



AHRC/ESRC RELIGION and SOCIETY PROGRAMME

## Sacred Practices of Everyday Life Conference

9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012

The John McIntyre Conference Centre, 18 Holyrood Park Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5AY

### PROGRAMME

#### Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> May (Day 1)

9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	JMC Central Area Registration and coffee		
10.30 – 11.45 a.m.	<u>Prestonfield Room</u> <b>Welcome and Plenary Session(1) <i>Three Perspectives on Everyday Religion</i></b> David Morgan Mary Jo Neitz Robert Orsi Linda Woodhead (Chair)		
11.45 – 1.15 p.m.	<u>Duddingston Room</u> <b>Formation and Cultivation</b> Elizabeth Olson – <i>Youth transitions, international volunteering and religious transformations:</i>  Kim Knott/ Jasjit Singh – <i>Online Authorities? Young British Sikhs, Religious Transmission and the Internet</i>  Jonathan Scourfield – <i>Islam in Middle Childhood</i>	<u>Salisbury Room</u> <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b> Sally Munt/ Andrew Yip – <i>Queer Spiritual Spaces</i>  Stephanie Berns – <i>Glass cases and sacred traces: an actor network approach to religious engagements in museums</i>  Nicholas Buxton – <i>The Modern Art Museum as the Cathedral of Contemporary Life</i>	<u>Holyrood Room</u> <b>Death, Suffering and Transitions</b> Hannah Rumble – <i>Natural Burial and the Corpse: from waste to gift</i>  <i>Followed by film</i>  Douglas Davies – <i>Dissolving dead bodies</i>
1.15 – 2.15 p.m.	JMC Restaurant <b>Lunch</b>		

## Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> May (Day 1)

2.15 – 3.45 p.m.	<p><u>Duddingston Room</u>  <b>Formation and Cultivation</b>  Chris Philo/Louisa Cadman – <i>Life-lines: new-spiritual geographies in Brighton, UK</i></p> <p>Anna Clot Garrell – <i>Novel forms of religiosity shaping new religious communities: exploring ‘reenchantment’ in Catalunya through the case of HappyYoga</i></p>	<p><u>Salisbury Room</u>  <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b>  Sondra Hausner – <i>Category and Practice: Two Aspects of Religion in the Nepali Diaspora</i></p> <p>Claire Dwyer – <i>Encountering the Divine in W7 and on Number 5 Road: stories of the suburban sacred</i></p> <p>Sara MacKian – <i>Everyday spirituality: social and spatial worlds of enchantment</i></p>	<p><u>Holyrood Room</u>  <b>Death, Suffering and Transitions</b>  Marion Bowman – <i>Glastonbury Festival and the Performance of Remembrance</i></p> <p>Julie Ellis - <i>Re-thinking rupture: facing death, family practices and everyday life</i></p> <p>Jolyon Mitchell – <i>The Edinburgh ‘Peace and Justice’ Murals</i></p>
3.45 – 4.15 p.m.	<p>JMC Central area  <b>Afternoon tea and coffee</b></p>		
4.15 – 5.45 p.m.	<p><u>Prestonfield Room</u>  <b>Plenary Session (2)</b>  Photographing the Everyday Sacred: Daniele Sambo and Liz Hingley</p>		
6.00 – 7.00 p.m.	<p><u>JMC Central Area</u>  <b>Welcome Drinks Reception</b></p>		
7.00 p.m. onwards	<p>Free evening</p>		

## Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May (Day 2)

8.30 – 9.00 a.m.	JMC Central Area <b>Registration</b> (for new arrivals)		
9.00 – 10.30 a.m.	<u>Duddingston Room</u> <b>Formation and Cultivation</b> John Wolffe/Naomi Stanton – <i>From Sunday Schools to Christian Youth Work: young people’s engagement with organized Christianity in twentieth century England and the present day.</i>  David Bebbington – <i>Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain</i>  John Atherton – <i>More progress on religion and wellbeing</i>	<u>Salisbury Room</u> <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b> Gordon Lynch/Ruth Sheldon – <i>Performing sacralised conflict: exploring student activism relating to Israel-Palestine</i>  Sanja Kurd – <i>Born Out of conflict: Identity and Development of Muslim Women’s Organisations in Bosnia and the UK</i>  Reina Lewis – <i>Modelling Modesty: presenting the self on Modest style blogs</i>	<u>Holyrood Room</u> <b>Death, Suffering and Transitions</b> Marion Bowman – <i>Locating and narrating the journey of life: Love, death and Protestant pilgrimage at Luss</i>  Avril Maddrell/Alessandro Scafi – <i>Landscape Aesthetics, meaning and experience in Christian pilgrimage</i>
10.30 – 11.00 a.m.	JMC Central area <b>Morning coffee and tea</b>		
11.00 – 12 noon	<u>Prestonfield Room</u> <b>Plenary Session (3) Strategic and Tactical Religion</b> Linda Woodhead		
12.00 – 1.30 a.m.	<u>Duddingston Room</u> <b>Formation and Cultivation</b> John Harper/Sally Harper – <i>Practice-led investigation of past experiences: the case of worship in late medieval cathedral and parish church</i> (Film)	<u>Salisbury Room</u> <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b> Tej Purewal – <i>Shrine Cultures in South Asia: Practices and Iconographies of a ‘Common’ Religion of Northwest India and Pakistan</i>  Karen McPhillips/Jenny Russell – <i>The relationship between youth identity and spatial perception within the context of religious architecture in Northern Ireland</i>  Elizabeth Olson/Giselle Vincett – <i>Relational Religious Identities</i>	

**Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May (Day 2)**

1.30 – 2.30 p.m.	JMC Restaurant <b>Lunch</b>		
2.30 – 4.00 p.m.	<u>Duddingston Room</u> <b>Formation and Cultivation</b> Lois Lee – <i>Relocating Non religion, in Everyday Space and Practice</i>  Inez Schippers – <i>Trees of birth; a birth ritual in a newly built suburban area in the Netherlands</i>  Rebecca Aechtner – <i>Marking the Secular Life Cycle: Humanist Rites of Passage</i>	<u>Salisbury Room</u> <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b> Elizabeth Watson – <i>Landscapes of Religion, Identity and Conflict in Northern Kenya</i>  Patricia Iolana – <i>Key Characteristics of the Western Paradigmatic Shift Towards the Feminine Divine</i>  Bereket Loul – <i>Young Refugees, Lived Religion and Religious Customization</i>	<u>Holyrood Room</u> <b>Death, Suffering and Transitions</b> Jacqueline Hayes – <i>Experience of presence in bereavement; Symptoms, spirits, or ordinary lives?</i>  Tim Hutchings – <i>Dying Online</i>  Avril Maddrell – <i>Mapping grief. Everyday spatialities of bereavement, mourning and remembrance</i>
4.00 – 4.30 p.m.	JMC Central area <b>Afternoon tea and coffee</b>		
4.30 – 5.30 p.m.	<u>Prestonfield Room</u> <b>Plenary Session (4) Reflecting on the streams</b>		
7.00 p.m.	<b>Conference Dinner at The Scottish Café &amp; Restaurant, National Gallery of Scotland, Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh</b>		

## Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> May (Day 3)

8.45 – 9.00 a.m.	JMC Central Area <b>Registration</b> (for new arrivals)		
9.00 – 10.30 p.m.	<u>Duddingston Room</u> <b>Formation and Cultivation</b> Elizabeth Olson/Giselle Vincett – <i>Marginalised Spiritualities: Faith &amp; religion amongst young people in socially deprived Britain</i>  Ting Guo – <i>Biographical Spirituality and the Reinvention of Ourselves</i>  Andrew Yip/Michael Keenan/Sarah-Jane Page – <i>Meaningful sex: a multi-faith exploration of the interconnection of sexuality and religion in the lives of young religious adults</i>	<u>Salisbury Room</u> <b>Life-styles, Spaces and Identities</b>  Gordon Lynch – <i>The meanings and uses of belief</i>  Pete Ward – <i>Ordinary Theology and Visual Culture among Polish Catholic young people</i>	<u>Holyrood Room</u> <b>Death, Suffering and Transitions</b> Peter Coleman/Daniela Koleva – <i>Marking Transitions and Meaning Across the Life Course</i>  David Fergusson/Liz Bondi/Steve Sutcliffe/Alette Willis – <i>Understanding the Encounter between Christianity, Psychotherapy and Spirituality in Scotland</i>
10.30 – 11.00 a.m.	JMC Central area <b>Morning coffee and tea</b>		
11.00 – 1.00 p.m.	<u>Prestonfield Room</u> <b>Plenary (5) Recalibrating the Study of Religion</b> Chaired discussion about how the study of religion must change to take more account of everyday lived religion  Norman Winter (ex-BBC Religion and Ethics) and Linda Woodhead in conversation with David Morgan Mary Jo Neitz Robert Orsi And three speakers from the three conference streams		
1.00 – 2.00 p.m.	JMC Restaurant <b>Lunch</b>		
2.00 p.m.	<b>Finish</b>		



**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS – SACRED PRACTICES OF EVERYDAY LIFE CONFERENCE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> – 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2012 – JOHN MCINTYRE CONFERENCE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Marking the Secular Life Cycle: Humanist Rites of Passage**

**Rebecca Aechtner**

Secular organisations such as the British and German Humanist associations are offering increasingly popular alternatives to religious rituals, including naming and coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. These secularised rites of passage exemplify a re-invention of religious rituals, predominantly Christian, encompassing the ‘cradle to grave’ needs of people often described as disenchanting and disengaged from religion. One such example is the German youth rite of passage *Jugendweihe* (‘youth consecration’, also known as *Jugendfeier*, ‘youth celebration’), with roots in Catholic and Protestant Confirmation, but most commonly associated with the civic ritual system of the socialist East German government. Now conducted by various social and political groups, including the German Humanist Association, the ritual has come to express eastern ‘Germanness’ as well as irreligious people in reunified Germany.

Marking important life stages, such rituals provide the ritual space for the expression of individual values and family traditions, as well as experiences of community and perceived like-mindedness in modern ‘secular’ society. Research into two leading Humanist organisations and their respective life-cycle rituals shows a secular re-engagement with rituals, distinguishing such.

**More Progress on Religion and Wellbeing\***

**John Atherton, University of Chester**

Since 2010, when we returned the proofs of our *The Practices of Happiness. Political economy, religion and wellbeing* (Routledge 2011), developments have continued in the secular academics recognition of the positive contribution of religion to human wellbeing - reflected in the following two sections:

First, through locating wellbeing in multidisciplinary trends' surveys covering social development, demography and technology, life expectancy, income growth and declining poverty, violence, and resurgent religion. All trends are supportive of increasing wellbeing.

Second, through new research mapping religion and sources of wellbeing in the 21st century. Developed in table form (in the 2011 book), it reflects resonances between key features in religion contributing to wellbeing from secular sources, features identified by the Swedish church's work on the Christian tradition, and the secular New Economics Foundation National Accounts of Wellbeing. These features are from secular and religious sources, the former including the sociologist Putnam, the latter, a leading American evangelist, a Roman Catholic Abbott, a Muslim leader, and the Dalai Lama. Current work on spirituality draws from the Dalai Lama, psychologist Seligman and atheist philosopher de Botton.

## **Commonalities and differences in older people's experience of life passage rituals in Eastern and Western Europe\***

**David Bebbington, Stirling University**

It was established by the project that Fundamentalism did exist in twentieth-century Britain. Although, by contrast with America, it was small in scale, it showed the same intellectual and social characteristics, most notably a rejection of biblical criticism and a belligerent tone. The main finding, however, was that the common identification of Evangelicals with Fundamentalists is mistaken. Although Evangelicals did show some of the typical intellectual traits of Fundamentalists at certain junctures, they did not consistently display all of them. Thus scriptural inerrancy, an essential of Fundamentalism, was not endorsed by most of the theological conservatives among early twentieth-century Evangelicals in Britain. Nor for most of the time did they show any of the social characteristics of Fundamentalism. The investigators looked for the key markers of belligerence, institutional separatism and aversion to social action, but they were relatively rare. The sheer variety of Evangelicalism meant that many were not Fundamentalists. A number of case-studies revealed that individuals who might be expected to display signs of Fundamentalism turn out to have been otherwise on investigation. The main finding of the project was therefore that Evangelicalism in Britain cannot be equated with Fundamentalism.

## **Glass cases and sacred traces: an actor network approach to religious engagements in museums**

**Stephanie Berns, The British Museum**

Employing the principles of Actor Network Theory and calling on the work of John Law (2007) and Bruno Latour (2005), this paper will examine networks of engagement between museum visitors, objects and religion. The network approach draws our attention to all mediators involved within an engagement including the more mundane entities. By using this approach, we can turn our focus to an often overlooked mediator – the glass case. Glass cases are routine objects found in most museums, galleries, shops and places of worship. While the principal role of the glass case is usually to protect and preserve, they are also said to separate, elevate, and even entomb their contents.

As my field research in the British Museum will illustrate, glass cases have the ability to both strengthen and weaken networks of engagement with the divine. From preventing visitors from touching the objects inside to providing a touchable surface for visitors to bless their own objects; glass cases have a central and transformative role in these engagements in both devotional and non-devotional spaces. Through tracing the interactions of both material and immaterial entities, this paper will map the diverse ways in which visitors, objects and religion engage, starting with the glass case.

### **References**

LATOUR, B., 2005. Reassembling the social : an introduction to actor-network-theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LAW, J., 2007. Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics. Available:  
<http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf> [8/12/2010].

## **Locating and narrating the journey of life: Love, death and Protestant pilgrimage at Luss**

**Marion Bowman, The Open University**

This paper looks at the development of a pilgrimage path in the small and scenic village of Luss, Loch Lomond on Church of Scotland glebe land. Narrating and drawing lessons from the story of the founding saint, St Kessog - 50 years old when he started his mission in Luss - was inspirational to the development of the site for an aging congregation.

