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*Editors*

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## Introduction

*The purpose of the Biennial Conferences on Religion and American Culture is to bring together scholars in the humanities, social sciences, seminaries, and professional schools who study religion in America in order to continue working on big questions and themes we face in our fields. We established in 2009 that this is a worthy endeavor. At that first conference, we spent considerable time talking about the promise and challenges of interdisciplinary research. In 2011 we moved on to discuss the changing definitions of religion and culture, and what this means for the types of work we do. Conversations about changes in our understanding of religion—informed by various disciplines—can promote greater cross-fertilization of ideas and best practices in several fields. The second conference sustained and extended the conversation among different perspectives in ways that highlight the strengths and expose the weaknesses of disciplinary boundaries. Our third meeting presented us the opportunity to think anew about old topics, as well as to consider new developments in the field.*

*As you will see in these Proceedings, the speakers heeded our call to be provocative, to push further, to debate, to learn together. I'm pleased to report that those in the audience threw themselves into each session with that same temperament. Each session was spirited—animated by the shared desire to move the conversations that develop slowly in our books and journals to new levels of frankness and inter-disciplinarity.*

*We continue to believe that a biennial conference dedicated to new perspectives informed by various disciplines will reinvigorate the broader field of American religious studies. We can and should learn from one another. It will also lay the groundwork for future conversations about how to break down the disciplinary walls that have been erected when cross-disciplinary work is clearly needed, as well as to identify when the discrete disciplines offer better understandings of some topics. It is our hope that these conferences will aid serious and sustained conversations among the disciplines and their perspectives that will go a long way toward recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, we expect the annual meetings of the national disciplinary-based societies will be enriched by this conversation.*

*The Third Conference on Religion and American Culture was held in Indianapolis in June 2013, consisting of a series of roundtable discussions through presentations by top scholars from a variety of perspectives. Nationally known scholars from different backgrounds participated in each session. The panelists sat, quite literally, at a round table in the center of the room, surrounded by over one hundred scholars on risers so everyone could not only learn from the conversation but also participate in it.*

*These Proceedings include the papers that were read at the conference. What is missing, however, are the lively and spirited conversations that marked each session. Indeed, the discussions continued over coffee breaks, lunches, and dinners. New friends were made and fresh ideas were discovered. We look forward to continuing those conversations in 2015.*

*A word of thanks is due to a number of people and institutions. First, I am grateful to the panelists who wrote such thoughtful pieces. I asked them to be direct and provocative, and they responded wonderfully. I am also indebted to my colleague Art Farnsley, who helped put together the panels and moderate the discussions. John Corrigan and Verity Jones also facilitated two sessions, both suggesting speakers and hosting that hour. Becky Vasko, the Center's Program Coordinator, provided altogether stellar support in the planning and execution of the entire conference, as well as the publication of these Proceedings. Without her, there would have been no meeting. There were two organizations that provided funds to help underwrite the conference: Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis's Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Lilly Endowment Inc. contributed generously toward the costs of the meeting. I am deeply grateful for their ongoing faith in this project.*

**Philip Goff**  
**Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture**

## **Fifty Years of Non-Sectarian Study of Religion: Goals, Limitations, Expectations**

*June 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the Abington School District v. Schempp decision, which declared unconstitutional required devotional Bible reading in public schools. The decision is generally regarded as the impetus, ironically, for the development of religious studies programs in state-sponsored higher education because of its call to study scripture as history and literature. How did the decision change the course or scope of the study of religion in North America? What are the goals and limits of the study of American religion? And how do students (both/either public and/or private) shape what and how we teach and research?*

**Jon Butler**  
Yale University

In its 1963 decision in *Abington School District v. Schempp*, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed that compulsory Bible readings opening the public school day violated the first amendment to the U.S. constitution. The court held that such "religious exercises" constituted an "establishment of religion" forbidden by the first amendment. Ironically, it also is often said that the decision, written by Justice Thomas Clark, led to the creation of religious studies departments in public universities and, by extension, stimulated similar departments in private universities and colleges. In his opinion, Clark observed that ending school-sanctioned bible readings did not preclude the scholarly study of religion in public institutions. As Clark wrote, "Nothing we have said here indicates that . . . study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, American religious history never had been the exclusive province of the committed. Everyone in my introductory graduate U.S. history seminar assumed that Perry Miller, the author of our first book, *The New England Mind*, was a Harvard cleric, but we were humorously corrected. He wasn't alone, of course, but there's not time here to flesh out the point.

True, the study of religion grew after *Abington v Schempp*. But Clark's opinion notwithstanding, I would argue that the expanding quantity and quality of post-1960 specifically American religious history came largely from history departments and traditional divinity schools, in part led by the fame of Miller's work. In contrast, my sense is that the new religious studies departments more eagerly took up non-Christian religions outside the United States; American religious history was not ancient, not exotic, maybe not really deep, despite Perry Miller's Puritans.

But let us come back to Clark and the non-sectarian question posed by the charge for this panel. If we understand Clark at least to have argued for the relatively dispassionate study of religion in publicly supported institutions (Peter Novick's book on the "objectivity" quest in American history wouldn't appear for fifteen years), the lure of religiously linked scholarship never died. I'm not sure that its revival began with George Marsden's 1997 *Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. Perhaps. But the number of recent books and essays on "advocacy history" in religion or essays detailing authors' religious backgrounds for the histories they have written deserves notice. These include *Faith and the Historian: Catholic Perspectives*, edited by Nick Salvatore (2007); *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian's Vocation*, edited by John Fea, Jay Green, and Eric Miller (2010), three essays by Brad Gregory and two by Christopher Shannon, an entire issue of *Fides et Historia* (2011), and two essays by David Hollinger criticizing some of these approaches. Interestingly, Hollinger aside, all focus on Christianity, and the most assertive carry a strong sense of lost influence, power, and relevance.<sup>2</sup>

Many essays, such as those in Nick Salvatore's collection, including his own, simply describe how Catholic backgrounds inflected approaches to their history subjects, not always to obvious ends, most notably James Barrett's "The Blessed Virgin Made Me a Socialist." Gregory, Shannon, and Marsden criticize secularism or, in the new phraseology, "naturalistic" history (as opposed to

providential history), although Marsden and Mark Noll now are criticized for employing essentially naturalistic modes in their histories. William Katerberg proposes a "useful history" for religion akin to the political histories of Howard Zinn and cultural critiques of John Patrick Diggins. Richard Bushman argues that Mormon historians "are more likely to get into the nooks and crannies of Mormon belief better than outsider historians" and that they also are "confined by the evidence more unforgivingly than many other historians," points that might apply for other faiths.<sup>3</sup>

Shannon offers the most radical critique and revision of all, and having known him as a graduate student, I say hats off to chutzpah or its Catholic equivalent. He would simply eschew the "monographic tradition" because it reifies the naturalistic, secular historical mode and return to the classroom, "simply telling the Christian story" through an openly "uncritical" narrative history" that emphasizes "rote memorization" and "a very partisan story whose telling would vary with the denominational context." The point of rapture?: "This is where one could say the Holy Spirit caused the Great Awakening." College juniors and seniors would read some monographs, but as the "morally charged narratives" they "really are," such as E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, Edmund Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom*, and Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*.<sup>4</sup>

Are these the ways forward? Shannon assumes a known "Christian story" and, so far as I can see, simply proposes abandoning historical research and writing. Gregory's concern about secular bias, plus some of Marsden's, concentrate on philosophers and seldom discuss history books; which American religious histories don't take religion seriously? As for "useful histories," what does the "useful" do to the history, a question for all of us who inject moral purposes into our histories, religious and non-religious. And I don't agree that a believing writer is more likely to probe religion's "nooks and crannies"—more likely than Perry Miller or Jan Shipps?—or is held to higher standards. I'm inclined to go with Hollinger: enough already, it's the history that interests me, not that I don't also have other perhaps even intellectually prurient interests, such as the backgrounds that shape the choice of historical topics and the standards for historical assessments.<sup>5</sup>

My own view is that Clark was right enough. We should leave the divine and its promotion to the divine, or whatever it is; if it is anything we'll find out later, that is, unless we really bite the bullet to claim revelatory capacities to detect the divine, a possibility over which even Jonathan Edwards stumbled.

In the end it's our notes (cards or electronic) and their discerning use that offer the best chances for religious historians' disciplinary salvation. They, and not demands for a faithful religious history—Protestant, Catholic, liberal Catholic, traditional Catholic, Reform Jewish, Conservative Jewish, Orthodox Jewish, Hasidic, Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim, Scientological and so forth—will produce the insightful histories that deservedly guide us now and might be read in a century.

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1. *Abington Township School District v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

## Butler

2. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Nick Salvatore, *Faith and the Historian: Catholic Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); John Fea, Jay Green and Eric Miller eds., *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian's Vocation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Brad S. Gregory, "The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion," *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 132-149; Brad S. Gregory, "No Room for God? History Science Metaphysics and the Study of Religion," *History and Theory* 47 (2008): 495-519; Brad S. Gregory, "Historians' Metaphysical Beliefs and the Writing of Confessional Histories," *Fides et Historia* 43, no. 2 (2011): 9-17; Christopher Shannon, "After Monographs: A Critique of Christian Scholarship as Professional Practice," in *Confessing History*, 168-186; *Fides et Historia*, 43, no. 2 (2011).

3. Nick Salvatore, "Deeply Within: Catholicism, Faith, and History," in *Faith and the Historian*, 98-116; James R. Barrett, "The Blessed Virgin Made Me a Socialist: An Experiment in Catholic Autobiography and the Historical Understanding of Race and Class," in *Faith and the Historian*, 117-147; William Katerberg, "The 'Objectivity Question' and the Historian's Vocation," in *Confessing History*, 101-127; Richard Lyman Bushman, "Mormon History Inside Out," *Fides et Historia* 2011, no. 2 (2011): 2-8.

4. Shannon, "After Monographs."

5. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

**Patricia O'Connell Killen**  
**Gonzaga University**

In February 2012, I was in the Agnes Flanagan Chapel at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, a panelist for the symposium "Living Humanism: Material Culture and the Remaking of Religion." My task was to speak about religion and spirituality in the Pacific Northwest, providing a context for the other panelists. Dr. Susanna Morrill explored the Portland area's local food movement as religious activity. Drs. Monica Miller and Cassie Trentaz described their subjects' use of religious, theological, and ethical terms—or lack thereof—from their ethnographic study of Portland's young adult, nightlife scene. The final panelist, and big draw, was Diabolus Rex, founder of Chaos Imperium, "a techno-Black Magickal think tank and research group" that he established after breaking with Anton LaVey's Church of Satan for its lack of attention to metaphysical concerns. Rex presented on the metaphysical vision—one might say the theology—of The Chaos Imperium.<sup>1</sup>

I doubt that Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark or most scholars of American religion envisioned such an event when Clark wrote the majority decision in *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* in 1963. It is some distance from considering the Bible "worthy of study for its literary and historical qualities," and advocating for the "study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization," to a panel on the material remaking of religion whose participants included Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, humanists, and a devil. Today, however, the panel is no longer unusual. Further, both the presentations and I would note, audience members' questions, illustrated the complicated nature of the distinction between teaching "about religion" and the "teaching of religion" that Justice Arthur Goldberg made in his concurring opinion.<sup>2</sup>

The *Schempp* decision, which dealt with K-12, not higher education, did not cause the changes in the study of American religion that have occurred over the past 50 years. It did, however, contribute indirectly to expansion of religious studies, and to acceleration of developments already underway in the field, by legitimating "non-sectarian" study of religion and by highlighting religion's significance in realms beyond visible, organized institutional forms.<sup>3</sup>

Three developments that have profoundly shaped the study of American religion during the past half-century stand out. Most striking is growth in the number and sophistication of methodologies employed by scholars of religion, and their embrace of theory. This expansion has contributed to rich descriptive studies and to greater sensitivity to the "positionality" of the researcher.<sup>4</sup> Methodological reflexivity and awareness of the researcher's "location" coincided with and were driven by a second development, increased attention to "others." A survey of American religion textbooks across five decades shows the attempt to educate about, if not stitch into a narrative: Catholics, Jews and Mormons; Muslims, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs; New Religious Movements, agnostics, humanists and "nones"; women and children, underrepresented populations, and sexual minorities.<sup>5</sup> Attention to diversity and difference now infuses the study of American religion. The third development, integrally intertwined with the first two, is greater attention to "lived religion," an umbrella under which comes the particular, the local, the embodied, the physical, the en-

vironment, popular culture, and the trans-institutional. The number of sites researchers now explore to understand American religion have exploded, and approaches to lived religion are turned fruitfully on religious institutions.<sup>6</sup>

All three developments inform my work on the Pacific Northwest. Approaches from history, sociology, political science, physical and cultural geography, and literary studies provide an entre into the religious behaviors, beliefs and sensibilities of a regional population highly ambivalent about institutional affiliation.<sup>7</sup> Intriguing to me is how these approaches, at least for the Pacific Northwest, drive interpreters back toward classical American religious questions—foremost, the possibility of being at home in the universe, and, ala Emerson, each individual having his or her own, original experience of the divine.<sup>8</sup>

Over the past half century, expansion in methods employed and foci of study have advanced understanding of how individuals and groups use narratives, stories, and practices "to orient themselves in the world, express their individual and communal self-understanding, and give their lives direction and meaning."<sup>9</sup> New insights into these dynamics, for example tracking the shifting role of religion in public life, have been significant during a period of massive social and cultural change that some scholars consider another religious awakening.<sup>10</sup>

At fifty years, the challenges and opportunities these developments have created in the study of American religion are clearer. One is constructively complicating historical narratives of "American Religion" by incorporating the fruits of the studies of particular communities and extra-institutional practices. Particular studies need to be tethered to larger conversations and questions. Another is recognizing, creatively mapping, and engaging the chasms and crossings that exist in actual practice between the work of religionists and theologians. Both traverse common terrain when they explore how Americans make sense of their living, loving, suffering, and dying. Both are hypersensitive to the "position" of the scholar, rely heavily on theory, and to greater and lesser degrees drive toward criticism for the sake of justice and ethics, however construed, and however much contested. A third opportunity is exploring American religion within global religious dynamics, a project that furthers comparative work but can challenge by blurring focus.

Questions of method and material in the study of American religion confront me pointedly when I listen carefully to my students' questions. Especially in introductory courses they ask both theological and historical questions and are disinclined to categorize them. The classroom is a zone for parsing theological and religious studies, in part in response to a somewhat uncritical enthusiasm regarding students' interests in spirituality.<sup>11</sup>

Students' questions also inform my research on religion in the Pacific Northwest. In surprisingly nuanced ways students articulate the contours of institutional religious irrelevance in their lives, the erosion of ascribed factors in the composition of religious meaning, and the re-composition of organizational religious forms in a global, hyper-modern context.<sup>12</sup> Students' questions reveal much about larger social dynamics and how things religious are manifest in American culture.

## Killen

In teaching, I attend to students' questions as I compose both the scaffolding and deliberate gap between what and how they think about the subject matter and where I want them to arrive in their relation to it as a course unfolds.<sup>13</sup> Absent some sense of students' questions, it is difficult to convey intelligibly the relative significance and relationship of events, ideas, or theory, whatever the subject matter. Students' questions are helpful too in discerning their affective connection to material. Absent some affective connection—whether it be rapt curiosity or angry resistance matters little—they are less likely to learn in any significant way.

Finally, students' questions are crucial to their apprenticing in the study of American religion, in however preliminary a manner. Noticing, articulating, revising, tracking, and orienting by one's questions is what scholars of religion do. Good questions, complex questions, questions that tack between research subject and concepts and theories, questions that grab and won't let go, are the heart of scholarly research, and so of learning. The field of American religion has teemed with provocative questions and rich approaches to them over the past half-century; the fruit of work on those questions is deeper understanding of all dimensions of the dynamics of religion in America.

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1. A description of the symposium is at [http://college.lclark.edu/departments/religious\\_studies/symposium/](http://college.lclark.edu/departments/religious_studies/symposium/)

2. See <http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/374/203/case.html> for the decision. The emphasis is in the original concurring decision. Also quoted in Jonathan Z. Smith, "Tillich[']s Remains . . ." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78/4 (December 2010): 1145.

3. Smith cites studies showing twenty-five religion programs in state institutions, including Schools of Religion, in 1960 and 135 by 1967 (1145). He also locates the origins of American interest in what by 1963 was called the "non-sectarian" study of religion in the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions (1143).

4. See Thomas Tweed's introduction to his, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at A Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Elaine J. Lawless, *Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); and, Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton University Press, 2005). Also helpful on the turn to theory is Mark Taylor's introduction to his *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1-19.

5. See, for example, the development from the 1965 edition of Winthrop Hudson's *Religion in America* (Charles Scribner's Sons) to the 2004 edition (Pearson/Prentice Hall), for which John Corrigan is first author. Also, the restructuring of the narrative of American religious history to better incorporate others that Catherine Albanese began in her first edition of *America: Religions and Religion* in 1981 (Wadsworth) and that has continued to the 2012 edition (Cengage Learning).

6. See, for example, Nancy T. Ammerman, *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford University Press, 2006); David D. Hall, ed. *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton University Press, 1997); and, Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (University of California Press, 2005).

7. Patricia O'Connell Killen and Mark Silk, eds. *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The 'None' Zone* (AltaMira Press, 2004); Killen, "The Geography of a Religious Minority: Roman Catholicism in the Pacific Northwest," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 18/3 (Summer 2000): 51-72.

8. William A. Clebsch, *American Religious Thought: A History* (University of Chicago Press, 1974).

9. Eugene V. Gallagher, "Teaching for Religious Literacy," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 12/3 (July 2009): 208

10. See Amanda Porterfield, *The Transformation of American Religion: The Story of a Late Twentieth-Century Awakening* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

11. The enthusiasm is evident in reports on the spirituality of college students authored by Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin from their research at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA; see also some of the contributions in Miriam R. Diamond, ed., *Encountering Faith in the Classroom: Turning Difficult Conversations into Constructive Engagement* (Stylus Publishing, 2008); and, relatedly, the contemplative pedagogy movement, Judith Simmer-Brown and Fran Grace, eds., *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies* (SUNY Press, 2011). For both appreciative and critical responses to the embrace of the spirituality in higher education movement see essays in Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Husted Jacobsen, eds., *The American University in a Postsecular Age* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and Eugene V. Gallagher, "Spirituality in Higher Education?: *Caveat Emptor*," *Religion & Education* 36/2 (July 2009): 68-87. The current spirituality in higher education movement can be viewed as evolution of spirituality for a post-modern context and equally as a project, whether intentionally or not, that is remolding the study of religion and the blurring of study with spiritual development back into what Jonathan Z. Smith argues is a fundamentally liberal, Protestant, primarily "Tillichian" approach to the study of religion of the 1960s.

12. A helpful summary of theories about religion in the modern and post-modern context is Yves Lambert, "Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age: Secularization or New Religious Forms?" *Sociology of Religion* 60/3 (1999): 303-333.

13. Patricia O'Connell Killen, "Reaffirming Teaching as an Act of Composition" *Religious Studies News* (October 2009), v.

**John Schmalzbauer**  
**Missouri State University**

It's always good to be back at IUPUI, a place I called home from 1996 to 1998. It is fitting that this conference should begin with a discussion of *Abington v. Schempp*. Had the court not acted, we wouldn't be sitting here today. Instead of gathering on the banks of the White River, we would be meeting beside the Charles. Rather than visiting the Indiana War Memorial, we would be touring Rockefeller Chapel. Instead of sampling Hoosier sugar-cream pie or Indiana tenderloins, we would be eating New Haven pizza.

By authorizing the study of religion in state universities, *Schempp* prepared the way for the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture. Thanks to Lilly Endowment and the taxpayers of Indiana (in no particular order), the Center has sponsored dozens of conferences, a flagship journal, and the Young Scholars in American Religion.

Prior to *Schempp*, the field's center of gravity was located in mainline Protestant divinity schools and seminaries. It had yet to be institutionalized in state universities. Had IUPUI existed in 1963, it would not have hosted this conference.<sup>1</sup>

Ironies abound in discussions of *Abington v. Schempp*. Though usually portrayed as a separationist decision, the court helped integrate religious studies into public universities and colleges. While ending state-sponsored Bible reading, the court legitimated the non-sectarian study of religion.

During the 1960s, 61 public institutions created religious studies programs, including Florida State and the University of California, Santa Barbara. IUPUI's Religious Studies Department came together in 1975. While church-related schools trimmed their religion requirements, state universities expanded their offerings.<sup>2</sup>

Outside of religious studies, scholarship on American religion found a home in the social sciences. Thanks to Charles Glock and Robert Bellah, the University of California-Berkeley became a center for the sociology of religion, training many of the leaders in the field. According to sociologist Michael Lindsay, there are 77 distinct branches of Bellah's intellectual family tree, with 212 direct descendants.<sup>3</sup> Today, the religion section of the American Sociological Association is larger than a majority of the ASA's other units. The same is true in political science, where religion and politics draws more scholars than the presidency and urban politics. Last but not least, religion is currently the most popular specialization among American historians, attracting nearly 8 percent of the field. In each of these disciplines, scholars in public universities have advanced the study of American religion.<sup>4</sup>

Though all this is worth celebrating, we should take some time to consider another irony. While *Abington v. Schempp* unleashed a wave of American religion scholarship, it yoked the field to an epistemology that few would accept without qualifications.

Writing for the majority, Justice Tom C. Clark affirmed the "study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education." Concurring with the majority, Justice Arthur Goldberg recognized the propriety of "teaching about religion, as distinguished from the teaching of religion, in the public schools."<sup>5</sup>

Many public universities have adopted Justice Goldberg's distinction between *teaching about religion* and the *teaching of reli-*

*gion*. Reproduced in departmental mission statements and syllabi, it has become our boilerplate. Such boundary-marking rhetoric has allowed state university religion departments to differentiate themselves from seminaries and divinity schools.<sup>6</sup>

By contrast, none of the leading American religious history textbooks quote Justice Clark's sentence on the objective study of religion. Those that talk about such matters acknowledge the limits of scholarly detachment. Peter Williams exemplifies this epistemological humility in his *America's Religions*. While emphasizing fairness and impartiality, he writes that "complete neutrality and detachment from one's subject matter is impossible." Noting the "limit against which objectivity necessarily collides," Williams adds, "My own tradition, the Anglican, easily accommodates this combination of detachment, engagement, and irony, as behoves any church founded by an ax murderer."<sup>7</sup>

*Abington v. Schempp* included no such qualifications. Written at the beginning of the long sixties, it reflected the outlook of the postwar liberal consensus. Three years earlier, sociologist Daniel Bell had proclaimed the "end of ideology." Seeing American democratic capitalism as an alternative to Communism and fascism, Cold War intellectuals rejected the ideologies of the left and the right.<sup>8</sup>

As Peter Novick noted in *That Noble Dream*, "The denigration of ideology . . . was directly related to the celebration of objectivity as the hallmark of thought in the Free World. Indeed, the two terms defined each other."<sup>9</sup>

As Harry Truman's attorney general, Justice Clark regularly employed these Cold War tropes. Speaking to groups as varied as the House Un-American Activities Committee, the Indiana Association of Insurance Agents, and the 21st International Sunday School Convention, Clark warned against the dangers of "foreign ideologies" and "totalitarian doctrines." Emphasizing the religious roots of American democracy, he noted that "our way of life remains on the foundation rock of religion." An architect of the postwar Freedom Train, Clark saw history as a way of "aiding the country in its internal war against subversive elements."<sup>10</sup>

In *Abington v. Schempp*, Justice Clark commended "the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization," seeing no conflict between the ideal of objectivity and the meta-narrative of Western culture. Like the postwar Western Civilization course, the objective study of religion could advance the cause of freedom.<sup>11</sup>

This epistemological edifice came crashing down during the upheavals of the late sixties. Looking back on this turbulent decade, Robert Michaelsen recalled the response of a group of graduate students to *Schempp*: "Their reaction was stormy. *Objectivity* had become by then a very bad word and a totally unacceptable notion. The whole notion was about to be taken apart limb by limb by Theodore Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture*. Beneath the concept lurked the machinations of 'the establishment' and the self-deception of liberal academics."<sup>12</sup> Influenced by feminism and multiculturalism, a new generation of scholars emphasized the importance of situated knowledge, arguing that social location powerfully shapes academic inquiry.

