

***Religion in the Local and Global:  
Interdisciplinary Perspectives and  
Challenges***

**BASR 2015**

**Programme & Abstracts**

University of Kent

7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## Programme

### Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September

12.00 Registration (Welcome Desk/ Conference Suite Entrance) & Buffet Lunch (Darwin Suite 1)

13.00 Welcome: Main Room (Darwin Suite 2/3)

13.30-15.00 **Panel Sessions 1:** 4 Parallel Rooms (see panel session list)

15.00-15.30 Tea Break (Darwin Suite 1)

15.30-17.00 **Panel Sessions 2:** 4 Parallel Rooms (see panel session list)

18.00-19.00 Meal (Rutherford)

19.30 Social Time & Drinks (Darwin- Origins Bar): including **50 Years of the Study of Religion Bar Quiz** With Chris Deacy

### Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September

8.30-9.00 Coffee (Darwin Suite 1)

9.00-10.30 **Plenary 1: Plenary Discussion:** The Future of Religious Studies (Joint BASR & TRS-UK Event): Chaired by Steven Sutcliffe (BASR President-Elect) and Jolyon Mitchell (TRS-UK) (Darwin Suite 2/3)

10.30-11.00 Coffee (Darwin Suite 1)

11.00-12.30 **Panel Sessions 3:** 3 Parallel Rooms (see panel session list)

12.30-13.30 Buffet Lunch (Darwin Suite 1)

13.30-15.00 BASR AGM (Darwin Suite 2/3)

15.00-15.30 Tea (Darwin Suite 1)

15.30-17.00 **Panel Sessions 4:** 4 Parallel Rooms (see panel session list)

17.30-18.30 Meal

18.30-19.30 **Drinks Reception** for University of Kent 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet (Darwin Suite 1/2/3)

19.30 **Keynote Address:** Professor Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute, Göttingen, Germany) "Religion and the City: A Comparative Perspective on Asia and the Rest" (Darwin Suite 2/3)

21.00 Social Time in Darwin, Origins Bar

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September:**

8.30 Coffee (Darwin Suite 1)

9.00-10.30 **Panel Session 5:** 3 Parallel Rooms (see panel session list)

10.30-11.00 Coffee

11.00-12.30 **Plenary 2:** Professor Mia Lovheim (Uppsala University, Sweden) "Religion and Mediatized Publics" (Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

12.30-13.30 Lunch and Finish (Darwin Suite 1)

**Post Conference Session:**

14.00-15.00 TRS-UK AGM (TRS-UK Event) (Darwin Lecture Theatre 3)

## Panel Session List

### PANEL SESSION 1: 13.30-15.00 (Select from 4 sessions)

#### 1.A. Religion, Globalization and Theory Chair: Jeremy Carrette

(Darwin Suite 2: Main Room)

- Eileen Barker (London School of Economics / INFORM) "Here, There and/or Anywhere? Minority Religions and their Migration In and Out of Britain"
- Jessica Frazier (University of Kent) "Gadamer, Religion and Globalism"
- Richard Roberts (University of Stirling) "Is grand theory possible? Globalisation and the shamano-ritual complex"

#### 1.B. Evangelicals & Global Christianities Chair: Anna Strhan

(Darwin Suite 3)

- Kit Kirkland (University of St. Andrews) "Detached as Never Before: The Autonomy of American Millennial Christians and the Politics of Generational Succession"
- Alan Le Grys (University of Kent) "The Alpha God: The Impact of Old Testament Models of God on Continuing Christian ethics"
- S. Jonathon O'Donnell (SOAS, University of London) "Sacred Selves, Satanic Societies: Clashing Agencies in American Evangelical Conspiracism"
- Meadhbh Mclvor (London School of Economics) "'Pressing Beyond the Fringe': Conservative Evangelical Reflections on Publicity, Preaching, and British Reserve"

#### 1.C. Religion, Ethics and Policy Chair: Bettina Schmidt

(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

- David Dark (Belmont University) "Policy Is Liturgy Write Large: The Ploughshares Movement & Other Raids on the Sacrosanct"
- Gordon Lynch (University of Kent) "The Uses of Ethics: The Role of Humanitarian Sentiment in the Suffering of British Child Migrants"
- Beatrice Nuti (Pisa, Italy) "Religion and industry: Adriano Olivetti"
- Donovan Schaefer (University of Oxford) "Only Better Beasts: Globalisation, Affect, and the American Controversies over Darwinism"

#### 1.D. Religion in Time, Space and Place Chair: Chris Deacy

(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)

- Feyza Sacmali (Marmara University, Turkey) "Myth or reality: Is there a connection between Anatolian Alawites and Medieval European Heresy?"
- Krittika Bhattacharjee (Edinburgh University) "Everyday places deemed special: 'fresh impressions from the field on visitorship on Iona'"
- Abdul-Azim Ahmed (Cardiff University) "God's House – space sensitive ethnography"
- Sandra Maurer (University of Kent) "Negotiating the Qur'an: Practising Islam in a secular environment – a female students' perspective"

**PANEL SESSION 2: 15.30-17.00 (Select from 4 sessions)****2.A. Asia, Religion and Global Issues Chair: Jessica Frazier****(Darwin Suite 2: Main Room)**

- Richard King (University of Kent) "From "Mystic East" to "Eastern Spirituality": Colonial Legacies in an Age of Corporate Globalization"
- Stephen Jacobs (University of Wolverhampton) "Hanging Out with the Guru: The Role of Digital Communications in the Art of Living Foundation"
- Ting Guo (University of Oxford) "Cosmopolitan Spirit, National Identity, and Liberal Theology: An Episcopalian "House Church" in Shanghai"

**2.B. Religion in the Public Square Chair: Jeremy Carrette****(Darwin Suite 3)**

- Julia Berger (University of Kent/Bahai International Community, UN) "A New Politics of Engagement: The Baha'i International Community and the United Nations"
- Christopher Cotter (University of Lancaster) "(Non)religion and the Public Square: Discourse, Indifference and Hegemony"
- Liam Sutherland (University of Edinburgh) "Religion and National Identity in the 21st Century Scottish Public Eye: Representation, Heritage, Diversity and the National Norm"

**2.C. Religion, Ethics, and Economic Life****Conveners: Anna Strhan and David Henig, University of Kent). Session 1 Chair: David Henig****(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)**

- Laurie Denyer Willis (McGill University) "'Economic Evangelism': Women's Small Business in Rio de Janeiro's 'informal peripheries'"
- Mark Read (University of Birmingham) 'There's nothing in my job that stops me being a Quaker.' Quaker work-life responses to the 'austerity' of the Coalition government
- Fran Handrick (University of Birmingham) "The Curious Case of Amish Women in Multi-Level Marketing Businesses"
- Anna Strhan (University of Kent) "'God is not a communist': Conservative Evangelicals and the 'love of money' in London"

**2.D. Defining Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Chair: TBC****(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)**

- Suzanne Owen (University of Chester/Leeds Trinity) "Defining Religion through Charity Law"
- Richard Saville-Smith (University of Edinburgh) "Introducing a Model of 'Disruption' to the interdisciplinary debate between the Study of Religion/s and Psychiatry"
- Chris Deacy (University of Kent) "Why Category of Religion Debates Matter: A Case Study of Christmas as a 'Secular' Religion"
- Claire Wanless (Open University) "Embeddedness in Postmodern Religion"

**PANEL SESSION 3: 11.00-12.30 (Select from 3 sessions)****3.A. Global Bodies, Sexuality & Religion Chair: Bettina Schmidt****(Darwin Suite 2: Main Room)**

- Nicole Zaneti (Universidade Católica de Brasília- UCB, Brazil) "Sexuality and Women's Spirituality: A Study with Tai Chi Chuan"
- Sarah Harvey (University of Kent) "A Religious Studies Perspective on Natural Childbirth: A Global Ideal Versus An Individual Plan"
- Richard Amesbury (University of Zurich) "Is the Body Secular? Circumcision, Religious Freedom, and Bodily Integrity"
- Shaunna Calpin (University of Oxford) "Contemporary Witch Hunt: Making the Unintelligible Intelligible"

**3.B. ROUNDTABLE: Religion and Non-religion in London: Class and Power in the Secular City Chair:****TBC****(Darwin Suite 3)**

- A roundtable discussion on Lois Lee's *Recognizing the Non-religious: Reimagining the Secular* (OUP, 2015) and Anna Strhan's *Aliens and Strangers? The Struggle for Coherence in the Everyday Lives of Evangelicals* (OUP, 2015)
  - Roundtable discussants:
    - Abby Day (University of Kent),
    - Mia Lövheim (Uppsala University),
    - Dawn Llewellyn (University of Chester),
    - Paul-François Tremlett (Open University)

**3.C. Global Positions of Yoga Chair: Richard King****(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)**

- Suzanne Newcombe (London School of Economics) "Yoga, Ayurveda and Immorality: The Case of Swami Ramdev"
- Karen O'Brien-Kop (SOAS, University of London) "An Intertextual Reading of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*: Localized Contexts of Production and Global Challenges of Interpretation"
- Theo Wildcroft (Open University) "Wild Things and Fallen Angels: An Epistemological Struggle in the Evolution of Physical Practice"

**PANEL SESSION 4: 15.30-17.00 (Select from 4 sessions)****4.A. Local and Global: Migration, Boundaries and Performance Chair: Abby Day  
(Darwin Suite 2: Main Room)**

- Moojan Momen (Independent) "From Local to Global: An Examination of the Spread of the Baha'i Faith"
- Anna S. King (University of Winchester) "Crossing Boundaries: The Liberation Spiritualities and Ethics of the Dalai Lama and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar"
- Graham Harvey (Open University) "Indigenous Performances in the UK: Ceremony or Entertainment?"