The pilgrimage path (built largely by volunteer groups of young people from all over Europe) not only tells the saint's story, but urges personal reflection on nature, life, love, death and the divine. The Pilgrimage of Love path celebrates the distinctive role of love in Luss, as the location of choice for marriage for many people from Scotland, and far beyond (USA, Canada, Australia). If the concept of a Protestant pilgrimage path is surprising, perhaps even less expected are the Stations of the Cross on the site, but part of the pilgrimage site's mission is to counter the negative history of sectarianism of Scottish life (a significant proportion of weddings performed at Luss are 'mixed' in the sense that one partner is Catholic, the other Protestant). Although within in the area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, as glebe land the pilgrimage site is outside some of the Park's regulations, allowing the development of a memorial site where trees are planted on memory of loved ones to whom Luss was in some way special.

The paper explores the ways in which the landscape of Luss has been harnessed to become a site of faith tourism and anti-sectarianism, and above all a place stressing the power of stories of love, death and faith.

## **Glastonbury Festival and the Performance of Remembrance**

**Marion Bowman, The Open University**

The Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performance Arts (better known simply as The Glastonbury Festival) is an eclectic annual gathering during which diverse performances of music, dance, comedy, circus arts, film and other expressive forms are on display. It is also significant as a site where, primarily in the Healing Field and King's Meadow (also known as Sacred Space, Sacred Ground), various forms of healing and contemporary religiosity are on show, and as such it is an important centre for the dissemination of these phenomena. However, less obviously, it is also the locus for the performance of remembrance in a variety of ways, from one off memorial 'installations' and, exceptionally, permanent memorials for people connected with or influential to the Festival, to

more general sites of mourning and remembrance for festival goers. This paper looks at some of these sites, and their underlying aesthetics, rationales and significance within the Festival context.

### **Sites of the Sacred: The Modern Art Museum as the Cathedral of Contemporary Life**

**Nicholas Buxton, Ripon Cathedral and York St John University**

The Millennium Footbridge over the Thames in London links the Tate Modern and St Paul's Cathedral. One a temple, the other a museum – but which is which? Modern art museums have been dubbed the cathedrals of contemporary culture, while cathedrals have become an adjunct to the heritage industry. This paper will explore the respective cultural and spiritual roles of cathedrals and modern art museums today.

Cathedrals and museums are both iconic structures and, in their own way, projections of the power and influence of the state or its worldview. Both are places in which people seek aesthetic and/or spiritual experiences.

But a cathedral is also the site of a ritual activity that defines the worldview it represents. Can the same be said for the modern art museum? While it may be argued that art museums are sites of meaning-making, and that visitors engage in ritual behaviour, is this really analogous to the relationship between worshippers and the rites of the church?

In spite of functional similarities, there would appear to be less correspondence on substantive questions. If art is the religion of modern life – and museums are its temples – then it is a religion that is individualistic and ill-defined.

### **Novel forms of religiosity shaping new religious communities: exploring 'reenchantment'**

**in Catalunya through the case of HappyYoga**

**Anna Clot Garrell, University Autònoma Barcelona, UAB**

Taking into account the historical Catholic dominant culture in the configuration of the pluralised, contemporary Catalan religious map as a point of departure, this paper will focus on

the presentation of a carrier of novel religious expressions beyond the distinct faith traditions and traditional religious contexts: HappyYoga, an organisation which embraces under the same label diverse yoga schools. This case study, which illuminates new aspects of religious pluralisation and can be considered an evidence of 're-enchantment' in the Catalan society, points to the emergence of detraditionalised suppliers of 'alternative' religious experiences and answers to everyday life and existential concerns. Likewise, the exposition of this group will not only illustrate novel individualised ways through which population respond to suffering and attain wellbeing, but also it will show how this predominance of an individualised and instrumentalised attitude does not contradict a valued sense of 'community' in order to make personal experiences and systems of signification meaningful. In this regard, I will also expose how the case study indicates a novel mode of conceiving and experiencing the 'religious community' beyond the congregational domain and groups labelled as "sects", which underlines new forms of solidarity and ways of constructing individual and collective identity.

### **Marking Transitions and Meaning Across the Life Course\***

**Peter Coleman and Daniela Koleva**

Our project has combined oral history and gerontological approaches to explore changes in religious and secular beliefs and practices related to life passages in Bulgaria, Romania and the U.K. In analyzing life story interviews we have looked for similarities between as well as differences across countries. A common social normativity is inherent in the motivations of our interviewees to organise or participate in life-passage rituals for themselves and their family members. It can be attributed to a generational ethos based on shared experiences, attitudes and moral values. Differences however do appear in accounts relating especially to death rituals. Although the Bulgarian communist authorities in particular sought to provide alternative forms of secular rituals for life passages, there is little trace of them in the life stories we collected. The achievement of satisfactory secular alternatives to religious ritual is more evident in the U.K. In searching for explanations for the greater respect paid to religious rituals in Bulgaria and Romania, one must take account of hostility to past atheistic regimes and the possibly greater ownership of these rituals among Orthodox Christian peoples.

## **Encountering the Divine in W7 and on Number 5 Road: stories of the suburban sacred**

**Claire Dwyer, University College London**

This paper draws on on-going collaborative research on suburban faith spaces in London and Vancouver. The emergence of a range of spectacular new religious buildings in the suburbs of London and Canadian cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, usually associated with transnational migrants, has prompted reflection on wider narratives of modernity, secularization and the suburbs (Dwyer et al. forthcoming). Drawing on field work on faith spaces in the suburbs of Hanwell, West London and Richmond, Vancouver this paper explores the everyday spaces and practices of the suburban sacred and the re-enchantment of suburbia.

## **Re-thinking rupture: facing death, family practices and everyday life**

**Julie Ellis, The University of Sheffield**

In this presentation I will discuss my PhD study which explored the experiences of individuals living in a family where a member is dying or has a life-threatening illness. I will be arguing that in both popular culture and theoretical work there is a pervasive tendency to associate death with crisis and discourses of the 'spectacular'. As a consequence, I suggest that the more ordinary, everyday and mundane aspects of dying experiences are less well understood. Therefore, the analysis I present of family lives will move away from the familiar model of emotional crisis and rupture in relation to severe ill-health and dying and ask new questions about the everydayness of practices and experiences during this time. Drawing on my data – gathered from participation observation on a hospice ward and in-depth interviews with families – I shall explore various aspects of day-to-day life to show how ill-health and dying are not discrete ontological experiences existing outside and separate from everyday life. I will argue that it is through an immersion within everyday life and its daily practices that families come to 'know' and make sense of, their experiences of facing death and 'being' a family during this time.

