in Italian historiography that has tended to emphasize the "making" of Fascist selves and other markers, such as the makeover of many urban monumental spaces, as measures of the regime's success. My purpose is to disrupt this emerging consensus, alongside other commentators I hasten to add, by pointing how much the Fascist regime had to collaborate with other powers, not least the Catholic Church, and was often outflanked by them in its designs, most notably in efforts at making over the city of Rome as its showcase capital.

**GORABS BUSINESS MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 4/10/2014**

**7:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**Room 9, TCC, First Floor**

**Full agenda TBA, including the David E. Sopher New Scholar Award 2014.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

## THE DAVID E. SOPHER NEW SCHOLAR AWARD 2014

### Description:

The purpose of the David E. Sopher New Scholar Award is to promote intellectual enquiry from new scholars into geographies of religions and belief systems through the presentation of papers at the AAG meeting. Papers will be judged on potential contribution to the field of Geography of Religions and Belief Systems, organization, and written composition.

**Eligibility:** Both graduate students and untenured faculty, who are not currently serving on the GORABS board, can apply for the award.

**Award:** The amount for the 2014 award is a travel grant of \$250. The recipient will also be given an official certificate at the AAG awards luncheon.

**Disbursement:** A check will be disbursed to the winner at the 2014 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems annual business meeting at the AAG event.

**Requirements:** The paper and application form must be emailed to the GORABS chair in rich text or Microsoft Word format by **March 22, 2014 (a slight extension on the original March 15 date)**. The paper must subsequently be presented at the national AAG meeting, though it does not have to be in a GORABS sponsored session. A panel of previous GORABS chairs will judge the papers and determine a recipient. The winner will be announced in time to attend the awards luncheon with a GORABS representative. GORABS reserves the right to not make an award in a given year.

Justin K.H. Tse

Chair, Geography of Religion and Belief Systems (GORABS) Specialty Group  
Association of American Geographers

tse.justo@GMAIL.COM

## GORABS Sessions At-A-Glance

### Tuesday, April 8 2014

- 1517 *Critical Geographies of Religion I: Religion, Politics, and the Public Sphere*  
2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in Room 17, TCC, First Floor
- 1617 *Critical Geographies of Religion II: Citizenship, Identity, and Belonging*  
4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in Room 17, TCC, First Floor

### Wednesday, April 9, 2014

- 2137 *Geographies of Alternative Spiritualities*  
8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Room 37, TCC, Fourth Floor
- 2155 *Biopolitics, Religion, Security*  
8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Grand Salon D, Marriott, Second Floor
- 2223 *GORABS Annual Lecture: The Popes and the City of Rome during Fascism, 1922-1943*  
10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in Room 23, TCC, First Floor
- 2422 *Routes and Rootedness in sacred landscapes (1)*  
12:40 PM - 2:20 PM in Room 22, TCC, First Floor
- 2522 *Routes and Rootedness in sacred landscapes (2)*  
2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in Room 22, TCC, First Floor
- 2624 *Connecting the Social and the Religious, New Spaces of Inquiry*  
4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in Room 24, TCC, First Floor

### Thursday, April 10, 2014

- 3434 *Religion: Sacred Spaces and Places*  
4/10/2014, from 12:40 PM - 2:20 PM in Room 34, TCC, Fourth Floor
- 3809 *Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group Business Meeting*  
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM in Room 9, TCC, First Floor

**GORABS SPONSORED SESSIONS - PRESENTERS AND ABSTRACTS*****Paper Session:***

***1517 Critical Geographies of Religion I: Religion, Politics, and the Public Sphere***  
*is scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014, from 2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in Room 17, TCC, First Floor*

***Sponsorship(s):***

*Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group*

***Organizer(s):***

[\*Caroline Nagel\*](#) - University of South Carolina

[\*Peter Hopkins\*](#) - Newcastle University, UK

***Chair(s):***

[\*Peter Hopkins\*](#) - Newcastle University, UK

***Session Description:*** *Geographers have developed a strong interest in religion and religiosity in recent years as they have come to acknowledge the centrality of faith, religion and belief to people's identities, ways of life, and spatial practices. In approaching geographies of religions from a critical perspective, scholars are concerned not only with patterns of religious practice and belief, but also with the ways that religious discourses, institutions, and practices mediate social relationships and are woven into the exercise of power and authority at multiple scales.*

*Geographers' critical engagements with religion have raised challenging questions about relationships between 'secular' and 'sacred' belief systems, spatialities, and forms of social and political organization. For instance, how do faith-based organizations participate in the production of urban space, and to what extent do these organizations provide alternatives to—or support for—dominant, neo-liberal forms of citizenship and development? How does religious belief and discourse inform ideas about citizenship, multiculturalism, progress, and development, and what are the implications for society-at-large of intersecting secular and spiritual norms? To what extent are religious identities and beliefs subordinated by secularism, and what does this mean for the socio-spatial mobility of religious people? How do faith-based groups participate in the production of (post)secularism, as well as in the production of religion?*

*This session on the Critical Geographies of Religion is intended to bring together scholars who are grappling with the meaning and significance of faith in societies that have historically been understood in terms of secularism and modernity. Papers in this session will address a multitude of theoretical questions and empirical contexts but will be connected by recognition of the*

*ambiguity and complexity of religious beliefs and identities as practiced and implemented in everyday life. Possible paper topics/themes include:*

- *Religion and multicultural discourse/practice*
- *Religion and economic/urban development*
- *Faith-based organizations and social movements*
- *Religion, civic identity, and citizenship*
- *Embodied religious practices*
- *Religion and sexual/race/gender/class relations*
- *Religion, poverty and social exclusion*
- *Faith-based responses to austerity and social justice*
- *Children, youth and religiosity*
- *Religious built environments, institutions and governance*
- *Religion and nationalism*
- *Religion and immigration/minority politics*
- *The politics of missions and evangelization*
- *Religion and everyday geopolitics*
- *Faith-based discrimination and religious intolerance*

**2:40 PM Author(s):** \*Justin K.H. Tse - University of British Columbia, Department of Geography

**Abstract Title:** [The Civil Human Rights Front: religion and radical democracy in post-handover Hong Kong](#)

After Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, the Special Administrative Region has seen the emergence of calls for universal suffrage, the preservation of civil liberties, and solidarity with the materially marginalized in Hong Kong's civil society. In one moment of collective solidarity, an umbrella group called the Civil Human Rights Front launched a protest against anti-sedition legislation based on Basic Law's Article 23, a law whose alleged threats to free speech drove some 500,000 Hongkongers to the streets on 1 July 2003. This paper analyzes the radical democrats who have been key to such political placemaking activities in Hong Kong, contesting the city's policy landscape through physical demonstrations. It argues that while a wide swath of Hong Kong's Catholics and Protestants have historically been allied with the state establishment both under British and Chinese sovereignty, the emergence of radical democratic groups like the Civil Human Rights Front have been driven largely by Catholic and Protestant Christians who emphasize a separation of church governance from the state. While the separation of church and state has often lent itself in other contexts to more conservative politics, this spatial schematic has led these radical democratic activists, their churches, and their solidarity groups to contest the modus operandi of Chinese sovereignty. This is thus a contribution to

critical geographies of religion, for it shows the potential power of religious movements to critique the practices of the state in order to imagine more socially just cities.

**3:00 PM Author(s):** *\*Christine G Schenk - University of Geneva, Department of Geography*

**Abstract Title:** [Negotiating justifications for governing vis-à-vis religious agency and statebuilding: the case of Aceh, Indonesia](#)

This paper aims to discuss the role of the individual and the community vis-à-vis well-being and how it informs religious and secular justifications for governing. It is situated in a context shaped by religious agency and everyday geopolitics, around statebuilding, where Islam is a determining factor for governing. Drawing on Michel Foucault's recently published lectures on "Du gouvernement des vivants" (2012) the paper will test the concept of an *alèthurgie* - a justification for governing aiming to appear truthful (*véridique*) or to establish truth (*vérité*). Foucault thereby discusses the role of the individual in establishing truth within a religious dimension. Informed by this Foucauldian approach I illustrate that articulations of the individual as well as the population as part of an *alèthurgie* become part of a justification for governing and ultimately a search for power. I argue that such articulations are less concerned with the well-being of the population, but more concerned with aspects of disciplining the individuals. Statebuilding and its geopolitical dimension are well advised to address such notions of the individual and the population. My analysis will discuss this conceptual proposition related to a developmental programme in Aceh, Indonesia. This programme focussed on re-establishing a population administration system in the statebuilding and reconstruction processes after the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. The paper thereby discusses the example of the registration of marriages where contested notions of well-being between the individual and community were at stake, one legitimating a liberal reconstruction agenda, the other a Muslim vision of society

**3:20 PM Author(s):** *\*Timur Hammond, UCLA - Dept. of Geography*

**Abstract Title:** [It's Become a Carnival: Commerce of the Sacred in an Istanbul Neighborhood](#)

In a corner of Istanbul in early July 2013, a strange temporary structure began to be assembled in the square in front of the mosque of Eyüp Sultan. Residents of and visitors to the neighborhood quickly learned that the fiberglass arcades were being built by the local Eyüp Municipality as a special project during the month of Ramadan. They were intended to remind visitors of the arcades surrounding the Kaaba in Mecca, but they were only one of several new structures built to capitalize on the massive increase in visitors to the neighborhood during Ramadan. These structures provoked a variety of reactions, ranging from measured approval to outspoken critique. Common to all responses, however, was an argument about how Islam should be made public.

Scholars of Turkey have long analyzed Islam and Islamic movements through the rubric of religious/secular, focusing in particular on the growth of religious spaces at the expense of secular ones. What makes Ramadan in Eyüp particularly interesting is precisely the way it challenges that division of the religious and secular. The Islamicness of Eyüp was not seen as encroaching upon the secular; instead, it was the particular material and social projects through which one particular form of Islam was rendered visible and public. Drawing upon both interviews and participant observation, this paper explores the contested ways that Islam is made public. In the process, it helps us to understand in greater detail how the religious comes to be materialized in one particular urban environment.

**3:40 PM Author(s):** \*Deborah Johnson, PhD candidate, teaching assistant - University of Zurich

**Abstract Title:** [Brokering Sri Lankan Warscapes; Priestly Potentates and Travelers](#)

Although in the 1990s Stirrat described the ethnically diverse Sri Lankan Catholic Church as 'politically defeated', in the north and east of the island a paradox has emerged. Somehow, the protracted experience of everyday violence and uncertainty has promoted an invigorated Tamil Church which has held the power to act in sometimes exceptional manners to protect, negotiate and facilitate small and large moments and spaces of 'peace'. Amidst the shifting and dangerous borders (discursive, political and physical), Catholic priests have been able to act as brokers, at times navigating and negotiating borders in order to cross over, and at other times reinforcing and hardening them. The act of bounding and the negotiation of borders reveals something about the complex geographies informing performed and physical boundaries structuring public sphere, and the rooting of religion in them. This research considers the agencies through which Catholic priests have been able to perform such complex and dangerous maneuvers, as well as the ways in which these have reconfigured warscapes and the everyday lives of those living within them. Not only does the project speak to the study of religion, violence and conflict but to the importance of the role of brokerage in marginal spaces, as people and communities forge methods for and spaces of survival in harsh and fluctuating circumstances.