**4.B. Pilgrims, Pentecostals and Postcolonial Christians in Africa and Asia: An Ethnographic Exploration****(Conveners: Jonathan Miles-Watson and Sitna Quiroz, University of Durham)****Chair: Alan Le Grys****(Darwin Suite 3)**

- Jonathan Miles-Watson and Sitna Quiroz (University of Durham) "Rupture or Redress? Processional Ritual, Identity and the Everyday lives of Christians in Africa and Asia"
- Iracema Dulley (London School of Economics) "Iterations of Christianity: Catholic and Protestant Missions in the Central Highlands of Angola"
- Iliyana Angelova (University of Oxford) "Postcolonial Conversions and the Construction of Difference in the Indo-Burma Borderlands: An Ethnographic Study of Identity Formation in Northeast India"
- Seth Kunin (University of Aberdeen) "Japan's Kakure Kirishitans: Mediating Structures and Conflicting Identities at the Nagasaki Matzori"

**4.C. The Political Values of Religious Studies****(Convener: Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh) Chair: Richard King****(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)**

- Steven Sutcliffe (University of Edinburgh) "After Smart: from liberalism to the rebel alliance"
- Paul-François Tremlett (The Open University) "Darwinism makes it possible": Religion, Progress and the Conquest of Nature
- Jeremy Carrette (University of Kent) "The Politics of Objects: Commodification, Objectification and Religious Things"

**4.D. The Church of Scientology: Doctrine, Practice and Rebellion****Convener: Stephen Gregg (University of Wolverhampton) Chair: TBC****(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)**

- Donald A. Westbrook (Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, USA) "Keeping Scientology Working": Systematic Theology, Orthodoxy, and Heresy in the Church of Scientology
- Aled J.Ll. Thomas (Open University, UK) "Scientology Beyond the Church: The Practice of Auditing in the Free Zone"
- Stephen E. Gregg (University of Wolverhampton, UK) "Scientology Inside Out: Complicating Religious Identity in Global Scientologies"

**PANEL SESSION 5: 9.00-10.30 (Select from 3 sessions)**

**5.A. 'Religion and Culture in Scotland: New Practices in Local Contexts'**

**Convener/Chair: TBC**

**(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)**

- Marion Bowman (Open University) "Pilgrimage in Scotland: Recovering and Reframing a Land of Lost Content"
- George D. Chryssides (York St John University) "A Scottish View of Jehovah's Witnesses: A Study of Cultural Outsiders"
- Steven Sutcliffe (University of Edinburgh) "'Life Reform' in the Early Twentieth Century: A Scottish Example of a European phenomenon"

**5.B. Fiction in the Study of Religion: Three Case Studies**

**Convener: Ethan G. Quillen (University of Edinburgh)**

**Chair: TBC**

**(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2) (University of Stirling) "Is Cassandra a true believer?"**

- Clement Grene (University of Edinburgh) "The Jesus of History and the Christ of Literature: Literary Approaches to Historical Jesus Research"
- Ethan G. Quillen (University of Edinburgh) "An Atheist Gospel: The Quest for the Fictional Jesus and the Gospel Novel as Atheist Discourse"

**5.C. Religion, Ethics, and Economic Life (Session 2)**

**Conveners: Anna Strhan and David Henig, University of Kent).**

**Chair: Anna Strhan**

**(Darwin Lecture Theatre 3)**

- Shaheed Tayob (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious Diversity, Gottingen) "Feeding the Customer: 'Sufi Food' and the Ethics of Care and Responsibility in a Mumbai Restaurant"
- Petra Kuppinger (Monmouth College) "Mosques and Supermarkets: Faith, Space, Economy and Urban Renewal in Germany"
- Ingrid Storm (University of Manchester) "Does economic insecurity predict religiosity? Evidence from the European Social Survey"



## Abstracts

### Panel Session 1.A

#### Religion, Globalization and Theory Chair: Jeremy Carrette

(Darwin Suite 2: Main Room)

- **Here, There and/or Anywhere? Minority Religions and their Migration In and Out of Britain**  
Eileen Barker London School of Economics / INFORM

Religious beliefs and practices have travelled around the world since before the days of the silk routes. This they continue to do, with new inventions, be these printing, air travel or the World Wide Web, facilitating the exchange of ideas with an ever-increasing speed to an ever-increasing extent. Taking contemporary Britain as a case study, this paper examines the wide variety of both foreign and indigenous minority religions to which it plays host, considering the diverse ways in which the movements have changed since their founding, and how, why, where and when such changes occurred. Factors that are both internal and external to the religions will be explored, and, in an effort to suggest where generalisations might be posited (and when they might not), some attempt will be made to consider how at least some of the variables might (or might not) be related. Questions to be addressed include: 'Which sort of new religions are liable to globalise, be it through such means as migration, missionary activity or the mass and social media?' 'What kind of a demand might there be – that is, what might attract potential converts, and to what extent are the beliefs and practices of the imported religion negotiable?' 'How do such factors as the social/political situation (state regulation, anti-cult sentiment, media reception, and other aspects of the existing culture) affect the receptivity of migrant religions?' and 'What are the available alternatives, and to what extent is there satisfaction with the status quo?'

- **Gadamer, Religion and Globalism**  
Jessica Frazier, University of Kent

Having seen Nationalism at its worst, whilst preserving his own ideal of a Platonic realm in which all minds meet and interweave to shape new landscapes of thought, Gadamer sought in his later years to shape a new 'globalism'. Using the models of a collaborative artwork, a healthy organism, a constructive classroom, or the rich play of poetic language, Gadamer's 'Positive Globalism' stressed complex and creative forms of unity.

Redefining networked autonomy, affirming dependence (rather than dominance) as a creative tool, and rethinking selfhood at the core, this is a Post-Heideggerian global ontology. It speaks to Foucault's critiques, Giddens' model of structuration, and to Zygmunt Bauman's notion of nomadic liquidity, as well as to Deleuze, Badiou and the emergence of network theory, and to John Ralston Saul's ideal of soft nations with creative values. But we see in this paper that it was meant not only to guide the West politically, but also to provide the foundation for spiritual life - that is, for Gadamer's own 'Sublime' vision of the vast whole of our shared (and ongoing) cultural life.

- **Is grand theory possible? Globalisation and the shamano-ritual complex**  
Richard Roberts, University of Stirling

As a pioneer in the application of globalisation theory to the study of a religious event (see 'Globalized Religion? The Parliament of the World's Religions [Chicago 1993] in theoretical perspective', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 10, 1995, pp. 121-37), I am concerned to find a way of correlating globalisation theory with the manifold of categories to be confronted across the field of religious studies. Both 'globalisation' and theories of ritual have their discrete conceptual histories; my aim in this paper is to draw together these two dimensions in the interests of developing a unified theory of human emergence applicable to the fields of religious studies - and 'theology'. Utilising the synchronic conceptual motif of 'transcendental deduction', classically developed in the second edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, we seek to frame the history of the conceptual representation of globalisation from critiques of imperialism, through development theory and world system theory to

the conceptualisation of the 'glocal' matrix, and draw this into dialogue with Roy Rappaport's diachronic theory of ritual in his posthumously published masterpiece, *Religion, Ritual and the Making of Humanity* (1999). In sum, Rappaport's life-work can be understood as a cumulative argument for a human ecological vision in which sustainability at all levels of analysis is integral – and in which 'ritual' is foundational to the attainment of such integrity. Yet the reality is that such humane vision would appear to be overwhelmed by multiple crises and the pathologies associated with globalisation, environmental degradation – and with 'religion' itself. The latter might indeed be the 'making of humanity', but it is now in danger of being its unmaking. How might we recover and re-frame the making - and resist the breaking?

### Panel Session 1.B

#### Evangelicals & Global Christianities Chair: Anna Strhan

(Darwin Suite 3)

- **Detached as Never Before: The Autonomy of American Millennial Christians and the Politics of Generational Succession**

Kit Kirkland, University of St Andrews

For the past forty years America's evangelical Christians have been tied to Republican party. Appealing to conservative Christian values through what Domke and Coe labeled the 'God Strategy' the Republicans successfully mobilized the voting resources of this 'base' to push Bush to consecutive victories in 2000 and 2004.<sup>1</sup> In the run up to 2016, the power of this hybrid relationship or as Laderman terms 'Republicanism' is once again in evidence as Republican nominees attempt to court evangelical Christians who make up to a third of the American electorate with a countercultural Christian platform.<sup>2</sup>

This appeal nonetheless is based on baby-boomer relations, premised on a shared vision of America. As 'Generation Y' or the 'Millennials' take the tiller of America's future, there is evidence that this once foregone relationship may be passing; as a selective, skeptical form of religiosity in politics takes hold amongst the younger generation. Based on qualitative evidence gathered from five Christian colleges in America's North East and Mid-West in 2013, this paper suggests millennial Christians are seeking greater autonomy from the political tribalism that characterized their parents faith engagement. Though the life issues of abortion and homosexual marriage have been inherited, their concerns remain just that, there is little to suggest they want to exercise their faith publically through the narrow agenda propagated by the Republican machine. Backing Hout and Fischer's findings that millennial Christians are seeking greater autonomy from party politics with freedom from labels, the paper suggests millennial Christians share the political disenfranchisement of their secular peers.<sup>3</sup>

Along with the waning tribalism this generational succession presents, the paper also examines the retrenchment amongst American evangelical millennials towards domestic matters over international affairs, probing what this international void may hold for America's foreign relations, and the nature of America's engagement with Israel and the Middle East that defined boomer concerns.