## **Understanding the Encounter between Christianity, Psychotherapy and Spirituality in Scotland\***

**David Fergusson, University of Edinburgh**

**Liz Bondi, University of Edinburgh**

**Steve Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh**

**Alette Willis, University of Edinburgh**

Now known as 'Theology and Therapy', the project explores the interactions between theology, philosophy, psychotherapy and spirituality in Scotland during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A cross-disciplinary team involving five researchers from the Schools of Divinity and Health in Social

Science has participated. An oral history archive has been created through interviewing around 15 key participants from movements, organisations and networks in Scotland and beyond. Research outputs have included a range of journal articles exploring the ways in which counselling and psychotherapy prospered in holistic contexts with formative theological and spiritual elements. These have focused on key figures such as John Macmurray, Ian Suttie, R. D. Laing and Winifred Rushforth. The oral history archive will be described, research outcomes will be briefly summarized, and assessment will be offered of the wider impact of the project and its potential for future research and public outreach.

## **Biographical Spirituality and the Reinvention of Ourselves**

**Ting Guo, University of Edinburgh**

Through the lens of the life, death and ideas of Alan Turing (1912-1954), the “Father of Computer Science”, this paper aims at exploring the sacredness and significance of the re-invented self. Turing’s life was ended by himself after a criminal prosecution for his sexuality. For homosexuals in the 1950s, the deprivation was not only one of laws but also of the spirit – a denial of identity. From a historical-comparative perspective, the ideas of Turing’s abstract machine intelligence seem to have been driven by problems of being, in particular mortality, human uniqueness and self recognition. Choosing Turing as a case study for a new methodology - biographical spirituality, helps to account for the “metatheoretical” discussion of “life”. Despite the increasing prominence of theories regarding human enhancement technologies, the very idea behind is largely under-explored. At the same time scholars of religion tend to interpret a more complex understanding of spirituality as straightforward secularisation or de-traditional, alternative spiritual praxis. As a result, there remains a huge disembodied and disengaged area in how we conceptualise ourselves. Individual forms of life are never accomplished on account of human life *per se*, rather, I argue, it always points at a genuine creation of self-knowledge.

## **Practice-led investigation of past experiences: the case of worship in late medieval cathedral and parish church\***

**John Harper, University of Bangor**

**Sally Harper, University of Bangor**

At a formal act of worship in a sacred space each person present encounters physical, sensory, emotional, intellectual and social experiences – both individually and collectively – whatever their role or status. How far can contemporary, practice-led investigation of late medieval acts of worship enable modern researchers better to interrogate and understand the buildings, artefacts, texts, rituals and people of medieval cathedrals and churches, and their inter-relationships? Drawing on the outcomes of the processes of preparation, enactment, reflection, analysis and interpretation in the research project, *The Experience of Worship in late medieval Cathedral and Parish Church*, this paper seeks to establish the distinctive features of this inter-disciplinary work, and its potential application in other contexts.

## **Category and Practice: Two Aspects of Religion in the Nepali Diaspora\***

**Sondra L. Hausner, Oxford University**

**David N. Gellner, Oxford University**

We suggest that religion is best approached as comprising at least two contrasting or complementary angles, category and practice. In our quantitative and qualitative research with Nepalis in Britain, we ask whether in diasporic contexts either or both of these elements change, and if so, in what directions. Our findings show that the comparative demographics of different religious categories shift between Nepal and the UK, reflecting the migration trends of various ethnic groups and recruitment patterns into the Gurkha Brigade. People's religious practices, however, remain remarkably consistent between their homeland and new settings, although most people report, sometimes regretfully, that they do less religious practice in the UK than they did in Nepal. New religious categories and the practices that go with them flourish in diaspora locations, but, interestingly, many of them started in Nepal: some appear more vibrant abroad and now support movements in Nepal, thanks to frequent and active transnational interactions.

**Experiences of presence in bereavement; Symptoms, spirits, or ordinary lives?\***

**Jacqueline Hayes**

This talk is about experiences of presence in bereavement. This is when a bereaved person experiences a voice, vision, touch or general feeling relating to the deceased. These are common experiences in bereavement, but are they hallucinations symptomatic of psychosis? Or are there other ways to understand them?

This project was the first to systematically examine the meaning and consequences of these experiences in the lives of the bereaved. In this presentation I will focus on the function of these experiences in relation to the bereavement. Do they help the bereaved to cope with their loss? Can they cause the bereaved more problems? I will show through case studies that the answer lies in the nature of the relationship between the bereaved and the deceased.

**Ubiquitous Spaces, Created Places: The Multi-faith Space as Retreat\***

**Chris Hewson, University of Manchester**

The *Multi-faith Space* (MFS) is an embryonic and emergent form, an arena of ritual and religious practice nestled within a larger context; the airport, the hospital, the college or

university. MFS are often constructed in a grassroots manner, at times designed professionally; they are created rather than revealed spaces, usually demarcated from their institutional setting. Whilst MFS generally eschew 'sacrality' as generally understood, neither are they obviously 'profane' spaces, with attempts typically made to enforce a separation, or retreat, from the social and economic logics at play 'outside'.

What then are they? If not sanctuaries or faith buildings in the ordinary sense, they customarily provide space 'good enough' for worship, prayer, contemplation, relaxation, etc. Whilst wholly capable of 'housing' sacred acts, MFS communicate a positive ambiguity, casting light on hugely varied conceptions of sacred space.

I suggest that it is unhelpful to begin by considering what these spaces 'lack'; a discourse of absence that implies its opposite, the ideal of an (impossible) 'space of abundance'. Rather, utilising a socio-architectural approach, I consider the processes via which MFS achieve balance, stability and disconnection from their immediate context; with issues of entrance, liminality, threshold, storage and spatial division of particular significance.

### **Dying Online**

**Tim Hutchings, University of Durham**

Digital media are now part of everyday practices of dying, grieving and remembrance. Blogs and social network sites allow individuals to communicate and make connections around their end-of-life stories. The same media are key to the communication of news about deaths and responses to them. Online memorials have emerged as spaces for the bereaved to share stories and images of the deceased and serve as public platforms for continued communication from the living to the dead. This paper will offer an overview of the current state of the field of digital death studies and indicate some of the ways in which digital media are changing the culture of death and memory. Building on work undertaken in the AHRC network Emotion, Identity and Religious Community, this paper will conclude with suggestions regarding the significance of these changes for the emotional regimes of contemporary spirituality.

## **Key Characteristics of the Western Paradigmatic Shift Towards the Feminine Divine**

**Patricia Iolana, University of Glasgow**

For the past few decades, there has been a noticeable subtle, persistent shift towards an assortment of Goddess Spiritualities which empower the adherent with personal religious authority and focus on the socio-culturally defined “feminine” traits of the Numinous. These new Western faith traditions centre upon reclaiming not only the personal (often considered mystical) unmediated relationship with the Feminine Divine but also focus on connecting the adherent to the sacred world around them—this pantheistic foundation re-enchants the world in which they live.

My research into this paradigmatic shift has revealed two fundamental characteristics of this trend: personal religious authority and a theological doctrine that many avow as ‘re-invented’ or ‘reclaimed’. According to the female adherents (many of whom are post-Christian) who have come to embrace the Goddess and document their individual journey in spiritual memoirs, personal religious authority and a new theological doctrine lay at the heart of this movement. Therefore, this paper shall examine their novel conception of this personal religion focusing on a new doctrinal understanding of the nature of the Divine, theism, immanence and transcendence, and the web of interconnectivity.