**4:00 PM Author(s):** \*Caroline Nagel - University of South Carolina

Patricia Ehrkamp - University of Kentucky

**Abstract Title:** [Faith-based outreach to immigrants and the production of multiculturalism in the US South](#)

As many governments in Western immigrant-receiving societies have seemingly turned their back on multiculturalist policies and discourses, many scholars have turned to exploring everyday multiculturalisms—that is, the multiple, situated social practices through which people negotiate

and accommodate social difference. This approach locates multiculturalism not so much in the state as in the daily interactions and encounters that take place cities and neighborhoods. This paper follows this approach, yet also emphasizes that official and semi-official discourses about diversity, articulated in a wide array of institutions, remain central to understanding the ways that communities 'manage' difference. We explore the particular ways that Christian churches in the American South are engaging with ideas of diversity and are, after a century and a half of segregated worship, seeking to build multicultural churches, in part through outreach to immigrants. Churches' engagements with diversity reflect an entanglement of liberal-multicultural discourse, Christian theology, and missionary-evangelistic imperatives; they intersect, as well, with regional economic growth strategies, which focus on the desirability of 'internationalization'. Drawing on interviews and focus groups with pastors and congregants conducted in Atlanta, GA, Charlotte, NC, and Greenville-Spartanburg, SC, we examine the dilemmas and tensions created as churches introduce an ethos of multiculturalism to congregational life. We give particular attention to the tendency of pastors and lay ministers to treat immigrants and 'Anglos' as distinct cultural groups with separate needs, and we consider the ramifications of this approach for the development of relationships between immigrants and non-immigrants within congregations

**Paper Session:**

**1617 Critical Geographies of Religion II: Citizenship, Identity, and Belonging**

is scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014, from 4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in Room 17, TCC, First Floor

*Sponsorship(s):*

Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group

*Organizer(s):*

[Caroline Nagel](#) - University of South Carolina

[Peter Hopkins](#) - Newcastle University, UK

*Chair(s):*

[Caroline Nagel](#) - University of South Carolina

**Session Description:** Geographers have developed a strong interest in religion and religiosity in recent years as they have come to acknowledge the centrality of faith, religion and belief to people's identities, ways of life, and spatial practices. In approaching geographies of religions from a critical perspective, scholars are concerned not only with patterns of religious practice and

belief, but also with the ways that religious discourses, institutions, and practices mediate social relationships and are woven into the exercise of power and authority at multiple scales.

Geographers' critical engagements with religion have raised challenging questions about relationships between 'secular' and 'sacred' belief systems, spatialities, and forms of social and political organization. For instance, how do faith-based organizations participate in the production of urban space, and to what extent do these organizations provide alternatives to—or support for—dominant, neo-liberal forms of citizenship and development? How does religious belief and discourse inform ideas about citizenship, multiculturalism, progress, and development, and what are the implications for society-at-large of intersecting secular and spiritual norms? To what extent are religious identities and beliefs subordinated by secularism, and what does this mean for the socio-spatial mobility of religious people? How do faith-based groups participate in the production of (post)secularism, as well as in the production of religion?

This session on the *Critical Geographies of Religion* is intended to bring together scholars who are grappling with the meaning and significance of faith in societies that have historically been understood in terms of secularism and modernity. Papers in this session will address a multitude of theoretical questions and empirical contexts but will be connected by recognition of the ambiguity and complexity of religious beliefs and identities as practiced and implemented in everyday life. Possible paper topics/themes include:

- Religion and multicultural discourse/practice
- Religion and economic/urban development
- Faith-based organizations and social movements
- Religion, civic identity, and citizenship
- Embodied religious practices
- Religion and sexual/race/gender/class relations
- Religion, poverty and social exclusion
- Faith-based responses to austerity and social justice
- Children, youth and religiosity
- Religious built environments, institutions and governance
- Religion and nationalism
- Religion and immigration/minority politics
- The politics of missions and evangelization
- Religion and everyday geopolitics
- Faith-based discrimination and religious intolerance

**4:40 PM Author(s):** \*David K. Seitz, PhD Candidate - University of Toronto

**Abstract Title:** [\*"We Always Have to be on the Side of David, Not Goliath": Recasting the Political in a Queer Church\*](#)

Critical geographies of religion are animated by the premise that religious and secular concepts and norms suffuse and inflect people's everyday/political spaces and practices. Yet religious collectivities themselves also comprise vital sites where notions of citizenship, multiculturalism, progress and development are contested and reforged. If the political has deep, live and dynamic roots in the religious - and the secular - the religious and the secular are also profoundly political in their own right. Empirical geographical research is uniquely well positioned to shed light on the microscalar processes through which people in faith polities debate and refashion conceptions of belonging, political subjectivity, and futurity, and the practical and political implications of such discussions. To that end, this paper explores varied articulations and practices of social justice, citizenship, and political temporality at a large Protestant church with a predominantly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer membership located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Drawing on over 40 semi-structured interviews and three years of ethnographic participant-observation, it traces how congregants' practices as volunteers, lay church leaders, and activists respond to dilemmas about the meaning and future of LGBTQ politics and queer citizenship at multiple geographical scales. Focusing on a church program serving LGBTQ refugee claimants seeking asylum in Canada, an emergent social justice network that aims to broaden political engagement beyond identity politics, and internet-based efforts at global outreach to LGBTQ people of faith, I argue that sustained engagement with faith communities points to the unsettled and multifarious character of religion's imbrications with the political.

**5:00 PM Author(s):** \*Anna Mansson McGinty - University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**Abstract Title:** [\*Muslim American Youth: Identities in the Intersection of Religious and Secular Discourses\*](#)

In this paper I intend to explore the relationship and intersections of religious and secular messages and norms as they develop in the contexts of identity formation and everyday lives of Muslim American youth in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Despite an extensive body of literature on Muslim American identities across the social sciences, little attention has been given to Muslim identities that are primarily secular in nature. Namely, many studies have primarily focused on religiously oriented Muslim identities and to the degree Muslims are able to practice Islam in American society. Consequently, there is a problematic silence about secular Muslim Americans who identify themselves as "Muslim" ethnically, culturally, politically and/or nationally. Drawing on a new ethnographic study on Muslim American youth in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I intend to explore the multifaceted Muslim geographies and identities both beyond and within religious discourses and

spaces. By comparing the narratives of religiously practicing Muslim youth with those of secular Muslim youth, I am interested in opposition as well as overlap, examining the degree to which they develop ideas in relation to each other. In the context of increased religious mobilization and Islamist influences among Muslim Americans (Leila Ahmed 2011), it is of interest to study how such tendencies further the formulation of secular Muslim identities in the context of 21st century America.

**5:20 PM Author(s):** \*Peter Hopkins - Newcastle University, UK  
Katherine Botterill - Newcastle University  
Rowena Arshad - University of Edinburgh  
Gurchathen Sanghera - University of St Andrews

Abstract Title: [\*Everyday geopolitics and faith in the suburbs\*](#)

Contributing to on-going debates about connections between geographies of religion and geopolitics (Sturm, 2013), this paper employs a framework informed by everyday geopolitics in order to explore and extend critical geographies of faith experienced and negotiated by young people from different minority religious groups. With a geographical focus on Scotland this paper also brings discussions about nationalism and national identity to the fore in light of current debates about the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. In this context, we explore the intersections between class, religion and place as negotiated by religious minority young people from aspirational middle class families who have migrated to the suburbs in an attempt to improve the life chances of their children. We trouble the assumption that the suburbs are safe, middle-class and aspirational by demonstrating the ways in which young people's negotiations of religious and ethnic diversity are shaped by local, national and global geopolitical issues that transcend young people's grounded negotiations of the time-space of the suburbs.

**5:40 PM Author(s):** \*Laura Premack, Ph.D. - Bowdoin College

Abstract Title: [\*"Without Religion": Spiritism and the Everyday Sacred in Brazil\*](#)

Long the proud bearer of the title "most Catholic country in the world," with a population that for centuries was overwhelmingly Catholic, Brazil is now home to some of the world's largest Pentecostal churches. Yet, while scholars have been transfixed by the rise of Pentecostalism and decline of traditional Catholicism, two other developments have received far less attention. First, the number of people who describe themselves as *sem religião* (without religion) has increased notably. Second, Spiritism - an understudied and undertheorized religion centered on embodied spiritual practices - has quietly become a key component of Brazilian popular culture and everyday

spirituality. In the past several years, there have been telenovelas and major motion pictures made with Spiritist themes. In national bookstore chains, substantial shelf space is devoted to novels, memoirs and poems written via psicografia - that is, by Spiritist mediums who have channeled the spirits of dead people and recorded their words. Courts of law have accepted messages communicated via psicografia as evidence in murder cases. How did Spiritism become so firmly engrained in the Brazilian cultural landscape? This paper will argue that the increasing prominence of Spiritism is connected to the increasing numbers of people who identify as without religion. It will suggest that Spiritist practices and cultural tropes allow people to be both secular and spiritual at the same time, and, by doing so, it will raise the overarching question: does secular actually mean without religion?

**6:00 PM Author(s):** \*Caitlin C Finlayson, PhD - University of Mary Washington

Abstract Title: [\*The Space of Memories: Exploring the Influence of Personal Histories on Experiences of Sacred Space\*](#)

Sacred spaces undoubtedly serve to reinforce religious theology, but the ways in which we interact with and experience them are largely shaped by our personal histories. The role of memories in shaping the construction of sacred space has remained marginalized within the geography of religion, despite repeated calls for a greater attention to the lived religious experience. This paper engages in a theoretical exploration of the role of memories in shaping our creation and understanding of space. It also engages in an empirical investigation of three religious communities in Tallahassee, Florida, utilizing in-depth interviews to uncover the ways in which memories shape the affective experience of sacred space. This research demonstrates that while religious symbols and decorations within sacred sites influence how these sites are experienced, the personal histories of individuals have discernible effects on how individuals emotionally respond to and understand these unique spaces.

**Paper Session:**

**2137 Geographies of Alternative Spiritualities**

is scheduled on Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Room 37, TCC, Fourth Floor

*Sponsorship(s):*

Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group

*Organizer(s):*[Nadia Bartolini](#) - The Open University[Steve Pile](#) - The Open University*Chair(s):*[Nadia Bartolini](#) - The Open University

**Session Description:** Spirituality is commonly understood, in Human Geography, using models of faith and belief based on mainstream Religion, usually in the guise of Christianity or Islam. Though there has been increasing interest in the idea of post-secular society, especially drawing upon the experience of Western cities (see Beaumont and Baker 2011, and Stevenson et al. 2010, Wilford 2010), and the re-emergence (or not) of faith and belief systems as significant in the constitution of social and spatial relationships, questions of spirit and spirituality remain strangely absent from these debates (MacKian 2012). The purpose of this session is to engage with these issues through the lens of spirit and spirituality beyond the traditional confines of Religion, and to build upon Cloke and Beaumont's (2013) argument that secularism and post-secularism need to be viewed as fluid and porous, and indeed, in constant mutually transformative dialogue with one another. This session aims to engage with the experiences and the practices of spiritualities in everyday life, and how the mundane and the extraordinary are interwoven.