- **The Alpha God: the impact of Old Testament models of God on continuing Christian ethics**

Alan Le Grys, University of Kent

<sup>1</sup> David Domke & Kevin Coe, *The God Strategy: How Religion became a Political Weapon in America* (Rev. Ed.) (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 25

<sup>2</sup> Gary Laderman, 'Republicanism: The GOP Transformation Is Nearly Complete' *Religious Dispatches*, 17<sup>th</sup> Jul. 2011, date accessed 29<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2014

<[http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/4844/'republicanism'—the\\_gop\\_transformation\\_is\\_nearly\\_complete/](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/4844/'republicanism'—the_gop_transformation_is_nearly_complete/)>

<sup>3</sup> Michael Hout & Claude Fischer, 'Explaining why more Americans have no religious preference: Political backlash and generational succession 1987-2012' *Sociological Science*, Oct. 2014 Vol. 1., p.433

Christian values and practices are typically said to be the product of a dynamic process of reflection on scripture, tradition and reason; yet a growing number of voices in recent scholarship have begun to challenge the way in which underlying assumptions embedded in both the Bible and tradition reflect archaic notions of patriarchy and hierarchy that continue to exercise a significant influence over Christian ethical thinking. The most obvious example would be the challenge of feminist interpretation from Mary Daly to Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, but other contributions include the critique of atonement theory as 'divine child abuse' by Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole Bohn and the study of disturbing images of God in the Hebrew Bible by Eric Siebert. This paper will build on this emerging critique and focus specifically on the issue of sexuality in the Hebrew Bible. It will argue that the perceived incompatibility of sex and the divine owes less to the purity concerns commonly associated with it and more to a classical understanding of God as an ancient oriental tyrant, a jealous God who requires absolute submission and obedience. In the presence of this God, all other males (in particular) are seen as a potential threat to divine power and sovereignty. This model of God as the great dictator is certainly modified in the Christian tradition through the 'Christological filter' used to read the Hebrew texts; but even so, the New Testament carries over many of these basic assumptions, allowing the underlying Hebrew understanding of God to continue to influence Christian thinking, often at an unspoken level. The paper will thus conclude that a radically new biblical hermeneutic is required to rebuild Christian ethics – a fundamental rethink around the way the biblical tradition is appropriated in a rapidly changing social environment.

- **Sacred Selves, Satanic Societies: Clashing Agencies in American Evangelical Conspiracism**  
S. Jonathon O'Donnell, SOAS, University of London

Scholars, pundits, and think-tanks alike have remarked on the rise of far-right conspiracy theories in the United States since the events of 9/11, gaining in momentum with the 2008 election of Barack Obama. Manifesting across the conservative political spectrum from neo-Nazis to the Tea Party and Birther movements, this culture of conspiracism has become an enduring feature of the American political landscape. As scholars like Michael Barkun and Christopher Partridge note, such conspiracies are heavily inflected with millenarian concepts, often framing themselves in opposition to diabolical powers aligned with forces of big government and totalitarian globalisation.

My paper analyses recent US conspiracy theories about Obama as 'secret Muslim', exhibited by several members of the political right throughout both his terms in office, and how these tie into related conspiracies of Islamist infiltration of the American government advanced by individuals like Michele Bachmann and Phyllis Schlafly. These conspiracies often hinge on the assertion of a reified pure, (Protestant) Christian America against infiltration by an Islamic/Islamist other—a form of 'negative globalisation' threatening to American power, but which in the domestic realm merges with conspiratorial ideas of big government oversight as undermining American (Protestant, Christian) 'authenticity' in service to diabolical powers (identified here with Islam, but elsewhere with transnational forces broadly). By deconstructing these conspiracies, I analyse their underlying structures of personal agency, in which neoliberalist concepts of the individual as self-contained director of their destiny and bearer of religio-national 'authenticity' are opposed to other (inter-)national societal processes that attempt to undermine that individual—but which are also identified as stemming from the deliberate actions of nefarious, sometimes explicitly demonic, others for the purposes of undermining 'Real America'.

- **'Pressing beyond the fringe': conservative evangelical reflections on publicity, preaching, and British reserve**  
Meadhbh McIvor, London School of Economics

The past decade has seen a rise in ‘Christian interest’ litigation in English courts, including a growing number of street preachers arrested for their (alleged) use of offensive language. Funded by Christian lobby groups, and drawing inspiration from the legal engagement strategies of their American peers, these cases posit socially and theologically conservative Christians as the victims of state-sanctioned intolerance, with legal cases a chance to both expose and slow this perceived anti-Christian trend. Some English Christians, however, worry that these legal cases – and the publicity they generate – risk misrepresenting their faith to outsiders. Based on twenty-two months of fieldwork split between a conservative Christian legal aid centre and a conservative evangelical church in London, this paper focuses on the heterogeneous responses that the pursuit of religious publicity, both in public preaching and religious activism, can generate. Drawing on local notions of ‘British reserve’, it argues that these Christians have a complicated understanding of the potential pros and cons of what is often posited as American-inspired legal engagement, with English evangelicals simultaneously keen to speak of Jesus Christ in the public sphere but unwilling to transgress the social boundaries and class-based norms that are thought to circumscribe such speech.

### Panel Session 1.C

**Religion, Ethics and Policy:** Chair Bettina Schmidt  
(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

- **Policy Is Liturgy Write Large: The Ploughshares Movement & Other Raids on the Sacrosanct**  
David Dark, Belmont University

In her vision of climate change as the deliberate destruction of the Earth for the alleged gain of the wealthy few and at the loss of a human future for all, author Rebecca Solnit offers a clarion call: “The revolt against brutality begins with a revolt against the language that hides that brutality.” This aphorism addresses the way our language can render covert an otherwise obviously perverse conception of bodies, communities, and resources. As the reigning nomenclature has it, a suicide bombing is *religiously* motivated but the crowd killing of alleged militants in a drone strike, for instance, is born of the *always reasonable* demands of national security. It’s how we speak that defiles us, and all manner of geopolitical brutality is effectively guarded over as sacrosanct, beyond the purview of what we popularly call “religion.” The “realpolitik” of governments and corporations is kept painstakingly clear of the religious sphere (and therefore left largely unchecked) while the moral witness of “faith communities” is *only* religious (and thereby deprived of its sociopolitical heft). Dysfunctional orderings of human life, the bad religion underwritten by getting and spending, voting, and tax dollars, go largely unchallenged. Newspeak touts “the role of religion,” “religious issues” or the presence of a “religious aspect” in the interest of presenting a “religious angle.” But the deployment of such phrases is tantamount to asserting that “Relationship was a factor,” “Language played a role,” or “Culture was involved.” Religion, in the meantime, is always already there. Drawing on Talal Asad, the Catonsville Nine, and the actions of Megan Rice of the Ploughshare movement, I argue that religion, like liturgy (*leitourgia* – the work of the people), is never more nor less than the how and the what of all practice. Policy is liturgy writ large.

- **The Uses of Ethics: The Role of Humanitarian Sentiment in the Suffering of British Child Migrants**  
Gordon Lynch, University of Kent

Between 1869 and the early 1970s, around 100,000 children were sent from the UK, unaccompanied

by their parents, to British overseas dominions as part of organized child migration schemes run by leading charities and churches and often funded by British and Commonwealth governments. Inspired by the American 'orphan train' movement, these schemes were initially intended as humanitarian interventions to remove children from poverty and family environments deemed unsuitable, and later became more formal strategies of empire settlement.

This paper examines how moral meanings circulating through these child migration schemes were implicated in creating conditions in which children were exposed to unnecessary suffering. Examining how the schemes functioned publicly around the cultivation of the humanitarian subject, and the implications of this for children who were meant to be 'redeemed' through their exposure to these schemes, the paper will go on to consider the implications of this for sustaining uncritical organizational cultures, structured around trans-national bonds of trust, in which the abuse and neglect of children became possible.

The paper concludes by discussing how the circulation of humanitarian moral meanings continues to influence the ways in which these child migration schemes are remembered today. This includes the ways in which some organizations previously involved in this work seek to protect their reputations in order to maintain their capacity to continue humanitarian work as well as the ways in which the construction of the history of the child migration schemes can be simplistically constructed as a moral drama, framed in terms of the sacred/profane binaries of the victim and abuser.

- **Religion and Industry: Adriano Olivetti**  
Beatrice Nuti, Pisa, Italy

Adriano Olivetti was an Italian industrialist (1901-1960), able to enlarge his own factory since 45,000 workers, with a worldwide commercial network. Born to Jewish father and Waldesian mother, Olivetti's industrial policies tried to connect Taylorism with Christian values: factory had to be a workers *community*, and profits investment had to be employed for community needs. Olivetti's typewriters factory was well organized, highly technological and strongly competitive, in order to have budget surplus, increase employees and distribute profits indirectly with corporate welfare, directly with the creation of a new type of company property. He tried to turn capitalistic factory propriety into a foundation, i.e. ownership of a set of entities representing the local community of citizens, as local University, Region, and workers representatives. In his mind, an industry should be the main tool of a community wealth, against impersonal State control, and capitalistic profit. Industry had to improve urban planning, publishing and cultural activities, and above all, spiritual development of individuals, especially workers. Industrial profits were rigorously required but their aim was the spiritual wealth and progress of workers.