## **Meaningful sex: A multi-faith exploration of the interconnection of sexuality and religion in the lives of young religious adults\***

**Michael Keenan, Nottingham Trent University**

**Sarah-Jane Page, Aston University**

**Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, University of Nottingham**

Drawing on the data from the AHRC/ESRC/ ‘Religion and Society’ funded study ‘Religion, youth and sexuality: A multi-faith exploration’, this paper explores the everyday negotiations of sexual and religious identities in the lives of 693 young religious adults. Following an initial reflection on the attitudes, practices and experiences of participants, the paper turns its focus to the interconnection of the participants’ religious and sexual lives, manifest in two distinct ways. Firstly, the paper discusses the influence of religion and its role as a meaning-maker in young people’s construction and management of their sexual lives. Here religion is illustrated to act as constrainer of choice/activity whilst also providing a sense of depth and connection. Secondly, the paper explores the religious meaning which is attached to sexual practice by some participants, illustrating that sex and sexuality are viewed as connected to, or even part of their religious identities. In sum the paper emphasises the need for an approach to young people’s lives which emphasises the connection rather than the difference between experiences of youth, religion and sexuality.

## **Born Out of Conflict: Identity and Development of Muslim Women's Organisations in Bosnia and the UK\***

**Sanja Kurd, University of York**

In this paper I discuss how war and violent events lead to the questioning and transformation of one's identity. While this topic has been discussed before, my focus is on two particular groups of European Muslim women in the UK and Bosnia. Despite the presence of negative stereotypes and often dangerous circumstances due to the violence in both countries, there have been an increased number of Muslim women who feel a strong need to publicly express their religious identity. Another outcome of the violence (the war in Bosnia, 7/7 in the UK and the effects of 9/11 in the US) is the formation of Muslim women's organisations which were previously non-existing. My research explores the relation between the increased sense of women's religious identity, agency and empowerment by considering the work of three Muslim women's organisations. By comparing two distinct Muslim communities in Europe – indigenous (Bosnia) and diasporic (UK) – this research gives a unique insight on how Muslim women negotiate their religious identity within two different European contexts and how these contexts influence the way women position and organise themselves.

## **Relocating Nonreligion in Everyday Space and Practice**

**Lois Lee, University of Cambridge**

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of nonreligiosity – that stuff which is defined by how it differs from religion (Lee 2012) – as a substantial or concrete phenomenon, the presence of which in human life and society can be documented and theorised. As such, it presents researchers with a prospect quite different from the study of secular, which measures the marginality or absence of a substance (religion). An understanding of nonreligious cultures as primarily intellectual in nature are persistent, however, outliving Weberian, belief-centred approaches to religion which are increasingly critiqued by sociologists of religion (see Lynch, 2012; Day, 2011). The frequent coupling of 'religion' with 'atheism' – the broader cultural term with the narrower, (un)belief focused on – demonstrates how much there is still to be done in terms of communicating 'lived religion' and cultural approaches to the newer field of 'nonreligious studies' (Bullivant and Lee, 2012; Lee, 2012). This paper presents findings from exploratory research into everyday nonreligiosity in the UK and demonstrates that methodologies for the study of nonreligion can be broadened from their current intellectualist foci to include practical, spatial and material expressions of nonreligion manifest in everyday life.

### **Modelling Modesty: presenting the self on Modest style blogs\***

**Reina Lewis, London College of Fashion**

Building on my previous study of new protocols in the recently emerged Muslim lifestyle print media (Lewis 2010), this paper explores two areas of challenge for the new online modest fashion media. First, how the increasing commercialisation of the blogosphere and social media poses particular challenges to the presumption of spiritual integrity that secures religious credibility in the independent modest blog sector, at the same time as opportunities for promotional tie-ins can benefit blogger profile and content. Second, how the incorporation of the reader style photo, now a genre standard, requires bloggers to make overt their definitions of modesty despite the sector netiquette of respecting multiple modesty codes. I conclude by considering new professional media opportunities for people of faith.

### **Young Refugees, Lived Religion and Religious Customization\***

**Bereket Loul, Leeds Metropolitan University**

Shifts in the scale and pattern of post-cold war global asylum immigration have brought new dynamics in social formation and transformation in most of West Europe. This unfolding socio-political context - referred by some forced migration scholars as 'super-diversity' - is characterized by complex relational dynamics of individuals and groups from diverse ethnic, national, cultural and faith traditions sharing the same geographic and social space. This paper, framed against the backdrop of super-diversity, presents some of the findings of a doctoral research exploring religiosity and spirituality in the lived transition experiences of young refugees and asylum seekers based in Yorkshire, England.

The paper first outlines and describes critical intra and intercultural encounters identified by the young forced migrants. Secondly, it explores how their religiosity and/or spirituality factored in the experience, meaning and response to such encounters. Thirdly, it investigates how exposure to super-diversity and the critical encounters has shifted their own religious and spiritual values and attitudes. Fourthly, the paper discusses their shifting values and evolving plural identities against the commonsense understanding and established consensus on religion as a major source of life meaning and anchor of identity and belonging. We attempt to show how the religiosity and faith of the young participants was performed, expressed and engaged differently to fit competing relational needs of multiple social spaces in their everyday life. The paper then introduces the phrase 'religious customization' to account for such fluid capacity to assume and hold multiple identities and

belonging without a sense of identity crisis and/or loss of integrity. The paper concludes with key pointers and recommendations for future policy and research.

### **The Meanings and Uses of Belief\***

**Gordon Lynch, University of Kent**

A common assumption within some sociological approaches to the study of religion is that belief is a universal phenomenon, in which people's lives and behaviours are directly informed by coherent systems of belief that can be made easily explicit to researchers through research tools such as surveys and interviews. This research network was developed to examine both critiques of this understanding of belief that have become well established in disciplines such as history and anthropology (see, for example, works by Coleman, Day, Marshall and Street) and to use network members' studies of young people and 'belief' from different cultural and religious contexts to explore in what sense 'belief' can still function as a meaningful analytical concept. Network members discussed their studies and compared them to describe a range of different ways in which 'belief' is constructed, situating this in particular contexts of historical change and conflict. This session will present key conclusions from this network discussion, as well as explore ways in which these ideas have been further developed since the network itself came to an end.

### **Everyday spirituality: social and spatial worlds of enchantment**

**Sara MacKian, The Open University**

'I wake up and thank the angels for keeping us safe... If I'm feeling down I carry a rose quartz or ask my guides to look after me. I take them with me to work as well' (Kathryn).