**8:00 AM Author(s):** \*Mats Nilsson - 202100-3120

Mekonnen Tesfahuney - University of Karlstad

Abstract Title: [\*Post-secular Journeys. Spiritual Places and Transformations of Self/Identity\*](#)

The aim of this article is to examine the dynamics between post-secularism, tourism and sacred places. Specifically, how tourism mediates the complex interplays between place and spiritualism. Post-secular Studies of post-secularism have mainly focused on 'discursive arena where faith-based and non-faith activities' intertwine. However, less is known "how the post-secularism of the discursive arena interacts with arenas of post-secular praxis" (Cloke 2011: 242). This paper argues that post-secular pilgrimage is one such arena where post-secular praxis and discourse fuse. Empirical studies of pilgrimages to the Holy Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela, shed light on contemporary spiritualization of places and journeys as instances of post-secular praxis and discourse. How are various meanings and roles ascribed to religious places mediated by post-secular pilgrims? In what ways are myths, place, faith and spirituality, reworked by post-secular pilgrimage to sacred places? Journeys to religious places are can be conceived as post-secular performativities in search of inner peace and spiritual meaning, and answers to existential questions such as "who am I?", "what is my reason for being?" or "my place in the scheme of

things?" These are some of the key questions raised in this paper. Post-secular journeying to is a search for existential anchorage, meaning and fulfillment in life. Sacred places can act as agents of spiritual "rebirth" that trigger transformations of identity and self. Santiago de Compostela is post-secularized via embodied and performative acts of the pilgrims, as well as narratives of revelatory experience and transformations of self, individual and place identity.

**8:20 AM Author(s):** \*John Paul Jones - University of Arizona

Abstract Title: [\*The Magical Mystery Lights of Marfa\*](#)

Marfa, a town of some 2,000 settled on a high plateau (4,688 feet) in the Chihuahuan Desert, lies in a sparsely populated part of Texas, roughly in the middle of the state's westward-pointing arm.

The region's elevation makes the land suitable for dryland ranching, but Marfa proper has steered in a more artsy direction, first with the star-studded 1956 classic, *Giant*, and later with modern westerns such as *No Country for Old Men* (2005) and *There will be Blood* (2007).

Minimalist sculptor Donald Judd's arrival in Marfa in the early 1970s transformed the landscape - literally - with his oversized boxes of concrete, and in the ensuing years the town became a mecca for hipster artists and tourists. But way before these arrivals, well into the 1880s in fact, Marfa had gained fame for its 'Ghost Lights', a strange nighttime phenomena in which colored lights can be seen to dance, merge, disappear and reappear off in the distant Paisano Pass southwest of town. The Marfa Lights regularly draws both skeptics ("just car lights") and believers ("UFOs"). In this presentation I provide an account of (rather than account for) the mysterious magical lights of Marfa. My site visits to the 'scene' provide first-hand evidence of their existence; subsequent analysis focuses on efforts to explain the phenomena by those seeking alternatives to the more occultish explanations on offer.

**8:40 AM Author(s):** \*Brad Huff, Ph.D. - Columbus State University

Abstract Title: [\*A Spatial Structure of Spiritualism\*](#)

Lily Dale, New York, is a spiritualist community developed during the 1880s. Since its establishment it has been among the largest spiritualist communities in the world. While it's year round residential population has always been small (currently estimated at under 300), it enjoys large summer season attendance (estimated between 22,000 and 25,000 registered visitors per year) of its classes, workshops, and public religious offerings. This session will present preliminary analysis of the spatial structure of Lily Dale exploring how it employs spatial configuration to optimize the community's domain focus on spiritualism

**9:00 AM Author(s):** \*Steve Pile - The Open University

Abstract Title: [\*The Place of Spirit: secularization and the geographies of spirituality\*](#)

In this paper, Nadia Bartolini, Robert Chris, Sara MacKian and Steve Pile (presenter) seek to map out the key coordinates in debates in Human Geography about the secularization and postsecularization of modern societies in the West. In particular, we spell out the specific geographies through which geographies of religion have been imagined. These commonly involve such spatial metaphors as islands, networks, spheres and the like. More than this, geographies of religion are dominated by analyses of Christianity and Islam, tracking both their infrastructures and practices through spaces such as the city, the suburbs, small towns and countryside. Increasingly, there is an attendance to the globalization of religion through migration and communicative technologies, especially. Nonetheless, the focus of this paper is on the consequences of thinking about spirituality from the margins: that is, from the perspective of spiritualities that do not quite count as a Religion. We conclude that adding non-Religious spiritualities to the mix of geographies of Religion requires rethinking more than the boundary between secularity and religion, but rethinking what we understand by secularity and religion themselves

**9:20 AM Discussant:** [Deborah P Dixon](#) - University of Glasgow

**Paper Session:**

**2155 Biopolitics, Religion, Security**

is scheduled on Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Grand Salon D, Marriott, Second Floor

**Sponsorship(s):**

**Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group  
Political Geography Specialty Group**

**Organizer & Chair:**

[Meagan Todd](#) - University of Colorado

Session Description: This session includes papers, grounded in fieldwork, which examine the relationship between religion and the biopolitical. Religion is not only an external ideology (Althusser 2001) or an individualizing pastoral technology of power (Foucault 2007), but a shifting discursive formation (Asad 1993; Masuzawa 2005). Religion can also be conceived of as biopolitical- the creation, maintenance, and calculation of a population is often connected to concern for morals, afterlives, and spirituality as well. This is evidenced in contentious debates unfolding in multiple sites, including churches and territoriality in Ireland, new religious movements in the US, disaster relief in the Philippines, and debates on homosexual propaganda in Russia. Biopolitical rationale seeks to maximize life while protecting populations from security threats. Religion reconfigures the logic of biopolitical security by asking how not only life but afterlife are targets of governmental and social interventions. This session draws from and expand on theories of biopower /biopolitics and touch on questions such as:

- What role does religion play in constructing and securing healthy citizenries?
- How is religion configured as a securitizing force against threats and risks to vulnerable populations?
- Conversely, how is religion understood as a security threat to populations?
- What role does territory play in religious communities?

The aim of this session is to share critical geographic approaches to analyzing security, religion and biopolitics.

8:00 AM Author(s): \*Christine E Gibb - Université de Montréal

Abstract Title: [Post-disaster Reconstruction of a Society by Religious and State Actors: The Case of Typhoon Sendong in Northern Mindanao, Philippines](#)

Disaster relief and recovery in the Philippines are located at the nexus of religion, development and politics. When natural hazards unfold into disasters, the response of religious and state actors reveals both the complex relationship between these parties and myriad ways in which they securitize communities against geophysical and perceived threats. This paper examines such relationships and the muddy politics of disaster relief and resettlement in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. It is based on interviews conducted with key informants representing religious, municipal and regional state interests, and on interviews with urban poor survivors of Typhoon Sendong. Since the disaster, Christian and Muslim religious actors have played pivotal roles in resettlement processes - from donating so-called 'secure' land for relocation and financing the

construction of permanent housing for survivors, to delivering 'values formations' workshops at relocation sites. Government-led rehabilitation and resettlement activities have been politically charged, and have alternately supported or paralleled religious efforts. Religious actors have exploited the disaster to publically challenge the legitimacy of the local government and its claims of being pro-poor by highlighting the inability of local politicians to adequately prepare for or respond to the disaster. In analyzing tensions between religious institutions and the state in disaster relief and recovery, this paper explores how and to what ends religious institutions engage with and contest state-led development. It finds religiosity and political patronage deeply embedded in all aspects of disaster response, suggesting that religious and state institutions use disasters as opportunities to enact their visions of development.

8:20 AM Author(s): \*Neil Conner - University of Tennessee

Abstract Title: [Defending Victory: Religious Identity and Territoriality in Dublin, Ireland](#)

In June 2013, the Victory Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational and multicultural Church in Dublin, Ireland, was evicted from their state-of-the-art facility as a result of being eighteen million euro in debt to the Bank of Scotland. This paper uses a spatiotemporal approach based on eight weeks of ethnographic research to explore the spiritual and physical changes that occurred before, during, and after the Church's eviction. Ultimately, this paper will emphasize the important role that territoriality plays in the identity construction of a person and a community by explaining how and why certain adaptations made to the territoriality of the Church have caused considerable deviations to the everyday identities of the congregants.

8:40 AM Author(s): \*Thomas J Christoffel - Regional Intelligence-Regional Communities, LLC

Abstract Title: ["Think Local Planet, Act Regionally." A Candidate Paradigm Reflective of a Greater Community Spirituality Networking Historic World Religions](#)

In the 15th century, today's world religions had a limited perspective of the scope and scale of the planet, just like the explorers of that day. Maps created a virtual view of the whole world, something humans could not see themselves until in the 1960's when satellite images let us see a spherical earth in space. Maps depicting the reach of world religions 500 years ago show that then, as now, regional more than global presence for each. Though its reputation for war is unchecked, religion is no longer the cause of international war, yet it can be perceived as a threat to security. Religions do work on global social issues, having achieved a world view on problems, many of which are biopolitical. Though religions still compete for adherents, it is unlikely that one will grow to dominate. A new religious movement introduced in the 1997 book: "Greater Community Spirituality," offers a path to validate core spiritual insights of inspired religions, providing integrating concepts which enable networking for regional/greater community spirituality. The

planet has yet to recover from the economic crisis of 2008; environmental challenges mount; and extreme climate events pressure limited resources. The greater community of humans is offered as an action focusing paradigm: "Think Local Planet, Act Regionally." Moderated by a long term spiritual perspective of salvation by, in and through community, for perpetuation of the human race.