The paper attempts to portray countless Olivetti activities, from management policies, industrial design improvement, urban and welfare planning, reporting main points of his political *manifesto*, and speeches (1945-1960).

- **Only Better Beasts: Globalisation, Affect, and the American Controversies over Darwinism**  
Donovan Schaefer, University of Oxford

American conservatives—especially Southern conservatives—are unique (among other Western right-wing movements) in their strong resistance to Darwinian evolutionary accounts of speciation. Rather than simply suggesting that low rates of acceptance of evolutionary theory among Southern conservatives are the result of poor education standards, this paper argues that the Creationism controversies are not about dissemination of knowledge at all. Specifically, it proposes that the insistence on Creationist accounts is best understood as the offshoot of what postcolonial theorist Sara Ahmed would call an "affective economy." This posture resists Darwinism as an emblem of Northern, urban, secular, pro-black cultural ingression, corresponding not to a set of intellectual commitments, but to an affectively-determined vision of civil society.

The emerging contours of this affective economy can be traced through an examination of the media coverage of the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, in which a Tennessee schoolteacher was prosecuted for teaching a Darwinian account of speciation. My presentation shows that Southern newspaper editorial cartoons frequently represented the controversy in terms of a Northern-driven media blitz that achieved nothing except to draw publicity to Darrow's irreligious vision of the world. Northern newspapers, by contrast, attacked the trial as a diversion from the South's own problems with race and poverty.

These attacks engraved the battle lines that still shape the Creationism controversy 90 years later. The Scopes Trial, then, was not a scientific debate, but an ongoing clash of visions of civil society drawing on historical, regional, religious, and class templates stemming back to the Civil War, producing a landscape of affective resonances. This pattern—of entrenched affective economies shaping knowledge production—can be traced not only in the American context, but in other locations where globalisation has placed societies with different intellectual starting points and a history of political conflict into ever-closer cultural proximity.

### Panel Session 1.D

**Religion in Time, Space and Place:** Chair Chris Deacy  
(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)

- **Myth or reality: Is there a connection between Anatolian Alawites and Medieval European Heresy?**

Feyza Sacmali, Marmara University, Turkey

This paper will try to investigate whether or not it is possible to identify a link between the Anatolian Alawites and Medieval Dualist European Heresies. Recently there have appeared various translated works especially about Cathar heresy in Turkey arguing for its possibility. However, interestingly enough, although there is no sign of the Alawite movement within these books in the English versions, in Turkish translations there is a widespread use of this term. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that these translations are speculative. There are some academic studies also, which are in support of this argument.

If we consider the Medieval European Dualist Heretics Movements as connected with one another, these movements will correspond to a widespread geography and a long period of time. For instance, if we start from the Paulisians in the 10th century from Armenia and Asia Minor, the movements would spread to Balkans with Bogomils in the eleventh century, with the Cathars in the twelfth century to the North Italy, South France, Germany and England. Yet, the widespread expansion of these movements does not necessarily prove their links with the Alawites.

There exist certain positions in Turkey relating Sheikh Bedreddin and Bogomils. However, the historical and geographical questions regarding this linkage await answers. Moreover, a possible influence of Bogomils with Balkan Baktashies is another topic that needs to be addressed on this matter. Essentially, after examining the translational and academic works on this topic, in light of the Alawite history and religious structure, this paper will discuss whether or not there is a connection with European Heretic movements.

- **Everyday places deemed special: 'fresh impressions from the field on visitorship on Iona'**

Krittika Bhattacharjee, Edinburgh University

This paper will be a presentation and analysis of qualitative data obtained during fieldwork conducted on the island of Iona between June and August 2015. Iona is a small island off the west coast of Scotland that receives several thousands of visitors each year. Some visitors see it as a place of pilgrimage; some treat it as a place of uncommon spiritual energy; there are those who go for its

scenic beauty or because of its contemporary ties with several retreat houses. Iona is comprised of many interpretative 'layers': the religious, the spiritual, the scenic, the historical, among others. Often, and across a wide variety of popular sources, this multiplicity of layers is absorbed into a wider conception of Iona as a special place.

This paper addresses the possibility of studying the 'ordinary' in a place deemed special. It proposes to supplement the popular idea of Iona as 'special' by presenting some of the everyday realities of visitorship on the island. The diversity of visitors to the island and the variations in their motivations, the duration of their stay, their management of time and so on, produces a similar diversity in the kinds of relationships they form with Iona. This paper will present some of these relationships. Using 'fresh impressions' from fieldwork data, it will attempt to capture a sense of the life of Iona as a visitor spot, and provoke larger questions about the role of visitorship in a place deemed special.

- **God's House – space sensitive ethnography**  
Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Cardiff University

The sacred/profane dichotomy has been a significant theme of religious studies since Durkheim first articulated his thesis on its centrality to understanding religions. In recent decades, a number of scholars have developed the idea of the sacred further, particularly in regards to space. Pnina Werbner and Barbara Metcalf in developed a vocabulary and basis for looking at sacred space amongst Muslims. More recently, edited collections by Margaret Cormack (Muslims and Others in Sacred Space) and Desplat and Schulz (Prayer in the City) expanded available literature on the theme significantly. This presentation builds on existing work, and explores the question of sacred space through reflections on an extended ethnographic study of a British mosque conducted as part of a PhD thesis. It argues that behavioural norms and spatial practice (adaab) around sacred spaces are not static, but fluid, in order to meet the various demands on the space. The paper highlights how the adaab of a mosque is learned, how it is contested, and what it can tell us about Muslim sacred space.

- **Negotiating the Qur'an: Practising Islam in a secular environment – a female students' perspective**  
Sandra Maurer, University of Kent

The Peace Direct Report (2006) positions religious identity as a crucial dimension of adolescent Muslim identity formation processes. Empirical evidence on increasingly diverse student bodies enrolled at higher education institutions however suggests that students experience a lack of consideration of their religious identities at university (Dinham and Jones 2010, Catto 2013). Muslim students in particular often face institutions unsuitable for Islamic practice due to lack of suitable facilities and social policy protocols. Furthermore, female Muslim students reportedly in particular are subjected to socio-economic disadvantages and Islamophobic or racist discourse. In this paper I will present findings from a case study with Rabya, a female postgraduate student in 2013/2014 at Cardiff university to address some of the potential challenges she faced as a religious student on campus. I will then show how she overcame some of these obstacles and has found ways for meaningful religious interaction during her time in Cardiff. Additionally to her lived experience I will discuss the socio-political challenge of establishing prayer facilities in Cardiff and use the concept of lived religion to help explain how Rabya has found the means for unique religious expression in a secular landscape through oral tradition.

Latest research on 'campus experience' which is identified to be a growing important factor by the Higher Education Academy (2014), however, does not take students' religiosity into consideration. By discussing Rabya's case I propose lived religion as partially a temporary place holder due to lack of other options to practice one's faith. Instead, unique, adapted practices have allowed this young Muslim woman to negotiate agency and transform her religious identity over the course of her degree. In summary, this paper will probe questions about the changing nature of religious landscapes across campuses relevant across the UK.

## Panel Session 2.A

**Asia, Religion and Global Issues.** Chair Jessica Frazier  
(Darwin Suite 2)

- **From “Mystic East” to “Eastern Spirituality”: Colonial Legacies in an Age of Corporate Globalization**

Richard King, University of Kent

The field of comparative study of mysticism occupied a crucial role in debates about religion as a cross-cultural phenomenon and as an object of academic study in the middle decades of the twentieth-century but has declined in significance in recent decades. By contrast, in popular culture, the notion of spirituality has risen as a frequently deployed concept linked to changing modes of "religious" identity in the early 21st century. This paper will explore this trend through an examination of use of the category of 'the mystical' by key Asian figures such as Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) and D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966). Finally, some reflections will be offered on reasons behind the growing popularity of “spirituality” and the corresponding decline of the category of "mysticism".

- **Hanging Out with the Guru: The Role of Digital Communications in the Art of Living Foundation**

Dr Stephen Jacobs, University of Wolverhampton

Art of Living (AOL) – a Hindu-derived meditation group founded in 1981 by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar – claims to have a presence in over 150 countries. AOL makes extensive use of new communication technologies and social media. AOL not only has a highly sophisticated web site, but also makes considerable use of Facebook, Twitter, webcasts, You Tube and mobile apps. Perhaps the most innovative use of communication technology was AOL’s Google Hangout in 2013 to enable a global conversation between Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and devotees from all corners of the globe. In this paper I will explore the use of digital communication platforms as a way of establishing a network of association that is intrinsic to the creation of what Sri Sri Ravi Shankar calls ‘a one-world family’. I will also investigate how the carefully managed online presentation of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar as a global humanitarian leader establishes him as the central node of this globalised form of spirituality.

- **Cosmopolitan Spirit, National Identity, and Liberal Theology: An Episcopalian “House Church” in Shanghai**

Ting Guo, University of Oxford

Combining methods of historical ethnography and semi-structured interviews, this paper will illuminate how Chinese Episcopalians strive, construct and reconcile their religious, national, and political identities through the story of an intellectual urbanite community in Shanghai, China's centre of commercial and cosmopolitan culture.