Since then many of these criticisms have been absorbed by the field. Mediating between advocacy and objectivity, some have

## Schmalzbauer

searched for middle ground. As IUPUI's own Conrad Cherry noted in 1995, the study of religion "requires empathetic participation as well as critical distance." More recently, Ann Taves has described the ways that scholars shift back and forth between engagement and detachment.<sup>13</sup>

And yet there is no dominant epistemology in religious studies. While Stephen Prothero urges scholars to "move beyond bracketing to moral inquiry," Robert Orsi criticizes those who distinguish between good and bad religion, lamenting the influence of Niebuhrian neo-orthodoxy on American religious historians.<sup>14</sup>

While free from Protestant moralizing, Orsi's own scholarship has pushed the boundaries of religious studies. Focusing on "supernatural presences," he has criticized the reductionism of modernist historiography. As Orsi wrote in the *American Scholar*, "Can we begin to think about unexplained religious experiences in ways that acknowledge their existence?" Asked to comment on Orsi's project, Amanda Porterfield replied, "I disagree with the direction he would like to take the study of religion." For Porterfield, history is about locating events in their social and cultural contexts. It cannot speak of real presences.<sup>15</sup>

Fractured and fragmented, the field has yet to resolve the "objectivity question." While some call for a new science of religion, others embrace a postmodern perspectivalism. Surveying the historical profession in the late eighties, Peter Novick described a period of "confusion, polarization, and uncertainty." The same could be said of religious studies after *Schempp*.<sup>16</sup>

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1. On this period, see Harry S. Stout and Robert M. Taylor, Jr., "Studies of Religion in American Society: The State of the Art," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D.G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Henry May, "The Recovery of American Religious History," *American Historical Review* 70 (1): 79-92 (1964).

2. Claude Welch, *Graduate Education in Religion: A Critical Appraisal* (Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press, 1971), 174. See also Conrad Cherry, *Hurrying Toward Zion: Universities, Divinity Schools, and American Protestantism* (Indiana University Press, 1995).

3. On the role of Berkeley, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Michael Lindsay, "How Bellah's Ideas Spread: The Diffusion of a Scholar's Influence," *ASA Footnotes* (May/June 2007).

4. The counts of the American Sociological Association's sections (including the membership of the section on the Sociology of Religion) can be found at <http://www.asanet.org/sections/CountsLastFiveYears.cfm>. Membership counts for the APSA's sections were retrieved at <http://www.apsanet.org/sectioncounts.cfm>. On the American Historical Association, see Robert B. Townsend, "AHA Membership Grows Modestly, as History of Religion Surpasses Culture," *AHA Today*, 30 June 2009. For more on these developments, see John Schmalzbauer and Kathleen Mahoney, "Religion and Knowledge in the Post-Secular Academy," in *The*

*Post-Secular in Question*, ed. Philip S. Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 215-248.

5. *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

6. For more on the rhetoric of boundary-work, see Thomas Gieryn, *Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

7. Peter Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), xiv-xv.

8. On the postwar liberal consensus, see Godfrey Hodgson, *American in Our Time: From World War II to Nixon, What Happened and Why* (New York: Random House, 1976); Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideologies in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

9. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 299.

10. The speeches of Attorney General Thomas C. Clark can be found at <http://www.justice.gov/ag/aghistry/tclark/tclark-speeches.html>. The religion quotation is from "An Address by Tom C. Clark Attorney General of the United States," Prepared for Delivery Before the 21st International Sunday School Convention, Des Moines, Iowa, 24 July 1947, available at <http://www.justice.gov/ag/aghistry/tclark/1947/07-24-1947pro.pdf>. The Freedom Train quotation appears in Eric Foner, "The Idea of Freedom in American History," *GHI Bulletin*, Spring 2004, 25, available at <http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/034/34.25.pdf>. See also Jonathan Herzog, "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex and the Policy of Revival in the Early Cold War," *Journal of Policy History* 22(3): 337-365 (2010).

11. On the Cold War history of religious studies, see Russell T. McCutcheon, "'Just Follow the Money': The Cold War, the Humanistic Study of Religion, and the Fallacy of Insufficient Criticism," *Culture and Religion* 5(1): 41-69 (2004); Amanda Porterfield, "Religious Pluralism in Religious Studies," unpublished paper, available at [http://religion.fsu.edu/documents/Porterfield\\_Pluralism.pdf](http://religion.fsu.edu/documents/Porterfield_Pluralism.pdf). Porterfield describes the "Cold War investment in religion as a bulwark against godless communism." Tom C. Clark was fond of bulwark rhetoric. See Clark, "Insurance—A Bulwark of Free Enterprise," Address to the Insurance Brokers Association of New York, Inc., Hotel New Yorker, 13 May 1947, available at <http://www.justice.gov/ag/aghistry/tclark/1947/05-13-1947pro.pdf>. In *That Noble Dream*, Peter Novick calls the Western civilization course a "war baby," noting its resonance with "the values of cold war America."

12. Robert Michaelson, "Constitutions, Courts, and the Study of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45(3): 295-296 (1977).

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13. Cherry, *Hurrying Toward Zion*, 117; Ann Taves, "Negotiating the Boundaries in Theological and Religious Studies," unpublished paper, available at <http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/Faculty/taves/GTU-FinalLecture.pdf>.

14. Stephen Prothero, "Belief Unbracketed: A Case for the Religion Scholar to Reveal More of Where He or She Is Coming From," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, 32(2): 10-11 (2004), available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20040621190940/http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/bulletin/articles/prothero.html>; Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Randall Stephens, "Beyond the Niebuhrs: A Conversation with Robert Orsi on Recent Trends in American Religious History," *Historically Speaking: The Bulletin of the Historical Society*, July/August 2006, available at <http://www.bu.edu/historic/hs/julyaugust06.html#orsi>.

15. Robert Orsi, "Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity," *Historically Speaking: The Bulletin of the Historical Society*, September/October 2008, 12-16, available at [http://www.bu.edu/historic/\\_hs\\_pdfs/abundant\\_history\\_orsi\\_shaw.pdf](http://www.bu.edu/historic/_hs_pdfs/abundant_history_orsi_shaw.pdf); Robert Orsi, "When 2+2=5," *American Scholar* 76 (2): 3-43 (2007), available at <http://www.theamericanscholar.org/when-2-2-5/>. Randall Stephens, "Religious History and the Historian's Craft: An Interview with Amanda Porterfield," *Historically Speaking: The Bulletin of the Historical Society*, June 2009, 40, available at <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hsp/summary/v010/10.3.stephens01.html/>. See Porterfield's comments in Fred Glennon, et al., "Formation in the Classroom," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 14(4): 357-381 (2011).

16. In some ways, the subfield of American religion is less polarized than the field of religious studies. Reflecting on the latter, Donald Wiebe writes that "the AAR seems to have embraced, with enthusiasm, the deconstructivist and postmodern agendas espoused by scholars in the humanities as an antidote against the scientific approach to the study of religion championed by some." See Wiebe, "An Eternal Return All Over Again: The Religious Conversation Endures," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74(3): 687 (2006). Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 16.

## Space and Place

*American religious studies has for too long been captive to outdated models of space and place, while European scholars have moved considerably beyond us in thinking about this topic. We believe that this biennial conference, which was focused on re-thinking old topics as we considered altogether new ones, was the perfect place to push the field forward in considering space and place.*

**John Corrigan**  
**Florida State University**

At a banquet in ancient Thessaly, the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos (556-468 B.C.) chanted a lyric to a roomful of celebrants during a dinner convened to honor their host, Scopas. According to Greek storytellers, when Simonides stepped outside a short time later, the roof of the house collapsed, all were killed, and the bodies were crushed beyond recognition. Called upon to help in identifying the victims, Simonides subsequently was able to name the dead by recalling the places they had sat at the table. His “method of loci,” later referred to as “the memory palace,” was reported by Cicero (who wrote):

He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a wax writing-tablet and the letters written on it.

The relationship between memory and location discussed by Cicero, Quintilian, and other ancients, and exploited in academic practice of memorization in medieval Europe, has been investigated recently by researchers who have begun to refer to “spatial learning” as an aspect of human brain activity located largely in the hippocampus. Brain science proposes that the mental organization of our activity in the world and the recall of events has much to do with our experience of space. The spatial organization of knowledge is not just a trick of the Greek poet but a hard-wired process that affects the manner in which persons engage the world and make sense of it. That spatially-enabled practice of mnemonics encompasses not only the business of storing thoughts but, as Yadin Dudai and Mary Carruthers recently have suggested in *Nature*, it also frames creative and future-oriented thinking. Spatial thinking is not a sideline to other kinds of thinking but is closely interwoven with them, playing a crucial role in the human practice of world-making through the mental production, organization, archiving, and alteration of knowledge.

To think spatially as a historian or academic humanist is to take seriously the degree to which persons’ experience of space influences the manner in which they make sense of their lives. Over the course of the past few decades, researchers in various disciplines have made strong contributions to our understanding of how space is constructed in culture. We have learned much about the ways in which cultural boundaries are established, contested, and erased, how power has spatial referents, how our engagement of the spaces of everyday life shapes our lives in unexpected fashion, and how the territories of body, society, and nation can be reimagined. Such research has proven fundamental to the work of scholars in the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, it has had the effect of retarding theorization of the manner in which our engagement of physical space—in the sense of Euclidean, geographic space within which we as embodied individuals are situated—influences our lives. In the last decade or so, scholarship has begun to reassess the importance of physical space and to estimate how our lives within it are recognizably wrought.

As scholars increasingly have turned their attention to geographic space, a promising avenue of investigation is developing at the intersection of (1) research that focuses on the cultural construction of space and (2) studies that stress the direct influence of natural and built physical environments on human lives. From the former we can glean insight into how space is conceived in ways that represent cultural ideals and social predicaments, and from the latter we can learn to appreciate how a coastline, mountain range, piazza, skyscraper, or vast desert sets terms for how persons think about their lives and direct their behavior. Spatial thinking joins an awareness of physical environment to culturally-derived notions of space as a mirror of social order and power. Such an approach blends attentiveness to what the seating places at Scopas’s table reveal about social status, emotional relationships, and religious and political traditions with judgments about the relation of actors to the physical environment.

Research that is attentive to spatiality, then, recognizes the cultural construction of space while remaining wary of taking such constructions as accurate diagrams of physical environment—a virtue historically modeled by Copernicus when he made the sun, not the earth, the center. A “spatial humanities” advances interpretation by framing historical actors within a broad range of spatial instances, such as the Sante Fe Trail, a football stadium, the North Atlantic, Times Square, a hospital operating room, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, or a prison cell. It is inclined to interpretation that is informed by the discovery of patternings and correlations within and across spatial planes, shapes, or points, alongside interpretation arising from theory-driven analyses of ideologies of space. It asks hard questions, for example, about how we are to understand interpretive claims of “bilocal” and “polylocal” identities when persons actually experience space through physical bodies that can occupy only one space at a time. Similarly, the spatial humanities can prompt rethinking of how the development of local economic theory, for example, was conditioned by proximity to mineral and biological resources, waterways and terrain suited to trade, and defensible space. And the spatial humanities can lead to rethinking how the words that we use to describe our lives are spatially-conditioned. The experience of place and the mental images that we locate there build, as Cicero observed, a story of our lives.

When we think about culture in space, then, we recognize the importance of our experience of space and our mental images of those experiences. The stories that persons tell about their individual lives and the collectives to which they belong can be understood more clearly when we are attentive to the spatial language that grounds them. It has been several decades since George Lakoff and Mark Johnson stressed the manner in which spatial thinking, arising from our embodiedness, structures our reflections on the most important matters in our lives. Their work has been refined and advanced in a multitude of ways, and integrated with research arising from other fields, some of which finds strong connections between spatial language and thought. That research is a potentially rich resource for the study of religion in America. But in order to fully exploit it, we must continue to move away from shopworn ideas of “sacred space” that have constrained us.

Here I mention the obvious. Although in the early twenty-first century some scholars have experimented with the new emphasis

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on geography, environment, and physical space, academic writing about religion has remained somewhat confined within a glossary invented by scholars in the middle of the twentieth century and grounded above all in the work of Mircea Eliade, who made the term “sacred space” ubiquitous in religion scholarship. Drawing on the writings of geographer Pierre Deffontaines, and with an eye to Durkheim, Mauss, and van der Leeuw, Eliade argued that humans represented space as sacred through their organization of it in terms of centers and peripheries and that they maintained it in ritualized remembering, performing stories about how it came to be. Eliade naturalized that practice as “homo religiosus.” In Eliade’s phenomenological approach to religion and space, persons ritually responded to “the sacred” in such a way as to mark space and time, in some cases designating sites where the sacred was present and in other cases inventing calendars marking its recurrence in cycles. In simple terms, the world for Eliade was divided into the sacred (i.e. the meaningful and powerful) and the profane, humans had profound encounters with a pre-existent sacred, and communities organized space around sacred centers, or axes mundi.

Criticism of the notion of human contact with a reified “sacred” resulting in the detection of sacred space has prompted religion scholars to look elsewhere for theoretical support in analyzing religion and space. One writer who has been important in this regard is Jonathan Z. Smith, whose *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (1987) joined a critique of the idea of “the sacred” to a proposal that space was made sacred by ritual. Sacred space, in other words, was not an absolute, independent of human conceptualization. All conceptualizations of space as sacred are cultural artifacts, socially constructed and as such contingent and arbitrary. In the interest of distancing himself from some of the phenomenological freight of the term “sacred space” Smith wrote instead about place. For Smith, human activity in ritual makes “place”: “Human beings are not placed, they bring place into being.” Smith’s view of ritual accordingly is one that divides space into that which is meaningful and purposeful and that which is meaningless and accidental (although there is creative tension between them), with the presence or absence of ritual activity being the determinant. While tacking away from certain aspects of Eliade’s theory, however, Smith retains others. As ritual studies researcher Ronald Grimes noted, Smith’s theory relies both on metaphorical and geographic understandings of space, but unevenly so, so that in the end “metaphorical emplacement is more determinative than geographical place.” Because conceptualized space is more important than physical, geographical space, (writes Grimes) “Smith’s theory disembodies ritual,” a central aspect of religious practice. In larger terms, Smith’s privileging of metaphorical space concurred with the similar late twentieth-century trend in the study of the body, in which the body as a construction was much more appealing to humanities scholars than the body as blood, bones, and brains. Now we know that we missed something in overimagining the body in that way.

All of this is to say that we have an opportunity. We need to incorporate the excellent work done by geographers. We must take physical geography seriously. We have to map better. We have to move beyond a spatial vocabulary that has been chained to ru-

minations about “sacred space.” And we have to stop pretending that we can effectively pivot by substituting the word “place” for “space.” That leaves out space.

**Bret E. Carroll**  
**California State University, Stanislaus**

To consider space is to both rethink old topics and address new developments in the study of American religion. Sidney Mead first applied the concept to American religion nearly six decades ago, but the “spatial turn” in the humanities and social sciences is a relatively new development. Scholars of religion have begun moving away from traditional institutional, denominational, and doctrinal approaches to consider space as a category of analysis and religion as a form of spatial behavior.<sup>1</sup>

Space as conceptualized in the spatial turn is not space as Mead understood it. Mead, steeped in consensus scholarship and the frontier thesis of American history, conceived of it as an objective, boundless, uniform container of human experience and activity that shaped the development of American religious freedom and tolerance. But postmodern cultural theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau define it as a subjective experience, a situational construction “produced” through active efforts at definition, appropriation, and control by human beings organizing societies and cultures. Likewise, Jonathan Z. Smith and other religion scholars have sought to extricate theories of religion and space from phenomenological approaches, essentialist assumptions, and sacred-profane dualisms—exemplified in the work of Mircea Eliade—and to imbue them with social and cultural constructionist approaches from history, anthropology, and sociology.<sup>2</sup>

The production of space lies at the very heart of religious experience and practice; it is the stuff of lived religion. The processes of producing space and identifying what we call the sacred are inseparable—often, perhaps, identical. We ought therefore to engage the work of geographers more systematically than we currently do since they in particular have sought to apply spatial theories and explore spatial experience. We also must remain mindful that where different people and ways of believing exist in contact, investments of sacred and secular meanings in any one site are simultaneous, fluctuating and conflicting. Space in such circumstances is necessarily multivalent and contested, inherently plural and heterogeneous. Religious life in the United States is best understood, David Chidester and Edward Linenthal have said, as an “arena of multiple centers, changing environments, shifting geographical relations, and ambivalent symbolic orientations, all contested and at stake.”<sup>3</sup> We should approach American religion as an ongoing and complex spatial dynamic—one becoming ever more complicated as recent immigration trends and advancing communication technologies combine to make it ever more transnationally engaged.<sup>4</sup>

Because spatial theory assumes diverse presences, contested meanings, and intersecting claims, it offers a fruitful method for conceptualizing and examining pluralism—that engagement with diversity, pursuit of mutual understanding, encounter of commitments, and commitment to dialogue that, Diana Eck tells us, defines both the ideals and much of the quotidian reality of our national religious life.<sup>5</sup> For religion scholars and for much of the public, American religious pluralism, especially in a globalizing age, remains a puzzle and a challenge. Martin Marty, for example, felt compelled in 1977 to assure his readers that it was not “a blur” or “crazy quilt,” and in 2007 described American religious pluralism as something which Americans are “upset about, hopeful

for, bewildered by, and committed to.” So far, we have looked more to sociologists and legal scholars than to cultural theorists and geographers for our models of pluralist dynamics. But the fundamental questions we ask about pluralism—What exactly is it? How does it function? What factors shape encounters? On what grounds can we base dialogue? Which conditions promote harmonious coexistence, and which generate conflict?—are clearly of the type that spatial theory can address. We have looked largely to institutional, doctrinal, or social factors in examining pluralism at work, but the frequency with which matters of “turf” appear in the religion news suggests the powerful salience of spatial models. Pluralist encounters are fundamentally spatial encounters and pluralist engagements are spatial engagements.<sup>6</sup>

In particular, the spatial lens can enhance our view of how the First Amendment—the legal foundation of religious pluralism in the United States and the official ground rules governing pluralist encounter and engagement—operates in practice. Considered spatially, the First Amendment codifies a national commitment to “spatial equity” and “spatial justice.”<sup>7</sup> Its antiestablishment guarantee defines the nation’s public space as officially neutral and recognizes that any group can with equal legitimacy stake a claim. The production of space being a fundamental imperative of religious practice, its free exercise guarantee means that religious groups have a right to produce and protect space. Because doing that in practice typically requires access to property, the nation’s courts, town and city councils, and zoning boards have become important “site[s] of encounter and disputation,” key shapers of religion’s geographic expressions and, in effect, official mediators of U.S. religious pluralism just as the expanding immigration and growing religious diversity of the last half-century have intensified and sometimes stressed its core spatial dynamic. This is the context for the Religious Land Use Act of 2000, a supplement to the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment intended to reduce burdens on free religious exercise resulting from zoning laws and other land use regulations. It is the context, too, for the Muslim Public Affairs Council’s comment that the recent Park51 controversy was “the civil rights moment for Muslims in this country.”<sup>8</sup>

A survey of American pluralism at work shows us that religious groups have created space and destroyed it; claimed it and seized it; shared it and fought over it; bounded it and opened it to others; borrowed, lent, leased, and donated it. Understanding the hows, whens, and whys of these spatial actions and interactions will advance and enrich our field. Given the enormous promise of spatial analysis for exploring the inner workings of American pluralism, it is no wonder that Eck used a geographic metaphor—“mapping the fault lines of America’s diversity”—to express her hopeful vision for understanding our national religious life.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossings and Dwellings: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Roger W. Stump, *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London and Oakville, CT:

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Equinox, 2005); David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Louis P. Nelson, *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

2. Sidney E. Mead, "The American People: Their Space, Time, and Religion," *The Journal of Religion* 34/4 (1954): 244-255; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991); Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1984), 239-256; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward a Theory of Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1957). See also Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York, NY: Verso, 1989).

3. Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*, 31.

4. On the spatial dimensions of transnational and electronic religious life, see, for example, Kim Knott, "Spatial Theory and Spatial Methodology, Their Relationship and Application: A Transatlantic Engagement," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77.2 (2009): 413-24; Elizabeth McAlister, "Globalization and the Religious Production of Space," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44.3 (2005): 249-55; and Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

5. Diana L. Eck, "What is Pluralism?," The Pluralism Project at Harvard Pluralism University website <[http://pluralism.org/pages/pluralism/what\\_is\\_pluralism](http://pluralism.org/pages/pluralism/what_is_pluralism)>, accessed March 5, 2013.

6. Jackson W. Carroll, Douglas W. Johnson, and Martin E. Marty, *Religion in America, 1950 to the Present* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1979), 84; Martin E. Marty, "Pluralisms," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612 (2007), 16.

7. Myer Siemiatycki, "Contesting Sacred Urban Space: The Case of the Eruv," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 6/2 (2005): 255-270; Edward W. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

8. Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 326; Common Cause of New York, "Press Statement on Behalf of New York Neighbors for American Values." August 25, 2010 <<http://readme.readmedia.com/Press-Statement-on-Behalf-of-New-York-Neighbors-for-American-Values/1702485>>, accessed October 3, 2011.

9. Diana L. Eck, "The Multireligious Public Square," in Marjorie Garber and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *One Nation Under God? Religion and American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 4.

**Tracy Neal Leavelle**  
**Creighton University**

A few years ago, I was a guest at the annual meeting and powwow of the Miami Nation in northeastern Oklahoma. At an afternoon lunch in the Miami longhouse, I won a door prize. I received a beautiful letter holder that now sits on my desk holding photos of my two sons.

As a historian, I was intrigued by the image in the base. The painting showed Miami families boarding canal boats for the long journey from Indiana to Kansas during Miami removal in the 1840s. Although this painful event did not seem like the most obvious subject for an item that one might look at every day, it appeared to connect in a powerful way Miami places and history. The letter holder recalled the original Miami homeland in its imagery, remembered the removal to Kansas, and yet I received the gift in Oklahoma. How many Miami places are there?

On the same trip, I had the pleasure of walking the beautiful Miami cultural ground, a large property—with open grasslands, woods, and wetlands—recently reacquired by the Miamis. The land had once been a Miami allotment, and its loss decades ago was yet another symbol of government economic intervention and culturally destructive assimilation programs.

The story has turned, however, at least for the moment. The cultural ground has become the location for the annual language camp, where Miamis reawaken a once dormant language. The language camp, other cultural activities, and plans to restore the native ecosystem create numerous opportunities to reconnect with this place and with traditions and practices that originated in other places and times. The Miami people are reclaiming land and language in a way that links a history of survival to present cultural and economic concerns and promising visions for the future.

The standard historical narrative of Native lands in North America is one of loss and almost unimaginable trauma, but that is hardly the only story. Migration, removal, and land loss did not stop the historical processes of imagining, creating, and experiencing what two Native poets have called “home places.”<sup>1</sup> The cultural ground is one example of such a place. The attachment to the original Miami homeland remains strong even while the connection to Miami lands in Oklahoma deepens. Cultural and economic renewal has contributed to the emergence of a multi-centered Miami community that spans time and space.

I employ this example to promote discussion about two issues:

- 1) The need to account appropriately for movement, change, and multicenteredness in Native histories. And, in the process,
- 2) To broaden our inquiries into the relationship between indigenous communities and place beyond traditional notions of the “sacred.”

In preparation for this panel, I went back to look at two influential studies of sacred space in America. If you have any interest in this subject, you are probably familiar with the work of Belden Lane and the edited volume by David Chidester and Edward Linenthal. To summarize, Lane emphasizes mythic narratives (sacred place as storied place) and the phenomenology of place (the experience of the sacred). Chidester and Linenthal stress situational definitions that encourage analysis of the politics and production of sacred space (sacred space as contested space).<sup>2</sup>

The two positions might seem at odds, but it’s not really that simple, especially if one considers Lane’s expanded second edi-

tion. Both books, for example, consider the role of ritual in making sacred space. While I prefer the approach put forward in the Chidester and Linenthal volume, I still find value in the attempts of Lane and others to identify the poetics of place. Nevertheless, I see limits to both of these definitions when considering the complex nature of American Indian sacred places.