9:00 AM Author(s): \*Meagan Todd - University of Colorado

Abstract Title: [Biopolitics and Mosque Construction in Moscow, Russia](#)

This paper examines religion and biopolitics in Moscow, Russia. The shift from scientific atheism to a secular democracy promising freedom of religion has resulting in a well-documented growth of religiosity in multi-confessional Russia. One of the effects of this growth of religiosity has been increased demand for places of worship. In this paper, I examine how freedom of religion is interpreted spatially in Moscow by comparing the politics of mosque and Russian Orthodox Church construction. Moscow's Orthodox and Islamic practitioners are both underserved by religious infrastructures, with one church per 35,000 residents and one mosque per 3 million residents respectively. However, Moscow's current mayor Sergey Sobyenin has implemented a plan to construct over 200 churches, while he has opposed plans to build new mosques, explicitly citing the Islamic population of Moscow as transient and illegal. Moscow's religiously diverse population includes an estimated 2 million Muslims out of 11.5 million residents, but only four mosques serve Islamic practitioners. Drawing from 9 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Moscow, I argue that the opposition to mosque construction is tied to concerns over not only geopolitical threat of terrorism, but also to the increased role of spirituality in Russian neoliberal biopolitics. As spiritual and governmental leaders seek to increase the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in everyday life, the suburbanization of the Orthodox Church is a spatial solution to a politico-spiritual need. However, the increasing visibility of Islam challenges monolithic narratives of Moscow as an Orthodox city

9:20 AM Discussant: [Patricia Ehrkamp](#) - University of Kentucky

**Paper Session:****2422 Routes and Rootedness in sacred landscapes (1)****Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 12:40 PM - 2:20 PM in Room 22, TCC, First Floor*****Sponsorship(s):*****Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group*****Organizer(s):***[Richard Scriven](#) - University College Cork[David J Butler](#) - Department of Geography, University College Cork (UCC)***Chair(s):***[David J Butler](#) - Department of Geography, University College Cork (UCC)

**Session Description:** This session aims to engage with sacred landscapes as fractured spaces, being located at the confluence of the past and present, the physical and spiritual, the practiced and believed. As Dewsbury and Cloke (2009, p. 698) have recently outlined, there is a 'tension between what is solid, present, corporeal and material and that which inheres in the material as something mysterious, elusive, and ethereal'. In building on research over the past decade, which has explored 'how place is sacralized' and de-sacralization (Kong 2001, p.213), we are eager to examine sacred landscapes, both theoretically and empirically, as arenas of tension which are continually unfolding, most obviously between the sacred and the profane, but also between new movements and established faiths, development and preservation, presences and absences, materiality and immateriality, stability and change. Papers are invited which address sacred landscapes as spaces that are rooted - historically, geographically, ethnically - and routed - performed, practiced, evolving. In doing so, it is intended to consider how these spaces are affected by socio-cultural, economic and political changes that create clashes and apprehensions through multiple discourses and actions from established religions, alternative faiths, emergent denominations, Secularism, civil authorities, indigenous peoples, commercial developers, tourist industries and security services.

**12:40 PM Author(s):** \*Alyson Greiner - Oklahoma State UniversityAbstract Title: [\*Sacred Space and Globalization: Constructing an Intellectual History\*](#)

Although research and discussions of sacred space began to capture the attention of

geographers in the late 1970s, the subject of sacred space has factored in the scholarship of religious historians, sociologists, philosophers, and others since the early twentieth century. But what is sacred space, and how have scholars approached and deployed the concept? To begin to address these questions, this paper presents an intellectual history of sacred space that reaches back to the contested ideas of Mircea Eliade, among others, before turning to an examination of the ways in which globalization enables the creation of new sacred spaces through virtual pilgrimages, religious Web sites, religious transnationalism, and commodification. This meta-analysis suggests that contemporary scholarship on sacred space reclaim a (small) place for the some of the early foundational works, and identifies possible directions for future research

**1:00 PM Author(s):** Ruben Camilo Lois-González - USC

\*Xose Santos - USC

Abstract Title: [\*New and old pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago\*](#)

More than 20 years have already been passed since it commenced the process of revitalization of the Camino de Santiago. The Jacobean 1993-2010 cycle is now closed but, it brought new concerns related to, above all, the ability to survive as a religious and touristic phenomenon until the arrival of the new cycle that will start in 2021st. Over the last 20 years, the number of pilgrims has been in continuous growth. It's been explained that the success of this phenomenon is related to the adaptation of the Camino de Santiago to the new trends that characterize the contemporary tourism. However, what is certain is that it has not been paid too much attention to the evolution of the pilgrims themselves whose profile has been transformed over the last few years. In this work we want to focus fundamentally on this latter aspect, that is to say, in the analysis of the characteristics of pilgrims along the time. We think it is relevant to point out the importance of increasing incorporation of pilgrims from countries that are not part of the traditional Jacobean core like France or Portugal, among others. Visitors from countries like Canada, Korea or Poland were almost irrelevant in the last two decades, and now they have had a significant role on the flows of people who make the way. We understand that this is not a simple change in the origin of the pilgrims but it probably reflects deeper processes of transformation.

**1:20 PM Author(s):** \*Richard Scriven - University College Cork

Abstract Title: [\*The Emergence of Liminality: Pilgrims, place and practices at Lough Derg, Ireland\*](#)

This paper examines the pilgrimage island of Lough Derg, in Co. Donegal Ireland, as a liminal zone in which practices and performances create a place apart where the past and present, earthly and spiritual, self and setting, intertwine and entangle. Lough Derg, or St Patrick's Purgatory, has been a pilgrimage centre for centuries, with Catholic pilgrims spending three days on the lake island fasting, keeping vigil and praying barefoot. The contemporary pilgrimage is simultaneously located within this rich tradition and the shifting religious-spiritual context of modern Ireland. Drawing on my ethnographic fieldwork, I explore this site as a liminal place produced by pilgrims withdrawing from the quotidian and normative to engage with the religious-spiritual realm and focus on more meaningful, larger concerns in their lives. In examining pilgrimage as a process, I offer considerations of how rituals and performances, beliefs and motivations, and the micro-landscape of the island interact becoming embodied and emplaced. In closing, the paper speculates on theoretical and methodological approaches intended to contribute to discussions in related arenas.

**Paper Session:**

**2522 Routes and Rootedness in sacred landscapes (2)**

is scheduled on **Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in Room 22, TCC, First Floor**

***Sponsorship(s):***

**Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group**

***Organizer(s):***

[Richard Scriven](#) - University College Cork

[David J Butler](#) - Department of Geography, University College Cork (UCC)

***Chair(s):***

[Richard Scriven](#) - University College Cork

**Session Description:** This session aims to engage with sacred landscapes as fractured spaces, being located at the confluence of the past and present, the physical and spiritual, the practiced and believed. As Dewsbury and Cloke (2009, p. 698) have recently outlined, there is a 'tension between what is solid, present, corporeal and material and that which inheres in the

material as something mysterious, elusive, and ethereal'. In building on research over the past decade, which has explored 'how place is sacralized' and de-sacralization (Kong 2001, p.213), we are eager to examine sacred landscapes, both theoretically and empirically, as arenas of tension which are continually unfolding, most obviously between the sacred and the profane, but also between new movements and established faiths, development and preservation, presences and absences, materiality and immateriality, stability and change. Papers are invited which address sacred landscapes as spaces that are rooted - historically, geographically, ethnically - and routed - performed, practiced, evolving. In doing so, it is intended to consider how these spaces are affected by socio-cultural, economic and political changes that create clashes and apprehensions through multiple discourses and actions from established religions, alternative faiths, emergent denominations, Secularism, civil authorities, indigenous peoples, commercial developers, tourist industries and security services.

**2:40 PM Author(s):** \*Edward H Davis, PhD - Emory & Henry College

Abstract Title: [\*The spirit made flesh: Jazz performance and sacred space\*](#)

John Coltrane's turn to the spiritual was only one case among jazz musicians, many of whom, from Mary Lou Williams to Duke Ellington to Monty Alexander, have intentionally sought some kind of link between their craft and religious practice. But the ties between jazz music and religion are also dependent on space. Geographers have long argued that space is constructed socially through performance, but jazz improvisations unite performance and space in unique ways which can be intensely spiritual. These sacred unities might be temporary, and for some they even seem placeless. So what can we say about such moments in space? This paper analyzes how space and spirit can be joined during jazz performances. Memoirs, reflections, and recorded interviews are used to support my argument that three features of jazz performance potentially configure sacred spaces: 1) the immediacy and generosity of improvisation, 2) the celebration of radical difference and diversity, and 3) the healing sensuality inherent in the roots of jazz. None of these can automatically render a performance capable of forming a sacred place; anyone/anyplace can fail under the pressure of political/economic forces. The tenuous quality of jazz-based sacred space seems most evident, since its landscape may be all but invisible, and few musicians or music lovers are prepared for it. But the potential should be recognized, for in it we gain a fresh interpretation of both sacredness and musical performance as both are "made flesh."

**3:00 PM Author(s):** \*Anton Gosar - University of Primorska

Abstract Title: [\*Western Society's Heritage In Focus By Asian Visitors\*](#)

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the growing numbers of East-Asian visitors and their activities in Central Europe. Good practices in cross-cultural communication in selected, newly discovered tourist destinations by Asians will be introduced. Special attention will be devoted to the written information available on works of art to be visited / admired by Asian tourists in Christian religious shrines. The visitors are not familiar with the Western Culture but are keen to admire the classic, millennia old expressions of it. Compared to the "classical" tourists, which originate in Europe and the New World, they come from completely different cultural backgrounds. Their knowledge of the Greek and Roman heritage and of the Christian faith is just basic. Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia have just recently experienced a significant rise of tourists from Asia. Guidebooks on national culture, embedded in Christianity, have been selected for the analyses. The in depth analyses of the description of art works in four Catholic cathedrals in guidebooks demonstrate that religious contents in the travel literature are minimal. Guidebooks attention is not given to tourists from non-Western societies visiting Europe - in particular when describing Christian heritage. Tourist guidebooks have still in focus the classical European-North American visitor and not an intellectual residing in China, Korea, Japan or India. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the Western society several sentences on Christianity in guidebooks and promotional materials should be incorporated - therewith enriching the cross-cultural touristic experience.

**3:20 PM Author(s):** \*Lance F Howard - Clemson University

Abstract Title: [\*A Labyrinth for Clemson? A project-based inquiry into place apprehension.\*](#)

Unicursal labyrinths are phenomena that share conceptual and geometric space with geographical concepts and objects such as place, sacred space, landscape, monument, and performance. Enigmatically, labyrinths are material objects in Euclidean space that are also said to have effects that go "beyond" the material into psychological, emotional, and/or spiritual realms. Both ancient and cross-cultural, labyrinths defy appropriation by any particular historical period, culture, or faith, although they have until recently been generally considered as pre-modern and primarily of antiquarian interest. Their recent proliferation can be seen as consistent with a post-modern re-engagement with the ancient and indigenous. They are, thus, relatively non-threatening to materialists and of relevance to contemporary culture. My interest in the labyrinth is with its hypothesized role as a locus of exchange between humans and the Earth where important energetic/informational exchanges can occur between labyrinth-walkers and the Earth (or Nature, Environment, Place) that can have consequences for both.

Dowsers, for example, claim that water tends to collect, migrate or transmute beneath labyrinths (that are walked regularly). In asking of a labyrinth for Clemson I wish to (re)engage the student body with the land of the campus in a manner that explores human-land relationship alternatives to those of previous occupants, John C. Calhoun, and his heir, Thomas Green Clemson, both full participants in antebellum slave-run plantation agriculture. My presentation

will explore some of the ways that labyrinths relate to geographical concepts of sacred space and share what I have learned from working with students and the land of the campus.