During the Republican era (1912-1949), the city’s municipal authority was constantly negotiated among different foreign concessions, and Shanghai’s connections to missionary organisations made it part of a larger liberal Christian movement. This provided an ideological framework for the making of identity among intellectual urbanites. The Episcopalian fellowship of family and friends that is selected as the case study of this paper—comprising Harvard graduates, university professors, Nationalist Party officials and their revolutionary Communist or anarchist children—appears to have a pragmatic outlook, as they appropriated and instrumentalised liberal Christianity to configure their left-wing, progressive new identity in China’s post-imperial era. This fellowship survived the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) when religious activities were banned and believers persecuted, and continues until this day as an underground Episcopalian “house church” that is part of a state-sanctioned non-denominational Patriotic “Three-Self” (self-governance, self-support, self-propagation) church. This unique example indicates a mechanism and nature of faith that defies any straightforward reductionist interpretations.

Overall, by examining this liberal Episcopalian framework in relation to individuals’ formation of national identity, this paper not only tells a saga of modern Chinese Christianity from the inside out,



but also sheds light on how liberal theology was contextualised vis-à-vis the vicissitudes of the twentieth century, from the Sino-Japanese War to the Communist Revolution, and how people strived to make sense of their identity in a familial space of faith in the face of swiftly changing values and ideologies.

## Panel Session 2.B

### **Religion in the Public Square** Chair Jeremy Carrette

(Darwin Suite 3)

- **A New Politics of Engagement: The Baha'í International Community and the United Nations**  
Julia Berger Baha'í International Community's United Nations Office

The Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office is the presence of the worldwide Bahá'í community at the UN. Over the course of its 70-year engagement with this intergovernmental organization, the Office has become a respected and valued member of the NGO community, engaging on issues such as gender equality, human rights, sustainable development, peace, children and youth, and the elimination of racism, to name a few. The formal relationship of this religious community with the UN is part of a broader phenomenon of a growing and increasingly visible engagement of religious actors in international affairs. This paper examines, for the first time, the history of the Bahá'í International Community's diplomatic work in the area of gender equality from the perspective of an organized religious community seeking to contribute to discourse and policy formation within the secular context of the UN. The influential role of the Bahá'í International Community in the area of gender equality is of particular interest given the concerns within the avowedly secular UN community that the growing role of religion in the public sphere threatens to undermine the hard-won victories of secular women's rights NGOs to advance the status and rights of women and girls around the world. The long history of collaboration with the UN in service of gender equality challenges the religion-secular binary that dominates discourse and inquiry about religion in the public sphere.

- **(Non)religion and the Public Square: Discourse, Indifference and Hegemony**  
Christopher R. Cotter, Lancaster University

Throughout my ongoing doctoral work, I have been engaged in an in-depth analysis of the discourses surrounding 'religion' within Edinburgh's diverse 'Southside.' The Southside has served as a geographically bounded and localized discursive field, allowing me to access, analyse and, indeed, construct, a wide variety of discourses on 'religion' through interviews, archival work, spatial approaches, and discourse analysis. A central argument developed throughout this research is that 'non-religion' – a rhetorical catch-all category comprising positions from 'atheism' and 'secularism' to 'scientism' and 'religious indifference' – is best understood as part of broader discourses on 'religion'. In this paper I outline this argument and my locality-based approach, and focus particularly upon the entanglements between these local discourses, and broader national and global discourses of multiculturalism, moderation, and secularity. In doing so, I aim to provide some theoretical challenges and methodological insights relevant to the study of 'religion' and 'non-religion' in the local and beyond.

- **Religion and National Identity in the 21st Century Scottish Public Eye: Representation, Heritage, Diversity and the National Norm**  
Liam Sutherland, University of Edinburgh

Scotland is a country which has undergone immense political change since entering the 21st century, which affects the ways in which individuals and communities within Scotland relate to or construct 'Scottish national identity'. After the recent referendum on Scottish independence, Scotland remains a 'stateless nation' but nonetheless continues to drift ever further from the 'British mainstream' to a large extent due to the increasing power and centrality of the devolved Scottish Parliament established in 1998. The pace of change, the increasing institutional significance of the Scottish political centre and the politicisation of 'Scotland' itself mean that many aspects of life in Scotland and the purported characteristics of 'Scottishness' and Scottish society are open for re-definition, re-negotiation and re-contestation.

One of the most significant of these issues is the relationship between Scottish national identity and religion: the perceived place of religion in Scottish public life, the characteristics of religion in Scotland and the 'religiousness' of Scotland, its people and their culture. The latest census conducted in 2011 reveals that an increasing percentage of Scots define themselves as 'non-religious', while the percentage of Scots identifying with the established church and even the label 'Christian' continues to decrease. Increasingly debates around key public issues such as same-sex marriage, birth control and education are conducted between organised and vocal secularist and Humanist groups and once rival religious traditions such as the Roman Catholic and Free Churches. In order to examine these questions I have turned to the media and sources produced by a variety of 'religious' and 'non-religious' groups in order to shed light on the intertwined questions of religion and national identity as played out in the case of a particular fast-changing country.

## Panel Session 2.C

### **Religion, Ethics, and Economic Life (Session 1)**

Conveners: Anna Strhan and David Henig, University of Kent).

Session 1 Chair: David Henig  
(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

The interrelations between religion, values, and the economy were central preoccupations in the work of the founding thinkers of anthropology and sociology. With both the growing marketization of different spheres of human activity and the questioning of current economic orders following the financial crisis of 2008, with religion often perceived as providing resources to (re)moralize the markets and challenge the idea that 'the market has become God' (Frank 2001), these questions are once again returning to prominence. Religions have responded to the global extension of market ideologies in the post cold-war era across different spheres of social life in complex ways. Some have provided moral motivations and resources to foster work ethics and practices that closely align with broader logics of economic 'growth' and 'productivity'. Others have offered challenges to the pervasiveness of the idea of human life as shaped by logics of commodification and the socio-economic inequalities associated with the expansion of global capitalism. Others have offered a critique of contemporary economic values while also drawing on market logics and practices to their own ends.

A growing body of recent scholarship has focused on such questions as the commodification of religion and spirituality, how religion is influenced by consumer culture, how faith-based organizations are involved in forms of welfare provision in neoliberal political economies, and how religious groups have responded to experiences of increasing economic scarcity. This panel seeks to open up analysis of the lived interrelations between religion, economics, and ethics. How are the ethical practices, values, and understandings of religious groups shaped by and responding to particular aspects of economic life? How do religious groups seek to engage with the question of what, or where, is the Good in economic and market practices? What does the increasing public prominence of some religious leaders' comments on the economy tell us about the place of religion in wider social life, and how does this relate to everyday religious interrelations with economic structures? [For Session 2 see panel 5.C below].

- **'Economic Evangelism': Women's Small Business in Rio de Janeiro's 'informal peripheries'**  
Laurie Denyer Willis, McGill University

Evangelical women small-business owners in low income Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, are taking leading roles in supporting their households and their extended evangelical family. Working out of their homes and advancing their livelihood via their faith networks, the evangelical logic of many in the 'peripheries' is a central part of these women's business models. While these kinds of businesses have been labeled 'informal' - defined by their relationship to 'the formal economy' - ethnographic research suggests that these businesses have a different logic. These evangelical entrepreneurs understand their work as linking the informal marketplace to evangelical moral economies of compassion, care and ethics. This shift has allowed women entrepreneurs to augment their entrepreneurship using their faith networks. On a small-scale in revenue, but abundant in assemblage, this shift reflects changing notions of how evangelical Christian women take care of family in the city. For these women, 'economic evangelism' means being a model of personal responsibility, where economic sustenance is a form of ethical care taking. This new mode of work and life -both civic and entrepreneurial- is part of a move away from 'center centric' ideals of economy, reflecting a larger move in the survival-in-spite-of-the-center modes of life consistently shaping the everyday economies of low income Rio de Janeiro.

- **'There's nothing in my job that stops me being a Quaker.'** Quaker work-life responses to the 'austerity' of the Coalition government  
Mark Read, University of Birmingham

This paper is based on my qualitative PhD research into the contemporary workplace as seen through the eyes of Quaker affiliates. Quakers are mainly employed in the public or third sectors, in almost inverse proportion to that of the general UK population. They see their aims and values as being closely aligned with those of their work organisations. My research investigates this ethical ordering. The immediate politico-economic context of the study was the formation of a Coalition government in 2010 and its budgetary priorities. Often understood in terms of 'austerity', the effects of these financial readjustments on religious work-lives were the accidental focus of my research. Serendipitously, I interviewed Quakers as these budgetary constraints were being proposed and then re-interviewed affiliates after the cuts had been put into effect. Responses to the cuts in Quaker work-life were mixed: new friendships were made, promotions achieved, Quaker values re-affirmed. But work was also a bitter, angry and toxic experience where 'nice liberal Quaker values' were for 'happier times'. I argue that Quakers' engagement with work is framed by the organisational setting and that, with managerial support, Quakers feel able to transcend corporate terms. However, without that support, Quakerism is effectively disempowered.