Spirituality is often seen as something requiring 'time out' from the distractions of everyday life. Consequently, most studies of spirituality focus on discrete moments suspended outside the everyday, such as healing consultations, rituals or specialist retreats. However, spirituality has a tendency to spill out into the broader fabric of everyday life and this has consequences. Perhaps the reluctance of social science to map the spiritual across the everyday is because, as Kathryn's quote suggests, spirituality is also re-embracing the otherworldly. The conceptual frameworks available fail to house the otherworldly in any meaningful way. However, if we are to fully understand the role of spirituality, we must be receptive to the spirit at its heart. This paper presents a conceptual framework which is sensitive to both 'spirit' and 'the everyday', allowing us to map the otherworldly within the contours of 'this' world. By exploring the everyday impacts of otherworldly spiritualities the paper enhances understanding of the place of spirit in the modern world.

## **Landscape aesthetics, meaning and experience in Christian pilgrimage\***

**Avril Maddrell, University of West of England**

**Veronica Della Dora, University of Bristol**

**Alessandro Scafì, The Warburg Institute**

**Heather Walton, University of Glasgow**

This paper focuses on the ways in which landscape inflects pilgrim experience across a range of Christian denominational sites and practices (Roman Catholic at Subiaco, Greek Orthodox at Meteora and Ecumenical (largely Protestant) in the Isle of Man. Drawing on contemporary geographical and interdisciplinary work, landscape is taken as material surface, field of representation, site of embodied practice, as well as experiential, emotional-affective arena, allowing an approach to pilgrimage which combines perceived sacred places and shrines with mobilities and performances. Field data illustrates similarities and differences between the three case studies, demonstrating the various complex ways in which landscape and denominational performances intersect to shape the spiritual experience of many pilgrims, individually and collectively. Landscapes with high aesthetic value, especially where combined with cultural attractions, also contribute to attracting non-adherent visitors to pilgrimage sites and events, which was seen variously as an opportunity for sharing faith or an obstacle to practising faith. The approaches to the spatial and temporal management of visitors is discussed, with the different case studies highlighting outreach, gender, income-generation and community needs.

## **Mapping grief. Everyday spatialities of bereavement, mourning and remembrance**

**Avril Maddrell, University of West of England**

This paper explores the ways in which the everyday but often life-changing experience of bereavement can be understood through a spatial lens. Understanding space as not only as physical territorial phenomena, but also as embodied, psychological-emotional-affective, and virtual, facilitates sensitivity to a range of 'spaces' within which loss is dynamically experienced, performed and mapped by individuals and communities. This approach allows a conceptual blending of the material and representational with the more-than-representational, as the bereaved live with and express loss, remembrance and continuing bonds - sacred to the memory of the deceased - in vernacular form, in public and private spaces, ranging from tattoos to domestic shrines, public memorials and online blogs.

## **The relationship between youth identity and spatial perception within the context of religious architecture in Northern Ireland\***

**Karen McPhillips and Jenny Russell, *University of Ulster, Northern Ireland***

The relationship between religious buildings and the shaping of young peoples' identities is one which has received little investigation. Northern Ireland is a region which has experienced a religious divide for many years and provides an interesting setting on which to examine concepts associated with religion, youth, place, and spatial perception of architecture as an aspect of identity. Religion is an important part of life in Northern Ireland and religious buildings have played a vital role in shaping modern society by providing spaces for young people to learn about their faith and culture. This study investigated how young people from different religious backgrounds perceived certain elements of place, religion and identity, in particular, how they interpreted and negotiated the spatial layout of religious buildings and perceived the relationship between the space and the religion itself. The study endeavoured to promote the cross cultural understanding of young people's perceptions of religion and architecture and provide further clarity into the cultural and social distinctions between young teenagers of conflicting religions. An insight was gained through the analysis of non-textual material such as drawings and art-work developed from young people. This paper lays out the key findings of this study, identifying architectural concepts that are fundamental to the production of different religious places in Northern Ireland and examines the impacts of religious places, through spatial experience, and their conceptual architectural configurations, on young peoples' perceptions, ideas and understanding of religion. The main religions of Northern Ireland, Catholicism and Protestantism, along with the minority religions of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism, were examined.

### **Keywords**

Religious Architecture, Spatial Perception, Identity, Youth

## **The Edinburgh 'Peace and Justice' Murals**

**Jolyon Mitchell, *University of Edinburgh***

In this illustrated paper, I investigate how a series of murals in Edinburgh have been used to portray the search for peace and justice. Over a period of nearly thirty years, around 170 murals painted by 'Artists for Justice and Peace', and displayed beside St John's Church on one of Scotland's busiest shopping streets, have regularly provoked national debate and controversy. Unlike the better-known

Belfast murals, some of which have been preserved for many years as reminders of sectarian divisions, these Edinburgh murals are normally displayed for less than three months. In spite of their transience the prominence of these murals is heightened by local and national press coverage and the number of people who pass by, especially during the festival season, which can double to over half a million viewers for a period of a month or so. Bearing this background in mind, I consider the content, the genesis and the reception of these murals. More broadly engagement with these portrayals provides a concrete local history for considering the relation between aesthetics and politics, religion and conflict; as well as visual identity, solidarity and mediation.

### **Visual Piety as Lived Religion**

**David Morgan, Duke University, USA**

This presentation will explore how lived religion happens visually, training special attention on theorizing visuality as a medium of religious practice. Instead of isolating vision in the form of images as remote from bodies, this presentation proposes to fold seeing into the study of embodiment. The object of study is therefore seeing, in which images are an ingredient, but not the end.

### **Queer Spiritual Spaces\***

**Sally Munt, University of Sussex**

**Andrew Yip, University of Nottingham**

This project sought to investigate Queer Spiritual Spaces in contemporary Britain and the United States. Its principle aims were to explore:

What is the place of queer people in spiritual/cultural traditional spaces?

What is the place of spirituality (identities, practices and spaces) within queer lives?

What does queer spiritual space/place itself mean?

Where do queer spiritual spaces/places exist? - In the bodies of individuals, in community, in queer spiritual texts, in specific or moveable spaces of worship, in cyberspace, in visibility, or in secrecy?

The project set up 6 case studies: Queer Quakers, Muslims, Buddhists, and two place based projects at Findhorn Community in Scotland and Michigan Womyn's Festival, USA. It also looked at LGBTQ virtual spiritual communities, online. The project had a team of 10 people, who worked together through the Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies

In 2010 the investigators, (Sally R Munt, Andrew K.T. Yip and Kath Browne) published the research from the project in a book: *Queer Spiritual Spaces: Sexuality and Sacred Places* (Ashgate Publishing); we have also published various refereed journal articles with postdoctoral researchers who worked on the project.

### **Border Crossings : local practices and translocal contexts**

**Mary Jo Neitz, University of Missouri**

Practices are always local, occurring in time and place. Yet individuals engaging in particular local practices often do so with other people, and they draw on globalizing and universalizing rhetorics and discourses. Most likely they are involved in translocal networks in one way or another. Consideration of broader cultural resources, such as those found in religious traditions and the material resources of established religious organizations, including staff and space can contribute to our understanding of the sacred practices people do and with whom they do them. This process is illustrated with a story of a small Midwestern farming community's encounter with Mexican migrants who came to the United States to work in a hog processing plant.