**3:40 PM Author(s):** \*David J Butler - Department of Geography, University College Cork (UCC)

Abstract Title: [\*An unlikely harbinger of pre-/early Christian ritual: The Church of Ireland and its churchyards\*](#)

Churches and their churchyards are richly symbolic and emotional spaces where the presence of the past of ordinary people is strongest, the sacred sites of rituals marked out for generations. The Christianisation of Ireland was a process more akin perhaps to assimilation than to conversion. A change in ritual practice, but with a degree of continuity, most especially in the designation of sacred places in the landscape. Christian churches were built within pagan ritual sites at oak groves; the sacredness of freshwater springs to paganism continued into the Christian rite of baptism at holy wells. The Tudor Reformation led to the Irish state becoming Protestant, while the majority of the people remained Catholic. In Ireland this separated the people from their churches: church yards became sites of contestation. The mid-nineteenth century Catholic hierarchy launched a devotional revolution to rid Irish Catholic practice of those folk practices that had in large measure ensured its survival. Wakes, pattern days, holy wells, votive trees and pilgrimages were suppressed and catholic ritual was driven from the landscape into interior spaces. Yet the obliteration of many of these sacred spaces remained elusive, they being situated in close proximity to an active church of the establishment, or in a churchyard still owned by the state religion. This paper examines the complex situation which led to a low-church version of Anglicanism, which itself shunned unnecessary ritual well into the twentieth century, becoming the unlikely harbinger of ancient Irish Christian and pre-Christian ritual.

**Paper Session:**

2624 Connecting the Social and the Religious, New Spaces of Inquiry

is scheduled on Wednesday, 4/9/2014, from 4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in Room 24, TCC, First Floor

***Sponsorship(s):***

**Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group**  
**Political Geography Specialty Group**

## Cultural Geography Specialty Group

*Organizer & Chair:*

[Sarah A Soliman](#) - University of Kentucky

**Session Description:** Traditionally, geographies of religion have mainly focused on religion as an object of study through examining it's distribution, impact on the landscape, and geographic context (Knott 2005; Park 1994). However, more recent research has illustrated how a focus on religion can offer insight into new understandings of secularization processes, cultural and social issues, and politics (Gorski, et al. 2012; Aitchison et al. 2007; Kong 2010).

Notwithstanding the debate on whether religion is experiencing a revival, or if scholars are simply taking notice of practices not previously included in the scope of analysis (Habermas and Cronin 2010), religious perspectives have great potential for renewing social and cultural criticism (Mendieta and Vanantwerpen 2011). This session seeks to build specifically on existing conversations about the relationship between the social and the religious. There remains a need to examine how community and a sense belonging influences religious practice and spirituality; religion as a tool for transforming one's socio-cultural context, and how religious identities inflect and are inflected by ethnicity, age, and gender. Further, there remains much ground to cover on the strategies of different religious groups for outwardly practicing in new locations, or in the case of converts, the tools and resources sought out in the process of transition both during and after conversion. In the interest of continuing conversations around these issues, this session welcomes presentations on, but not limited to, the following topics:

Religion and belonging

Religious communities and community life

Intersection of religion and social identity formation

Piety movements

Conversion

Relation between secular and religious citizens

Social role of religion or religion as social resource

Cultural change and religion

Everyday spaces that intersect with religious practice and meaning

### References:

Aitchison, Cara, Peter E Hopkins, and Mei Po Kwan (eds.) 2007. *Geographies of Muslim Identities: Diaspora, Gender and Belonging*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Gorski, P., Kyuman Kim, D., and Torpey, J. 2012. *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in*

Contemporary Society. New York and London: New York University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen, and Ciaran Cronin. 2010. *An awareness of what is missing : faith and reason in a post-secular age*. Cambridge, U.K. ; Malden, Mass.: Polity.

Knott, Kim. 2005. *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

Kong, Lily (2010). "Global shifts, theretical shifts: Changing geographies of religion". *Progress in Human Geography* 34 (6): 755-776.

Mendieta, E. and Jonathan Vanantwerpen. 2011. "The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere with Judith Butler, Jurgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Cornel West." New York: Columbia University Press.

Park, C. C. 1994. *Sacred Worlds: An Introduction to Geography and Religion*. London: Routledge.

**4:40 PM Author(s):** \*John S. Benson - Minnesota State University Moorhead

Abstract Title: [\*Faith of Our Fathers Living Still?: A Comparison of the Religious Development of Children of Missionaries to their Parents.\*](#)

The social world of the children of missionaries is/was a world that is/was fully intermeshed within a religious world. Missionaries develop a religious viewpoint in childhood that helps them consider going out onto the mission field. Despite the multiple locations that missionaries grew up in, their religious development is often remarkably similar. This study begins by looking at the religious development of American Lutheran missionaries who served in Tanzania for at least twenty years and the lives of the children who grew up in this mission field. The religious development of the children of the missionaries will be compared to that of the missionary generation. In addition, as the children grew into adulthood, their decisions to remain Lutheran, choose another Christian faith, remain spiritual but not religious, or to give up on religion entirely will be discussed. The religious development of this generation will be examined in terms of the time they made their final religious decision. The religious development of the different genders will be compared. This study was part of a much larger history of this Lutheran missionary community to which the author belongs. In all, the author interviewed approximately 80 people from 15 different families, of which approximately 50 belonged to the second generation.

**5:00 PM Author(s):** \*Chad Emmett - Brigham Young University

Abstract Title: [\*It's not the Book of Mormon Musical: How the Mormon Church has grown in Indonesia.\*](#)

In 1970 the first Mormon missionaries began proselyting efforts in Indonesia. Conversions in this mostly Muslim land were slow in coming, particularly when compared to the rapid growth of Mormonism in the neighboring Philippines. Mormon Missionaries relied on a variety of methods to spread the faith. For the first few years they used the typical Mormon method of door-to-door tracting. When that was prohibited, they turned to less intrusive means of contacting such as radio programs, teaching English classes, street contacting and community service. Those who joined did so for a variety of reasons. Some had dreams and visions that directed them to the Mormon Church, some were attracted by specific points of doctrines and still others were intrigued with the young, white foreign missionaries riding bikes through their town. Using information gathered from scores of interviews with converts and missionaries, this paper will help to describe how the Mormon Church grows in foreign lands.

**5:20 PM Author(s):** \*Vincent Artman - University of Kansas

Abstract Title: [\*The Manas Epic, National Identity, and Islam in the Kyrgyz Republic\*](#)

Many social scientists have presumed a nested hierarchy of identities in which nationality enjoys primacy of place and effectively supersedes other forms of identity. Such a perspective, although sometimes helpful, often obscures more than it explains. For instance, it assumes that there is an ineluctable antagonism, or at least a fundamental separation, between national identity and religion. In reality, this relationship is more complex. Using the Epic of Manas as a focal point, this paper examines the relationship between Islam and national identity in the Kyrgyz Republic. Since independence, the Kyrgyz government has actively promoted a nationalist ideology focused on the hero Manas, who is said to symbolize the Kyrgyz nation's collective will to statehood. As such, Manas has been transformed into a thoroughly nationalist figure, and monuments to him have been constructed throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. Although the epic has been yoked to the project of Kyrgyz nation-building, it also contains numerous references to Manas being a Muslim, and Manas himself is reputedly buried in an Islamic mausoleum, the Manastin Kümbözü. The mausoleum is a major pilgrimage destination for many Muslims in the Kyrgyz Republic. The state has also constructed a large museum and park complex dedicated to Manas, the Manas Ordo, in the vicinity of the mausoleum. A pilgrimage to the Manastin Kümbözü is therefore inextricably a national pilgrimage as well. Manas and the sites associated with him thus represent a symbolic bridge between religious and national identity discourses.

**5:40 PM Author(s):** \*Julia Wood - University of Mary Washington

Abstract Title: [\*Gendered understandings of the lived religious experience: Exploring emotional responses through sacred space\*](#)

A key facet of understanding sacred space is not just the physical space they occupy or the rituals that occur within, but rather how participants interact with and experience these unique places. Using the framework established by other geographies of emotion as well as perspectives on feminine and masculine experiences of the sacred, this study moves research in the geography of religion forward by adding a personal, emotional perspective to the exploration of gendered experiences of sacred space. The author investigates not only how participants make sense of sacred spaces, but also how they are actively engaging in activities within their religious communities. This research demonstrates that gendered, emotional understandings of the sacred are distinctly different and further that these emotional responses are connected to the lived, religious experience.

**6:00 PM Author(s):** \*Sarah A Soliman - University of Kentucky

Abstract Title: [\*Finding Community: Identity and Belonging for American-Born Converts to Islam\*](#)

The importance of community has long been an ignored aspect in the lives of converts to Islam in reconciling their past lives with their new beliefs. There has been considerable empirical research detailing the conversion process of converts to Islam in the West, but there has been little empirical or theoretical work on post-conversion experiences. Through in-depth interviews of converts and community leaders in Cincinnati, I examine the relationship of converts with various individuals, religious organizations and places of worship in order to determine the extent that hybrid social-religious spaces, and their associated sense of community, are beneficial for converts during and post-conversion. I argue that organizations that focus on convert care and providing a safe space provide important support networks and a feeling of belonging for converts that is often absent in the mosque. Further, I have found that these efforts help converts foster spiritual and religious understanding and practice that is both culturally relevant and self-transformative.

**Paper Session:**

**3434 Religion: Sacred Spaces and Places**

is scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014, from 12:40 PM - 2:20 PM in Room 34, TCC,

**Fourth Floor****Organizer(s):****[Program Committee](#)****Chair(s):****[Garrett Smith](#) - Kennesaw State University****12:40 PM Author(s): \*Daniel McGowin - Auburn University**Abstract Title: [Geography of Religious Freedom](#)

In 2007, the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom classified the level of religious freedom in 101 countries and territories. The index focuses on "the denial to anyone of rights of a particular reason, those connected with practicing one's religion, and the denial of rights for a particular reason, because of the religious beliefs of those who are persecuted and/or those who persecute." Using the categories of "free," "partly free," and "unfree," we first map these data to analyze the geography of religious freedom in different parts of the world. Religious freedom is generally greatest in North America and Western Europe, and least in North Africa and Asia. We further analyze these data in terms of the dominant religion in each country. The Muslim world had one of the smallest proportions of countries with high levels of religious freedom. Of the 35 countries dominated by Islam only Mali and Senegal were classified as "free" on the religious freedom index. The Catholic world included 23 countries with 19 being classified as "free."

Considering all 49 Christian countries whether Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox or mixed, 36 were classified as "free." Countries dominated by Buddhism and related religions were divided with half being "free" and half being either "partly free" or "unfree." Finally, there are six countries classified as "mixed Muslim/Christian" such as Cameroon, Eritrea Lebanon, with all six being classified as "partly free" or "unfree."