- **The Curious Case of Amish Women in Multi-Level Marketing Businesses**  
Fran Handrick, University of Birmingham

Historically, the Amish have been an agricultural community known for their reluctance to embrace progress, minimizing contact outside their community, selective acceptance of technology and preferring to remain separated from mainstream life. However, since the early 1970's faced with a shortage of land, and an inability to compete with large-scale agribusiness, many Old Order Amish have moved out of farming and into an array of successful small businesses. At the time that they were wholly a farming community, wives did not work outside the home, but filled a very traditional role raising children, keeping house and tending the garden to raise large quantities of produce to provide food for the family. With the change in occupations has come a change for women too. Based on interviews with more than thirty women in Ohio and Pennsylvania, this paper discusses the ways in which Multi-Level Marketing businesses have become a surprising but attractive business method for some Old Order Amish women. It highlights the freedom that this business method affords them and the way in which this freedom can be used to 'push the boundaries' of Amish life, showing how an apparent paradox has been incorporated/negotiated into community life.

- **'God is not a communist': Conservative Evangelicals and the 'love of money' in London**  
Anna Strhan, University of Kent

This paper examines the techniques through which members of a conservative evangelical church in London are encouraged to reflect on the place of money in their lives, and addresses the construction of an ethical stance in relation to wealth that they experience as in tension with a prevailing 'love of money' in London. With a high proportion of affluent professionals, the congregation at St John's speak of an aspiration to become 'downwardly mobile', yet at the same time, are taught that 'God is not against money. He made money.' Situating this in conversation with Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis, the paper describes how members of the church are encouraged to see 'working hard' as an ethical duty and to internalize the sense of a 'consumption cap' limiting their consumer spending. Describing how members of the church learn to engage with the place of money in their lives and in the city around them through participation in small discussion groups, listening to sermons, reading evangelical money advice books, and other techniques of the self, the paper reflects on how members of the church practically navigate the differing ethics of engaging with money they encounter as they move through different social spaces in London, and how this forms them as particular kinds of religious subjects.

## Panel Session 2.D

### Defining Religion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Chair TBC (Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)

- **Defining Religion through Charity Law**  
Suzanne Owen University of Chester and Leeds Trinity University

Religion conceived as *sui generis* – self caused – is the view that religion is somehow unique and so gets a unique status in law. An alternative view is seeing religion as a rhetorical strategy to elevate a group's interests. The problem is how to define a group as 'religious' as opposed to educational, social, political, etc. Charity Law is one means by which a group can claim status as a religion in England and Wales, as long as their activities are also 'religious'.

This paper will examine selected cases – Scientology, the Druid Network and the Pagan Federation – through document and discourse analysis, to show that the Charity Commission's criteria and interpretations favour liberal Protestant Christian forms of religion, which all other religions need to conform to it in order to gain charitable status as a religion. In doing so, they reproduce a certain understanding of 'religion' derived from a normative Anglican understanding of what constitutes the 'core essence' of religion. Of the three aforementioned groups, only the Druid Network succeeded in presenting their focus and activities as 'religious', noted by other Pagan groups seeking charitable status both in the UK and in other countries, while the subsequent failure of the Pagan Federation in particular leads us to question the requirement for a separate category of religion for the purpose charity registration.

- **Introducing a Model of 'Disruption' to the interdisciplinary debate between the Study of Religion/s and Psychiatry**  
Richard Saville-Smith (University of Edinburgh)

Western academic disciplines of Religious Studies and Psychiatry share an interest in working out the terms of the relationship between 'acute religious experience' and 'mental illness'; not least because, in the secure units of UK and US psychiatric wards, around a quarter of patients articulate their experiences in religious terms. The 2013 launch in the US of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) offers scope for advancing this debate by raising the possibility of a post-colonial psychiatry. Specifically, it introduces grounds to theorise 'disruption' as a liminal pre-diagnostic state which can be accommodated within 'cultural or religious practices' (CORPs), rather than resulting in an inevitable diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder (i.e., mental illness).

This paper reports on the considerable ramifications of these changes in psychiatric theory for the comparative study of religion/s, in the following three ways: (1) 'Disruption' provides a more coherent

model than the existing 'Altered States of Consciousness'. ASCs privilege states of consciousness, diminishing the role of the body and social context. ASCs also retain an implicit comparator – the 'normal' - against which states are 'altered'. My model of 'disruption' addresses these limitations. (2) 'Disruption' provides a way of addressing traditional academic difficulties in reconciling psychopathology and possession by providing a model which can accommodate multiple epistemologies. (3) 'Disruption' deconstructs the traditions of elitist interpretations in the study of religion/s which have served to protect the 'Mystic' of western scholarship from the 'rowdiness' of the Shaman and the Spirit Possessed.

- **Why Category of Religion Debates Matter: A Case Study of Christmas as a 'Secular' Religion**  
Chris Deacy, University of Kent

The aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which category of religion debates can be used to help reframe the way in which we can understand the interplay between the secular and the religious with specific reference to our understanding of Christmas. I will begin with the premise that religion plays an elementary role in our understanding of the Christmas festival, but I differ from much of the established literature on the question of the location and parameters of where religion can be found. I query the established wisdom that the celebration of so-called secular and consumerist values is evidence of a decline of religious significance in the modern world. Rather, I argue that the celebration of consumerism is itself a repository of 'sacred time' and that Christmas is one of the most fertile embodiments of religious activity in the world today. This paper will interrogate the way in which Eliade, Tillich and Durkheim understand the relationship between religion and culture, the sacred and the profane, to present a more subtle understanding of the interplay between material and spiritual configurations, to the point that Christmas is a religion because of rather than in spite of its material and commercialized teleology. In so doing I will posit the need to move away from conventional binary language in order to develop a more sophisticated and realistic understanding of where religion can be encountered. Accordingly, it will be possible to counter the prevailing orthodoxy that the study of Christmas lacks serious scholarly ballast. The paper will conclude with a discussion of whether 'Christmas' and 'Christianity' could amount to competing religious forms and, if so, what sort of definitional and methodological questions thereby arise.

- **Embeddedness in Postmodern Religion**  
Claire Wanless, Open University

Opponents of the secularization thesis argue that instead of causing a process of irreversible decline, religion's encounter with modernity has in fact resulted in a shift away from traditional forms to postmodern forms that enable subjective experience and individual autonomy. One form of counter-argument against this shift accepts that these forms exist but argues that they will not last because their emphasis on freedom of the individual means that they cannot exert control over their members or transmit their values to new generations. I argue that this kind of counterargument depends on two underlying sets of assumptions, neither of which are sound. First, it assumes that transfer of beliefs, values and shared understandings occurs according to principles associated with objectivist learning theory. Second it assumes that autonomous individuals in this context are isolated, self-interested and atomic in nature. I will argue that in the case of postmodern forms of religion transfer of beliefs and values is likely more accurately modelled through recourse to social constructivist theories of learning such as Etienne Wenger's notion of Communities of Practice, and that autonomous individuals in these forms of religion are better understood as strongly embedded in wider communities and networks. I will briefly go on to suggest that this kind of argument also has implications for our understanding of traditional denominational forms.

### Panel Session 3.A

**Global Bodies, Sexuality & Religion** Chair Bettina Schmidt  
(Darwin Suite 2)

- **Sexuality and women's spirituality: A study with Tai Chi Chuan women practitioners**

Nicole Bacellar Zaneti- Universidade Católica de Brasília- UCB

Marta Helena de Freitas- Universidade Católica de Brasília- UCB

Spirituality and sexuality are fundamental human dimensions. Both are complex phenomena and can be experienced in an integrated way or not. In our Western culture, they tend to be often experienced in a decoupled way, fragmented, guilty and accompanied by conflict and / or shame, especially for women, depending on how internalized religious values, and its normative aspects concerning sexuality, have been. The study approaches the subject through the historical work of Foucault in relation to sexuality and religion, highlighting his view of "body" and how it is closely related to religion and sexuality.

The paper proposes an in-depth study of the notions of sexuality and spirituality and the experience of these two phenomena by Tai Chi Chuan women practitioners, investigating how they experience and establish relations between them. Presenting work in progress, the paper outlines the initial results of a first pilot interview. The phenomenological method was used in a study with a Tai Chi Chuan woman practitioner, through a semi-structured interview, which was recorded and then transcribed. From a phenomenological reading of the transcribed material, the experiences shared by the interviewee are understood and contextualized. According to her account, she experiences sexuality and spirituality in an integrated way, identifying Tai Chi Chuan as a practice and a philosophy of life that has helped her, even if it also depends on the partner's posture. That is, if the partner has no affinity with this practice, this can hinder a more integrated and healthy living. Thus, although one can not generalize, according to the impressions shared in this first pilot interview, Tai Chi Chuan can contribute to the integration of sexuality and women's spirituality, generating higher quality of life and healthier experiences for women who practice it, especially when she is related to a partner who shares the practice.

- **A Religious Studies Perspective on Natural Childbirth: A Global Ideal Versus An Individual Plan**

Sarah Harvey University of Kent

Changes in religion in the western world in the last 50 years or so has necessitated changes in the focus, theories and methods of Religious Studies. Not only has there been a desire to understand new forms of religiosity but also to understand strongly held commitments, beliefs and practices that lie outside of the traditional categories of religion, such as in communities around shared cultural and moral norms. In this paper I discuss the various lenses I have used to attempt to understand the moral community of natural childbirth - from the 'religion relocated' ideas of a lived religion perspective, to the sociology of the sacred, to the anthropology of values and ethics. I argue that contemporary theoretical perspectives which seek to understand the changing nature of the religious and secular can be usefully applied to the study of 'things of value' (Bender and Taves (2012) *What Matters: Ethnographies of Value in a Not So Secular Age*. Columbia University Press).