There is an overwhelming sense of pastness when dealing with American Indian religions, leaving very little room for growth, for life, for the future. This problem reflects the tyranny of authenticity, the idea that only practices rooted deeply in the patterns of an impossibly unbroken past have validity in the present. Vine Deloria, Jr. complained that this expectation caused the federal courts to conclude that God was dead for Native people.

How does one make sense, then, of the activities that take place at the Miami cultural ground? The Miamis purchased a property that they had once owned. It is far away from the Miami places that ground the sacred stories—the aalshoohkaakani—of their much deeper history. Most Miamis are Christian and do not seek a return to so-called “traditional” Miami religion. And yet, ritual conduct of the Miamis at the cultural ground represents the reclamation of land and culture and the ongoing redefinition of home.

Most of the significant work on American Indian sacred space has focused on sacred places, on visible points of concentrated power in the landscape—the mountains, lakes, and springs that have so often become the subject of bitter conflict. These sites are important for a number of reasons, but attention to them alone obscures the more diffuse constructions of the sacred in everyday life, the quieter everyday expressions of significance. There is a sacred landscape that remains mostly unseen by outsiders, a landscape with its own peaks and valleys, thickets and trails, and flowing streams of power, significance, and possibility.

The history of displacement and exile has made home an especially sensitive and important subject for Native peoples. Disruptions cut off certain possibilities, but they also created new opportunities for establishing connections to place. A more expansive and dynamic view of these connections must account for movement as well as rootedness, for change over time as well as the strength of tradition, and ultimately for the existence of multi-centered communities.

In her book *The Lure of the Local*, art critic Lucy Lippard writes, “the intersections of nature, culture, history, and ideology form the ground on which we stand—our land, our place, the local. The lure of the local is the pull of place that operates on each of us, exposing our politics and our spiritual legacies. It is the geographical component of the psychological need to belong somewhere, one antidote to a prevailing alienation.”<sup>3</sup>

Lucy Lippard explains that multicenteredness is a result of movement through the landscape. People travel, relocate, suffer exile and displacement, wander, and return. “Each time we enter a new place,” she writes, “we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all ‘local places’ consist of. By entering that hybrid, we change it.”<sup>4</sup>

I would add that the place changes people as well. Lippard’s concept of hybridity simply describes the notion that people in all their variety interact with places and that these encounters with place alter both in important ways. Neither the Miami people nor

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the land of northeastern Oklahoma remains the same after more than a century of living together. Without erasing the memory of the fragmentation and alienation caused by colonization, the Miamis created a new homeplace through this long encounter.

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1. Larry Evers and Ofelia Zepeda, eds., *Home Places: Contemporary Native American Writing from Sun Tracks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), vii-xi.

2. Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*, Expanded ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

3. Lucy R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 7.

4. *Ibid.*, 6.

**Elaine Pena**  
**George Washington University**

The Virgin of Guadalupe has moved across various national borders and impacted diverse populations (Hispanic and otherwise) for over five centuries. Many of the Roman Catholic icon's origin and travel narratives begin in and traverse places like Extremadura, Spain, Cebu City in the Philippines, and Mexico City—the site of her apparition in 1531. She holds several official titles. In 1754, Pope Benedict XIV declared la Virgen de Guadalupe to be "*patrona de Nueva España*" (patroness of New Spain) and designated the 12th of December as her feast day. His famous proclamation, taken from Psalm 147—"Non fecit taliter omni natione" (It was not done thus to all nations)—differentiated Mexico from all other colonized territories and positioned the Virgin as a Catholic icon for subjects living between northern California and El Salvador. Pope Pius XI proclaimed her to be "Empress of Latin America" in 1935. Pope John Paul II three-upped them when he claimed her as Patroness of the Americas, Empress of Latin America, and Protectress of Unborn Children. Scholars from across the humanities, the arts, and the social sciences have explored her extra-theological significance in different languages and for different publics.<sup>1</sup> In a quiet article published in 1958, even the great Eric Wolf reflected on her importance as a "Mexican National Symbol."<sup>2</sup> While institutionally and academically vetted, her real power emanates from her extraordinary accessibility—how people from different walks of life offer her their time, space, and labor to get things done, to get by, and to get on.

With so much clout, so many fan bases, and so many outposts, synthesizing the Virgin's significance for one field or one discipline is a seemingly impossible task. But I feel like taking a calculated risk. Today, I want to claim the Virgin of Guadalupe for the study of American Religion. Not because I particularly like supporting "regional categories"<sup>3</sup> or exceptionalist platforms but because I think considering her impact on American soil, specifically how different U.S.-based groups use transnational ties to construct shrines in her honor, can expand our playing field. Transnational exchanges, that is, sustained communication across national borders, inform the production of Guadalupan sacred space in the United States.<sup>4</sup> The underlying point here is to reinforce the idea that American religious spaces, and expressions of American religion more generally, are not generated solely within the nation's geographic borders.

The work of Tom Tweed, Karen McCarthy Brown, Elizabeth McAlister, Manuel Vásquez, Marie F. Marquardt, Bob Orsi, and others has shown that a shrine, a chapel, a temple, a mosque, or a procession in the United States can exist in a realm of simultaneity with places outside of the nation-state.<sup>5</sup> The religious production of space often depends on cross border engagement—sometimes imaginatively, sometimes palpably. In some cases, our starting points may actually be located outside of the United States. While those studies address transnational issues in innovative and compelling ways, many focus on sites of worship in one country. And in the case of space/place studies in American Religion, that country is usually the United States. So how can we recalibrate our research models to reflect a more balanced account of those transnational engagements? Not only theoretically but also empirically? How does a scholar of American Religion begin to assess the intricacies and nuances of sacred space production in

two countries, let alone one? What does pursuing a multi-sited and ostensibly multi-lingual research agenda that pays equal attention to sites in the U.S. and sites abroad actually entail? Using insights acquired during multiple years of fieldwork at the "Second Tepeyac of North America," a Guadalupan shrine in Chicago, and Tepeyac, the Virgin's flagship sacred space in Mexico City, as reference points, I will use the rest of my time today reflecting on those tough questions.<sup>6</sup>

A bit of context is in order. In October 2001, the Institute for Historical and Theological Worship for the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City, under the guidance of Mexican Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, proclaimed Maryville Academy in Des Plaines, Illinois to be the "Second Tepeyac of North America." But proclamations alone do not sanctify space. The process actually began in 1987 when Joaquín Martínez, then a lay volunteer at a church in the Chicago suburb of Northbrook, Illinois, solicited a statue of the Virgin from relatives in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí. Inspired by a call for a Marian year by Pope John Paul II, Martínez organized a tour that took the statuette to various Chicago-area schools, parishes, seminaries, convents, hospitals, retirement homes, Mayor Daley's home, and eventually, after much uncertainty, Maryville Academy.

Using the Virgin's early 16th century apparition narrative in Mexico City as a touchstone, Martínez and a group of devotees began planning the "Second Tepeyac" in 1991. They enlisted Chicago-based architects to study Tepeyac's physical layout in Mexico City. Those planners traveled to Mexico, studied the landscape, conferred with Mexican colleagues and clerical officials, returned to Chicago, consulted with clergy, Martínez, and other "Second Tepeyac" committee members, and drafted mock-ups that showcased the aesthetic qualities of the Mexican shrine. Maryville Academy devotees solicited approval from Tepeyac officials in Mexico City, and then (and only then) did the construction process begin. The venture was transnational from the start.

Since its inauguration in 2001, the shrine has become a pilgrimage site for thousands of Guadalupan devotees, many of who cannot return to their country of origin—Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Over 50,000 visitors drive, walk, bus, or fly into the Chicago area to celebrate the Virgin's feast day at the Second Tepeyac. In contrast, millions of devotees from around the globe visit Tepeyac each December. While the number of *Guadalupanos* who have worshipped at Tepeyac and the Second Tepeyac is relatively small, clergy and lay officials at both shrines maintain strong transnational connections. One Sunday morning in the spring of 2006, for example, the presiding priest at the Second Tepeyac offered to personally deliver Chicago-based devotees' notes, prayers, and personal items during his official visit to Mexico City the following week. The year before, high-ranking clergy members based at Tepeyac in Mexico City journeyed to Chicago and the "Second Tepeyac." In addition to those orchestrated visits and architectural similarities, practitioners at both sites share a repertoire of prayers, dances, songs, narratives, and rituals.

Conducting multi-sited ethnographic research required a lot of prep work. Reviewing Chicago's long-standing labor migration circuits with central Mexico was pivotal, as was shoring up my language skills. Writing to and speaking with clergy members in

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Mexico City can be dauntingly formal. Studying each shrine's political economy (e.g. who laid down the bricks? who developed the access routes? who subsidized the construction of the buildings? how were legal issues dealt with?) revealed integral material factors. Learning to listen for continuity and nuance was perhaps the most important skill I developed in the field. As Michel de Certeau reminds us, "what the map cuts up, the story cuts across."<sup>7</sup> At its most basic, a transnational analysis of the religious production of space requires time and the freedom to be hyper-mobile. Indeed, it took several trips across the U.S.-Mexico border and several years to begin to understand how that American sacred space in Des Plaines was inextricably linked to Tepeyac in Mexico City—how Guadalupán devotion was indeed more transnational than national.

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1. See, for example, Antonio Pompa y Pompa, *El gran acontecimiento guadalupano* (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1967); Xavier Noguez, *Documentos guadalupanos: Un estudio sobre las fuentes de información tempranas en torno a las Mariofanías en el Tepeyac* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995); David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Jacques Lafayé, *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of National Consciousness* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976); Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia UP, 1978); Jeanette Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994); Alyshia Galvéz, *Guadalupe in New York: Devotion and the Struggle for Citizenship Rights among Mexican Immigrants* (New York: New York UP, 2009); Virgil P. Elizondo, *La Morenita: Evangelizer of the Americas* (San Antonio: Mexican American Cultural Center, 1980); and Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002).

2. Eric R. Wolf, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol," *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 71 No. 279 (Jan-Mar 1958): 34-39.

3. Sam Gill, "Territory," In *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998), 298-313.

4. I use the term transnational to refer not only to the transposition of religious idioms and practices across national borders but also supranational legal, institutional, and financial ties. For an overview of transnational studies see Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994); Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarizno, *Transnationalism from Below* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1998); and Sid-

ney Mintz, "The Localization of Anthropological Practice: From Area Studies to Transnationalism," *Critique of Anthropology* 18.2 (1998):117-33.

5. See, for example, Manuel A. Vásquez and Marie F. Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2003); Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1999); Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and its Diaspora* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2002); R. Marie Griffith and Barbara Dianne Savage, *Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance* (The Johns Hopkins UP, 2006); and Paul Christopher Johnson, *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2007). For studies that focus explicitly on space/place and cross-border engagement see David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995), especially 262-312; Robert A. Orsi, ed. *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999); Thomas A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997); and Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2011).

6. It is also worth noting that UK-based researcher Kim Knott's analyses, especially *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London and Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2005), and her critique of Tom Tweed's work, "Spatial Theory and Spatial Methodology, Their Relationship and Application: A Transatlantic Engagement," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77.2 (2009): 413-24, offer terrific methodological insights and tools.

7. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984),129.

## Belonging and Participation

*This session was held at the Indiana World War Memorial, so the civil religious overtones were obvious, but our topic goes beyond civil religion to religion's role in all sorts of social engagement. Does religion play the same role it used to play? We know that a significant portion of American citizens do not participate in civic life and a significant portion of "believers" do not participate in organized religious life. Yet, such social movements as the Tea Party and Occupy often resound with religious echoes. Many things are at work here, including individualism and community. To what degree, then, is citizenship or faith determined by active social involvement, and vice-versa? Similarly, to what degree is involvement determined by the standard organizational forms of political parties, interest groups, denominations, or congregations?*

**Korie L. Edwards**  
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In the description for this session, we are encouraged to think about how non-religious groups foster belonging and togetherness. I am going to highlight two movements in America in my discussion that, at first glance, seem to have very little in common, the Tea Party Movement and the Multicultural Movement, in an effort to stimulate a conversation about belonging in America. These movements are quite different in many ways, but each is, as I see it, responding to a similar social phenomenon and linked to a common tension in American society. I will highlight some historical moments in America to illustrate this point.

The mission of the Tea Party Movement, according to its official website, is “to bring awareness to any issue which challenges the security, sovereignty or domestic tranquility of our beloved nation, The United States of America.”<sup>1</sup> This movement caught fire after a CNBC reporter, Rick Santelli, went on what some in the media referred to as a “rant” about a stimulus idea put forth by the Obama administration. I quote Santelli’s comment in part:

The government is promoting bad behavior. Mr. President. . . Why don’t you put up a website to have people vote on the internet as a referendum to see if we really want to subsidize the losers’ mortgages? . . . This is America! How many people want to pay for your neighbor’s mortgages that has an extra bathroom and can’t pay their bills? Raise their hand! . . . President Obama, are you listening? . . . It’s time for another tea party. What we are doing in this country will make Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin roll over in their graves.<sup>2</sup>

The video clip of these comments went viral.

What Santelli said really resonated with people, or “struck a nerve,” as Santelli put it.<sup>3</sup> Within a week, Tea Parties were being established across the country and the Tea Party Movement was born.

The Multicultural Movement doesn’t have a clear mission and is less unified than the Tea Party movement. It is, however, far more diffuse than the Tea Party Movement, actually spanning the globe. There is a common idea that runs through any multicultural movement, which is that society ought to make room for people who are different—culturally, racially, or ethnically, be more inclusive and accepting. Here in the U.S., multiculturalism has been integrated into the structure of most organizations, including corporations, schools, universities, and churches. It has become normative for organizations to have mission statements indicating a commitment to cultural, racial, or ethnic diversity.

Whenever we are discussing belonging and participation, we are essentially talking about group identity. Social psychologists tell us that the most critical question that a group needs to address as it attempts to establish its identity is who is the “we”—which by definition necessitates a “them” (e.g., Brewer 1991, 1999; Brewer and Gardner 1996; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1982; Tajfel 1982.) Or put another way, who is in and who is out?

The basic premises underlying both the Tea Party Movement and the Multicultural Movement are nothing new. They are really just repackaged manifestations of ideas at opposing ends of a fundamental tension which has plagued America since its inception. That tension is about who can and cannot be Ameri-

can? Who has the capacity to be a steward of this great land—divinely bestowed or ruthlessly claimed depending on who you are speaking with—and thus deserving of its bounty? Who is in and who is out?

This tension regarding who can and cannot participate in the great democratic experiment called America is seen in the codification of the first congress’ naturalization law. It declared that “Any alien, being a free, white people” could become American. Not slaves or indentured servants. Not even free American Indians or blacks, as they were at that time considered savages and ungodly, incapable of self-governance—but free white people only. And from that point on, America has grappled with the question of who can belong and who cannot. Who can be trusted with the bounty that is America?

This struggle characterized the fight over whether or not blacks could be Americans, a fight that led to a civil war and culminated in the passage of several statutes, including, for example, the 13th Amendment that banned slavery and the expansion of the naturalization laws that allowed blacks and whites—although not Asians or American Indians—to become American citizens. Later, during the first part of the 20th century when Southern and Eastern European immigrants (who also happened to be largely Jewish and Catholic) were growing in what many at the time perceived to be alarming numbers, questions again arose about who is capable of self-governance. Who is worthy of being American? Who is in and who is out?

It is during this period that the Americanization Movement emerged and we begin to hear echoes of the multiculturalist language that we hear today. Public and private interests across the country, including schools, voluntary groups, local and state level government, unions, as well as religious organizations, actively engaged in facilitating the integration (or more accurately the assimilation of immigrants) through a variety of programs, such as English language classes, courses on how to become citizens and even hygiene classes. Although the inclusion was conditional, the idea was that society ought to make room for the most recent arrivals to America, include them in the civic community. In the end though, unlike the abolitionist movement, this multiculturalist movement lost the battle of making America more inclusive as the boundaries of who could literally be in were made more rigid. In 1924, Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, which severely reduced immigration from European countries and wholly eliminated immigration from Asian ones (Wang 1974; Schmid 1996).

I could point to other historical moments, like the rise of the common man which was initiated by the election of Andrew Jackson in 1829 (Brands 2005; Meachem 2009), the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the local and national exclusionary housing policies of the mid twentieth century (Jackson 1987), or the Civil Rights Movement. Each of these moments is an example of America dealing with the question of who should belong? Who is deserving of belonging? Who is in and who is out?

I believe that the contemporary movements introduced earlier—the Tea Party Movement and the Multicultural Movement—are linked in their quests to answer these same fundamental questions: Who is the “we” that is American? Who deserves to be a part of this “we”? Who is in and who is out? The particulars

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of the Tea Party Movement's mission or its concerns about the Obama administration as well as those of the Multicultural Movement are not of concern here. I rather want to highlight how these movements are a part of a broader American storyline about belonging. So, I focus more on the frames of the movements.

When we look more closely at the statement by Rick Santelli, the igniter of the Tea Party, he is answering those fundamental questions I refer to. He implies that Americans are not losers, but winners. And winners are responsible people who can handle their finances well; who do not make poor decisions and expect others to suffer the consequences for those poor decisions. Moreover, the losers, or the "them" in this case, are not deserving of America's resources, that is, help from the government in the form of housing relief. And while not explicitly stated, it is implied that the "we" is deserving of American's resources. Moreover, when he references Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, he is suggesting that the values that he espouses are fundamentally American and that values that contradict his values are un-American. Then, in the mission of the Tea Party Movement, we see that the movement's primary aim is to protect America from the "them," where the "them" includes those who would endanger the Americans' freedom and ability to live in peace.

Taken together, we see that the Tea Party Movement has made a clear distinction between a "we" and a "them." The "we" are winners, people who are responsible, well-behaving and deserving and who see themselves as charged with protecting America from those who are dangerous and not deserving of its resources. The "them" includes those who, in their view, do not have these qualities.

Unlike the Tea Party Movement, the Multicultural Movement lacks a clear "them." The boundary of who is in and who is out is, well, somewhat murky. Why? Because everyone belongs. Ultimately, everyone should be a part of the "we." Of course, the Multicultural Movement is more common, accepted and institutionalized. Over the centuries, the long view of America shows that it has become more inclusive, not less so. The "we" has expanded. So, it seems that the spirit of multiculturalism has, at the end of the day, won.

But has it? At least when it comes to establishing a sense of belonging and increased participation, I am not so sure. While my moral self strongly believes in and supports multiculturalism, especially as a means of allowing access to critical social and material resources, I find myself questioning its value as a means of creating a strong group identity and begrudgingly agreeing with Putnam (2007) who suggests that diversity, at least in the near term, often diminishes social capital and social solidarity. Groups with the strongest identities, who foster a strong sense of belonging and participation, are those that are more exclusive, not less so (Austin and Worchel 1986; Gaertner and Dovidio 2012; Brewer 1991). In this regard, it would appear that belonging and participation necessitate exclusion.

Thus, in the spirit of stimulating intellectual engagement, I conclude with a few questions for our consideration: How do we foster a strong sense of belonging in a society that—in the long view—moves toward inclusiveness? In so doing are we sacrificing a strong sense of belonging and participation, mutuality and inter-

dependence? Finally, are movements like the Tea Party Movement that make clear distinctions between a "we" and a "them" good for America, even a necessity in a society that ultimately says no one should be excluded?

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1. [www.teaparty.org](http://www.teaparty.org)
  2. [abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2009/02/cnbc-santelli/](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2009/02/cnbc-santelli/)
  3. [guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/07/tea-party-godfather-proud-firebrand](http://guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/07/tea-party-godfather-proud-firebrand)

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**Kathleen Garces-Foley**  
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I have long been interested in the ways in which people participate in religion without belonging to a particular religion. If you were here for the 2011 conference you may recall that in the final session Mark Silk noted that Americans increasingly recognize “None-dom as a place to be.” He predicted that down the road, ten years or so, Nones would increase their share of the U.S. population from 15% in 2008 to 20%, which is exactly what the Pew Research Center reported only one year later.<sup>1</sup> This rapid growth of None-dom led Gary Laderman to write in the *Huffington Post* a few months ago, “I have seen the future of religion in America, and its name is ‘none.’”<sup>2</sup> Leaving the predictions to others, my own interest is in understanding the 55% of Nones who think of themselves as religious or spiritual but not religious.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey, 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, and Pew’s follow-up surveys on the religiously unaffiliated released in 2012, we know a bit about them. For example, we know that few are atheists or nonbelievers. Many more are agnostics, but the majority of Nones believe in a personal God or a higher power. At roughly the same rates as religiously-affiliated Americans, Nones believe in life after death, spiritual energy and reincarnation; follow their horoscope and talk to dead people. Over half pray regularly and one-quarter attend religious services at least yearly.

Based on this data, what can we say about how Nones are participating in religion? Michael Hout and Claude Fischer argue that they are “unchurched believers” who have rejected organized religion but not traditional beliefs in god and the afterlife.<sup>4</sup> Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar claim that the majority of Nones are agnostics and deists best described as skeptics.<sup>5</sup> Herbert Gans suggests that we think of the religious nones as “seculars” who find religion irrelevant.<sup>6</sup> Even those who still adhere to some religious practices and beliefs have removed all but the remnant of religion from their lives. In quite the opposite view, Gary Laderman describes the unaffiliated individual as “a spiritual entrepreneur who can be innovative, imaginative, and ingenious in her pursuit of creating a meaningful religious life.”<sup>7</sup>

I am especially drawn to this last portrait of the Nones as fearless explorers of new religious worlds. This is how I pictured Sheila Larson when I read *Habits of the Heart* in graduate school. She had her own religion, her own little voice telling her to “love yourself and be gentle with yourself” and to “take care of each other” because He would want that.<sup>8</sup> I wanted to know then and even more so now, what Sheilism looks like in the everyday: a drumming circle every Sunday afternoon at the beach? Training with friends for the annual Race for the Cure? What would Sheila do in the big moments of her life when facing illness, infertility, and newfound love? What about the public moments like weddings, funerals and divorce ceremonies? Imagine being able to create meaningful rituals liberated from the boundaries of orthodox traditions. What symbols and scripts would she use when the religious idioms available to her via the internet are vast?

These are the questions that prompted me to attempt an ethnographic study of funerals of the unaffiliated.<sup>9</sup> This was in 2001 before the invention of “certified celebrants” who can be hired to create personalized, meaningful rituals for every occasion. Back

then, when a religiously unaffiliated family wanted a funeral service, the funeral director would find a minister-for-hire willing to leave out Jesus and “tone down the God-talk,” which was a major challenge for the evangelical minister I interviewed but no problem at all for the religious science minister. With the ministers censored, I looked forward to seeing the creative possibilities of religious ritual beyond tradition. Yet, the eight funerals I observed were formulaic. Almost all included bible passages, especially Psalm 23, singing “Amazing Grace,” and talk of heaven as a place of reunion. The rituals all looked very much like what Nancy Ammerman describes as “Golden-Rule Christianity,” except for the absence of Jesus.<sup>10</sup>

How disappointing! Where was the combinative religion? The bricolage? Why hadn’t they discarded these “remnants” of Christian normativity and let Sheila soar? Thankfully, British sociologist Tony Walter helped me see what I was missing. In his essay “Facing Death without Tradition,” Walter discusses the experience of hospice patients. In the absence of a religious tradition to guide them, the patient is able to construct her own meaningful death script. But she does not proceed alone. Her dying is negotiated with many others: medical experts, bereavement specialists and family members, as well as her experiences of dying both real and imagined via popular culture. Far from an autonomous individual creating her own death, her dying is a social process. Walter concludes: “Dying without tradition is possible, but only in the company of and with the support of others.”<sup>11</sup> I wonder if the same can be said of religion: Religion without tradition is possible but only in the company of and with the support of others.

If we expect religious Nones to act as autonomous spiritual entrepreneurs creating meaningful religious lives out of the detritus of tradition, we may be disappointed. Not only do they recycle familiar scripts and symbols, as in the case of the funerals I studied, but much of their religious participation is done for the sake of others. I’m thinking, for example, of husbands who go to services to make their wives happy, young adults accompanying their parents to church, parents who join a congregation so their young children will have a moral foundation. What are we to make of Nones’ religious participation that is recycled and negotiated rather than creative and unbounded?