### **Relational Religious Identities\***

**Elizabeth Olson, University of Edinburgh**

**Giselle Vincett**

**Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University**

**Rachel Pain, University of Durham**

The religious lives of young people raise many questions about how we theorise religion in contemporary societies. The purpose of this study was to analyse the ways that young Christians in Glasgow, Scotland, construct their religious identities and practices in reflection of the diverse relationships that they form with family, friends, and other influences. In this paper, we reflect upon the implications of youth religiosities for how we understand secularisation and postsecular theory. We argue that young people's formulations of authentic faith reveal an expectation for public acceptance, yet their vision of a transformational and transcendent Christianity is also challenged and becomes interwoven with other socially and historically produced Christian identities. We conclude by linking our research to broader trends in the role of religion in the U.K.

## **Marginalized Spiritualities\***

**Elizabeth Olson, University of Edinburgh**

**Giselle Vincett**

**Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University**

**Rachel Pain, University of Durham**

**Eduardo Serafin, University of Edinburgh**

This research project followed from our previous research with young people, and considered how the experiences of growing up in areas of urban economic deprivation influences the ways that young people experience religion and spirituality. Whereas contemporary studies of religion have failed to engage adequately with spatial theory when considering the relationship between class and religion, geographers have been reticent to bring the two together, preferring to focus on intersections with race and ethnicity. The resulting spatial oversight leads to a rather narrow focus on the predictive power of deprivation and poverty in determining religious affiliation, inhibiting the development of a broader social critique. Drawing upon interviews, participant observation, and films and images produced with and by young people in two British urban neighbourhoods, this paper illustrates the different ways that religion and class intersect in the lives of young people. We conclude by suggesting that considerations of the moral significance of class might allow us to understand the resonance of traditional or formal religion in the lives of young people, and to challenge what can be a rather dismissive treatment of youth religiosities by scholars and practitioners.

## **Youth transitions, international volunteering and religious transformations\***

**Elizabeth Olson, University of Edinburgh**

**Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University**

**Nina Laurie, Newcastle University**

**Matt Baillie-Smith, Northumbria University**

This paper considers the intersections between love and suffering, using as a case study the experiences of sixteen young British Evangelical Christian who participated in short-term volunteer missions in Latin America. The broader study explored the ways that volunteerism, faith, and life transition are co-produced in and through the emotional, theological, and developmental work that

takes place during international volunteering, and the ways that volunteerism more generally shapes international development and developmentalist subjectivities. Whereas contemporary Christian discourse tethers the experience of suffering to what is described as an ultimate form of love through sacrifice of the body, we find that the young people in this study focus strongly on difference and exception in making sense of the relationship between love and suffering. For many of them, the 'suffering other' – in this case, largely poor Christian communities in Latin American states – act as a religious artefact of the testament of Christian love, while the suffering of volunteers themselves receives a very different philosophical treatment. We conclude by reflecting on the significance of distance, difference, and embodiment for our understandings of love and suffering.

### **The Everyday and the Problem of Belief**

**Robert Orsi, Northwestern University, USA**

The idea that "belief" is central to the study of religion has been effectively challenged in the past three decades. Scholars of religion are more comfortable now talking about disciplines and practices, regimes and embodiment. As necessary as the historical and theoretical critique of "belief" was, however, the danger is that under its influence the old split between mind and body is sneaking back into the study of religion. The question that needs to be addressed now is: what are everyday ideas? How might we scholars of religion begin to conceptualize religious thinking—and believing—in relation to the paradigm of the everyday.

### **Life-lines: new-spiritual geographies in Brighton, UK\***

**Chris Philo, University of Glasgow**

**Louisa Cadman**

**Jennifer Lea, University of Loughborough**

New-spiritual 'life-lines' criss-cross Brighton, traced out by people engaging with 'new spiritualities of life', especially yoga and meditation. They are lines conjoining sites and moments of new-spiritual practice, spatially and temporally localised, but often with an affective quality vibrating along the lines, infusing how people think, feel, act and cope in other time-spaces. They can be delicate lines, easily broken given the difficulties of carving out 'niches' for new-spiritual engagement sustainable against the demands of bustling urban existence. Yet they may also be surprisingly durable, carefully planned and jealously protected, yet rarely with the fundamentalist undergirding (sometimes)

associated with other belief-systems. They are lines that can matter greatly: the vital scaffolding for some people dwelling in the contemporary city, a basis for physical and mental well-being in the face of both routine demands and dramatic crises. Indeed, they may genuinely become 'life-lines'. Creating time-spaces for new-spiritual self-work can readily be criticised as an individualised retreat from – even a consumerist complicity with – late-capitalist modernity; but here are also the seeds for an immanent *critique* of such an order, squaring with the very-late Foucault's turn to the tests of spiritual practice when questing for "truth ... in the form of the other world and the other life" (Foucault, 2011:340).

### **Shrines Cultures in South Asia: Practices and Iconographies of a 'Common' Religion of Northwest India and Pakistan\***

**Tej Purewal, University of Manchester**

Shrines in South Asia constitute a constellation of sites which articulate spiritualities of benefits and acts of sustenance- bridging the spiritual and the material. They generally mark the life and death of a saint or holy person of local or regional significance. There are historical, monumental sites as well as more recently established smaller shrines both of which attract pilgrims and local worshippers from diverse backgrounds and identities. This paper will conceptually develop a picture of shrine cultures in South Asia which exist within, across and alongside more official notions of religious identity and practice. By drawing upon iconography, rituals and practices at selected shrines, the paper will argue that there is a 'common' religious system of northwest India and Pakistan as articulated in these shrines which constitutes an underbelly of popular religious practices to the more official overt expressions of 'religion' in the region.

### **Natural Burial and the Corpse: from waste to gift\***

**Hannah Rumble, University of Durham**

**Douglas Davies, University of Durham**

Natural burial began as a very specific burial innovation in England in 1993, but since then has been adopted and fostered by other countries world wide. In this paper however, I shall focus on ethnographic and interview data collected from a church of England-affiliated natural burial ground in Cambridgeshire that was collected between 2008-2010. This paper will argue that people's articulated desire "to be of use", "return to nature" and "give something back" that subsequently explains their choice to have a natural burial (as opposed to cemetery burial or ash scattering), is in fact a form of gift-giving. For natural burial, I argue, enables the bereaved and dying to symbolically

and literally take the hitherto rotting corpse and reproduce it as an animate gift to nature, to fecundity and to future generations. In this way a natural burial site becomes a type of intergenerational legacy and this animate gift changes our understanding of 'to be dead' and the place of the dead amongst the living.

### **Trees of birth; a birth ritual in a newly built suburban area in the Netherlands**

**Inez Schippers, Tilburg University**

The popularity of rituals is rising, resulting in ever-growing attention from a variety of scientific disciplines. Apparently, rituals provide us with important knowledge about ourselves and the way we inhabit and organize the world around us.