In presenting this argument, I give an overview of the main findings of my study - the process of negotiation that women undertake between an 'ideal' of natural birth, deriving from, and contributing to, the highly moralised discourse surrounding birth in popular culture, and their own practical considerations, personal circumstances and the influence of social networks. This is also a relationship between a global ideal - the natural signifies a connection with other women across time and space - and local concerns and an individualised birth plan, encapsulated in the term, 'the birth I want'. I will discuss my use of the term 'the work of birth' to signify the negotiation process in which the 'ideal' exists as a goal to be worked towards through planning, preparation and practice - a physical, mental and emotional working on the self. I argue that through the work of birth, the women demonstrate that they are good and responsible mothers, regardless of whether the ideal birth is actually attained.

- **Is the body secular? Circumcision, Religious Freedom, and Bodily Integrity**

Richard Amesbury, University of Zurich

In June 2012, a court in Cologne ruled that a four-year-old boy's "fundamental right to bodily integrity" outweighed his Muslim parents' right to have had him circumcised. The decision ignited a wide-ranging controversy about, *inter alia*, the status of Muslims and Jews in Germany, and, following months of debate, the Bundestag voted in December 2012 to allow the practice of circumcision under certain conditions. Taking the Cologne case as its point of departure, this paper seeks to unsettle two background assumptions that served to frame the debate, and which belong to a globalized human rights regime. The first is the conception of *religion* as a distinct social sphere which autonomous selves can enter and exit at will, and the second is the idea of the body as something *natural*, which serves as a limit to culture. I argue that these assumptions work together within a liberal imaginary to render the body *secular* and to make this secular body *normative*. What from this standpoint must always appear as an illicit form of heteronomy -- a trespass of religion into the domains of law, education, and medicine -- is religion associated not simply with private belief but with bodily discipline, religion cut into the self before it is able to be the self that it is.

- **Contemporary Witch Hunt: Making the Unintelligible Intelligible Race, Ethnicity and Gender in Global Religious Contexts**  
Shaunna Calpin University of Oxford

It is often assumed that belief in and persecution of witches are a manifestation of early modern periods. The belief in witches is, however, still a prevalent worldwide phenomenon; recent cases in Africa, India, South America and Papua New Guinea point to an anthropological phenomenon that seems to transcend the specificity of culture and time. This paper will use the witch camps and their associated beliefs in Ghana as a case study to ask why the witch is so often gendered as female, and why demonological theories and practices have not only survived, but thrived. After giving a succinct background to the witch camps this paper will trace Ghanaian witchcraft beliefs, the economic and political climate of Ghana, and the introduction of Christianity and their 'Africanization'. Subsequently, this paper will offer a survey of the secondary literature – historical and anthropological – and turn to answer why the witch in Ghana is predominantly female and why the highly gendered camps exist.

For the West it seems nearly self-evident that the entertainment of witchcraft beliefs is something traditional which will inevitably disappear with modernization. This conviction, however, does not fit with the visible developments in the world today. Furthermore, not only is the stereotypical early modern witch a female, but the recent news reports point out that witch-hunts target predominantly, if not exclusively, women. This paper takes place in the wider context of this recent debate and asks why the witch is so often gendered female, especially in a Christian context, and why witchcraft beliefs have not only survived, but thrived in the contemporary world. Ghana offers a particularly rich example because of the high proportion of elderly women accused of practicing witchcraft, and because of the complex cultural interaction with Western Christianity, particularly Pentecostalism.

### Panel Session 3.B

#### **ROUNDTABLE**

(Darwin Suite 3)

- **Religion and Non-religion in London: Class and Power in the Secular City**  
A roundtable discussion on Lois Lee's *Recognizing the Non-religious: Reimagining the Secular* (OUP, 2015) and Anna Strhan's *Aliens and Strangers? The Struggle for Coherence in the Everyday Lives of Evangelicals* (OUP, 2015)  
Roundtable discussants: Abby Day (Kent), Mia Lövheim (Uppsala), Dawn Llewellyn (Chester), Paul-François Tremlett (Open University)

This session sets out to examine the intersections of class, power, religion and non-religion in the global city, in response to Lois Lee's ethnographic research on non-religious populations and Anna Strhan's ethnographic research on conservative evangelical Christians in London. Lee's *Recognizing the Non-religious* examines the beliefs, ritual practices and identities of non-religious people in

London, and develops a new vocabulary, theory and methodology for thinking about the secular, while Strhan's *Aliens and Strangers?* examines the embodied practices, beliefs, and strategies through which conservative evangelicals seek to form themselves as different from the non-religious and other religious 'others' they encounter in the secular city, as they seek to become 'aliens and strangers' in the world. There are marked similarities and differences between these religious and non-religious cultures, both of which are favoured by powerful London elites – who sometimes come into contact with each other and sometimes live parallel lives. The roundtable discussion will reflect on themes arising from and connections between these books, and consider what it means to study these populations in a global metropolitan context. It will consider also what opportunities and questions they open up for future research on relations between the religious, the non-religious, and the secular.

### Panel Session 3.C

#### **Global Positions of Yoga** Chair Richard King

(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

- **Yoga, Ayurveda and Immortality – the case of Swami Ramdev**  
Suzanne Newcombe, London School of Economics

Global 'Modern Yoga' has often been seen as 'yoga light' offering a watered down version of 'authentic' Indian spirituality. Yoga in its 'purist' form is seen as aiming for absolute freedom, *mokṣa*, from suffering and cycles of reincarnation. The extension of life – possibly into alchemical immortality – gives an individual more time to attain *mokṣa*.

Swami Ramdev is a yogi with a global following, extremely popular in the India diaspora while explicitly championing Indian nationalist ideology. Ramdev's rhetoric and media statements appeal to Indian national pride and the superiority of its spiritual traditions, while also offering specific remedies in the form of asan (postures), pranayam (breathing exercises) and his own brand of Ayurvedic medicines. He offers a very specific interpretation of the Indian traditions of yoga, ayurveda and rasaśāstra (Indian alchemy and iatrochemistry) that is simultaneously global and local in its appeal. With Ramdev's Indian nationalist vision, can immortality and freedom be understood as communal as well as individualistic goals?

This paper will offer an initial assessment of the extent to which themes of immortality and liberation are used in the practice and literature of Baba Ramdev – and how this relates to more explicit focuses on wellbeing and biomedical models of ill health. It will attempt to place Ramdev in his specific local and global social-political contexts and identify questions and strategies for further research.

- **An intertextual reading of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*: localized contexts of production and global challenges of interpretation**  
Karen O'Brien-Kop, SOAS, University of London

The *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (325-425 CE) has been the subject of much western scholarly analysis since Colebrooke's study in 1805. In many ways academic, religious, consumer, and political investment in the PYS, both in India itself and globally, is ever-increasing. Thus a reappraisal of the early formation of this text and its identity as part of the Hindu religion seems timely. Monopolisation of the text for political, cultural, or economic ends has a long history. Having been re-presented by British Orientalists (as Colebrook's 'fanatical' text) and by Indian nationalism (as Vivekananda's pure 'raja' text) the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* is again taking its place on a number of 'world stages': that of global yoga markets, that of the current Indian government, and that of a disgruntled Hindu diaspora such as the 'Take Back Yoga' movement in the USA. In most arenas, yoga continues to be represented as perennial, universal wisdom preserved from Vedic tradition.

Contrary to these standard narratives, this paper will demonstrate that Patañjali's *Yogaśāstra* is not a singular and hermetically sealed repository for the tradition of Vedic Brahmanism. Rather it is a composite and synthetic text that integrates Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanic thought in a Sāṃkhyan frame, and is thus suspended between a cluster of traditions rather than firmly situated in any one.



Furthermore, as an intertextual composition, the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* can only be fully understood as an interaction with other texts, of which it contains paradigmatic and discursive traces. This includes the Buddhist *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and the Jain *Tattvārthasūtra*. Reading the PYŚ intertextually asks us to rethink current assumptions of authenticity and ancientness in the discourse of global yoga, as well as the notion of discrete religious origins, in favour of a localized context of dialogic co-construction of religious identity in early India and of practicing communities with porous intellectual boundaries.

- **Wild Things and Fallen Angels: an epistemological struggle in the evolution of physical practice**  
Theo Wildcroft, Open University

In the last 150 years, the practice known as Modern Postural Yoga has expanded from its original definition of 'asana' as a comfortable seat for meditation, to hundreds, if not thousands of shapes, rhythmic movements, and sequences. Each style or school evolves its own repertoire of variations. These subcultural forms are not arbitrarily chosen. The evolution of each asana contains the traces of epistemological and ontological debates on the nature of morality, purity, safety, health and truth. This paper tells the story of three linked asanas, as a means to travel from 19th Century colonialism and Hindu nationalism; through the rise of the globalised yoga industry, health claims and New Age re-definitions of karma at the turn of the millennium; to the recent fall of a modern guru and the impact of research into yoga on the practice itself. From vedic sages, to wild things, to fallen angels.