In his book *Nonbeliever Nation*, David Niose, president of the American Humanist Association, describes receiving a wedding invitation from an old college friend in 1989.<sup>12</sup> Niose was appalled to learn that his ardently atheist friend had yielded to family pressure and agreed to a church wedding. He wants an America where Nones are free to reject such gestures without fear of repercussion. Of course, Niose is right to worry about coercion, and Nones have many stories to tell of being liberated from familial and social pressure to conform to a religious norm, as we see in the qualitative research of Phil Zuckerman and Jesse Smith.<sup>13</sup> But both of these authors focus on those who reject not only the religion of the childhood but also theism and supernaturalism. Since atheists make up no more than 7% of None-dom according to ARIS 2008 and half of that according to Pew, we cannot take their irreligion as typical of Nones. I look forward to more quali-

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tative research about the participating-but-not-belonging Nones: the Nones who believe in a personal god or a higher power, the Nones who pray often and go to religious services once and a while, or read their horoscope and commune with their dogs on walks. I suspect that much of their religious participation is embedded in familial negotiations that we would be foolish to write off as obligatory performance. Though they do not “belong” to a religion, Nones do belong to someone and to somewhere. Their social location shapes how and why they participate in religion in ways we are only beginning to understand.

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1. “‘Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have Not Religious Affiliation,” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC, October 9, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/Unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx#.UcS3AJimIvE.google>.

2. Gary Laderman, “The Rise of Religious ‘Nones’ Indicates the End of Religion As We Know It,” *Huff Post Religion Blog*, March 20, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-laderman/the-rise-of-religious-non\\_b\\_2913000.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-laderman/the-rise-of-religious-non_b_2913000.html).

3. See “‘Nones’ on the Rise,” 44. This figure includes atheist and agnostic Nones of whom 7% think of themselves as religious and 34% think of themselves as spiritual but not religious.

4. Michael Hout and Claude S. Fischer, “Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations,” *American Sociological Review* 67: 2 (2002):165-190. See also Michael Hout and Claude S. Fischer, “Unchurched Believers,” *The Immanent Frame Blog*, October 1, 2009, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2009/10/01/unchurched-believers/>.

5. Barry A. Kosmin et al., “American Nones: The Profile of the No Religion Population,” Hartford, CT: Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture. March 2009, [http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/NONES\\_08.pdf](http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/NONES_08.pdf).

6. Herbert J. Gans, “The Rise of the Seculars,” *The Immanent Frame Blog*. March 29, 2010, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2010/03/29/the-rise-of-the-seculars/>.

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8. Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 221.

9. Kathleen Garces-Foley, “Funerals of the Unaffiliated,” *Omega—Journal of Death and Dying* 46: 4 (2002-2003): 287-302.

10. Nancy Ammerman, “Golden Rule Christianity: Lived Religion in the American mainstream,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. by David Hall (Princeton University Press, 1997).

11. Tony Walter, “Facing Death without Tradition,” in *Contemporary Issues in the Sociology of Death, Dying and Disposal*, ed. Glennys Howarth and Peter C. Jupp (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996).

12. David Niose, *Nonbeliever Nation: The Rise of Secular Americans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

13. Phil Zuckerman, *Faith No More: Why People Reject Religion* (New York: Oxford, 2012); Jesse M. Smith, “Becoming an Atheist in America: Constructing Identity and Meaning from the Rejection of Theism,” *Sociology of Religion* 72:2 (2011): 215-237.

**R. Marie Griffith**  
**Washington University St. Louis**

Like “Space and Place,” the topic of the previous session, the categories of “belonging” and “participation” are foundational for human life. In fact, they permeated our discussion of the classroom this morning, as we talked about how to engage students’ own serious religious and theological questions. Mark Noll and others invoked “empathy” more than once, and this is certainly a concept that has everything to do with establishing a sense of belonging and participation for others. Of course, the challenge faced by those of us on this panel, as with the others, is how to put some boundaries and limitations on these vast concepts in a way that makes them analytically interesting for this gathering. Several presenters already today have invoked some of our field’s ancestors, and I would like to do the same, returning to one of the early foundational texts in the field of American religious history, Robert Baird’s *Religion in America*, first drafted in 1842 and then revised and expanded over the next dozen or so years.

In the final section of the fifth book of *Religion in America*, a long description of how “church” was defined in the U.S., Baird mused on what he hoped was the most visible characteristic of the American church in the 1840s:

A stranger, upon visiting extensively our evangelical churches of all denominations, would be struck, I am sure, with the order that prevails in them; and this applies equally to the smaller prayer-meetings to be found in every parish and congregation that has any life in it, and to the greater assemblies that meet for public worship. . . . As for the Church, a regard for law and order reigns to a degree not surpassed in any other country. There is no confusion of the respective rights of the ministry and people. The duties of both are well understood everywhere. Most of the churches, such as the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian in all their branches, possess and maintain a strong ecclesiastical government, and even the Congregational, however democratic in theory, have a government that exercises a hardly less powerful control. How seldom do we hear of disorder occurring at the little meetings of Christians held for prayer and the reading of the Word of God—meetings so numerous and almost always conducted by pious laymen! How seldom do private church members encroach by word or deed, at meetings of any kind, on the proper sphere of these who hold office in the churches! Indeed, on no one point are our churches more perfectly united in opinion than with respect to the necessity of maintaining due order and subordination. The ministry enjoys its full share of influence. No one ever hears of unauthorized, unlicensed persons being allowed to speak in our meetings for public worship. Those leveling doctrines, now spreading in other countries—doctrines which would reduce the ministry to nothing, and encourage lay brethren to take it upon them to preach or teach in the churches—I dare affirm, will not make much progress among us.

For Baird, the categories we are using in this session—“belonging” and “participation” were made possible through, in his own words, “order,” “control,” “subordination.” He continued with a severe caution to those encountering the newly awakened after revivals:

I consider hasty admissions to our churches to be the greatest of all the evils connected with revivals in some parts of the country . . . With all possible care it is difficult to keep a church pure, in a reasonable sense of that word. How absurd, then, to expect it when

the doors are thrown wide open to admit hastily all that profess to be converted! Experience shows the necessity of decided views on this subject, and of firmness in enforcing them. On this point, as well as on all others relating to the discipline and government of the Church, too much care cannot be taken to avoid latitudinarian practices. The Church must be kept a living body of believers—a company of persons who have come out from the world, and are determined to adorn the profession which they have made. In their organization and action, order, which is said to be “heaven’s first law,” must be maintained. In this opinion, I am sure, Christians of all denominations in the United States sincerely and entirely concur. [pp.218, 219]

The anxiousness of this passage is, I think, palpable; for of course all Christians did not agree on what order precisely meant for notions of church participation—not in Puritan New England (where the “Halfway Covenant” was just one of many bitter disputes over the meaning of church membership, of who was “in” and who was “out”), not in 1844, and certainly not subsequently as religious communities split over slavery and baptism and women’s roles and sexuality and much else besides. Sometimes civic patriotism has seemed the only glue holding members uncomfortably together: Sidney Ahlstrom was one of many observers who echoed Will Herberg and noted that in the 1950s, “being a church member . . . became a means of affirming the ‘American way of life,’” and not necessarily much else (951); so there was “order,” sure, but hardly the lofty theological truths that Baird believed would accompany that. However much “order” has been sanctified and elevated by religious no less than civil leaders, the chief themes of American church and political history from the earliest days have arguably been dissent, disorder, fracture, reorganization—on and on, the cycle goes.

Baird’s words illuminate the complexity of the specific category of church membership and also point out a fundamental assumption that no longer holds, if it ever did. There are certainly some who want to return to Baird’s own conceptualization of church membership (there are some parallels here to what the Southern Baptist Thom Rainer has most recently called for in his book *I Am A Church Member*), but the far more common way of thinking about belonging and participation in American society today, if we’re to trust the social scientists who study such things, is loose affiliations, fragile networks—the EROSION of the very order that Baird claimed, in somewhat desperate tones I think, was the norm for 1844-style church belonging.

It’s very difficult to tell a story about this that does not have undertones of declension in it. Even in a gathering like this one, where I expect few to none of us have much nostalgia for a Robert Bairdian utopia of authoritarian control and subordination along clear social hierarchies of race and gender, the idea of unifying around a common cause or life purpose surely holds great appeal. Most everyone I know bemoans the changes they themselves have undergone in relation to their onetime communities of deep significance because of the habits inculcated by mobility, in every sense: literally moving, often repeatedly, from one community to another; and also our heavy reliance now on mobile devices, online social networks, twitter tantrums, and other modes of rapid

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technological “connecting” that in all kinds of ways also generate “disconnection” from the people nearest us. Facebook “likes” have their place, don’t get me wrong, but they hardly translate into much we can with a straight face call either genuine thick social “belonging” or long-time sustained “participation.” [I’ll leave the rest of that discussion to the social media panelists tomorrow.] For the “restless souls” who have long been in our midst and who are particularly allergic to the “order” of institutional religion, venues such as yoga classes may feel like the closest thing to communal belonging available or appealing to them.

Philip invited us to connect these themes to our own work, and I suppose I’d want to point to my earliest scholarly research on neo-Pentecostal women in Aglow Fellowship; in a real sense, this entire project—and, likewise, the overarching “lived religion” enterprise of which it was part—was all about these categories: women wanting love and acceptance and community—from/with one another, with family members, with a holy nation governed by God. And like the Robert Baird example or just as starkly the Halfway Covenant, the example of Aglow shows, in the starkest of terms, that “belonging” and “participation” are categories shot through with power relations; “belonging” comes about as those on the margins (or children) watch insiders closely enough to see what insiderhood entails and do what it takes to actualize that state, to perform and thereby enact belonging. That is what Americans do—as church members, as academics in this field, as participants in this particular conference, and on and on and on. What I learned from the women in Aglow is that some of them were willing to endure an awful lot of “subordination,” even searing humiliation, simply to feel that they belonged and were accepted by the group. The psychology of religious belongingness is quite a subject, indeed; and so too the subject of academic belonging, I think (and if you don’t yet know what I mean there, I’d recommend reading a David Lodge novel, for starters).

We know, then, (from Robert Putnam, Robert Wuthnow, etc.) that modes of belonging and participation today are fragile and fleeting, in ways that present constant challenges to our interpersonal relationships, our social institutions, our modes of teaching and learning, and our political engagement. Perhaps we have freed ourselves from the rigid domestic, religious, and civic structures of our past only to find that we’ve somehow, inadvertently or not, thrown out sustaining forms of belonging right along with them. In our discussion today, I hope we can talk about our own professional and scholarly practices of belonging and participation, our participation in the intellectual debates within and about our field, its potential contributions, and its future directions. How can we think better about belonging and participation in our academic communities, our teaching classrooms, our debate assemblies, and focused gatherings such as this one?

**Edward T. Linenthal**  
**Indiana University, Bloomington**

In our introduction to *American Sacred Space*, David Chidester argued that human work—processes of consecration—was crucial to our understanding of sacred space. The Eliadian approach to the sacred—that it “irrupts or manifests” is, David wrote, “a mystification that . . . erases all the hard work that goes into choosing, setting aside, consecrating, venerating, protecting, defending, and redefining sacred places.”<sup>1</sup> The danger of mystification lurks in indiscriminate use of the term “memory,” as well. I much prefer Jay Winter’s choice of “remembrance,” which, he writes, insists on “specifying agency, on answering the question who remembers, when, where, and how?”<sup>2</sup> (And of course, for what reasons.) In *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, Kenneth Foote uses categories of sanctification, designation, rectification, and obliteration to chart the transformation of various sites. In *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, I wrote about processes of “veneration, defilement, and redefinition” at Lexington Green, Concord’s North Bridge, the Alamo, Gettysburg, and Pearl Harbor.<sup>3</sup>

Oren Baruch Stier’s and J. Shawn Landres’s edited collection, *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place* attends directly to “the ways in which atrocities render places religiously charged, indigestible in their toxicity, while their commemoration creates of those sites sacred spaces, variously digestible in and through their memorialization and contestation.” In my postscript to this collection, “A Grim Geography of Remembrance,” I observed that “religious themes, symbols and motifs permeate the essays: meaningless death, meaningful sacrifice, blood purification and purgation, visions, pilgrimage, charged relics, including bodies, the allure of the apocalyptic, grief, mourning, processes of religious remembrance that locate personal identity in often competing narratives proclaimed by memorial structures and narrated at memorial sites.”<sup>4</sup>

I want to focus briefly on 1) the dynamic revision of our landscape of violence; 2) the lure of the redemptive; and 3) the power of material remains.

1) No longer does our landscape of violence focus strictly on assassination sites, battlefields, and sites of so-called natural catastrophe. We now memorialize sites of domestic terrorism, labor violence, religious violence—the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, for example—sites of racial violence—Tulsa and Birmingham, for example, even sites of lynching. We now mark massacre sites in the Indian wars, such as Washita and Sand Creek. So many issues at these sites are “razor’s edge.” Just one example: at Washita, site of the 7th Cavalry’s attack on a Cheyenne village in 1868, there has been a long simmering debate on how to characterize the violence: battle or massacre? At Sand Creek, site of the horrific massacre of mostly Cheyenne women and children in 1864, there was little question about massacre vs. battle, but an enduring controversy over where, in fact, the Cheyenne village stood. Cheyenne oral tradition placed it and the ensuing massacre in a particular area, the archaeology of the National Park Service’s consultants placed it in a different area. How this was negotiated is the story of Ari Kelman’s brilliant new book, *A Misplaced Massacre*.<sup>5</sup> Our landscape of violence now includes Cold War sites, and our memorial imagination will be tested by sites that represent what Kai Erikson so aptly characterized as a “new species of

trouble,” those places contaminated for millennia by the nuclear enthusiasms of past years. How do we memorialize whole areas of the American west characterized by a former Pentagon official as “national sacrifice zones,” or the “slow violence” of environmental degradation? What are the symbols of toxicity that we can create now that will still be understood in thousands of years? How does our memorial imagination engage those places at nuclear sites so contaminated they are called “infinity rooms,” because the levels of radiation cannot even be measured? Memorialization of sites of violence focuses often on the spectacle events of our history. It mostly fails to notice, however, those living memorials in our midst: the wounded bodies in veterans’ hospitals, for example, invisible presences on our commemorative map. It remains, in my view, one of our great challenges: how to memorialize sites that reveal the violence of chronic affliction.<sup>6</sup>

2) The “lure of the redemptive,” the insistence that emotionally satisfying—if not happy—endings is a strategy of containment that seeks to soften shattering stories of violence. This move reveals itself in many ways, for example through architecture, when the dark brick windows of the U.S. Holocaust Museum’s Hall of Remembrance,” windows evocative of the ghettos, had to be replaced by something lighter and seemingly emotionally softer; or through commemorative rhetoric, when, for example, at the dedication of the Oklahoma City Memorial in 2000 President Bill Clinton compared those murdered to those who died at “Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Selma,” in my view a profoundly misguided attempt to reframe the bombing. Contrast his efforts with the words of the wife of a secret service agent murdered in the bombing: “He was always prepared to defend the innocent, or put his life on the line to protect. He was given the opportunity to do neither in this situation. . . . This was nothing more than a damn waste of lives.”<sup>7</sup> Too often we take refuge in rhetoric of “the triumph of the spirit.” I find a terrible honesty in Lawrence Langer’s words, that “when we write of martyrs instead of victims; focus on resistance instead of mass murder; celebrate the human spirit and bypass the human body; invoke the dignity of the self and ignore its humiliation—we are initiating the evolution of preferred narratives that use embattled words to build buffers of insulation against the terrors of the Holocaust. . . .” While Langer focuses on the Holocaust, his words absolutely speak to the whole “triumph of the spirit” formulaic evident at far too many sites and part of far too many stories.<sup>8</sup>

3) I have been struck at so many different sites by the power of material remains to create a “commemorative membrane” in which purity of story and place are of paramount importance. Three examples: first, the commemorative membrane of the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor, a historic site, a memorial, an active burial site, a preservation challenge, extends to the shore side NPS visitors center and impacts what stories can be told and what artifacts can be displayed there. For some, the planned presence of the fuselage of the Enola Gay would have been an artifact out of place in an exhibition critical of the use of atomic weapons. It was considered a toxic presence to Japanese, who were willing to donate items for the exhibition only if they were not displayed within sight line of the plane. Finally, think of the year and a half controversy at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum over whether or not

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to display women's hair shorn from victims and used in the Nazi war machine. The museum's director, the late Shaika Weinberg, respected the wishes of several survivors, whose impassioned objections trumped the arguments of curators and historians.

Some final observations: memorial processes both bring communities together and tear them apart at the same time; acts of remembrance are not by definition "healing," and the dominant narrative in the struggle to interpret sites of violence is the often insidious therapeutic narrative—that speaks of trauma, healing process, closure—a narrative that too often transforms those seared by violence into patients suffering from a disease, passive selves whose experiences need to be interpreted by our new "high priests," mental health professionals. The influence of this narrative, observes Kirk Savage in his *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*, helped give birth to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a "memorial made expressly to heal a collective psychological injury." Its influence endures.<sup>9</sup>

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1. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 17.

2. Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 3.

3. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, 2nd ed. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

4. Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres, eds., *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 9 and 235.

5. Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over The Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

6. Kai Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994). For the "national sacrifice zone" comment, see Mike Davis, *Dead Cities* (New York: The New Press, 2002), 33.

7. Edward T. Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 234-235.

8. I am indebted to Lawrence Langer for a copy of an unpublished presentation in which these comments appear.

9. Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) 267.

## Religion and Changing Technologies

*Technological change—especially changes in communication technology—has had an enormous impact on religion. But religious ideas and practices have sometimes spurred, sometimes challenged, technological change. This session provided the opportunity to take the long, broad view of the relationship between religion and communication technology. How do technological changes—from printing, radio, and television to film and the internet—affect religious experience, education, organization, preaching, and even theology? How should changes in technology influence the questions we ask?*

**Matthew Hedstrom**  
**University of Virginia**

I am the books guy on this panel, so I want to start with some friendly reading advice. In 1870 the president of Yale College, Noah Porter, cautioned in a popular reading guidebook, “we ought to select our books—above all our favorite books—with a more jealous care than we choose our friends and intimates,” because, he went on, “No force nor influence can undo the work begun by those few pages. . . . No love of father or mother, no temptation of money or honor, no fear of suffering or disgrace, is an overmatch for the enchantment conjured up and sustained by [an] exciting volume.”<sup>1</sup> Now, questions about what and how to read had troubled educated Westerners at least since Gutenberg and the Protestant Reformation, but these concerns became especially acute in Porter’s era—in the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth—with the rise of industrial printing methods and mass literacy. Since American Protestants could turn neither to a magisterium in Rome nor an established church at home for reading guidance, an industry of reading expertise, like Porter’s, arose.

By the 1920s professional reading advice was a fixture of American cultural life, ranging from the Harvard Five-Foot Shelf of Books to Reader’s Digest, the Book of the Month Club, and the new book review sections cropping up in newspapers across the country. Of all the archival discoveries in my research, a 1921 essay by the Quaker philosopher and activist Rufus Jones best captures these cultural concerns and crosscurrents, and I want to use it as the basis for my reflections this morning. Jones wrote his essay, entitled “The Habit of Reading,” to promote a national campaign called Religious Book Week. Jones began by lamenting the poor reading habits of most Americans and noted, ominously, the impressive “experiment made by many of the new cults in America.” “They grow, expand, and flourish,” he warned, “largely through the use of books.”

The question, therefore, was how to get people to read the right books, and just as critically, read them in the right way. So Jones told his readers: “It is not enough to read capriciously and sporadically, to borrow a book occasionally and then have done with it.” “I am pleading for the ownership of books and for *the cultivation of the habit of reading*” (italics original). Proper religious reading, for Jones, meant reading in a very specific manner. “The true and effective way to read an illuminating book,” he counseled, “is to read it, pencil in hand, to mark cardinal passages, to make notes, and to digest the message which the book contributes.” To make sure his point was clear, he added, “That means that the book ought, if possible, to be owned rather than borrowed” because “one needs to go back again and again to a good book, to reread marked passages, and to become literally possessed of it.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, according to Jones, a good book can possess us only if we first possess it.

In this brief commentary Jones articulated what I see as many of the most important matters in the study of religion and print—and even religion and media more broadly. The first observation is that the marketplace for print was, according to Jones, a site of intense religious contestation. Print has always functioned as both a centripetal and a centrifugal force—a force that both sustains and undermines centralized authority, that solidifies belonging and that atomizes—but in the nineteenth century the balance of power shifted dramatically. By 1921 Jones stood well on the far

side of this cultural shift. Mass media, more than any other cultural force, allowed one to participate yet not belong (to borrow a phrase from yesterday), and to do so in uncontrollably heterodox—or at least innovative—ways. First Amendment freedoms of press and religion, coupled with steam-powered printing presses and increasingly sophisticated distribution networks caused an explosion of religious literature in the 1810s and 1820s, an explosion that reverberated and amplified across the decades. Evangelicals certainly used their tract and Bible societies to harness this new mass media for their ends, but the role of print in spreading Mormon and Millerite and other new gospels demonstrated that upstart religions and idiosyncratic preachers and prophets could now reach mass publics too.

This term, publics, is worth pausing over for a moment, because I think it captures just what the new mass print media of the nineteenth century brought to American religion, and in a sense what Porter in the 1870s and Jones in the 1920s feared. It’s a term that in this particular sense—meaning publics related to the consumption and use of print media—we take from Jurgen Habermas and Benedict Anderson, but that I find most helpfully considered by Michael Warner.<sup>3</sup> So a few observations about religion and print derived from Warner. Warner observes, first of all, that the publics of mass media do not exist apart from the discourse that creates them; they are self-organized, in his words, independent of pre-existing institutions such as churches. In this sense, the new reading publics of the nineteenth century operated akin to the audiences for revival preaching. Unlike the relatively stable audience of a local congregation, whose relationship to a preacher and to each other stemmed from many factors beyond shared participation in the sermonic text, revival publics only existed because of the shared text. For this reason members of the publics at revivals, and members of the publics formed around mass-produced religious books, were strangers to each other. This in fact is part of the very meaning of a public—it is an affiliation of strangers. Publics are not voluntary associations like churches or denominations, formed by durable bonds of community and ritual. Rather, publics are dependent on attention—and are therefore as evanescent and fragile as attention. Mediated religion, for this reason, like all forms of mediated culture, must be marketed, must demand attention—and Jones in his 1921 editorial for Religious Book Week was doing precisely this, writing ad copy for the book business.

The larger point is that as religious debate and evangelism, but also religious instruction and nurture, increasingly moved into the arena of mass culture through commodity publishing, religion acquired a public dimension, or a set of overlapping publics, for the first time.

This public dimension of religion—again, not meaning a communal or civic or state-affiliated dimension, but meaning a mediated and marketed dimension, a dimension of ever-new associations of strangers formed in relationship to texts—this public dimension of religion looks to me a whole lot like what we now commonly call spirituality. In yesterday’s discussion of belonging, Marie Griffith mentioned geographic mobility and the hyper-connectivity of the digital age as forces corrosive of community and belonging, and certainly they have been in recent decades—but I would even more look to the mass media and mass culture

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that emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the pressures that public, mediated religion placed on local, durable communities like congregations.

One last observation from Rufus Jones's 1921 editorial, about his advice to read "with pencil in hand," meaning to read attentively (I tempted to say mindfully). Much of the work in my recent book on religion and reading was to explore the various mechanisms by which religious persons and institutions sought to mitigate the effects of mass print on religion.<sup>4</sup> That is what I understand Jones to be doing with this piece of reading advice. Nineteenth and twentieth century leaders like Porter and Jones, after all, saw the growing power of mass culture all around them, and believed as a result that the modes of sacred reading they cherished were losing ground to "shallow" consumerism. Paul Griffiths of Duke Divinity School has nicely contrasted what he calls reading religiously—in his words, "as a lover reads, with a tensile attentiveness that wishes to linger, to prolong, to savor"—with consumerist reading, which "wants to extract what is useful or exciting or entertaining from what is read, preferably with dispatch . . . all in the quick orgasm of consumption."<sup>5</sup>—and I think Porter and Jones would agree.

Americans reading religiously in the twentieth century, and on into the twenty-first have been deeply formed by these countervailing reading practices. I think of the underlining and sticky notes one commonly sees in the well-worn Bibles evangelicals often bring to church, but also of the rampant consumerism of the Christian Booksellers Association. Religious reading occurs in a culture fundamentally structured by mass media, mass culture, and consumer capitalism. For all the reading advice of figures like Porter and Jones—and for all the book clubs and books lists and wartime reading programs that make up the bulk of my own book on religion and reading—Americans in the 21st century face religion more than ever as guideless consumers. Is it any wonder that spiritual but not religious is the order of the day?