Part of the Religion and Ritual research group of the highly acclaimed Faculty of Humanities at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, focuses on sacred space and rituals practices. Not in a conventional way, but by trying to look beyond the traditional locations (church, mosque, synagogue) toward newly emerging sacred zones. We apply this point of view on specific and contemporary locations and situations in Dutch society. Modern pilgrimage sites, public commemorative monuments, newly built suburban areas, and rest- and nursing homes are the kinds of places that lay under scrutiny.

For my PhD project I conduct research in a so called Vinex-area. Vinex-areas are large newly built suburban areas and this specific one, Leidsche Rijn, is meant to house around 80.000 residents. Since churches and mosques were left out of the original construction plans, it is a great place for new forms of sacrality and rituals to take shape.

One of the rituals I study is the planting of trees for new-born, and in a few cases deceased, babies. Twice a year a large group of parents and grandparents ritually plant a tree to symbolize the birth and life, or death of their child or grandchild. Later on they return to their tree and small personal rituals emerge.

Of course the planting of trees is not a completely new ritual but in the context of the Vinex-area it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the arising birth forest. The trees do not only represent the life of the child but they are also meant to create a connection between the planters and their new neighborhood.

### **Islam in middle childhood\***

**Jonathan Scourfield, University of Cardiff**

Secondary analysis of the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2003 suggests the inter-generational transmission of religion is more prevalent in Muslims in England and Wales than in Christians. The paper explores possible reasons for the relatively strong transmission of Islam, with reference to qualitative research with Muslim families. Firstly, there is the importance of formal learning and the role of religious institutions in this process. Secondly, there is socialisation into the *habitus* of family and community. Thirdly, there is the effect of being in a minority; both the connection between faith and ethnicity and also the strengthening of religious identity that can result from having to defend a faith that is under pressure. Fourthly and finally, there is the cognitive science of religion, which can shed some light on the mechanisms of transmission. Each of these themes will be explored to aid understanding of why Islamic nurture is relatively successful in a more generally secularising social and cultural context. The empirical basis of the paper is research with a diverse sample of 60 families with children aged 12 and under. The data include interviews with adults and children, oral and photographic diaries and observation of formal learning.

### **Performing sacralised conflict: exploring student activism relating to Israel-Palestine\***

**Ruth Sheldon, University of Kent**

**Gordon Lynch, University of Kent**

Palestine-Israel has been a focal concern within UK student politics for over four decades, giving rise to recurrent, highly emotive institutional conflicts. In this paper, I will discuss the findings from my year-long ethnographic research focused on this student activism.

The paper will describe the processes through which student societies represent and enact sacred tensions intrinsic to the Middle East conflict, drawing on cultural-sociological concepts of the sacred (Alexander 2003; Lynch 2012) and social performance (Alexander 2006). I will highlight some mimetic aspects of this activism, including performances of universalist versus particular solidarities, civility versus rage and enactments of conflicting collective traumas.

I will consider how the intensity of this issue is sustained across what are transitory student communities, developing Carlson's (2001) concept of 'haunting' to describe how sacred tensions persist within, and are refracted by, the materiality of the university setting. To conclude, I will discuss the aesthetic power of these student conflicts in relation to concepts of 'the tragic' (Critchley and Kesselman 2012), and will relate this to the socio-historic locations of student groups. I aim both to show *why* Israel-Palestine retains its significance for students and to demonstrate the contribution of ethnographic research for a cultural sociology of the sacred.

### **Online Authorities? Young British Sikhs, Religious Transmission and the Internet\***

**Jasjit Singh, University of Leeds**

**Kim Knott, University of Lancaster**

Based on a wider study of processes of religious transmission amongst young British Sikh adults, this paper explores the impact of the Internet on religious transmission. Given that 'going online' has become an everyday practice for many, this paper will examine how the Internet is being used by young British Sikhs to learn about Sikhism.

Beginning with a description of the emergence of Sikhism online, this paper will present data gathered via interviews and an online survey to understand the impact of the online environment on processes of religious learning, with a particular focus on how the Internet may or may not impact on ideas of religious authority.

### **Ordinary Theology and Visual Culture among Polish Catholic young people\***

**Pete Ward, King's College London**

This paper will explore the idea of ordinary theology using visual ethnographic methodologies. It arises from research into Migration This paper examines the idea of ordinary theology using visual ethnographic methodologies. It is the third in a series of papers arising from research into Migration and Visual Culture among Polish Catholic young people. Using the work of Raymond Williams as a starting point the theme of the ordinary in Practical Theology is examined. The paper argues for the ordinary as being constructed in relation to formal theology as well as part of a whole way of life.

Using the work of Raymond Williams as a starting point the theme of the ordinary in Practical Theology will be discussed. The paper argues for the ordinary as being constructed in relation to formal theology as well as part of a 'whole way of life'.

### **Landscapes of Religion, Identity and Conflict in Northern Kenya\***

**Liz Watson, University of Cambridge**

**John Mack, University of East Anglia**

**Justin Willis, British Institute in Eastern Africa**

**Hassan Wario Arero, The British Museum**

**Purity Kiura, National Museums of Kenya**

**Fugicha Wako, Egerton University**

In the arid lands of northern Kenya new and old belief systems inter-relate and influence the constructions of identity and inter-group relations. Among the Boran and Gabra pastoralists, indigenous religious beliefs have been central to the construction of landscape, as well as to the development of certain identities and inter-ethnic relations. Identities were enacted through ritual movements across landscapes and the experiences of everyday sacred practices reflected and encouraged nomadic lives. The engagement with space embodied open and ongoing creative processes that produced relations between groups that were sometimes hostile, but also provided the basis of mutual recognition, dialogue and peace building. Changes to these everyday patterns of movement have been brought by multiple factors operating in the area, environmental, economic and political. A factor that is commonly overlooked is the change to the ritual landscapes associated with increased levels of conversion to global monotheistic religions. The new landscape of mosques and churches has brought an engagement with space that is more fixed and is associated with less open relations to others. Far from weakening ethnic identities and improving inter-ethnic relations, therefore, the evidence suggests that these new religions have entrenched ethnic identities and hardened relations between ethnic groups.

**From Sunday Schools to Christian Youth Work: young people's engagement with organised Christianity in twentieth century England and the present day\***

**John Wolffe, The Open University**

**Naomi Stanton, The Open University**

This session will present findings from qualitative research into the decline of the Sunday School Movement in the twentieth century and young people's experiences of Christian youth work today. We will begin by outlining the initial vision of the project, and how it subsequently developed, as well as explaining how it fits into wider debates about secularisation in the UK. The presentation of the findings will be framed by the notion of social currencies; a more fluid, dynamic and multi-directional form of social capital. It will be argued that religious organisations have been more successful in engaging young people where they are connected to the social currencies of their time and place, and where they facilitate space for young people's expression of 'choice and voice'. Themes that crosscut the time periods, from Sunday Schools to Christian Youth Work, include; the institutionalisation of religious organisations, tensions between youth leaders and their wider churches, and the significance of young people's participation as a mutually negotiated process.

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