**1:00 PM Author(s): \*Rajinder S Jutla - Missouri State University**Abstract Title: [Sacred Space and Sacred Place in Sikhism](#)

Today the Sikh Diaspora stretches over many countries of the world, from India and South East Asia to Australia, Europe, North and South America. Sikhism, a monotheistic religion based on the universal equality of mankind, irrespective of caste, creed, and ethnicity, was founded in 1469 by Guru Nanak. Nanak's message was continued by nine successors who provided a distinct shape to the Sikh community in terms of a written language, religious scriptures and institutions. He traveled across India and her neighboring countries to

spread his message. As a result, Sikh monuments and temples are scattered throughout India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tibet. The research will examine the significance of sacred space and place in the context of the Sikh religion. It will be based on interviews with Sikhs residing in the United States and Canada to find out what they consider to be sacred.

**1:20 PM Author(s):** \*Jennifer Kopf, PhD -

Abstract Title: [\*Global Influence on and of Tampa's Muslim Communities\*](#)

Geographers have written about the surveillance state created by the War on Terror (WoT) by examining the political-economies of geographic intelligence. This paper comes from the angle of the US Muslims, as they are most directly affected by the surveillance state. Although they make up a small proportion of the area's population, Muslims in Tampa Bay have acted on national and global stages since Esteban Cortez arrived in 1527 with a Spanish party that attempted to establish a settlement in the Tampa Bay region. Muslim slaves in the mid 19th century and black Muslim activists in the 20th century shaped the Tampa region as they did many other US regions. More recently, the dismissal of a tenured professor at the University of South Florida signaled to academics across the country that they are targets in the WoT, and the FBI followed the trail of the Boston Marathon bomber to a town near Tampa, where they shot a man they were interviewing in his own home 17 times, killing him in questionable circumstances. This paper examines the interplay between these global events and Muslim communities in the region. Mosques, traditionally considered spaces of refuge, have been infiltrated by FBI agents and informants, who question members of the community.

**1:40 PM Author(s):** \*Garrett Smith - Kennesaw State University

Abstract Title: [\*Religious Communities and Alternative Economic Spaces\*](#)

Work and industry have played central roles in western monasticism since "The Rule of St. Benedict" was published in the 6th century CE. Benedict famously considered idleness as an "enemy of the soul." As followers of the Rule, the Cistercians or Trappists are historically known for large land-holdings, varied enterprises, and environment-altering industries (e.g. water control projects and agriculture). While these efforts have been well-documented there has been little work on modern Cistercian trends of income-generation and their connection to the emerging paradigm of alternative economic spaces. These spaces have been described as autonomous, community-led, diversified, environmentally-ethical and sustainable, green capitalist, of local ownership, non-profit, place-attached, socially-responsible, and valuing long-term investment. They are seen as more socially just

alternatives to laissez-faire capitalism and are being advocated by those opposed to neo-liberalist economics. This paper examines the distribution and work of Cistercian monks and nuns through the framework of alternative economic spaces in 178 monasteries in 45 countries with 3,430 residents. The physical environment varies from the Congolese rain forest to the fjords of Norway and industries vary from the traditional such as brewing to the innovative such as tourism, the merchandising of computer equipment, and the fabrication of herbal soaps. This paper positions Cistercian alternative economic spaces in the contexts of 1) the digital economy, 2) pressure from a declining membership, and 3) the twin objectives of remaining in place while practicing environmentally-friendly business ethics. Activities vary according to each region's dominant economic sector which suggests an evolutionary pattern.

### Papers of Interest

[Bible Belt Denominational Membership Patterns, Correlates and Landscapes](#)

Presenter: [Webster, Gerald](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Heritage, community, and religion in the American South](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 10:00 AM.

#### **Author(s):**

Gerald R Webster\* - University of Wyoming

Robert Watrel - South Dakota State University

J. Clark Archer - University of Nebraska

Stanley D. Brunn - University of Kentucky

#### **Abstract:**

The term "Bible Belt" was coined by journalist H.L. Mencken following his coverage of the Scopes "monkey" trial in Dayton, Tennessee in 1925. The label has been used regularly since that time to refer to a religiously conservative or fundamentalist region in the American South and Midwest though the geographic extent of the Bible Belt has historically been ill-defined. Geographers have attempted to delineate the location of the Bible Belt in the past. Notably Heatwole mapped the geographic extent of the Bible Belt in a 1978 article using 1971 data from

the Glenmary Research Center. In 2011, Brunn, Webster and Archer updated Heatwole's analysis adding cartographic and statistical analyses for data in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s and found significant changes to the Belt's location and geographic extent. This study further updates that analysis using data from 2010. In addition to mapping changes in the Bible Belt's geography since 2000, this study also examines the socio-demographic correlates to the region's denominational makeup, and considers the relevance of Stump's concept of religious territoriality through an examination of religious signage in the region. Each of these three perspectives, cartographic, spatial analytic and photographic, sheds light on the geographic, socio-demographic and economic character of the Bible Belt.

### [Community Conservation of Sacred Groves](#)

Presenter: [Ormsby, Alison](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

### [Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas: Limitations and Lessons](#)

scheduled on Saturday, 4/12/2014 at 16:00 PM.

#### **Author(s):**

Alison Ormsby\* - Eckerd College

#### **Abstract:**

Sacred groves occur worldwide, and are small community-managed forests that are protected through cultural traditions. These groves contain natural resources, including diverse flora and fauna, as well as water sources. Some of the sacred groves are considered home to local gods.

This presentation shares findings of a multi-year, multi-site research program on sacred natural sites. Results will be presented from research in Ghana in 2006, India in 2009-2010 and Sierra Leone in 2012. A qualitative, ethnographic research methodology was used, including open-ended interviews and focus groups. A similar semi-structured questionnaire was used in all three research locations to interview residents about natural resource use, rules, and belief systems regarding local sacred groves. Results indicate that management approach and level of community involvement are linked to effectiveness of site protection and community attitudes.

Societal traditions are key to the continued protection of the groves. In some cases, changing religious traditions and high demands for resource use have resulted in the reduction or loss of groves. However, culturally protected sacred sites can play a role as key biodiversity conservation areas if community conservation traditions are supported. The groves' cultural significance and local management help ensure conservation of these small forested areas.

### [Cultivation: Agency, Freedom and Politics in the Pentecostal Sensorium](#)

Presenter: [Brahinsky, Josh](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Cultivating Bodies: Learning, Feeling, Doing 2](#)

scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014 at 10:00 AM.

**Author(s):**

Josh Brahinsky\* - UCSC

**Abstract:**

In training texts and earnest somatic practice, Pentecostals develop the sensory aptitudes and sensibilities for visceral religiosity. Evental, affective, and resistant practices underpin a highly successful mobilization. Seen as exemplifying either irrational atavism or anti-rational radicalism, their practices form in close dialogue with notions of agency, freedom and politics. As such, this paper gathers philosophical-political implications from a study of Pentecostal missionary training techniques among the Assemblies of God. Three years of interviews with missionary trainees, participatory observation in missions classes, and reading through the archives of missiology, show the very concrete nurturing of a Pentecostal sensorium that might refigure current notions of agency, freedom and political practice. Pentecostals not only explicitly train, yearn, and practice to speak in tongues, but they form institutional and pedagogical networks to disseminate these skills. Here, "cultivation" emerges as a key analytic for tracing held tensions between systematic and affective elements of organizing that guide this modern project. Exploring cultivation as explicitly scaled between determinist church and agentive revivals might clarify the seeming paradox of embedded agency. Further, this exploration suggests that while events, resistances, affects and other non-liberal subjectivities can be cultivated and highly effective mobilizing devices, they do not provide a politics.

[Development and transformation of religious landscape in Prague in context of global and European shifts](#)

Presenter: [Havlicek, Tomas](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Politics and the implementation of landscape laws and regulations](#)

scheduled on Wednesday, 4/9/2014 at 16:40 PM.

**Author(s):**

Tomas Havlicek\* -

Tomas Havlicek -

**Abstract:**

During the last twenty years, research on the interaction of religion and space has significantly

changed and therefore we can speak about a so-called "new" geography of religion (e.g. Kong 1990, Pacione 1999, Kong 2001, Henkel 2004, Proctor 2006, Havlíček 2007, Havlíček, Hupková 2008).

The world and Europe is now more interconnected "where what happens here and now is profoundly affected by what happens at other times and other places" (Jackson 2008, 299). Perhaps impactful is "the emergence of more variegated and complex religious landscapes in many countries as a result of migration" (Kong 2010). In this case believes Peach (2006, 353) that religion may now be "a more important variable for social-geographic investigation than race and ethnicity." The newest research rather points out the uniqueness shows of the decline of traditional church religiosity in connection with the ideology of modernization in Western Europe, while this same process is generating a strong counter reaction. The pluralisation of recent modern religious space is a much more important change. The large cities are the good example of dramatic changes of religious spaces. This contribution represents the last transformation of religious landscape (places and people) on the example of Czech capital, Prague.

### [Estimates of the US Jewish Population](#)

Presenter: [Sheskin, Ira](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Issues in Ethnic Geography - II](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 10:00 AM.

#### **Author(s):**

Ira Martin Sheskin, PhD\* - University of Miami

Arnold Dashefsky - University of Connecticut

#### **Abstract:**

Because the US Census does not count Jews as a group, controversy continues among researchers estimating the number of American Jews. The 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), using a random digit dialing telephone survey (RDD), had estimated about 5.2 million American Jews ([www.jewishdatabank.org](http://www.jewishdatabank.org)) Since then, one researcher (DellaPergola) has suggested that NJPS was an undercount and the correct number should be 5.4 million. In addition, the report from NJPS had indicated that the 5.2 million was too low. The 2013 American Jewish Year Book article (Sheskin and Dashefsky) which aggregates statistics from local Jewish community studies and local informants to derive a national estimate, suggests a conservative estimate of 6.5 million ([www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com)). A recent study completed at Brandeis University (Tighe et al. 2013), using meta-analysis techniques, reports 6.8 million ([www.brandeis.edu/ssri](http://www.brandeis.edu/ssri)) and the Pew Research Center's 2013 Portrait of Jewish Americans,

using RDD, found 6.7 million ([www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org)). This paper examines the various methodologies and the reasons for the differences in the estimates. Given that three of the four sources, using three different methodologies, all converge on 6.5-6.8 million, it is likely that the true number falls in this range.

[God's Just Gaza War: Christian Zionist Geopolitics and the Justification for Territorial Dispossession](#)

Presenter: [Sturm, Tristan](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Spaces of Orientalism](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 12:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

Beginning after the evacuation of the Gush Katif settlement of the Gaza Strip and intensifying with the 2008-2009 Gaza War, the border town of Sderot and its surrounding landscape became, for American Christian Zionists, a pilgrimage landscape and therefore a religious site as it was performed as an Orientalist event portending the apocalypse. This Gazan landscape became a constitutive practice of religious and a hybrid American-Israeli national identity. Folding into this identity construction was the performance of their distanced gaze which translated into a vision of dominance of terror and territory. Watching the war from pilgrimage landscapes overlooking the Gaza Strip, American Christian Zionists attempted to discursively dispossess the Gazans of their land through the colonial practice of terra nullius in four ways: 1) by denying the Palestinians' ability to reason, 2) by denying that "Palestinians" existed as a legitimate national identity, 3) by arguing that Palestinians historically had no state and therefore no sovereignty over the land, 4) by a religiously sanctioned inevitability and harbinger of worse wars to come as God's wrath grows and the world teeters on the apocalypse. Gaza was therefore interpreted as God's land and the demise of the Palestinians of Gaza was made inevitable.