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1. Noah Porter, *Books and Reading: Or, What Books Shall I Read and How Shall I Read Them?* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1870), 8. Candy Gunther Brown's *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) led me to this source.

2. Rufus M. Jones, "The Habit of Reading," *Watchword* (Dayton, OH), March 13, 1921.

3. See most especially Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 1991); Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA: Zone, 2002).

4. Matthew S. Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

5. Paul J. Griffiths in *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) ix.

**Lerone A. Martin**

**Washington University Danforth Center for Religion and Politics**

I want to use my time this morning to raise some questions concerning how we approach the historical study of religion and communication technology. The phonograph will serve as the muse and/or medium for our consideration. There is much work in the discipline of American religious studies that chronicles the significance of mass mediums such as print, radio, film, television, and more recently the Internet and social media in religious practices. Specifically, scholars of American religion during the early twentieth century have insightfully displayed how radio, film, and print culture intersected with Protestantism in the U.S. However, the field has been slow to recognize the phonograph as an equally vital tool within these traditions during the specified period. Thomas Tweed has encouraged scholars of religion to consider how exploring the particular religious use of various media forms can illuminate religious studies. To this end, I submit to you, phonograph religion.

In keeping with one of the themes of this sessions: I would like to pause to consider how the phonograph was utilized for religious purposes in the form of recorded sermons during the interwar period and how this phenomenon might summon scholars of American religion to rethink the questions we ask at the intersections of religion and communication technology during the interwar period and beyond.

In 1921, Mrs. Mary Kelly, a mother of five, wrote to a leading phonograph company, "I have had my life made worth living since it [the phonograph] came into my home." The Providence, Rhode Island resident praised her inexpensive phonograph for not only providing her with entertainment, but also for improving her quality of life. Mrs. Kelly planned to save her money for a more expensive model because, she concluded, "There is no case too grand for such a glorious machine!" George Rhulen, a retired U.S. Army Colonel in Tacoma, Washington thoroughly enjoyed his \$285 phonograph (an amount equivalent to approximately \$3,600 in today's economy). He praised the medium for providing the nation with "pleasure, contentment, and enjoyment of living." The device seemingly relayed everything to American homes including John Wanamaker advertisements for his pioneering department store Grand Depot, campaign records for presidential candidates, music, speeches, and sermons. One Ohio couple wrote to the Edison Phonograph Company and best summed up the significance of the phonograph. They admitted that their assortment of religious records "take the place of church sometimes."

Beginning with a preacher who recorded under the name of the Reverend Black Billy Sunday in 1925, approximately one hundred white and black clergy incorporated this central and novel medium into Christian practices by garnering record contracts from leading record labels, such as Columbia, Paramount, and Victor (later RCA) to record and sell their sermons. These mass media preachers recorded approximately eight hundred sermonic titles on more than twenty different record labels in the short span of sixteen years. Popular phonograph preachers essentially delivered an extended sermon introduction followed by a climactic close, all within a standard format of four to eight minutes. In all, popular recorded preachers condensed an expressive worship service and sermon to fit the limited time parameters of records during the era.

Record labels recorded and sold these spiritual commodi-

ties utilizing posters, handbills, department stores, record label shops, furniture stores, mail order catalogues, chain stores such as Sears and Montgomery Ward, and nationally circulated newspapers. Posters of these commercial preachers donned the shopping windows of local record shops, furniture stores and department stores. Consumers lined up to pay seventy-five cents to a \$1.25 for the latest sermon. This was a significant price for a non-essential commodity. The affordability of these recorded sermons in current terms corresponds to spending between forty to seventy-five dollars out of an average income. Consumers, despite the significant price tag, eagerly purchased the sermons. In fact, some preachers even outsold some of their more famous label mates, including records by Bessie Smith, Fiddlin John Carson, Louis Armstrong, and Ma Rainey. Clearly, for some churchgoers hearing their favorite preacher over and over again was a priceless experience. Moreover, as Philip Goff has pointed out, entrepreneurial clergy such as Aimee McPherson and Charles Fuller used phonograph records to syndicate their broadcast.

The popularity of phonograph religion, I believe, beckons us to ask specific questions in our historical studies of religion and technology. Given our respective time parameters (coupled with the fact that my father raised my siblings and me in a Baptist Church) I will alliterate three queries: Access, Adoption, and Arrangement.

First, inquiries of religion and technology must attend to questions of access. Studies of radio have largely overshadowed the reality that the phonograph served as a viable religious medium. Phonograph preachers enjoyed large record sells, became celebrities, and garnered wealth and a renewed sense of social authority from their media ministries alongside radio evangelists. Preaching on wax, however, was mostly utilized and embraced by African American clergy and churchgoers. Most white clergy relinquished the enterprise by the 1930's for radio. Disparities in access to new technology explains a great deal of this. Access to radio, like most new technologies, was staggered. According to US census reports, in 1930, forty percent of white homes owned a radio compared to seven percent of black homes. In 1940, the numbers stood at roughly eighty three percent and forty three percent respectively. This lack of access to radio was due in part to the relative scarcity of black voices on radio, limited rural reach of radio, and white supremacy control of the medium. Cost was also a significant factor. Phonographs could be purchased in price ranges beginning at ten dollars. Radio, on the other hand, did not dip below \$55 (comparable to approximately \$900 in today's economy) until after 1935. Radio was the dominant sound medium for some, but not for all. Inquires into the field, then, must be attentive to who has access to technology to become cultural producers AND who is able and desires to consume the same. Such considerations might influence the kinds of historical narratives we write. When we ask questions of who exactly has access to certain kinds of technology—the phonographs, radios, movie houses, and books, for example—we open our studies up to reconsider who takes center stage and why, what is considered popular, and who and what traditions are attributed with possessing the greatest influence upon religion and technology. For example, in his forthcoming book *Religion Out Loud*, Isaac Weiner displays how Jehovah Witnesses vigorously used sound-car religion—phonograph sermons blared from public

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address systems that were mounted on cars—to disseminate the sermons of Judge Joseph Rutherford. Jehovah Witnesses, despite a relative obscurity in studies of religion and technology, were on the cutting edge of communication technology (cars and phonographs) during the 1920s. Such questions then, can have a great bearing upon the narratives we tell as well as how we understand the current landscape of religion and technology.

Questions of adoption are closely related. Considering the relationship between technology(ies) and geography, whether it be regional or local worlds should also influence our studies. Communication technology is often heralded as having the ability to “flatten” difference, time, and space. However, the adoption of technology is more spiked than flat. Communication technologies such as the phonograph and radio reached different areas of the country at different times. For example, by 1930, over sixty percent of all Chicago households owned a radio compared to twenty-three percent of those in Atlanta. Urban and rural rates were similarly disproportioned across the country. Spiked adoption of communication technologies might alter how we talk about the influence of technology and religion. Robert Orsi, among others, reminds us that “religious cultures are local and to study religion is to study local worlds.” Historical endeavors to study communication technologies and religion then could be understood as efforts to understand which technologies intervened in the “histories of people working on their worlds in specific ways at specific times and places.” Moreover, such attention might offer more precise understandings as to why some practices and mediums may have thrived and others did not.

Finally, financial arrangements, or the role of the market, should also help to structure the questions we ask of the field. Access, theological commitments, as well as location shape the kinds of discourses transmitted and broadcast through communication technologies. However, how such discourses are financed and sponsored must also come into consideration. Large corporations controlled the recording, production, and distribution of sermons, as well as the production of books and movies. How then might the funding sources and corporate holdings of communication technologies influence religious discourse? For example, controversial sermons such as the Reverend J.M. Gates’, “Stay out of the Chain Stores” were recorded, but they were never released by the same labels that quickly signed Gates and others to lucrative contracts. Some sermons were simply too antithetical to corporate profits. Investigating such arrangements can help us think about the kinds of religious rhetoric we hear and do not hear via communication technologies.

Jon Butler has argued that the task and greatest offering of the historian is to discover, examine, and narrate some of society’s most pronounced, understated, intricate, and sometimes paradoxical changes and continuities. Such work helps us make sense of the present and perhaps enables us to better shape the future through the expansion of historical knowledge. To this end, studies of religion and communication technologies have provided great insight into the forms and substances of religion in America. Further attention to staggered access, spiked adoption, and the arrangements of funding, I believe, can help to broaden our understanding and knowledge of this rapidly changing area of inquiry.

**William Romanowski**  
**Calvin College**

Based on my findings in *Reforming Hollywood*, I want to offer a brief sketch of the central dynamics in Protestant interaction with the film industry. This history reveals how the role of American religion in negotiating with media producers has shifted in the past and suggests that recent trends toward globalization, advancing digital technologies, and pluralism warrant a change in research focus for scholars in the field.

Protestant strategies for reform can be understood in terms of what I call *pietist* and *structural* motifs. Briefly, the pietist tendency sees social problems as the result of personal shortcomings and failings, and not harmful social conditions; the individual is the genesis of social change and religion the basis for virtue. The *structural* motif finds the core problem in patterns of organization and emphasizes transforming institutions that influence and govern people's lives. These two tendencies became more distinct over the twentieth century. With the decline of mainline Protestantism the structural motif lost import; the pietist approach moved to the forefront with American life increasingly characterized by the "privatization" of religion, the diminishing scope of religious authority, and the erosion of institutional life.

Contrary to the prevailing narrative, which casts them collectively as single-minded censors, most Protestants as early as the 1910s recognized the cinema as a complex phenomenon: movies were a popular art, an arena for discourse, and a commercial product. Drawing on their religious heritage, they hoped to secure a role for the cinema that would protect individual freedom under a shared ethos of self-restraint and public responsibility. Conflict between the film industry's relentless drive to maximize profits and the church's concern to protect civil liberties and the public welfare was at the crux of the struggle over movie regulation, which under the circumstances proved no easy task.

On the one hand, the Supreme Court denied movies free speech protection in 1915, subjecting them to legal prior restraint. On the other, by the late 1920s, the Hollywood studios had formed a tight oligopoly to eliminate competition. Comparing the influence of the cinema to that of school, church, and the press, one Protestant minister argued, "If either of these latter three should fall into the despotic and arbitrary power of five or six persons, the people would immediately look to Congress to take adequate measures to restore and maintain freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of the public schools from the selfish, despotic, illegal control of a few covetously minded men."

Protestant leaders eventually concluded that securing lasting reform, without resorting to official censorship, meant stopping the major film studios from gaming the system. They lobbied the federal government to break the studios' monopoly by invoking anti-trust laws. This initiative however, struck at the cornerstone of the studios' profitable system and put the Protestant establishment in direct conflict with Hollywood, the Roman Catholic Church, and of note, Will Hays, an eminent Presbyterian layman and president of the motion picture association. The struggle ended with Catholics empowered in a church-directed prior censorship of movies that lasted until the 1960s.

A paradigm shift occurred after World War II. The Supreme Court dismantled the vertically integrated film studios and ruled

now that movies were protected speech. The marketplace became more competitive, more fragmented, and with other changes in American life, more uncertain with the advent of television. Hollywood abandoned its practice of prior censorship, and with the sanction of Protestant and Catholic leaders, established an age-based rating system in 1968. In some measure, movie classification was an institutionalizing of Protestant values: safeguarding artistic freedom and the rule of individual conscience, and protecting the public welfare, i.e., youth from exploitation.

Since then however, the media landscape has undergone a huge transformation. The studio system that Protestants had worked to abolish was reassembled through corporate mergers and acquisitions in the 1980s. Today the major film studios are subdivisions of *global* media oligopolies. Though variously configured, they tend to be both vertically integrated with international production and distribution networks and horizontally diverse across media platforms (e.g., film, TV broadcasting, radio, cable, and newspapers). In the early 1980s around fifty companies controlled a majority of the U.S. media; today six firms provide news, information, and entertainment for the vast majority of Americans.

Media consolidation was made possible by deregulation policies that relaxed restrictions on cross-media ownership and an explosion in communication technologies and services that enabled the flow of content across multiple platforms. Deregulation brought about a fundamental shift. Media companies now operate chiefly as profit-oriented businesses under minimal government oversight, rather than as trustees serving the "public interest, convenience, or necessity." And the public interest is defined by what people supposedly choose through the marketplace—not by diversity, quality, competition, or social value. In response, the National Council of Churches released an extensive study in the mid-1980s with proposals to make "some adjustment to the conflict between artistic freedom and commercial exploitation." The call for industry reform went unheeded and marks the end of any structural initiatives by the old Protestant establishment.

Evangelicals took the lead in movie reform with their public protest of *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988). Unlike their predecessors, evangelicals accept the industry status quo and direct their appeals to the corporate bottom line, lobbying on behalf of a potentially lucrative "Christian" market for family-friendly products. The values-discourse is limited to the content of specific programming and not the corporate systems that provide it—a central concern of the structural approach. But the pietist plan for transformation has come under sharp attack for neglecting the complexity of culture, misjudging the power and role of institutions in cultural change, and, consequently, having failed to achieve the anticipated results.

In the academic world, the theology-film dialogue has thus far produced only a rather impressionistic search for religious themes in popular media. For the most part, communication studies focus on religious adaptation by groups or the individual use of media to create religious meaning. We could also benefit from further study of the corporate media system itself, along with perennial issues that are becoming more perplexing in our age of digital communication.

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Today's media environment is shaped by apparently contradictory trends. The concentration of ownership has brought a proliferation of products and services. Enlarged consumer choice has brought more social fragmentation. The broader range of available speech requires viewers to be more discerning if they are going to be full participants in culture and society. New delivery channels have outpaced the film and television industries' monitoring system raising questions about continued safeguarding of youth. If the size and scope of media conglomerates is necessary to compete in a global marketplace, it is also apparent that media concentration prohibits competition, reduces consumer power, and shrinks diversity, both in terms of ownership and the range of views and perspectives presented in the media. Recent events show that the risk of self-censorship in news reporting and the potential for media barons to exert undue political influence are serious matters. Finally, a healthy media environment is obviously critical to the functioning of a pluralistic democracy, and for that reason the religious community has a stake in seeing that the media provide access to a broad dissemination of news, information, and entertainment from divergent sources.

## Religion in Social Media

*The importance of the internet and new social media cannot be gainsaid, though as scholars our first inclination is to put it in context. What changes have come or will come because of new mass communication techniques that are heavily graphics-driven? Will the ability to merge and display multiple media sources change the way we think about religious practice? About religious organizations? About religious history? What effect will social media and new forms of (digital) interpersonal relationships or online communities have on religion?*

**Kathryn Reklis**  
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The word “cyberspace” was popularized by William Gibson in his cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer* in 1984. Gibson himself admitted he didn’t really know what the word meant: “All I knew about the word ‘cyberspace’ when I coined it, was that it seemed like an effective buzzword. It seemed evocative and essentially meaningless.”<sup>1</sup>

Into that elusive buzz were projected all the apocalyptic promises of the early internet age (roughly 1985-2005). For true believers, pervasive digital access would lead to greater freedom of expression, flows of information, equality, and thereby democracy. Traditional forms of top-down authority, coherent belief systems, embodied ritual, and stable selves would crumble under the new culture of user-generated interactivity and non-hierarchical power structures and information sharing. Discourse about religion in these predictions was mostly stuck on notions of religion as an institutional, monolithic force, which would be hollowed out as its subjects ran free in the digital expanse. Indeed, cyberspace would be the last frontier of secularization, weakening traditional religion to the point of non-existence, except perhaps where cyberspace itself could be understood in messianic terms.

In terms of sheer numbers, we are approaching the wired world prophesied by early internet disciples. Nearly 40% of the world’s population is online, with annual growth rates of 15% in Asia and 29% in Africa. 6.8 billion people—96% of the world’s population—have cellular phones, including 89% of the global South.<sup>2</sup> Given the fact that mobile internet access is growing much more rapidly than fixed broadband access, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt’s prediction that the whole world will be online by 2020 may not be that far off.<sup>3</sup>

We might all be online, but we do not live in cyberspace. Gibson’s nonspace, and the early adopters who populated it with digital presence, assumed an escape from the constraints of real-life into the unbounded freedom of virtual reality, a chance to create a radically different identity, a “second life.” The internet we all increasingly share is anything but an escape from real life; it is a digitally mediated immersion in it. Media theorist Beth Coleman refers to this Web 2.0 as “X-reality” to describe a “mobile, real-time, and pervasively networked landscape.” We don’t create virtual selves in digital space; we create a digital network to be ourselves across space and time. The binary between virtual and real breaks down as we move across sites that are real, simulated, digital, and embodied to various degrees.<sup>4</sup> This is the age of the immanent internet.

This is not to say that the immanent internet is not transforming or even radically challenging forms of religious practice and community. And there are still plenty of people, starting with their executives, who think Facebook and Google are ushering in the eschaton.<sup>5</sup> But as the internet itself has lost some of its transcendent aspirations, the immanent frame of X-reality allows us to see in more detail what is actually happening with religion online. Most of the work on digital religion in the last few years—the so-called “third wave of research” in internet studies—explores challenges to religion posed by increased digital mediation but does so without assuming the purely liberatory or secularizing promises of cyberspace.<sup>6</sup>

These studies do not just focus on religion online, but on religion in an immanently online era: at the intersection of face-to-face and digitally mediated practices and spaces. In each intersection, authority and authenticity, agency and presence (the four most commonly interrogated themes), are re-negotiated, transformed, or reinforced sometimes surprisingly and sometimes predictably. Take, for example, the strange confluence of traditional religious authority, lay agency, and concerns about embodiment and presence in the case of the so-called “kosher phone.” From 2004-2007 a coalition of ultra-Orthodox leaders waged a campaign to convince Israeli phone companies to manufacture a kosher cell phone that does not have internet or SMS capability and that can block “indecent” phone numbers, like escort and gambling services. The 3G phone was vilified not because it promoted disembodied virtuality or weakened social ties, but because it offered unmediated access to “sins of the flesh” and strengthened the wrong kind of social ties. The phone was adopted by tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox in Israel, but many within those communities continued to keep their 3G capable phones for private use and only used their “kosher” phones in public.<sup>7</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, a small Lutheran church in Denver comprised of self-professed “tech junkies” use new media to negotiate all aspects of community life, from scheduling hymn sings on MeetUp.com to using Google docs as a digital prayer chain. The use of new media is an explicit strategy to transfer spiritual authority from the pastor to her newly empowered laity while also serving to reinforce her singularity during face-to-face sacramental ritual, which is especially emphasized in the congregation.<sup>8</sup> In the early internet age, which was predominately text based (e.g. chat rooms and message boards), the great promise was a bodiless flow of information from one digital subject to the next. In this context, it made sense to worry about how our understandings of ritual authenticity, agency, and sacred space would be transformed by these disembodied domains. Think, however, of Google Glass—the modestly unattractive and relatively unobtrusive glasses that overlay the real world with virtual layers, coming to a student near you.<sup>9</sup> With the rise of augmented reality software and wearable network devices, virtual technologies are quickly developing the ability to tap into the full human sensorium and further diminish the thin membrane between embodied and virtual experience.

We need more scholars devoted to mapping this pervasively networked, digitally mediated landscape and the variety of religious practices it holds: religious practices in X-reality are proliferating faster than Facebook ads. I also want to suggest that we need more interpretative and theoretical frames to make sense of these practices not least of all because “digital religion” is not just the purview of a few new media scholars, but is, I’d argue, a frame for broader questions we might want to ask as a discipline. Here are a few reflections I threw together this morning on how we might sketch connections between new media and themes in our conversations over the last day and a half (some of which have come up explicitly).

How do we parse agency, or the “tyranny of authenticity,” with the rise of user-generated online content? On the one hand, the

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immanent internet blurs the line between producer and user—we are “producers” now (as Tracy Leavelle pointed us to with his example of DIY war memorials on YouTube). But this is within the limits of technical ability; you can post (almost) anything you want on YouTube, but you cannot create YouTube’s infrastructure without considerable technical skill. As phone apps strive to be “intuitive” and “frictionless” (the big buzz words of Silicon valley), they also encourage homogeneity of content and style. In the early wars for social network dominance, for example, MySpace, which allowed for extensive user control over visual presentation, lost to Facebook, which allows for none.

In our discussions of space and place, John Corrigan encouraged us to pay more attention to physical geography, to become better mappers. How might we think about this injunction in the era of user-generated world-mapping? With the rise of location-driven social applications (applications that pinpoint your precise physical location and broadcast it to the world) and wearable virtual software (like Google Glass that track your movements through space), we no longer simply navigate physical space but literally map it for other users (and for massive media conglomerates) (and it is interesting to consider how many phone applications have been created precisely to help navigate physical space). Certeau’s streetwalkers might be re-creating strategies of power even as they perform disruptive jaunts across back alleys and strange corridors.

Marie Griffith worried about what might be lost in the loose affiliations and fragile networks of social media. Research actually shows that Facebook “likes” do more to foster real-life social connections and belonging than to undermine them (most Facebook activity takes place between people who regularly interact with each other off line). But we might worry about how social belonging, or even the due political process, are understood in social media slacktivism. How do we understand the many layers of “participation” in communal identities and power relations when Facebook users changed their profile pictures in support of marriage equality during the March Supreme Court hearings and those same status updates were being mined for “moods” to generate affective banner ads?

Broader engagement with these questions is also germane because it is not just religious subjects that move fluidly between digitally mediated and face-to-face interactions. As scholars (and as human beings) we also navigate this immanent internet, and it is to the possibilities of embracing and interrogating our own presence there that I would like to devote my final moments.

Over the past several years, there has been a proliferation of online journals, blogs, and collaborative endeavors devoted to reporting, analyzing, and discussing religious presence in the public sphere. These sites themselves become spaces that celebrate a plurality of religious voices and perspectives, that challenge the religious/secular dichotomy, and that engage in the broader mapping and creation of “religion” and “spirituality.” I am thinking of sites such as, to name just a few, *The Immanent Frame*, *Frequencies*, *Killing the Buddha*, and *The Revealer* (some of the founders of which are here with us), as well as the ubiquity of *Huffington Post Religion*, *The Washington Post On Faith*, and *Patheos* as authoritative and popular sources of religion news and analysis. As

projects undertaken or engaged in by scholars of religion, these sites offer new modes of scholarship, and new audiences, for the study of religion. What is the relationship between scholarly and popular constructs of religion in our online work (for example, the cultivation of readership and community, the “popularization” of scholarship and the role of the scholar as participant/collaborator)? What are the constraints and opportunities inherent in the assumptions about the collaborative, immediate, and interactive nature of new media as well as the elevation of the mundane, popular, and personal as significant objects for reflection and analysis?

As we think together about the horizons for our own work in the immanent internet age, perhaps some of the most interesting questions about agency, authority, authenticity and presence come not just in assessing the possibilities of religious decision making or religious communal formation in digitally mediated space, but from our own presence there, making (the study of) religion online.

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1. Interview with William Gibson from the documentary film *No Maps for These Territories*, Mark Neale, 2000.

2. International Telecommunication Union, “ICT Facts and Figures: the World in 2013,” (Geneva, February 2013). Accessed online on May 29, 2013 at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013.pdf>

3. Doug Gross, “Google boss: Entire world will be online by 2020,” CNN.com, April 15, 2013. Accessed online on May 29, 2013 at <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/15/tech/web/eric-schmidt-internet>

4. Beth Coleman, *Hello Avatar: Rise of the Networked Generation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 20.

5. Cf. George Packer, “Change the World: Silicon Valley transfers its slogans—and its money—to the realm of politics,” *The New Yorker*, May 27, 2013, 44-55. For recent histories, analysis and critique of the “messianic” implications of Silicon Valley technologism, see Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism* (Public Affairs, 2013). For the same with a more sanguine prediction, see Steven Johnson, *Future Perfect: The Case For Progress In A Networked Age* (Riverhead Hardback, 2012).

6. For example, *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, edited by Pauline Hope Cheong, Peter Fischer-Nielsen, Stefan Gelfgren, and Charles Ess (New York: Peter Lang, 2012); *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, edited by Heidi Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2012). Rachel Wagner, *Godwired: Religion, Ritual and Virtual Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2012) and *Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God*, edited by Craig Detweiler (Louisville, KY: John Knox Westminster Press, 2009) both explore traditional themes and topics in religious stud-

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ies and theology in online immersive virtual realities. And Heidi Campbell, *Exploring Religious Communities Online: We Are One in the Network* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), *Religion and Cyberspace*, edited by Morton Højsgaard and Margit Warburg (New York: Routledge, 2005), and Ken Hillis, *Online a Lot of the Time: Ritual, Fetish, Sign* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009) are all excellent examples of “second wave” research that also track the paradigm shift from “cyberspace” to an “immanent internet.”

7. Tsurriel Rashi, “The Kosher Cell Phone in Ultra-Orthodox Society: a Technological Ghetto within the Global Village?” in *Digital Religion*, edited by Heidi Campbell, 173-181.

8. Jason Byassee, case study of The House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO, New Media Project at Christian Theological Seminary, <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/newmedia/findings/case-studies/house-for-all-sinners-and-saints>.

9. You can see what all the hype is about, or at least Google’s hope for the hype, at <http://www.google.com/glass/start/>

**Scott Thumma**  
**Hartford Seminary**

As one who works in a seminary and teaches about the congregational use of technology, I've been attentive to congregational uses of technology for over 15 years. As a result, I am well aware of how technologically backward and behind the times most religious groups are. However, before a recent experience, I didn't realize just how out-of-step the religious world was.

I approach the question of how religion is being reshaped, and perhaps undermined, by social media technology from the contextual starting point of religious life and lived practices within faith communities. In order to explore adequately the theoretical effects of social media on religion, it is critical to assess the producers of these platforms who create the "space" and shape the social context. It is equally necessary to determine the scope and character of the current religious communities' engagement with these technologies.

In March 2013, I spent an enlightening week in Austin, Texas at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Interactive conference. This event is the premier cutting-edge international gathering of social media developers and innovators. Picture the AAR annual meeting as if it was attended by over 30,000 hyper-connected, young, wealthy and energetic tech nerds rather than those of us sitting in this room. Only four percent of this massive crowd was over 50 years of age.

I was never fully aware of just how irrelevant religious ideas, forms, and structures were to these high tech producers until I hung out with and talked to them at SXSW. Of more than 1000 sessions at this gathering, only one of them addressed the topic of religion and that was an esoteric presentation about God's role in the Internet to an audience of about 20 people.

There was absolutely no traditional religious presence at this enormous gathering of people who are responsible for shaping our interactive social media future. The tents of sponsors offered yoga, meditation, and all manners of wellness practices but in conversation, and judging from the social tags participants chose to describe themselves, there was no traditional religion, faith, or spirituality to be found.

A radical disconnect exists between these cutting edge social media entrepreneurs and those persons engaged in traditional religious practice. As a result, the vast majority of technology being created within the social media marketplace completely bypasses the needs and interests of congregations and the religious lives of individuals. If faithful people and communities want to appropriate this technology, they will have to create it themselves or modify it to fit, since it isn't being produced by the elite of the field explicitly for consumption by religious organizations.

Yet numerous surveys show that religious persons are embracing Internet technologies and social media at rates somewhat similar to the general public. When asked, 80 percent of those who attend services consistently use email and the web. However, this figure drops to about 25 percent when congregational members are asked if they use religious sites or visit the sites of their own churches and denominations. Further, those who have adopted social media tools other than Facebook, such as Twitter, Yelp, Pinterest, or many others, for religious purposes, constitute a very small percentage of active religious persons.

Patterns within congregations regarding technological adoption are hardly better. Surveys provide evidence of significant use of the Web, email, and increasingly Facebook. On the other hand, if one examines how a majority of these congregations are actually using the media, it is elementary at best except for a relative handful of congregations. Almost no faith community, even the most tech-savvy, has fully embraced the social nature of this interactive media. Nearly all faith communities view Internet and social media technology as basically another communication device for uni-directional proclamation—not as the revolutionary interactive tool it is becoming in secular society.

The majority of congregations within the United States are under 100 attenders, resource poor, and elderly. These faith communities have rudimentary technology use and almost no hope of further digital development in the future. At the same time, the congregations with significant social media skill and the resources to utilize their abilities are predominantly much larger, wealthier, and more evangelical. Thus a huge technology gap exists between the religious digital haves and have-nots. These inequities in technological expertise contribute to an even greater skewing of the religious playing field as young religious seekers gravitate to those faith communities that do technology well—that speak their language. This will no doubt lead to an even more dramatic concentration of people in ever-larger congregations than we have seen over the past century.

The one religious venue where technology has already had a profound effect across all sizes of congregations is within the worship service. The dramatically swift adoption of projection screens and multisensory video presentations bring popular secular culture such as movies, sports and commercials into a sacred worship space. At the same time, mechanically-reconfigured audio and video projection is reshaping the physical experience and immediacy of the worship service into an increasingly technologically-mediated production. Among other consequences, this mediation creates an artificial reality that is authored and manipulated by the tech staff and the medium itself. Additionally, this situation can result in a greater tendency to produce spectators rather than engaged worship participants.

However, this technology also allows for new configurations of what constitutes "the church" both in time and space. Website and YouTube sermon video archiving and podcasts as well as the technological ability to stream services have allowed for a disconnection of the worship service from the gathered congregation. The worship experience is increasingly in the hands of the individual viewer as participant. Church and worship can happen when and where I view it, disconnected from any particular location, time, or date.

This social media reality is likewise revising our perceptions of the congregational community. The medium offers virtual venues for maintaining interpersonal connections without the need to be physically present to one another. Congregational interactions and interpersonal relationships can easily be stretched and extended across time whether through daily tweets and text messages, in a biblical discussion on a blog, exchanging personal prayer requests and support shared on Facebook, or vicariously experiencing live participation in a mission trip with a church's teenagers through Skype.

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Organizationally, this disconnection of space and time has also facilitated the creation of a multi-site distributed model of church or religious community. Through video venues the physical branches or satellite campuses of a single religious organization can be digitally connected so that one congregation can simultaneously meet in multiple locations, including across state lines and even national boundaries. This multi-site model has further evolved into online-only satellite campuses for several hundred US congregations. This phenomenon is best epitomized by the congregational leader of all things technological, Lifechurch.tv of Oklahoma City, which offers 54 online worship services each week complete with live pastoral staff, chatrooms, a prayer ministry, and even virtual conversions.

In fact, I would argue that in this present technological context all congregations have become virtual as well as physical entities. Whether these congregations embrace the technology or not, the societal expectation increasingly is that everything has a virtual presence and should function digitally.

Human participation in these interactive media, and the cultural reality surrounding them, are likewise reshaping the consciousness, needs and expectations of Americans. This is happening in most cases to the detriment of current traditional modes of religious organization and engagement.

All Americans, whether social media devotees or not, are increasingly expecting “on-demand” experiences individually tailored and accessible when we want them no matter what day or time. Organized religion is seldom offered this way; however, everything else in life is, from television and movies, music and work, to education and relationships. For persons steeped in this mindset, this situation provides further evidence of the contemporary irrelevance of “Church” and religion.

The technological and social media imbued reality for most young adults, as well as anyone immersed in multitasking on multiple screens every waking hour, is reshaping the social condition and human consciousness to be increasingly devoid of silence, stillness and the ability to maintain a singular focus. Humans are becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the absence of stimulation. Social media intrudes upon centeredness; creates a situation whereby mono-tasking becomes an intentional spiritual discipline. As one SXSW participant lamented, **“Is technology the enemy of transcendence? It immensely helps and it immensely distracts.”**

Finally, Internet technologies and social media present an inherent challenge to authority. With instant access to multiple, often competing authoritative voices, I no longer need to accept any authority at face value. Seen another way, the individual becomes the locus of authority – able to choose whichever religious path that best suits his or her needs. Likewise, individuals now have public venues to talk back to religious leaders, question this authority and discuss their self-generated ideas with their “followers” in tweets or blog posts. Can you imagine the religious reality when we begin to crowd source theological truth or morality the same way we choose the best places to dine?

From my perspective, there is no doubt that the various modes of social media and Internet technologies are creating a profoundly altered but increasingly interconnected world. I’ve suggested a

few ways these technological influences are changing congregational life and beginning to transform religious involvement. This constant stream of tweets, posts, status-updates and check-ins is recreating the social fabric digitally. Yet at the present religion is, for the most part, an insignificant participant in this interconnectivity.

## Jonathan VanAntwerpen Social Science Research Council

In the year 2000, two independent journalists, Jeff Sharlet and Peter Manseau, launched an online magazine that they called *Killing the Buddha*. Published entirely on the Internet, the magazine invited readers “both hostile and drawn to talk of God” to join its editors in “building an electronic Tower of Babel, a Talmudic cathedral of stories about faith lost and found.” In the world of online publishing about religion, it represented one of the earliest efforts of its kind.

The orienting vision and intellectual practice of *Killing the Buddha* might stand as one example of the persistent difficulty, the practical challenge, or perhaps just the overly labored oddity, of seeking to completely disentangle religion and its vocabularies from the intellectual efforts, both individual and collective, of those who write about it. This is a difficulty I was reminded of not long ago when I worked with others to help produce—under the thoughtful curatorial guidance of Kathryn Lofton and John Lardas Modern—an experimental digital project called *Frequencies*.

*Frequencies* was the product of a collaboration between *Killing the Buddha* and *The Immanent Frame*—a digital forum sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, and an experiment that came online a number of years ago, somewhere in between the launch of *Killing the Buddha* and *The Huffington Post*'s launch, 10 years later, of its own religion section. Arriana Huffington herself contributed the very first post for *HuffPost Religion*. “I believe we are all hardwired for the sacred,” she wrote.

While there are at least a few cognitive scientists who agree with Arriana that we are all “hardwired for the sacred” (and many more, I gather, who do not), I don't have any special purchase on that question. But I will say that in the formation and nurturance of *The Immanent Frame* we have not been afraid to invite and publish the sort of intellectual work that—to borrow the words of one of our contributors—“does not secure its stance as a privileged default against the particularities of religion.” And it seems to me that to set such limitations—to limit the available perspectives to those conceiving of themselves as authoritative just so far as they are set off against religion—would be as impoverishing for our digital work as it would be for the work of the field of religious studies as a whole. I say this in part in response to some of the discussion yesterday morning, but also to briefly set the context for my reflections on religion and digital media, which are conditioned in no small measure by my own attempts, along with a growing number of others, to use digital media in an effort to craft new spaces for writing about both secularism and religion.

In this context, I would like to develop an analysis of a set of hybrid spaces of intellectual activity that was for a time known as the religion blogosphere, to consider the relationship of this evolving digital sphere to more established fields of intellectual production, and to reflect on the challenges and opportunities afforded by digital media, especially for those of us who write about religion today. The digital spaces I have in mind are, like all spaces of scholarship and intellectual engagement, fundamentally social spaces—and it is to a select number of the social features of these new digital spaces that I want to encourage us to attend.

As I listened to Matt Hedstrom speak earlier this morning, it occurred to me that one approach to the analysis of these spaces would involve attending to the publics and counter-publics they

help constitute, and to the reading practices they afford and inculcate. While questions of readership, circulation, attention, and consumption are of particular importance, however, I want to focus here on modes intellectual production and exchange. My starting point for thinking about these spaces of intellectual production and exchange draws on a form of “field” analysis, associated with Pierre Bourdieu and others, while improvising somewhat on Bourdieu's approach in order to extend its analytical reach to the consideration of “interstitial” digital spaces—or what sociologist Gil Eyal has called “spaces between fields.”

Central to Bourdieu's theoretical lexicon, “fields” may be figured as arenas of production and circulation, networks of dissemination and distribution, and social spaces of discursive appropriation and intellectual improvisation. Within such spaces, cultural producers of various kinds contend for the power to determine the legitimate descriptions and definite boundaries that define the field and delimit the range of its rightful participants. Vying for the authority to order and organize an array of discursive content, and struggling over the field's central classifications and cultural productions, actors within the field do battle for the right to define its key terms and conceptual structures. As Bourdieu emphasized, intellectual producers—the creators and curators of culture (here very broadly construed)—hold a particular power. It is, he wrote, “the properly symbolic power of showing things and making people believe in them, of revealing, in an explicit, objectified way the more or less confused, vague, unformulated, even unformulable experiences of the natural and the social world, and of thereby bringing them into existence.”

While he wrote extensively about established fields, Bourdieu had relatively less to say about unsettled arenas, overlapping spaces, or hybrid fields—social locations in which a variety of different actors based in multiple fields meet, interact, and struggle. Have a close look at the motley, wildly interdisciplinary crew of contributors to *The Immanent Frame* and you will see one example of the sort of hybrid social space I have in mind. Some theorists have suggested that the relatively porous boundaries and limited autonomy of these sorts of social spaces make it difficult to see them as “fields” in Bourdieu's sense. I don't propose to settle that question here, but rather to simply call attention to a small handful of what I take to be distinctive and interrelated features of these not infrequently emergent social spaces. And so I'll close with four short theses or conjectures.

First, interstitial spaces are spaces whose boundaries that are significantly unsettled, uncertain, and fluid. This can be seen, if you like, as a question of belonging and participation, inclusion and exclusion—of who is in, and who is out. Questions of recognition, membership, and legitimate participation are raised more frequently in interstitial spaces, and their proposed answers are more contested.

Second, and relatedly, interstitial spaces are spaces of discursive struggle or what Bourdieu called “classification struggles.” While more established and well-defined fields are frequently spaces of struggle and competition over the legitimate and authoritative definitions of the field's key terms and concepts, in interstitial spaces such classification struggles are often more vigorous and intense—including struggle over the very terms of the space itself.

**VanAntwerpen**

Third, that which can be taken-for-granted or assumed to be tacitly understood is frequently limited and largely up-for-grabs in these sorts of spaces. There is very little doxa.

Finally, Bourdieu argued that within established fields a good deal of social action involves “the orchestrated improvisation of common dispositions” and “practices regulated without express regulation.” But the sort of “regulated improvisation” Bourdieu saw as central to established fields is made problematic by the character of interstitial spaces—it is, in a sense, both less regulated and less clearly a collectively shared improvisation on an established genre, theme, or heritage. Practical mastery of the space appears as a puzzle to the actors who enter it. This suggests a set of challenges—but also possibilities—associated with the creativity of action. In this sense, interstitial spaces represent spaces of opportunity. Given the indeterminate qualities of these spaces, and the relative instability of their rules and boundaries, they provide scope for different forms of improvisation, different combinations and conversions, hybrid definitions and heterodox arguments, and innovative formulations of familiar orthodoxies.

From what I have said thus far, some of you might be thinking that the sort of space I am describing sounds not altogether unlike the academic field of religious studies. What I want to suggest, however—and it may seem odd in the context of the rather dystopian technological turn of events that has come to light this past week, not to mention Bill Romanowski’s important focus on media concentration and corporate control, which was helpfully supplemented by some of what Kathryn Reklis just said—is that some of the opportunities associated with digital media lend themselves to (or at the very least open new possibilities for) the creation of these sorts of spaces. Whether, and to what extent, that is true is something I hope we might discuss.

## The Bible in American Life: Preliminary Discussions

*The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture has been involved in a Lilly Endowment-funded study of how people use the Bible in their daily lives. We added 24 questions to the General Social Survey and 6 questions to the third panel of the National Congregations Study managed by Mark Chaves at Duke University. A full analysis of the data from those surveys will appear in a White Paper distributed on the Center's website. This session was an interdisciplinary conversation about the context in which that data must be understood. The panelists, each of whom is an advisor to the Center's national study, drew on their own research into the role of the Bible in American life.*

**Sylvester Johnson**  
**Northwestern University**

The Center for the Study of American Religion has organized a fascinating research agenda rooted in research interviews to gauge the expansive uses of the Bible by American Christians and the Bible's significance for the formation of religious belief, liturgy, and Christian formation through institutional practices. It is useful to consider the implications of this ambitious agenda through the lens of select studies.

In a now-classic essay of the 1980s, Martin Marty examined the Bible as what he called an American icon. He aimed to explicate the central role that the Bible performs in US society as a cultural symbol and physical object. As a familiar symbol of authority, the Bible's iconicity, he emphasized, far exceeds its particular use as a source of instruction, information, and doctrine. Without necessarily being opened and read, it is used to swear in public officials (including presidents) and legal witnesses. It adorns altars and represents moral authority. And it signifies the imaginaries of cultural, racial, and national origins.<sup>1</sup>

In his watershed *What is Scripture* (1993), Wilfred Cantwell Smith attempted to explain the comparative dimensions of textual traditions and canonical authority that have constituted global formations of scriptural practices. Smith emphasized the fact that communities of devotees actively construct the status of particular texts as scripture. So, the Bible is scripture and not mere entertaining reading or good literature because a network of communicants endows it with elevated status and exceptional authority. More importantly, Smith examined the "propensity to scripturalize" as a cross-cultural phenomenon that attested to particular, structuralist modalities of human experience. By understanding the proclivity to scripturalize, Smith argued, we might better apprehend what it means to be human.<sup>2</sup> Smith's interest in ecumenism has been widely noted and critiqued. And it is likely a major impetus behind his tendency to identify scripture as a largely benign and even auspicious phenomenon.

The multidisciplinary, comparative study of scripture is best represented today through the work of the Institute for Signifying Scriptures (ISS) at Claremont Graduate University. The Institute aims to effect "a turn toward a different critical orientation" to create and sustain "an anthropology, psychology, sociology, aesthetics, performative-expressive and material culture criticism and critical politics of scriptures."<sup>3</sup> Under the direction of Vincent L. Wimbush, the institute has brought together researchers across multiples disciplines from several continents studying within the context of a plethora of religious traditions to examine scriptural practices as a complex, ambiguous problem of human agency. In contrast to Smith's more celebrative stance toward scripture, ISS has directed attention toward problematizing the way scripture functions within networks of power to produce a range of social consequences that are often troubling.

In his most recent monograph, *White Men's Magic*, Wimbush examines "scripturalization" as a social-psychological-political structure establishing its own reality. Wimbush, inspired in some ways by Smith, goes far beyond the latter by examining scripture as an at-best ambivalent and more commonly fraught phenomenon comprising four aspects: (1) it is a social-cultural matrix that renders conventional particular rules and disciplinary practices; (2) it is a vehicle for nationalist projects; (3) it is a socio-psycho-

logical carapace that naturalizes regimes of regulation; and (4) it is a translocal/transcendent regime of power deployed toward ambivalent ends. By grounding his analysis in the eighteenth-century African author Olaudah Equiano's encounter with scripturalizing practices—what Equiano interpreted as the "magic" of white colonial actors—Wimbush explains scripturalization as a means of constituting modern subjectivities to ends that are both tragic and generative.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that "the Bible in America" is an enterprise that in multiple ways will reveal the specific textures of scriptural practices among contemporary Christians. And it is equally evident that the forthcoming data will enable the team of researchers at the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture to make more intelligible the complicated role that the Bible plays in contemporary US religion.

In the wake of the aforementioned intellectual efforts to understand the role of scripture in American religion, I think we might distill several key points to serve as guideposts for interpreting the Center's data from its study of the Bible in America.

1. The Bible is not merely a Christian book. What are its meanings and efficacies for Jews? What are its meanings to Muslims? Practitioners of Vodun? Judaism, of course, has invested deeply in scripturalizing practices. And in strictly historical terms, what is most frequently regarded as the Christian Bible in the US context, one must recognize, cannot count a single Christian among its authors. In the case of Islam, Herbert Berg has observed that Elijah Muhammad has been the single most influential figure in spreading Islam in the US. He also notes that Muhammad preached from the Bible more often than from the Qur'an.<sup>5</sup> In the case of Vodun: the Bible is used in ritual speech as well as in furnishing sacred altars. If we follow the paths of the Bible in its readership, iconicity, and material deployment, we will certainly move across multiple formal religious boundaries. This should certainly indicate to us that the Bible cannot be studied as a merely Christian book, even when Christians are the subject of study.

2. The Bible is a material object and, as such, has found important usage (e.g., as an entity with healing power, as an amulet), as a locus for genealogical records, as a special place to keep rare photos, letters, and other memorabilia, etc. We should not be constrained by the ideological dominance of textualism into imagining, counterfactually, that the Bible is merely or even mainly a book to be read.

3. It was a big deal that the Bible became a book in the fifteenth century, with the invention of movable type. So, of further importance for considering the Bible's materiality is its physical presentation and medium of consumption. The Bible exists in digital form (the use of which the survey seeks to assess), as study Bibles, leather-bound intertextual editions versus Gideon-Bible style without study aids—all of these factors must be considered as we try to understand what the Bible is across the multiple platforms of its incarnation.

4. We should be concerned with the narrative power of the Bible. The Center's survey attempts to capture uses of the Bible by those seeking to know the future. Because discourses of end-times, prophecy, and global cataclysm have so deeply shaped US popular culture, this is a very important measure to gauge.

## Johnson

5. Bible studies have been an important Protestant innovation used to build study groups and to formulate disciplinary practices. Researchers should appreciate anew how this paradigm of creating cellular networks (i.e., study cells that form the basis of institutional identity and affiliation) constitutes a peculiar mode of disciplinary power.

6. We should consider the broad significance of scripturalizing practices and reject easy efforts to render scripture as a benign phenomenon. Scripture is a human activity and a comparative phenomenon (Smith was right here), even if it is not an exhaustively universal phenomenon. As such, it is by no means an innocent enterprise, however. As Itumeleng Mosala has noted: The Bible is not merely a book but also a weapon in the struggle for social power. For this reason, he suggests, intellectuals who study scripture must realize their potential to mitigate the destructive consequences of this power struggle. The imperative of a critical power-analysis of the Bible is to transform theory of the weapon into the weapon of theory in order render visible the destructive consequences of scripturalizing practices.<sup>6</sup> By no means can the Bible be reduced simply to the violent histories that have been the crucible of its making and deployment. But it is certainly the case that the intellectually responsible and rigorous study of the Bible must make visible its violent legacy. Regina Schwartz, for instance, has noted that one of the consistent themes of the Bible is its emphasis on the maintenance of divine identity (i.e., associating a particular people with the divine) and the complex encoding of the principle of identity scarcity—the violent legacy of monotheism purports that cultic loyalty must be exclusive. More immediately, it is striking to observe the Bible's role in structuring antigay repression and in religious movements and public policy debates.<sup>7</sup>

7. Finally, the study of the Bible in America must at some point become a stepping stone toward the interdisciplinary study of what Laurie Maffly Kipp has termed “American scriptures”—examples include the Book of Mormon, the Circle Seven Koran of Moorish Science, Helen Schucman's *Course in Miracles*, and Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Ethnography can help bring the study of scripture more fully into the fold of Religious Studies (broadly conceived). And ethnography must play a critical role in the multidisciplinary research agenda that will sustain this endeavor.<sup>8</sup>

3. <http://www.cgu.edu/pages/7370.asp>, accessed 6/4/2013.

4. Vincent L. Wimbush, *White Men's Magic : Scripturalization as Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

5. Herbert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad and Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

6. Itumeleng Mosala, “Why Apartheid was Right about the Unliberated Bible: Race, Class and Gender as Hermeneutical Factors in the Appropriation of Scripture,” *Voices from the Third World* 17 (June 1994): 151–59.

7. Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain : The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Also, see Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming : The Rise of Christian Nationalism*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006).

8. Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, *American Scriptures : An Anthology of Sacred Writings*, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2010).

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1. Martin E. Marty, “Scripturality: The Bible as Icon in the Republic,” in his *Religion and Republic: The American Circumstance*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 140–65. Also, see Peter Johannes Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures : American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible : A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

2. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What Is Scripture? : A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), x, 18–19. Other comparative studies of scripture include

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**University of Notre Dame**

Connecting the history of the Bible in America to the Scriptures' current place in our society or its future as a cultural marker is a complicated task. But for making even a gesture in that direction, there is no more fitting place than Indiana since in recent years Paul Gutjahr of Indiana University—Bloomington and Peter Thuesen of IUPUI have been responsible for two of the most insightful books treating important aspects of this foundational, but often neglected, subject in American religious history. This afternoon I would like to offer six historical vignettes, along with one sentence of commentary each, in order to suggest how the history of the Bible might be studied by those investigating contemporary practices and beliefs.