[Homes , Mosques and Graveyards: The Self- Narrative Style Interpretation of Hui's Religious Activity's Spatial Sense](#)

Presenter: [Kai, Bai](#)

is part of the Poster Session:

[Geography of Culture, Ethnicity, Gender and Social Issues](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 8:00 AM.

**Abstract:**

Based on emic perspective, this paper makes a subjective intentionality interpretation of the existential meaning of Hui's religious activity space by the self-narrative style method. After a complete autobiography and immersed thinking, the author holds the idea that there are some characteristics existing in Hui's religious activity space, they are as followed: Firstly, homes, mosques and graveyards constitute the core of Hui's religious activity space. Secondly, for Muslim believers, homes, mosques and graveyards are not single physical space, but religious "places" which have special significances. Thirdly, the author's memories and summaries about the religious functions and meanings of homes, mosques and graveyards illustrate that Hui's religious activity space has characteristics of transformation from place to placelessness. The non-place conversion's place point is the mosque. Fourthly, "jie du wa"—a religious ceremony and religious behavior—builds bridges from space to place, from place to placelessness for Hui religious activity space. The analysis and conclusions explicate that Hui's religious activity space has the trait of transition from material religion spatial structure of place to spirit religious space structure of placelessness.

[Jim Crow, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Radical Jesus: Civil Rights Discourses at the Atlanta "Protestant Catholic Worker"](#)

Presenter: [Bolton, Claire](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Civil Rights Legacy I : Revisiting the Movement](#)

scheduled on Friday, 4/11/2014 at 12:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

Engaging the intersections of critical race theory and geography, this paper discusses the use of Civil Rights narratives by grassroots organizations in the Southeastern United States as attempts to make sense of and confront persisting racial inequalities. The paper discusses the dynamics of race, class, space, and religion in these discourses based on a case study of the Open Door Community, a "Protestant Catholic Worker" organization in Atlanta that advocates for homeless people, people on Death Row, and others who are incarcerated. The paper argues that the community's theologically-inflected Civil Rights discourses are primarily informed by White and Black community members who lived through the Jim Crow era and its demise. Narratives about the de jure Jim Crow system and the Civil Rights Movement are perhaps most vocally put forth by White leaders in the community, and are used to criticize and analyze contemporary de facto segregation and its consequences. The paper contributes to an understanding of how anti-racist activists in Southeastern places understand the region's troubled past in the context of present racial inequalities.

[Let There Be Rock! Ideological Production at the Christian Youth Music Festival](#)

Presenter: [Caton, Kellee](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[New Horizons in Tourism Mobilities](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 10:00 AM.

**Abstract:**

Christian youth music festivals have received surprisingly little attention in the tourism and event studies literature. This exploratory study seeks to better understand the Christian youth music festival phenomenon, and in particular, the role of these festivals in promoting (or failing to promote) positive social values, such as tolerance, inter-group harmony, and peace. To this end, a field study was undertaken examining two popular festivals held annually in the United States: Lifest and Cornerstone. After situating the research within the context of American evangelical history, particularly with regard to the role of tourism and leisure in the evangelical subculture, the study presents an ethnographic portrait of each festival and then analyzes the ideological position promulgated by each. It concludes that Lifest and Cornerstone are very different, in terms of the constructions of Christian doctrine and Christian identity that each festival advances. Despite differences in ideology, however, both festivals draw on the same mechanisms--leveraged liminality, embodied performativity, and youthful impressionability--to advance their respective ends. Ultimately, the study concludes that the different constructions of the meaning of Christianity and Christian identity fueled by Lifest and Cornerstone have political implications; thus, the leisure and tourism practices of the American evangelical subculture will remain an important force to be watched in the future.

[Linking Traditional Beliefs on Climate Change to Scientific Understanding: A Case Study in Eastern Bhutan](#)

Presenter: [Lhakpa, Lhakpa](#)

is part of the Illustrated Paper Session:

[Climate Change in Africa and Asia: MyCOE / SERVIR Global Fellows](#)

scheduled on Thursday, 4/10/2014 at 12:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

This research examined indigenous beliefs on climate change and linked them to scientific understanding. Questionnaires, interviews and field observation methods were used to understand the perception and beliefs of the people about climate change. The study showed that farmers in local communities face phenomenon of abrupt and abnormal weather conditions steered by global climate change. However, despite the changes that are impacting their daily lives, they are found to be unsure about global pattern of climate change, rather, remain

inclined towards spiritual reasoning. Irregularities in temperature and rainfall, changes in land use and land cover, and existing literature clearly indicate that climatic conditions are changing, especially in recent years. Indigenous knowledge and traditional beliefs, associated with the intensified practice of 'Chorbu' - 'rain calling ritual' by offering spiritual sacraments and conducting prayers in order to appease the local deities/God during the delay or absence of rainfall; crop failure; poor harvest; disease and pests; and occurrence of natural disasters as reported by the local communities validates the understanding of climate change evidences. The most challenging task for communities using spiritual reasoning and seeking divine intervention to help them survive the phenomenon of climate change, which at times have worked in their favor, is this may not be the best means to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The role of the communities, researchers, planners, policy makers, stakeholders and the media is therefore crucial in extending climate change research, awareness, and mitigation measures for long term sustainable adaptation.

[Looking towards non-secular encounters in the city of Warsaw](#)

Presenter: [Narkowicz, Kasia](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Meaningful Contact: Generating social change from encounters with difference II](#)

**scheduled on Friday, 4/11/2014 at 10:00 AM.**

**Abstract:**

While the Habermasian idea of the public sphere where rational deliberation over universal issues takes place has since been challenged to exclude certain groups (Fraser 1990), the need for translation of religious language to be universally accessible in the public sphere is still emphasised (Habermas 2011). For the religious groups, translating their religious language is often understood as a 'price to be paid' in a context of living in difference with competing worldviews (Habermas 2011:26). But the focus on mutual translation, recently discussed within post-secular geographies (Cloke and Beaumont 2013), can potentially ignore meaningful encounters taking place within non-secular spaces, untranslated. This paper is based on research conducted in Poland with Muslim and Catholic groups in the context of mosque building tensions in Warsaw. The paper explores meaningful encounters in inter-religious spaces. As evidenced in the research, it was when respondents found similarities across their religious differences and shared values across their religious group identities that politics of compassion were mobilised, potentially translating into meaningful encounters that had the capacity to change values (Valentine 2008). With that, departing from the assumption that religion in the public sphere needs to be treated as a 'special case' (Taylor 2011), this paper looks to non-secular spaces for meaningful encounters across difference.

[Modernity, Zakat and the American Muslim philanthropic imaginaries](#)

Presenter: [Khan, Sabithulla](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[New Geographies of Philanthropy and Giving: New places and alternate forms of giving](#)

scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014 at 14:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam and its practice is central to the faith. While the practice of zakat and sadaqa is guided by Shariah, the ways in which it is imagined and practiced is varied in a pluralistic society such as the U.S, given the presence of almost all school of Islamic jurisprudence and various secular norms of giving. This paper argues that philanthropy among American Muslims is being "modernized" by several factors, not limited to social, cultural and technological norms and discourses of giving. These new "technologies of interpretation" and discourses around delivery of zakat are giving new meaning to concepts of efficiency, transparency. I ask whether this phenomenon is leading to zakat becoming more 'customized' and more 'individualistic'. By interpreting these traditional norms into modern settings, I point out how Muslim individuals and nonprofit organizations are redefining what is religious and secular, legitimate and illegitimate- when it comes to philanthropy. I further argue that while these changes seem to be about the use of technology and new interpretative norms, they are actually an indicator of a deeper "reformation" in Islam, given the central position of charity within Islamic belief system. This study is relevant in the context of the broader discussions of individualism and community, in a society dominated by neoliberal ideologies; and also the public role of Islam in the West

[Prisoners in Zion: Shaker Sites as Foundations for Later Communities of Incarceration](#)

Presenter: [Medlicott, Carol](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Historical Geographies of Prisons and Jails II](#)

scheduled on Wednesday, 4/9/2014 at 10:00 AM.

**Abstract:**

The US landscape has always been home to a broad spectrum of intentional communities. These have been organized on the basis of wide-ranging shared factors, from spiritual ideologies and economic practices to social visions and gender identities. Some scholars have even begun to suggest that institutions of incarceration or other form of semi-compulsory residence should also be considered intentional communities. One factor that often distinguishes an intentional community is its collective desire or need to establish spatial separation and maintain that separation through a range of visible boundary features. Such has

been the practice of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, or "Shakers," whose communities (referred to collectively as "Zion" by the Shakers themselves) were established as deliberately separate spheres where social and spiritual practices could be managed and sustained by distinctive patterns of architecture and land use. Because the Shakers left such indelible marks on the landscapes they inhabited, the post-Shaker transformation of these built environments has been difficult. In many cases, Shaker sites have been adapted for use by later institutions that also required strict spatial separation from surrounding communities. This paper will survey Shaker sites later transformed by institutions sharing similar spatial needs of separation, land use, and collective housing. It will present specific instances of sites that were transformed into prisons and other spaces of incarceration and compulsory residence. It will critically examine the factors that guided these transformations and consider the resulting challenges for interpretation of these historical and spiritually significant landscapes.

[Queer \(im\)mobilities and Christian \(in\)hospitalities](#)

Presenter: [Han, Ju Hui Judy](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[FQG: World, City, Queer](#)

scheduled on Friday, 4/11/2014 at 14:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

Once largely underground and hidden, queer spaces in South Korea and the Korean diaspora have in recent decades become more visible and decidedly more assertive. From bustling gay clubs and queer political expressions such as the annual queer cultural festival in Seoul to a variety of activist and social groups organizing across the United States and Canada, queer artistic and political projects have expressed a stake in the liberal democratic principles of equality and tolerance. To juxtapose these rights-based aspirations against a competing juridical and ethical framework, I focus on a site just as preoccupied with queer sexualities but unabashedly hostile to difference: powerful conservative evangelical Christian churches and affiliates that promote homophobia as both a religious-cultural value and an ethical-political obligation. I discuss how transnational geographies of homophobia have shaped the construction of queer spaces and identities, and how emerging forms of faith-based queer activism seek to disrupt the binary opposition between religious faith and queer sexuality.

[The Territorial Imperative: Changing Practices and Representations of the Muslim Spiritual Board in Post-Soviet Tatarstan, Russia](#)

Presenter: [Derrick, Matthew](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Eurasia's Environmental, Economic, and Geopolitical Transformations: Part VIII, Divisions](#)

scheduled on Friday, 4/11/2014 at 16:40 PM.