The first is the Polyglot Psalter of Agostino Giustiniani, a Genoese scholar who in 1517 published the first printed biography of Christopher Columbus as an extended gloss on a phrase from Psalm 19:4, "in fines mundi" (to the ends of the earth). Giustiniani explained that it was fitting to append a substantial life of Columbus to this text since his compatriot from Genoa "often claimed that God had chosen him to fulfill this [biblical] prophecy through him."<sup>1</sup> From this incident we should remember that the story of Scripture in America has always involved languages other than English along with focused Christian attention that does not involve Protestants.

The second is the first publication in our history by an African-American, a long poem that appeared in 1760 from Jupiter Hammon, a slave on Long Island. It was entitled *An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries*. Its very first verse included a reference to Scripture:

SALVATION comes by Jesus Christ alone, / The only Son of God;  
 Redemption now to every one, / That love his holy Word. . . .

The poem throughout was thick with scriptural quotation and allusion, as:

Ho! every one that hunger hath [Is. 55:1], / Or pineth after me,  
 Salvation by thy leading Staff [Ps. 23:4], / To set the Sinner free.

From Hammon's poem I take the injunction never to forget the liberation that Scripture has represented for America's marginalized populations, even if some of that marginalization has been supported by the dominant population's use of the Bible.

The third is Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, with its four strategic quotations from the Scriptures, and the hope expressed at the end of the address, which seems to rest on the view of providence that Lincoln evoked in the address, for "malice toward none and charity toward all." This speech suggests how important it is to study the knowledge and use of Scripture by individuals who have no formal connections with any religious society.

The 300th anniversary of the King James Version provides my fourth incident. In 1911 public forums, along with churches, rang with high praise for this venerable translation that had long been simply "the Bible" for most Americans, even for many who were not native speakers of English or who were not Protestants. Within weeks of each other in the spring of that year, major public ad-

resses were delivered to large crowds in celebration of this anniversary by former president Theodore Roosevelt, the governor of New Jersey and soon-to-be president Woodrow Wilson, and William Jennings Bryan, three-time nominee for president of the Democratic Party. The take-away for Roosevelt was ethical: "Our success in striving to help our fellow-men . . . depends largely upon our success as we strive . . . to lead our lives in accordance with the great ethical principles laid down in the life of Christ, and in the New Testament writing which seek to expound and apply his teachings."<sup>2</sup> For Wilson, by contrast, it was the Bible as political ideal: "not a little of the history of liberty lies in the circumstance that the moving sentences of this book were made familiar to the ears and the understanding of those peoples who have led mankind in exhibiting the forms of government and the impulses of reform which have made for freedom and for self-government among mankind."<sup>3</sup> Again by contrast, Bryan made a much more explicitly Christian claim: "back of the progress of the present day is the code of morals that Christ proclaimed. . . . and back of that code of morals is the divine character of him who is both Son of God and Saviour of Mankind."<sup>4</sup> From these speeches I take away the necessity of always remembering that Scripture may be used in ways having little to do with religion as traditionally understood and that may substantially contradict each other.

The fifth matter concerns the results of modern public polling. A Gallup Poll from January 2005, for example, found that 95% of American regular church attenders (89% in Canada), and 69% of the total American population (56% for Canada) expressed their agreement with either of the two most conservative opinions on offer: "the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word;" or "the Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally."<sup>5</sup> In 2000, 14% of Americans told Gallup pollsters that they were participating in a Bible study group.<sup>6</sup> In 2006, the Barna Group reported that its surveys found 47% of the American population reporting that they read the Bible at least once a week, a figure that had risen from 36% in 1988.<sup>7</sup> Yet the same polls find consistently weak biblical knowledge, with one Gallup survey from the mid-2000s finding that only 49% of the population could name the first book of the Bible and only 35% the four gospels that begin the New Testament. From public polling the lesson can be learned that ideology respecting Scripture and the actual use of Scripture are two different topics requiring different research strategies and fitting into different narrative agendas.

The sixth incident is provided by the annual presidential prayer breakfast in Washington, D.C. on February 2, 2012, when Barack Obama quoted or paraphrased at least 10 passages from Scripture, including a full quotation in the words of the New International Version from 1 John 3:17-18 (where the emphasis is on love through action instead of just words) and allusions echoing the wording of the King James Version and several modern translations to passages ranging from Genesis, Leviticus, Proverbs, and Isaiah in the Old Testament and Matthew, Luke, and Romans in the New.<sup>8</sup> Predictably, the very next day self-identified Christian believers from the Republican Party labeled the president's remarks "theologically threadbare" and the product of "laughable theology."<sup>9</sup> From this incident I conclude that in American history

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public use of Scripture has always been political, even if politics can never exhaust what public use of Scripture has meant.

I close by repeating words spoken in 1909 by Solomon Schechter at the dedication of the main building of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. In my view, Schechter was correct, when he noted problems in how Americans have used the Bible—including an “excess of zeal,” a spate of “caricature revelations,” and the presence of “quacks”—but also when he concluded, “this country is, as everybody knows, a creation of the Bible.”<sup>10</sup>

1. Liana Lupus, *A Light to the Nations: America's Earliest Bibles (1532-1864)* (Rare Bible Series, Vol. II) (New York: Museum of Biblical Art, 2010), 5, 9, 44 (quotation).

2. Theodore Roosevelt, “the Bible and the Life of the People,” in his *Realizable Ideals* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1969 [orig. 1911]), 90.

3. Wilson, “An Address in Denver on the Bible,” in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 23: 1911-1912*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 13.

4. Bryan’s speech is reprinted almost identically in own weekly newspaper, *The Commoner*, May 12, 1911, p. 3, and in a pamphlet, *Hon. William J. Bryan on the Bible: The Book of Supreme Influence* (New York: American Bible Society, 1911).

5. The Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing (January 2005), p. 96.

6. George Gallup, Jr., *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 2000* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2001), 349.

7. Reported in Cindy Crosby, ‘Not your mother’s Bible,’ *Publishers Weekly*, Oct. 30, 2006, p. 29.

8. “Remarks by the President at the National Prayer Breakfast,” email memo from D. Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement, 2 Feb. 2012.

9. Ralph Reed, as quoted in David Nakamura and Michelle Boorstein, “At prayer breakfast and with birth-control decision, Obama riles religious conservatives,” *Washington Post*, 3 Feb. 2012 [[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/at-prayer-breakfast-and-with-birth-control-decision-obama-riles-religious-conservatives/2012/02/02/gIQAgy1blQ\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/at-prayer-breakfast-and-with-birth-control-decision-obama-riles-religious-conservatives/2012/02/02/gIQAgy1blQ_story.html) (accessed 4 Feb. 2012)]; Peter Wehner, Commentary Magazine Email, 3 Feb. 2012.

10. Solomon Schechter, “The Seminary as a Witness,” in *Seminary addresses and Other Papers* (n.p.: Burning Bush Press, 1959 [orig. 1915]), 48-50.

**Valarie Ziegler**  
**DePauw University**

The first three chapters of my recent book, *Enticed by Eden*,<sup>1</sup> co-authored with Linda Schearing of Gonzaga University, deals with conservative evangelical attempts to recreate the love life Adam and Eve enjoyed in Eden, where men were men, and women obeyed them. These evangelicals are people who, if they took the Bible in American Life survey, would say they regarded the Bible as inerrant, that the Bible was critical to decisions they made about structuring their families, and that they consulted print and electronic sources for help in interpreting scripture. Universally these Christians use the language of gender complementarity to describe what they call biblical manhood and womanhood, arguing that God created men to be initiators and women to be their submissive helpers. Many participate in ministries endorsed or associated with Focus on the Family, such as the Becoming a Modern-Day Princess and the Secret Keeper Girls programs or online dating resources like Christian Café, Boundless, and Marry Well. Many interact regularly in online communities dedicated to biblical manhood and womanhood. And they invariably describe themselves as countercultural.

In their understanding of Christian marriage, these conservative Christians are universally reacting to the courtship movement championed most famously by Joshua Harris in his *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* (1997) materials, and all address the question of whether, in fashioning the first man and first woman in Eden, God was intentionally functioning as the Creator of Romance. Their answers fall into three categories: (1) yes, God created male and female for mind-blowing, male-initiated romance; (2) no, God didn't—rather God designed gender hierarchy and marriage as theological obligations, not thrills; and, (3) yes, God designed marriage to be an experience of romantic ecstasy, so long as ecstasy involves dominant males spanking their wives to blissful obedience and orgasm.

The authors who see God as the Creator of Romance come from a long line of evangelicals—from Ed Wheat and Tim and Beverley LeHaye to Joshua Harris and Eric and Lesley Ludy—who argue that God created man and woman to have fantastic sex in marriage. Preparing evangelical children for this future means emphasizing celibacy prior to marriage while training males to exercise leadership (or dominance) and teaching females to wait patiently for males to take the initiative. The Christian courtship movement has embraced this theology wholeheartedly, though not necessarily to biblical ends. The popularized expressions of these gender roles have resulted in a confusion of Eden with Camelot. Conservative evangelical girls are urged to think of themselves as princesses, like Sleeping Beauty or Cinderella, patiently awaiting the Prince Charming God will send them. A host of theological materials—like the Becoming a Modern Princess program, or *The Princess and the Prince* books and ceremonies, or ministries like PINC, Pure in Heart, and Secret Keeper Girls, to name but a few—allow evangelical girls to embrace popular culture by celebrating Mary Kay cosmetics, princesses, the color pink, and even Princess Bibles. There is nothing world-denying about these materials. As one author advises mothers, “Think facials, tea parties, and shopping!... I want you to thoroughly pamper your daughter... Find an exclusive little teahouse or a swank hotel and make reservations for an extravagant tea.”<sup>2</sup>

As evangelical girls learn to become pampered princesses, boys are urged to think of themselves as warriors.<sup>3</sup> The reward, all are told, is that God will present each of them with their soul mate spouse, just as God gave Eve to Adam in Eden. And when at last they embark on their long-awaited honeymoon, according to Harris, “their love-making becomes a jubilant, two-person worship service!”

The difficult thing about all this is that few real-life marriages are that ecstatic or romantic, and unmarried conservative evangelical men and women have grown frustrated about finding the perfect mate. Many have turned from courting to dating, and a host of Christian internet sites offer assistance. Some promise to deliver soul mates, but many denounce the whole concept. Sites like eHarmony (which was originally associated with Focus on the Family) and Christian Café (the largest Christian-only site, partnered with Focus on the Family since autumn of 2011) counsel people to seek not ecstasy but compatibility. And smaller sites associated with Focus on the Family, like Boundless and Marry Well, develop the grim theology of marriage outlined by Al Mohler of Southern Seminary in Louisville, who in 2004 excoriated Christians, especially men, who were postponing marriage to enjoy an “extended adolescence” into their late 20s and early 30s. Moeller denounced this “as the sin I think besets this generation” and insisted that marriage was for Christians an “obligation.”<sup>4</sup> Evangelicals who followed his lead at Marry Well and Boundless demonized “soul-mate-ism” and dismissed sexual attraction as a “temporary emotional disposition,” a release of pheromones bound to fade in eighteen to forty-eight months. Physical attractiveness was unimportant, authors insisted; for a “face is just wrapping paper.... Sometimes the tackiest wrapping paper covers the best gift.” Spiritual character was what mattered, and if people couldn't be turned on by holiness, that was their own sinful fault. For, in the beginning, Eve was attractive to Adam because of her godliness, and contemporary men must learn to “Forget the fantasy... Let the *Inventor* of attraction and beauty reform your thinking and your marriage will be rich.”

The jeremiads have not worked. Women outnumber men on the sites, and since the women weren't supposed to initiate relationships, many were never asked out, much less married. This dire situation prompted Candice Watters, co-founder of Marry Well, to turn away from the Genesis accounts of male-female relations and advise women at the Boundless site to a “pull a Ruth” by approaching men directly and seeking to “nurture” them into proposing marriage. How “nurturing” was different from the forbidden “taking initiative” was anybody's guess.

Finally, there is my third model: conservative evangelicals practicing Christian domestic discipline (CDD). This movement is overwhelmingly powered by laypeople and fueled by website communities. These sites proclaim the ecstasy inherent in Christian marriage while cautioning that marital bliss depends upon enacting the gender roles God designed in Eden. There God created Adam as an alpha male and designed Eve to follow and obey him. In a fallen world, however, women seek to control rather than submit to their husbands, so men must use corporal punishment to enforce their authority. CDD adherents practice a range of spankings, including regular maintenance spankings, which are

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given not for poor behavior, but to reenact the Edenic primal scene of male dominance and female submission. Play spankings are gentle reenactments of husbands as initiators and wives as passive receivers. When incorporated into sexual activities, play spankings also have an erotic element.

In fact, everything related to spanking is potentially erotic in the world of CDD. That is why, as CDD author Leah Kelley states, “CDD marriages are among the best in the world. Couples... report greater intimacy, special closeness, increased trust, and fantastic sex lives” because they are enacting “the roles God created for us in the most basic way.”<sup>5</sup> Biblical manhood and womanhood, in short, is arousing. And seen through the prism of CDD, everyday objects like silicon spatulas or mini blind rods are erotic implements. CDD women say things like “I need more caveman from him,” and CDD husbands may forbid wives to wear slacks or underwear or require them to perform sexual favors on demand. Couples for whom CDD works credit it with extraordinary benefits, such as releasing guilt, dissipating stress, creating intimacy, making them orgasmic, and instantaneously improving family dynamics.

Ultimately, CDD spanking is a morality play, a symbolic rendering of and participation in the really real—the hierarchical cosmos that God created. And it demonstrates—indeed, incarnates—the coercive drive essential to biblical manhood as well as the submission and victimization that define biblical womanhood. If, as conservative evangelicals argue, God created men to dominate women and holds men accountable if they fail at that task, it is hardly surprising that physical violence proves to be a useful and even celebrated tool. As one practitioner observed, “I found out about CDD when I typed in ‘Biblical womanhood’ into the google [sic] search engine.”

What is surprising, perhaps even shocking, about CDD couples is the loving intimacy and sexual ecstasy they associate with corporal punishment. Adam and Eve look more like Tarzan and Jane here, but the basic CDD understanding of what it means to be a man and a woman is the same as in the first two models of marriage I discussed. Gender hierarchy constitutes this theology; its purpose is to celebrate male dominance and reify female submission. And Christians who practice this theology are in cultural captivity to a variety of unlikely motifs, including Prince Charming; medieval castles; Mary Kay lip gloss; what John Piper has without irony called the “penetrating power” of masculine preaching that “aims to come with divine thrust” into listeners;<sup>6</sup> and, most of all, to two concepts that never appear in the biblical text at all: gender “complementarity” and “biblical” manhood and womanhood.

3. An excellent example of sharply gendered marketing to evangelical boys and girls can be found in any Vision Forum product catalog. See <http://www.visionforum.com/news/blogs/doug/default.aspx?path=/2011/11/9731/>.

4. Albert Mohler, “Reflecting on ‘The Mystery of Marriage,’” *Boundless*, March 19, 2010, <http://www.boundless.org/relationships/2010/reflecting-on-the-mystery-of-marriage> (accessed June 5, 2013).

5. Leah Kelley, *Christian Domestic Discipline 101* (n.p.: Christian Domestic Discipline, 2007), 52, 59.

6. John Piper, “‘The Frank and Manly Mr. Ryle’—The Value of a Masculine Ministry,” *desiringGod*, January 31, 2012, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/biographies/the-frank-and-manly-mr-ryle-the-value-of-a-masculine-ministry> (accessed May 14, 2012).

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1. Linda S. Scheearing and Valarie H. Ziegler, *Enticed By Eden: How Western Culture Uses, Confuses, (and Sometimes Abuses) Adam And Eve* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013).

2. Dannah Gresh, *8 Great Dates for Moms & Daughters: How to Talk about True Beauty, Cool Fashion, and... Modesty!* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2010), 26, 35.

## The Future of the Study of American Religion

*Having begun the conference with a look back over the past fifty years of American religious studies, the conference concluded with a session dedicated to thinking about where we are going. Given the state of the field, emerging technologies, and current efforts, where is the field going over the next two decades? What topics will be most important? Which methods for research will prove the most efficacious?*

**Nancy Ammerman**  
**Boston University**

Being invited to think about the future of the study of religion in America in the space of ten minutes is a daunting challenge. As a heuristic to frame these speculations, I will reflect on the three key words in that assignment—study, religion, and in America.

Let me begin with the last of them—in **America**. It seems to me that in the future, the object of our study will continue to include the attention to diversity and interconnectedness that has characterized the last couple of decades. We have increasingly recognized that the world is here and that “American religion” is far more than the Puritan heritage that seemed to describe it in earlier eras. We also know that American religion increasingly includes those who place themselves in the non-affiliated camp, so understanding them and the relationship between them and the institutions and traditions to which they are no longer connected will be a critical task. In addition, the diversities we are examining must begin to include a broader range of difference, especially including attention to the way America is shaped by economic inequality and social class. Those unequal social realities clearly shape American religion, as well, including growing disparities between African American middle class people – who are in church—and the underclass—who are not.

But understanding our interconnection and diversity should not obscure the degree to which there are distinctive themes in an American story and distinctive social and legal structures that shape us in this country. These distinctions become more clear, of course, as we engage in comparisons to the situation in other places. Paying attention to the role of the state and to national identity can be extremely useful both for understanding our own object of study and for being clear about where the points of comparison and distinction are.

The central key word in this question, of course, is “**religion**.” Social scientists and historians studying religion have typically defined their object of study in terms of major religious traditions, beliefs and organizations. What does Buddhism or Christianity teach, and what difference does that make in the world? Research questions have often been framed in terms of how beliefs affect behavior or how the membership of one group is different from the membership of another. We have already seen a major turn to research on “lived religion,” and I think it is now time for us to get serious about saying more clearly what we mean by that.

Yes, lived religion turns the focus toward everyday practice, paying less attention to the experts who decide on official theology and doctrine and more to the ordinary people. We include festivals and shrines, ritual healing practices and stories of miracles, many of which may not be endorsed by religious authorities. That is, we include what happens on the margins and among neglected populations. But we also include the body and the heart, and not just the head.

Being “lived,” points especially to the material, embodied aspects of religion as they occur in everyday life. The study of lived religion includes attention to how and what people eat, how they dress, how they deal with birth and death and sexuality and nature, even how they modify hair and body through tattoos or dreadlocks. Lived religion may include the spaces people inhabit, as well—the construction of shrines in homes or in public places, for

instance. And it includes the physical and artistic things people do together, such as singing, dancing, and other folk or community traditions that enact a spiritual sense of solidarity and transcendence. Some of these rituals and traditions may be widely recognized as religious and named as such, but research on lived religion also includes activities that might not immediately be seen as spiritual or religious by outsiders, but are defined as such by the participants. All of the ways Americans express a connection to spiritual life are being included in the study of lived religion, and that breadth of focus is likely to continue.

It has always been clear that the study of lived religion would push social scientists to look beyond congregations and denominations, temples and shrines, but our instinct too often has been to assume a dichotomy between that sort of institutional “religion” and individual or personal “spirituality.” We are still too often shaped by modernization paradigms that expected religion to retreat to the private domain. The notion that the social world is organized into neatly separate functional compartments, however, has become less tenable; and that signals a challenge to look for lived religion in workplaces and markets, hospitals and neighborhoods as much as in congregations, on the one hand, or households, on the other.

To do that asks us to recognize that “lived religion” isn’t just about extraordinary experiences or exotic rituals that take place in exclusive, bounded, “sacred” spaces. Religion is intertwined in everyday action, and we need to question our own need to draw a distinct line between sacred and secular. At the same time that ordinary work or consumption or routine chores (like dog-walking) are happening, they may be intertwined with sacred meanings or rituals.<sup>1</sup> People keep religious objects on their desks, pray with their co-workers, and sometimes chafe at the way they are made into an outsider by the common religious culture everyone else seems to share. That is, the public world of work and civic life is a place in which religion is lived. Religious goods themselves are bought and sold in the capitalist marketplace, and spiritual therapies may operate in conjunction with apparently secular medical environments. The religion people live everyday isn’t “either/or,” but weaves in and out of conversations with friends and family, as well as with the language and symbols of public rituals.

As we continue to focus on what constitutes “religion” in American life, we will need to keep an expansive dictionary. We need to recognize that both approved traditional practices and new innovations may be “lived.” Both what people do at the official sanctuary or shrine and what they do on a pilgrimage or in the yoga studio may be “lived.” What they do at work and what they do in tornado relief may be religious.

Finally, the key word “**study**.” Some of the most creative theoretical work utilizes the tools of cultural studies to ask how religion is produced and used in the social world. That is, if people interact with each other and with the world in ways that include language, objects, practices, and stories that are marked as religious, how are those sacred cultural objects created? What places and organizations serve as arenas for the production and legitimation of different forms of lived religion? How are cultural objects labeled and recognized as religious? What circles of conversation and social spaces allow this category to take on a reality that gives people

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patterns to live with? What material objects, styles of clothing, or ways of moving and singing might give a particular lived religion its tangible form? What imaginations about the self and identity are therefore possible? And what are the forms of cultural power or suppression that may limit any expression of this lived religion? All of these questions, by the way, remind us that religion is a socially produced category, and practices are given shape and meaning by socially-produced language and conversation, often created and sustained in organized religious institutions.

One of our challenges, however, is that our multiple disciplines sometimes fail to inform each other, making it all too easy to miss important contributions. The vast majority of lived religion research to date has employed some combination of ethnographic and historical methods, now often enhanced by methods that allow analysis of visual and material culture. Each discipline brings slightly different analytical questions to the data, but each seeks to ground an understanding of the religious social world in observations of living persons and communities along with their texts and artifacts. As both the methods and the disciplines expand, the study of lived religion will be enriched, but this too poses challenges. Common keywords (or hash tags) for lived religion and its components and dimensions would assist future researchers as they attempt to build a comprehensible body of knowledge. A common vocabulary would enable searching relevant literatures so as to build bridges.

I also want to suggest the perhaps radical idea that a more systematic approach to the study of lived religion may make possible better quantifiable measures. One of the best things that has happened to foster a broader general understanding of American religion is the very good work being done by the Pew Forum.<sup>2</sup> It's not perfect, but it is a huge leap forward, and they actually talk to the people whose ethnographic and interpretive work they know they need. This sort of partnership is extremely fruitful. To the extent that students of lived religion can build a body of common keywords and concepts, it may be possible to develop sensible ways to ask people across traditions about how religion is a part of their everyday life. At this point, the study of lived religion is probably still too much in its youth to venture that far. It is also inherently grounded in the detail and diversity only ethnographic work can fully apprehend. Still, if religion is something that permeates and often structures social life, lived religion will need to take its place on the standardized surveys along with politics and consumption and household status. A great deal has been learned over the last three decades, but there is a great deal yet to do.

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1. Here I have in mind the research I report in *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

2. See, for example, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008. U.S. Religious Landscape Survey [accessed July 19 2008]. Available from <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports#>.

**Kathryn Lofton**  
**Yale University**

Most scholars are not very good listeners. Why is this so? Answers range. A kindly explanation would focus on the nerdy loneliness of a scholarly life, one in which social interaction is a challenge to the basic habitus of data gathering and interpretation. A less kindly explanation would focus on the megalomania of the pontificating professor who speaks to be heard and has no interest to engage. We speak a lot about method in the study of religion, and we often talk about the importance of gathering lots of data. We even will talk about the historian as someone who listens to the dead. Yet we don't talk as much about the quality of that listening, or what we do with whatever we dig up. We tend to leave that kind of talk to a vague magical hermeneutics. My brief comments today are a bit about the current state of, and future for, those practices. Yet in the end I will simply say that whatever our debates are about the scholar and their subjectivity, we would do well to return to the simplest practices and ask ourselves *how we do them*. What kind of listener are you? Explain what you do when you listen. If you can make a mechanics of that, you have the beginnings of a methodological statement. My own sense, from reading a lot of scholarship and sitting many times in rooms like this one, is that few among us could fail to gain from this simple exercise of rigorously appraising our ostensible and internal tactics of listening (of discernment, of perception).

I mention this because one of the first things scientists will mention about their predictive equipment is its sensitivity. To predict the weather for tomorrow or whether an earthquake will happen today or whether metamorphic rocks will be found there or *there*, you need equipment that perceives the smallest ground movement or atmospheric oscillation. Our first critiques of all technologies will be on those grounds: How clear is the image? How readable the page? How vivid the sound?