**Abstract:**

This paper considers the changing practices and representations of the Muslim Spiritual Board (Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man) of Tatarstan, a centralized ecclesiastical institution, over the course of the post-Soviet era. The Muslim Spiritual Assembly, following its creation in 1992, generally supported a revival of the prerevolutionary indigenous religious reform movement known as "Jadidism" (from Arabic for "renewal"); however, before the close of the 1990s the institution had turned its back on reform in favor of more conservative religious practices associated with the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence as had been followed in the region for centuries, a position that has hardened over the past decade. Whereas previous explanations of this shift have focused on the role of individuals or more global developments in Islam, in this paper I illustrate how the changing practices and representations of the Muslim Spiritual Board have been conditioned by Tatarstan's broader political-territorial restructuration of the Russian Federation. Drawing on archival work and semi-structured interviews conducted over an 18-month period, I show how preferred notions of Islam, as propagated by the Muslim Spiritual Board, have shifted along with critical developments in Tatarstan's sovereignty campaign that was launched in 1990 and, beginning in 2000, a subsequent wave of aggressive recentralization of Russia that has disabused the region of its pretensions to sovereignty.

[Trans Substantiation, Part 2: Trouble In the Land of Theonomy](#)

Presenter: [Mustoe, Marian](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Theorizing Space, Place, and Identity](#)

scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014 at 8:00 AM.

**Abstract:**

This is part two of a research project that has analyzed the integration of the transgender experience within the religious political landscape of Anchorage, Alaska. The focus of this research considers the religious implications that assisted in the defeat of Anchorage, Alaska's Proposition 5 in 2012. This measure, if it had passed, would have amended the municipal code of the city to give protection against discrimination on the basis of transgender and sexual orientation. This research now turns to exploring the theological perspective that provided part of the impetus to defeat Prop 5. Although a clear division between support and opposition exists amongst religious communities involved in the debate of procuring civil rights for the GLBT

community, it is limiting to suggest that this duplexity is based exclusively on a hermeneutical approach to the Bible. In particular, this research attempts to go past the rhetoric of Sunday morning sermons and considers the "problem" with the existence of the GLB, and specifically the T community in the context of its threat to "socio-righteous" space. The research suggests a strong correlation exists between opposition to GLBT rights and a theological perspective based in theonomy. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that support for a spectral rather than a binary gender structure threatens the traditional "Biblical" cisgender hierarchy. A set of central questions have emerged from this research: How can the marginalization of the GLBT community be theologically supported? Does the GLBT community present a religious-based threat to those opposed to its socio-niche?

### [Where Does Spiritual Support Fit in a Shifting US Healthcare Landscape?](#)

Presenter: [Stewart, Kristin](#)

is part of the Interactive Short Paper Session:

[Applied GIS, Geographic Education, Medical Geography](#)

scheduled on Tuesday, 4/8/2014 at 12:40 PM.

#### **Abstract:**

In this Interactive Short Paper I present my current research, an endeavor to understand the current and future place of chaplaincy in U.S. healthcare facilities. An expanding body of research suggests that spiritual support helps patients better cope with illness and improves medical outcomes; nevertheless, there seems to be no correlating growth of attention (or allocation of resources) to professional spiritual care providers—healthcare chaplains. In fact, despite the movement toward more interdisciplinary "patient centered" care, space for spiritual care within healthcare facilities seems to be retracting. Is there a growing contestation of space in healthcare facilities today, with physical care providers and administrators on the one side and spiritual care providers on the other? Where does spiritual care fit in the rapidly changing and economically competitive landscape of healthcare? I explore why these questions are important, how to best approach them, and where to go from there.

### [Who Believes in Russia? A Quantitative Evaluation of Religious Revival among Muslims and Buddhists](#)

Presenter: [Holland, Edward](#)

is part of the Paper Session:

[Eurasia's Environmental, Economic, and Geopolitical Transformations: Part VIII, Divisions](#)

**scheduled on Friday, 4/11/2014 at 16:40 PM.**

**Abstract:**

Work on religion in the Russian Federation has primarily utilized national-scale data over-weighted towards the country's Russian Orthodox population when analyzing questions of longitudinal change in religious belief. In turn, the argument for a Russian religious revival in the post-Soviet period—made most recently by Evans and Northmore-Ball—is limited to the country's Orthodox community. This paper extends this literature theoretically and empirically by suggesting a more geographically attuned approach to such work. I make the case for a quantitative geography of religion that moves beyond the cartographic analysis of spatial data on religious affiliation. Rather than privileging national-level data, I use two sets of regional-scale surveys to evaluate patterns of longitudinal change in self-evaluated belief for two minority religions in the Russian Federation: Islam and Buddhism. The main findings of this paper are that the analysis of regional-level and confession-specific samples brings into question conclusions about religious practice that are made when considering only national-level data that primarily samples Russian Orthodox.

## MEMBER NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

(GORABS-related publications are presented annually in our Fall Newsletter.)

### James Norwine, Texas A & M

Forthcoming GORABS-related book event: The President of Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Dr. Steven Tallant, has announced a special Presidential Colloquium to celebrate the publication by Jim Norwine, Regents Professor Emeritus of Geography, of an important new book, *A World After Climate Change* (Springer-Amsterdam 2014). The event will be held at noon on Monday, 17 November 2014, on the TAMUK campus. Following welcoming and introductory remarks by President Tallant and Dr. Thomas McGehee, Professor of Geosciences, Norwine will speak on the subject, "A World After Climate Change and Culture-Shift: An Imaginative Geography", with Q&A, signing and reception to follow. As a focus of the talk--as of the book itself\*--is the nature and significance of the 21st as a "hinge" or axial century, GORABS members are especially invited. Those interested are cordially invited to contact Jason Marton for details at [Jason.Marton@tamuk.edu](mailto:Jason.Marton@tamuk.edu). . \*Synopsis of the book are available on the Springer and Amazon websites.

### Darrel L. McDonald and Jeffery E. Roth, Stephen F. Austin State University

The Stephen F. Austin State University Geography Club has adopted an African American Cemetery in Nacogdoches, Texas. Originally, the St. Paul's Cemetery was affiliated with a church which stood near the graveyard. In about 1909, the congregation relocated and after thousands of African American people left the Nacogdoches area, including church members, during the Great Migration, the cemetery was essentially abandoned. During the last four decades the cemetery loosely fell under control of City and County departments which failed to maintain the site. Thus, the final resting place of freedmen, military veterans and hundreds of citizens essentially dissolved into the landscape.

Over the last five years the students have worked to bring the landscape back to life. They have held clearing days which included community members to reclaim the cemetery from an overgrowth of pioneering vegetation and trees to a cemetery emerging from the wilderness (Figure 1).



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. St Paul's Cemetery at the beginning of restoration (a) and the cemetery landscape as of this spring (b).

Recently, students have been applying geospatial technologies to document and locate grave sites as well as restore grave stones. More undergraduate research projects are being planned to provide students with opportunities to further reclaim the cemetery and to provide students with field research activities.

Figure 2 is an image produced by ground penetrating radar showing identified and potential unmarked grave sites.

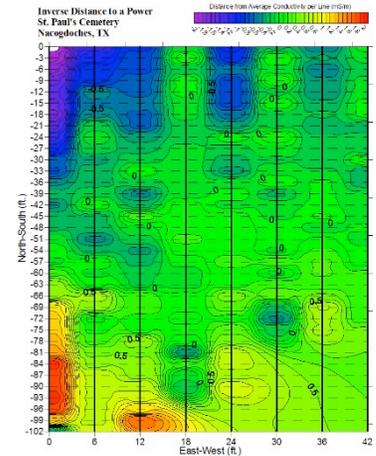


Figure 2

**Reinhard Henkel (Heidelberg) and Elzbieta Bilaska-Wodecka (Cracow)****Colloquium on the Changing Religious Landscape of Europe held in Cracow/Poland**

The 8th International Colloquium on the Changing Religious Landscape of Europe, organized by Institute of Geography and Spatial Management of Jagiellonian University, was held on 6-7 September 2013 in Krakow (Poland). It followed previous colloquia in Heidelberg/Germany (2003), Amsterdam/Netherlands (2004), Prague/Czechia (2005), Presov/Slovakia (2009), Oxford/Britain (2010), Lucerne/Switzerland (2011) and Goettingen/Germany (2012).

Attendees included more than 20 participants from 7 countries who listened to and discussed the 2 keynote lectures (Reinhard Henkel, Heidelberg, on "The changing religious space in Western European cities" and Antonius Liedhegener, Lucerne, on "Religious affiliation in Europe - an empirical problem. The «Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe »") and further 11 presentations. Some of these covered topics related to immigrant religion, places of mourning, locations of new churches and religious tourism in Poland, the Netherlands, Czechia, Serbia, and Ukraine. Most of the papers will be published in the journal *Prace Geograficzne* (<http://www.pg.geo.uj.edu.pl>).

**Regional Conference of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Cracow, Poland****18-22 August 2014 ([www.igu2014.org](http://www.igu2014.org))**

A thematic session with the theme "Religion and changes of socioeconomic and cultural space of cities and regions" will be organized by Antoni Jackowski, Elzbieta Bilaska-Wodecka, Izabela Sołjan (Cracow)

The 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is the period of very dynamic changes in many aspects of human activity. The subject discussed during this session will be the place of religion in these processes. Especially we will concentrate on relations between religion and socio-economic and cultural changes. It will be analysed in different spatial scale (national, regional, municipal). One of the most important problems will be research approaches and methods in geography of religion. The aims of the session are:

1. Theoretical background of religious influence on socio-economic and cultural changes and vice-versa
2. The impact of immigrants on changes in denominational structure and its socioeconomic reasons
3. Religious diversity and cultural identity
4. Religions in public space
5. The secularization thesis in geographical studies
6. The phenomenon of pilgrimages and religious tourism

In addition, a workshop on "City without God. Origin and changes of religious space in new socialist and post-socialist cities" will be organized by Elżbieta Bilaska-Wodecka, Justyna Liro, Izabela Sołjan (Cracow), Katarzyna Kulczyńska (Poznan) and Tomáš Havlíček (Prague).

### **GORABS online journal**

The *Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group* of the Association of American Geographers invites submissions for its on-line journal, *Geographies of Religions and Belief Systems*. The journal, published once a year, features substantive articles, commentary, book reviews, and debate. Editorial Board members represent a wide range of geography of religion and religious studies approaches and include John Corrigan, Julian Holloway, Lily Kong, David Ley, David Livingstone, Carolyn Prorok, James Shortridge, and Roger Stump. All papers will be double-blind reviewed.

Please visit the specialty group's website for information (<http://gorabs.org>) regarding length, format, and other particulars.

Questions may be directed to Elizabeth J. Leppman, editor, at [ejleppman@windstream.net](mailto:ejleppman@windstream.net)  
Please consider submitting a paper based on recent research, collaborations, debates, or presentations at appropriate academic conferences.