But sensitive equipment is not all the predictor needs. A July 2004 issue of *The Journal of Religion and Psychical Research* included an article by a Yunnan University physicist describing "Three Ways of Earthquake Prediction." In this short essay, Yi-Fang Chang argues that the prediction of earthquakes would improve considerably if three different groups of predictive methods were used together. The first methods are those of "traditional" science, which are, as Yi-Fang explains, based upon *detection*. This method involves instruments (like the electromagnetic seismograph, the fluxgate magnetometer, the digital geoelectric device, etc.) that are normally placed at many different locations and measure motions of the ground. This method detects what is there, and uses those detections of motion to predict what will happen next. The second method is that of theoretical physics which is based on *calculation*. This method involves formulae (like the continental geodynamics model, rock fracture, inversion of the seismic moment tensor, etc.) that are described mathematically. This method tries to predict what could be there, given certain preexisting patterns. The third method is that of the paranormal, which are methods that focus on observations and interpretations inconsistent with the world as already understood through scientific empiricism. This method involves observing unusual effects of earthquakes on animals or plants; disaster forecasting by thought field, ESP, and Qigong; and other magical practices from a diverse range of traditions. Chang concludes that "the accuracy

of scientific earthquake prediction would increase if these groups [of predictive methodology] were used in conjunction with each other to form a network."<sup>1</sup>

My initial proposition is a simple one, namely that the current state of the study of American religion shares much with Yi-Fang Chang's prescription for prediction. Most scholars of U.S. religion believe that a kind of mixed-salad approach is how the best kind of work is done: a salad in which the base methods are those of traditional detective bent (like history, anthropology, or sociology), and in which the added toppings include some play with theory (time with Edward Soja, perhaps, or a quotation from Bourdieu) and a thoughtful engagement with the beliefs of their subjects. Let me translate these three methods into a simplifying trio, and remark that all of us, in one way or another, consider history, theory, and theology when we write (*alternatively*: we consider anthropology, theory, witchcraft; *alternatively*: sociology, theory, divination).

Despite our various hand-wringing on all of these subjects, everybody does, I think, seek to see and analyze their subjects with a combinatory spirit. The differences between Jon Butler and John Modern (or Nancy Ammerman and Courtney Bender, or John McGreevy and Sylvester Johnson, or Nancy Cott and Marie Griffith) are not profound at this level. All of those scholars would, in their excellent work, try to give a vivid portrait of the thing itself; they would try to consider that thing relative to other things; and they would try to understand that thing relative to its understandings (rational or not) of other things. Everybody tries to get the details down; everybody tries to recognize demographics, scholarly and not; and everybody who claims any relationship to the study of religion knows now that they have to acknowledge the potential utility of beliefs unsubstantiated by scientific empiricism in the effort to understand those who believe in them. Right?

The difference between these scholars is the proportionality of their trio, and their sense of the overlap (or lack thereof) between history, theory, and theology. There are other differences, of course, but this is not a review essay in contemporary scholarly difference. This is about predicting where scholarship goes next. And if it's anything like predicting earthquakes (which I think it is) we need to begin with an aggregate, not an exception. Where we are now (after all the theory wars, and identity wars, and culture wars, and real wars) is this: we know that anything we want to know will be more likely to be discovered through using as many tools as we can staple to our belts. My worry, in case it is not clear, is that we staple without thinking much about how we use those tools (or indeed what a tool is). We just think: I gather data, and think hard, and compare, and dip into some Clifford Geertz, and go.

In a 1991 article for the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Edward Schoen wrote that "predictions can and do play crucial roles in religion, roles similar in many ways to those played by predictions in the sciences."<sup>2</sup> One way of summarizing the generation of scholarship which I occupy is an interest in **this** overlap: the space shared between what we think we're doing as scholars, and what they, those religious people, are doing over there as religious people. The finding of this generation is now a banality, namely that the distinction we'd like to establish

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between detection and divination is not so clear. Indeed, to the naked eye, their practices look remarkably the same. This does not mean they *are* the same. It means they look quite alike. And those similar appearances are important to understand well before we quickly defend the profundity of their differences.

It is no shock then that I, a scholar of such a generation, would point out that to predict the future of the study of American religion requires predicting the future of American religion itself. And then to make some connotations. For example, there is no future of American religion without thinking about the conjoined future of the university, the humanities, and the federal government. These are interrelated bodies produced through certain concepts of the public and slowly being remade through ideas we might broadly label neoliberal (a term that, like postmodern, does more to summarize an affect than specify the transformative aesthetic and political crisis it signals). If I say to you, a room of contemporary academics, that *we are all free agents now*, you will doubtlessly have varied replies to that claim. But let us agree that the professionalization and a free agency model of scholarly productivity and self-concept are not coincidentally concomitant with the crisis in higher education. As we conceive of ourselves in ever narrower arenas of specialty, with ever mobile concepts of economic betterment, we find ourselves becoming like Kathleen's interviewees.<sup>3</sup> Recall that her collaborators wanted to participate in religions without commitments to them. Isn't this how more and more academics relate to their universities? The institutional public of the university diminishes as other kinds of meta publics—social media, interdisciplinary centers, satellite campuses, massive online courses—take the place of those old mold of complicity and commitment. We want to participate, and benefit, but not belong in a way regulated by our submission.

And this suggests an end to a certain congregational life for us—an end to the local and the durable for something more immaterial and optional. As scholars of the subject *religion* we have said for some time that the congregation is a unit in crisis. Haven't we also said, in other voices, that the university department is in crisis? I am sure we all have said or thought such a thing, in one way or another, as we observe the consolidation of the humanities, the diminishing of tenured appointments, and the instrumental digitization of knowledge. Drawing together the department and the congregation as analogical is not to speak easily of their connection, but rather to provocatively ask if we all don't have, right at our fingertips, an analogical space to consider the future of something like religion, and the problem of such predictions. Think of the hysteria of some colleagues about the end of the university, the humanities, the professorate; think about what your replies, learned and instinctual, are to such posits. It is appealing to me to think about such hysteria as like the cyclical claims that religion will end. As we know, now, it's not that religion (or the study of religion) goes away (that is to say, there is no secularization). It is that the shape of religion (and the study of religion) has changed as our students [slash] believers [slash] consumers have asked more and more that the world be made for them, rather than they come to the world.

I myself am a shameful coward when it comes to predictive efforts. Whenever I read texts about the future I always think they embarrass the author a bit. This embarrassment occurs equally in

reply columns about tenure and its decline in the *Chronicle* and articles by Roger Finke about the supply-side inevitability of the next fifty years of American religion.<sup>4</sup> To be clear, I get nervous, too, when I read Hal Lindsay's *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. **What** are they doing? I think as I read. Why are they naming what is to come when they so clearly haven't figured out where we are? Playing prophet only works if you can name well the world to be revised. (For a strong example of such consciousness, see Job, chapter 6.) Which is why scholars are usually subpar prophets: we may be inwardly quite sensitive, but we are, in general, not very good at hearing well what is being said. We tend to like to climb into topical bell jars of our own making, and hide.

What is the future of American religion? Wherever we find individuals gathering in collectivities for the purpose of moral debate and social self-making, *there* it is. Wherever we see propositions for transformation, for regulation, and for survival, *there* it is. Wherever we find people both paying attention to common subjects and offering ritual, commentarial, and critical reply to them, *there* it is. If we pay attention to these locations, we will not only perpetuate the study of religion, but also propound the life blood of our classrooms, and our institutions, as we see and really listen—really listen—to where and who we are.

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1. Yi-Fang Chang, "Three Ways of Earthquake Prediction," *Journal of Religion & Psychological Research* 27:3 (July 2004), 126.

2. Edward L. Schoen, "The Roles of Predictions in Science and Religion," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29:1 (February 1991), 3.

3. This refers to Kathleen Garces-Foley's presentation, which included findings from The Changing Spirituality of Emerging Adults Project, which is gathering data about the religious lives of emerging adults (<http://www.changingsea.org/>).

4. Ralph Pyle and Roger Finke, "Forward to the Past: Predictions for the Future of U.S. Religion," *Religion, Mobilization, and Social Action*, edited by Anson Shupe and Bronislaw Misztal (Westport, Ct.: Praeger, 1998), 47-66.

**John T. McGreevy**  
**University of Notre Dame**

That more historians now identify themselves as historians of religion than as social historians, cultural historians or even political historians qualifies as an unanticipated episode in the sociology of the discipline. The number of historians in the past eighteen years willing to type “religion” next to their name when queried by the American Historical Association has doubled.

Just skimming the titles pouring out from the best university and trade presses, let alone reading, first of course the acknowledgments, and then the occasional, actual book, is exhilarating. Smart journals such as *Religion and American Culture* thrive. Blogs steer the scholarly conversation. Books on religious topics triumph in once inaccessible prize competitions.

Why this is so—the triumph of cultural history, exhaustion with other topics, academic dismay at “red-state” America—is not obvious. It may simply reflect professional imperatives, with historians of the United States catching up to historians of Europe and Latin America, where books about priests, miracles and revivals have shaped main historiographical currents more profoundly for the past thirty years.

Viewing American religious history as a “field”, though, is perhaps a bit of a misnomer. Fields mean coverage, certainly, but at a practical level fields are defined by arguments more than the class to class trudge of the survey course. And in American religious history courses, and the scholarly literature upon which they rest, arguments are elusive. We have **topics** a plenty—Mormons to Catholics to Christian Scientists. Kateri Tekawith to Ralph Waldo Emerson to Billy Graham. But do we have **problems**?

The field’s organizing principle is in fact diversity. In some ways this is good. But in other ways it is not. To take a modestly provocative example: do we now think there is a single superb survey of American religious history? If so, what is it? If not, why?

So before I offer a forecast of future directions a methodological request: we should argue more. Fair and good spirited arguments, certainly. And not arguments with me. But argument nonetheless since genuine argument or disagreement is actually a hard won achievement and marks a field’s maturation. And in religious history the number of productive arguments still strikes me as fewer than say, in political history, the history of slavery, the history of imperialism or even some versions of the Atlantic world literature.

Now I’m asked in my ten minutes today to offer some predictions about the field as we look out a decade. Beware: like many of us asked to make such predictions I dutifully came up with a few ideas and only slowly realized that these ideas, by sheer scholarly chance and my own unquestioned integrity, happened to be scholarly projects of the sort that I had done or planned to do.

So instead of assuming that I was singlehandedly meeting the field’s challenges I tried again and we’ll see what you think.

First: the nones. NONES. If the most exciting work in the last scholarly generation was around, in some shape or form, religious experience, I wonder if we’ll see a push in another direction, away from, say, cultural anthropology to political theory. Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* is the twenty-first century’s most talked about book in religious studies. Taylor’s argument, developed over seven hundred and seventy six intermittently brilliant but meandering pages cannot be condensed here. His central claim can: we have moved from “a society in which belief in God is unchallenged and

indeed unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest option.”

As a historian Taylor is a good philosopher but we can do better on the historical dimensions of his theme: the persistence of religion alongside of secularization. Determined to present our topic—American religious history—in its most alluring light, we historians of scholars of American religion may have skirted ways in which the American experience of religion and secularization is one variant on the North Atlantic norm. Or to put it more bluntly: is the United States, when Europe is looked at as a whole, including Poland not just France, really so exceptional?

The topic of secularism has not been entirely neglected and I could list some of distinguished historians including Jim Turner, David Hollinger and others interested in the topic. But in part because American historians have struggled to imagine a society simultaneously more secular and more religious, no American equivalents exist to Callum Brown’s bracing *The Death of Christian Britain*, which posits secularization less as a process than an explosion. in the 1950s and 1960s.

Second and more predictably, I like the idea of global or international history. It’s a cliché, I know, but sometimes clichés are right. Certainly the most important shift within the discipline of history in the last generation has been toward a more global enterprise. This does not mean, I rush to add, that every book or dissertation or article should have a global orientation. But probably more than do now. To me the best and most exciting history I’ve read in the past decade, beyond the work of everyone in this room, is Chris Bayly’s *The Birth of the Modern World* precisely because it has a sophisticated approach to global history, from the vantage point of a South Asianist. It still strikes me as dazzling, not least his chapter on nineteenth century religion, which he views as absolutely central. Now graduate students in the room should close their ears, because “global” topics for individual graduate students need very clever design. But still: I think this is basically a good thing for historians of US religion, a way to prompt us to be more ambitious in our outlook, our use of languages and our approach.

In a review essay I wrote a couple years ago and from which I’m drawing on now<sup>1</sup>, I noted that I had recently read four superb texts: my colleague Mark Noll’s magisterial *America’s God*, which provided an incisive coda to the long-running debate over religion and republicanism, marching from Jonathan Edwards and the founders to Lincoln. Catherine Albanese’s *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion*, which knitted together, a bit improbably for my taste, Paracelsus, Mary Baker Eddy and Father Divine into a single “national religiosity.” Richard Wightman Fox’s *American Jesus* And Leigh Schmidt’s *Restless Souls*.

Major achievements by major historians and all, and Philip Goff should fly us back here for a weekend to discuss them. But their shared emphasis on an American religion or spirituality—often across denomination, time, space—may have inadvertently deflected attention away from placing American religious history in a more global context.

This effect was surely unintended, since the transmission of religious ideas, objects, songs and architectural drawings is more likely than many subjects to resist national frames. Noll

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followed *America's God* with a determinedly trans-national and multilingual study of theological opinion on the Civil War, and he has long argued for a global understanding of evangelicalism; Schmidt's discussion of liberal Protestantism—his real subject I think—takes us into Zen. I do think we've become better at tracing religious communities across national boundaries—from Tom Tweed's Miami Catholic Cubans to James Campbell's African-American Methodists to Jon Gjerde's investigation of Missouri Synod Lutherans and German Catholics in the upper Midwest.

But we **don't have** many monographs that make the sort of connections we see in Erez Manela's history of what he calls the Wilsonian moment, the period after World War I when nationalists in places as diverse as Korea, China (Sun Yat Sen) and Egypt took President Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric about democracy seriously. Manela does a lovely job of showing how just one text, Wilson's 14 points, snakes across the globe animating anti-colonial nationalism, and how unwillingness or inability to dismantle French, British and even the American colonial empire radicalized these activists. I guess I'm looking for more books that look at, say, the Second Vatican Council as one of the key global events of the twentieth century, from Milwaukee to Milan, Cologne to Kampala. Or books that get us closer to the relationship between imperialism and missionaries.

Or, to take a concrete example: I think we need more books like David Hempton's *Methodism: a Global History*. Hempton takes a truly fusty genre, the denominational history, God help us, and at least for me transforms it, making us see eighteenth and nineteenth century Methodism more than American or English national history, but an independent force, pushed by John Wesley there, Francis Asbury here. Research in Methodist sources on six continents allows Hempton to flatly claim Methodism as the "most important Protestant religious development since the Reformation" and the forerunner of Pentecostalism. Reading Hempton edges wonderful books such as Nathan Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* and Christine Heyrman's *Southern Cross* into a more provincial light, forcing us to ask just what it was that held Methodism together, and what it was about the American context that permitted it to flourish.

A third topic is what we might call religion and political history. I'm near the end of my time so I won't go into detail but just take the period after 1945: two topics touched on in any U.S. history survey course—the Civil Rights movement and the emergence of the New Right—are now inextricably intertwined with core themes in American religious history. That Martin Luther King Jr. achieved what he did as an African-American minister is not only the central claim of Taylor Branch's magnificent three volume narrative, but the King papers project have also revealed to us King's indebtedness to the liberal social gospel tradition, and his self-understanding as a liberal Protestant.

King's southern white opponents, according to David Chappel, were weaker than they might have been because they could not muster the internal religious resources to defend segregation. I realize that this claim is contested, but remember I said that argument is good!, with Jane Dailey, Joseph Crespino, and others viewing religion as near the core not only of white resistance to racial intermarriage but also white resistance to desegregation. And

even when white Christians distanced themselves from violent opposition to desegregation, as they did in the mid-1960s, these scholars see the sharp reaction by evangelicals against theological and political liberalism as setting the stage for the emergence of the modern Republican party in the South.

Religion is even more significant in the emergence of modern conservatism. Lisa McGirr's illuminating study of Orange County conservatives included a chapter on the religious orientation of these activists, but in retrospect McGirr's book only opened the door for a wave of work, notably Darren Dochuk pointing to Christian roots in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas for the religious conservatism underpinning Ronald Reagan's success.

Bethany Moreton's *God and Wal-Mart* links this political history to the history of political economy. The lines Moreton draws between contemporary Christian conservatives and nineteenth century Christian Populists seem to me tenuous, but she clearly registers the importance of the particular Christian ethos at WalMart, an ethos tied to religious culture of the Ozarks. This vision of Christian free enterprise is as important to this century as the more social vision of, say, the Congress of Industrial Organizations for the last.

My point is simple: secularization, a more global orientation, and the connection of religion with politics seem to me to offer opportunities for all of us to have arguments, I suppose, but also to probe the religious roots of some of our deepest social and cultural divides.

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1. John T. McGreevy, "American Religion," in *American History Now*, Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds. (Philadelphia, 2011), 242-260.

**David K. Yoo**

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Perhaps like some of you, I have always felt more comfortable in the past than speculating about the future, but it is sometimes good to be drawn out of our comfort zones to stretch a bit. In the next few minutes, I want to offer some reflections about the study of American religion around the question—what are the connections between campus and communities beyond the university? Town and gown has been one way to frame this question. Some conceptual frameworks to consider are: 1) civic engagement, 2) service- or community-based learning, and 3) engaged scholarship. The focus will be more in the realm of teaching, and I noticed that in the proceedings in 2009 and 2011 there was not much discussion about teaching at least in the printed portion of the comments offered by panelists. Due to the constraints of time, I cannot explore a related question that looms in the background—namely, what is the relationship between research and teaching?

For a number of years, I offered an undergraduate survey course in American religious history at a private, small, liberal arts college. As part of that class, I sent students out in teams to local religious institutions that I had built relationships with over the years. The main purpose of this exercise was to underscore the fact that the religions we were studying were not artifacts, but on-going communities of people in particular places. I provided the students with a set of questions to help them process what they were encountering—lifted (with permission) from Phil Goff's syllabus from a class that he taught when he was based in Los Angeles.

After visiting these sites, student groups reported back to the class about their one-time visits. As might be expected, some students and teams found the field site visit more interesting than others, but overall, many students expressed an appreciation for the experience through course evaluations, email messages, and in classroom discussion. Students did comment on how it connected what we studied in class with people and places situated in neighborhoods and constituting various forms of community. Although a kind of sampler, I thought site visits represented an important part of the class.

Currently, I teach at a large, public university within an interdisciplinary program rooted within ethnic studies, and in particular, I have developed a two-quarter sequence in which during the first quarter, students learn about the Asian American movement that started in the late 1960s and 1970s with a particular focus on Los Angeles and the role that UCLA played. The course is a large, general education lecture course of about 150 students. In the second quarter, I lead a smaller class of about 30 students in which we send student teams out into non-profit, community-based organizations in various locales in Los Angeles. Students are at their placement sites approximately 6-8 hours a week for the quarter. Many of these organizations grew out of or were influenced by the Asian American movement. The organizations encompass the arts & culture, health care, social services, and labor/community organizing. The two-quarter sequence invokes some core values of ethnic studies, borne out of progressive social movements, that seek to link campus and community in meaningful ways.<sup>1</sup>

The literature of service learning suggests that all parties involved—students, the organizations, and those teaching the course—have a stake in the process and all should learn from and benefit from the process, grounded critically in readings, semi-

nar discussions, research, and written work.<sup>2</sup> The notion of civic engagement can mean many things, but one dimension surely is to ask how what we study (and teach) is connected to people and places outside the classroom. Engaged scholarship also suggests that our fields of study and the knowledge that is produced have something to say to the issues of our times and how we might address vexing and complex situations in our world. Although my two-quarter sequence is relatively new, it builds upon the foundations established by earlier classes that stretch back over the past 40 years. A number of the students have found the courses compelling—even transformational—because of how they are engaged with various communities, seeking to work alongside these organizations as they are grounded in particular neighborhoods and communities and issues.<sup>3</sup>

My experience of conceptualizing and then implementing the community-based learning courses within this ethnic studies framework got me thinking about possible connections to the study of American religion. Throughout American history, religion has played a pivotal role in hundreds if not thousands of communities and been at the forefront of social movements on a wide range of issues. Students, it seems to me, want to connect what they are learning in classes to the world around them. On some level, our role is to facilitate this connection through a critical engagement to the study of American religion. How this is done, of course, can take many shapes and forms: class discussion, readings, films (watching and producing), on-line formats, research papers, and presentations.

But I would make the argument that sending students into religious institutions and communities in the neighborhoods around our campuses opens up another dimension of the study of American religion worth considering. The process involves a lot more work than a traditional class, and there are risks involved. The potential payoff is a level of engagement that brings to the fore in powerful ways how religion is embedded in so many dimensions of society and culture. Students experience first hand a layered messiness and complexity within American religion and how it is that people and communities and institutions seek to navigate those contexts.

There are various levels of risk—including the fact that once students are sent out—even with due diligence and careful planning—one does not know what will really happen in the encounters that will take place. But those encounters and the unpredictability of them is what makes the process potentially invaluable and generative. Robert Orsi in 2011 at this gathering proposed developing “an empiricism commensurate with the realities we study and more adequate for discussing contemporary religious phenomena with the publics that need to hear from us ...”<sup>4</sup> I realize that Orsi's comments were not addressing what I have been discussing, but I think that there is a possible connection. What I am suggesting is that the kinds of encounters that can take place in linkages between campus and community can be fertile ground in the search for such vocabularies as all of the folks involved in those processes seek to find a way to articulate and understand the lived religious experiences that are unfolding around them.

The kind of engagement that I have been discussing builds upon James Lewis' comments from the 2009 gathering. Two points of

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his seem relevant to my discussion. The first is the call for a bold and sustained engagement with several publics around the pressing issues of the day. My guess is that he was not envisioning the student encounters that I have been advocating, but nevertheless, those encounters represent an opportunity for such engagement with communities that represent some of those publics as well as foster critical reflections on those encounters by all involved that can inform pressing issues of the day. Second, Lewis highlighted the notion of a scholarship of teaching that underscored the relationship between research and teaching.<sup>5</sup>

In those religious history classes that I taught, I noticed that many students had no religious connection at all and lacked a language or context for thinking about religion in its many shapes and forms at least in terms of major religious traditions and institutions. Many of these students were surprised to find out about how religion played such a significant role in the structures and sensibilities of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. Every year that I taught the course, there were some students who were surprised to discover that Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister or how the African American churches played such a pivotal role. Similarly, students had not heard about the place of Islam in the life of Malcolm X. In my ethnic studies classes, students had little idea of how Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta and the UFW movement was deeply influenced by the tradition of Our Lady of Guadalupe rooted in Catholicism. Student teams in their placements, moreover, encountered men and women in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities whose community-based work stemmed from a social gospel orientation.

In conclusion, I have been raising the issue of linkages between campus and community through a variety of frameworks: service- and community-based learning, civic engagement, and engaged scholarship. How might this kind of teaching inform the study of American religion in ways that connect our students to living and breathing religious communities and institutions? Those encounters may open the study of American religion in new and vibrant and unpredictable ways for our students, for the communities that they engage with, and for us, as teachers and scholars. How will that movement and those encounters help us to re-think the ways that we study religion in the United States?

Perhaps there is already a movement afoot to take the study of religion more fully from the classroom into all sorts of communities. I certainly hope so.

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1. Melany de la Cruz and Loh-Sze Leung, "Opportunities for Community-University Partnerships: Implementing a Service-Learning Research Model in Asian American Studies," *aapi nexus* 1:1 (Summer/Fall 2003), 47-65.

2. Andrew Furco, "Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education," in *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning* (Washington D.C: Corporation for National Service, 1996), 2-6.

3. Grace Lee Boggs with Scott Kurashige, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

4. Robert Orsi, "What Are Our Academic Assumptions About Religion?" in Philip Goff and Rebecca Vasko, eds., *Proceedings: Second Biennial Conference on Religion and American Culture* (Indianapolis, IN: Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, 2011), 10.

5. James Lewis, "Where Do We Go From Here?" in Philip Goff and Rebecca Vasko, eds., *Proceedings: First Biennial Conference on Religion and American Culture* (Indianapolis, IN: Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, 2009), 50.

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