#### Panel Session 4.A

#### **Local and Global: Migration, Boundaries and Performance**

Chair: Abby Day  
(Darwin Suite 2)

- **From Local to Global: An Examination of the Spread of the Baha'i Faith**  
Moojen Momen, *Independent*

This presentation is a continuation of last year's presentation at the BASR conference, looking at the spread of the Baha'i Faith as it moved from being a movement within one religious community in Iran and spread at first across different religious communities and across the countries of the Middle East in the late nineteenth century; then spread to North America and Europe in the early twentieth century; and finally became global by spreading across the rest of the world in the mid-twentieth century. The paper looks at the adaptations and developments in the religion that allowed it to do that, in particular within the theoretical framework of cultural breakthroughs. Last year's paper examined the later stages of this process. This year's paper will look in more detail at the earlier stages and briefly re-examine the later stages.

- **Crossing Boundaries: The liberation spiritualities and ethics of the Dalai Lama and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar**  
Anna S. King, University of Winchester

This paper explores how global interconnection is redefining religion, politics and spirituality by assessing the impact, both locally and internationally, of the life and teachings of the Dalai Lama (1935- ) and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956). Both present Buddhist philosophy and ethics as underpinning ideas of liberation and societal transformation, but while the Dalai Lama brings his understanding of Buddhist ethics to a universal secular ethics which transcends religion, Dr Ambedkar brings the liberal ethics of the Enlightenment and the political struggle for the emancipation of oppressed groups, Untouchables, women and labour, to his interpretation of the Buddha and of Buddhism.

The paper will present media images and iconography to illustrate the interpenetration of politics, spirituality and religion in their lives and teachings. It will reflect upon the dialectic between tradition and reform; non-violence and the requirements of justice and security; religious/cultural

particularism and universal values. In exploring the responses of the Dalai Lama and Ambedkar to violence, whether from external aggression or internal structural oppression, it questions the notion of an 'authentic' Buddhism and enters the debate as to whether the Buddha taught his disciples to transcend or transform the world. This will lead to a clearer understanding of the very different ways in which Buddhist liberation spiritualities and ethics affirm notions of positive peace, human rights and democratic process.

- **Indigenous performances in the UK: ceremony or entertainment?**  
Graham Harvey, Open University

Indigeneity is usually identified elsewhere than in the UK. Indeed, indigeneity may be recognised, asserted and/or theorised precisely in opposition to the UK and other (ex-?)colonial powers. In particular, "indigenous" (like "native" and "aboriginal") can be a discursive and performative antonym of "settler" or "colonial" in relation to the varied European occupying states. However, indigenous peoples have been in the UK since soon after the "first contact" phases of European expansion. Pocahontas, for instance, was a celebrity in London in 1616 and died in Gravesend in 1617. Maori and other Pacific Islanders have had diasporic communities in Britain since the early twentieth century. Alongside indigenous peoples, indigenous "artefacts" have been "collected" (some as gift or trade items, some following theft) and displayed (as "curiosities", "survivals of disappearing cultures" or, more recently, as signs of vibrant intercultural encounter) in the UK. Similarly, performances of indigenous culture have been presented to the local ("non-indigenous" or differently indigenous?) UK population in many and varied ways. This presentation considers stated intentions, perceptions and responses of indigenous performers and local audiences engaged in events in the 2015 "Origins Festival of First Nations" in London. It will include a short video filmed at Rich Mix and the British Museum which raises issues for consideration of ritual as spectacle and theatre as initiation.

#### Panel Session 4.B

#### **Pilgrims, Pentecostals and Postcolonial Christians in Africa and Asia: An Ethnographic Exploration**

Conveners: Jonathan Miles-Watson and Sitna Quiroz, University of Durham

Chair Alan Le Grys

(Darwin Suite 3)

The anthropology of Christianity and the anthropology of pilgrimage are two well-developed areas that have tended to talk about quite different forms of Christianity in distinct ways. Much of the recent developments in the anthropology of Christianity have tended to focus on the study of the "ruptures" and discontinuities that have been brought about by Pentecostal and Evangelical churches (Robbins 2007), while the discussions that surround the anthropology of pilgrimage have often focused on social stability, either through the processes of *communitas* or contestation (Di Giovine 2011). Inspired by Coleman's (2014) recent call to bring these two areas into dialogue, this panel explores how the two fields may be fruitfully engaged through a joint application to ethnographic accounts of Christian practice in Africa and Asia. By focusing on these regions the panel also brings to the discussion the ways that Christianity has been formed both by and in response to Colonial experiences, therefore adding an important, missing, third, point of triangulation to the process of theorisation. A comparative focus on these two continents brings two regions that are often thought about separately into dialogue with each other, generating a powerful exploration of local practices in relation to both regional and global processes.

- **Rupture or redress? Processional Ritual, Identity and the Everyday Lives of Christians in Africa and Asia**  
Jonathan Miles-Watson and Sitna Quiroz, University of Durham

This paper commences the panel by opening key avenues for exploration, which will be further

developed in the papers that follow. We will demonstrate how notions of rupture and both ritually condensed discourses and practices have drawn attention to certain aspects of Christianity at the expense of others. The paper then moves to explore these overlooked areas while arguing that they may have been ignored because of a tendency to see Christianity in these regions as a clearly defined social force that either opposes or blends with practices that exist outside of it. In particular, we draw on our collective ethnographic experience to present the journey that pastors from Benin Republic make every year to Nigeria to attend 'Shiloh', an international Pentecostal convention, and the entangling of Christian and Hindu pilgrims that occurs in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas. The way that these sacred journeys and everyday lives entwine both devotee and sacred place forms a key point for comparative reflection, as does the relation of the colonial experience to contemporary Christian practice. Adding this third element to the rupture/pilgrim discourse suggests that the Christianities of these regions are not only agents of rupture, but are often crucial sites of redress.

- **Iterations of Christianity: Catholic and Protestant Missions in the Central Highlands of Angola**  
Iracema Dulley, London School of Economics

Two denominations have been responsible for a significant part of the evangelization of the Central Highlands of Angola, from the colonial period to the present day: the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and the Congregational Evangelical Church. This paper focuses on the similarities and differences in their missionary projects during the colonial period by taking into consideration fundamental aspects, such as the continuities and discontinuities between pre-colonial Central Highlands societies and the structuring of Christian missions; the relations between the mission and the Portuguese colonial state and the way hierarchical positions are mapped onto racial relations. While the Congregationalist mission had a more community-oriented ethos, the Catholic mission embraced a more universalistic / assimilationist perspective; however, their projects converged in significant ways. This paper explores similarities and differences in these two iterations of the Christian mission in Angola as a way of bringing a fresh perspective to the debates surrounding the anthropology of Christianity.

- **Postcolonial conversions and the construction of difference in the Indo-Burma Borderlands: An ethnographic study of identity formation in Northeast India**  
Iliyana Angelova, University of Oxford

Christian conversions in South Asia are often explained in relation to the changed socio-economic and political realities brought about by the colonial encounter and by foreign missionaries, or as a tool for social mobility and empowerment, especially among tribal and Dalit groups in the post-colonial era of India's independence. In the far northeast of India, however, colonial and post-colonial conversions of tribal communities to Christianity have served the purpose of constructing difference and maintaining distance from what was perceived as the mainstream of Indian civilisation. Drawing on the ethnographic example of the Naga from the state of Nagaland in Northeast India, the paper will demonstrate how the unfolding of geo-politics in this borderland region in the post-colonial era has served as a strong catalyst for mass Naga conversions to Baptist Christianity. Since India's independence in 1947, Indo-Naga relations have been dominated by heavy antagonism in the course of which the Indian nation-state and its agents have come to be perceived as military aggressors by generations of Naga. As both a result of this and an attempt to create/reinforce their distinctiveness from a perceived aggressor, the Naga have upheld Baptist Christianity as their most distinctive identity marker. The paper will argue that while Naga conversions can undoubtedly be seen as the result of the legacy left behind by the American Baptist missionaries, who worked among them from the late 19th century to the mid-1950s, the fact that mass Naga conversions to Baptist Christianity occurred after the retreat of the foreign missionaries should be directly correlated to the Indo-Naga antagonism. This antagonism has been perpetuated by the complex interplay of Naga perceptions of their cultural and religious distinctiveness from Indians, and the inability of successive Indian governments to respond to these sentiments appropriately - blinded by security concerns in relation to China.

- **Japan's Kakure Kirishitans: Mediating structures and conflicting identities at the Nagasaki Matzori**

Seth Kunin, University of Aberdeen

This paper focusses on the mediating processes at play among contemporary Catholic communities in and around Nagasaki. In particular we explore the *matzori* (or festival), which is a pervasive aspect of the Japanese landscape, as a site where historical rupture is redressed. These *matzori* range from the tiny, defining a local neighbourhood, to the huge, encompassing an entire city or region. While these festivals often are means of creating a sense of communal identity, the tropes, symbols and actions employed are deeply implicated with themes derived from Shintoism, Buddhism, and in the case of a small number of communities in and around Nagasaki, a form of vestigial Catholicism. These events often involve large numbers of ritual participants, and months of preparation. Despite the work involved, many of the participants are not actively involved in other, more 'formal', aspects of the religious traditions, and often express little knowledge of the religious significance of the *matzori*.

While the secular is not a useful category in understanding the religious experience in Japan, the relation of participants to the *matzori* allows us to explore the mediated nature of categories; in this case, both the religious and the communal and the Christian and Buddhist, highlighting the selective, pragmatic choice of the category deployed, and the significant entwining of categories that characterises Japanese structure. The ethnographic data also allows us to touch on the significance of everyday action as a means of transmitting religious structuring processes in the absence of primary, or secondary, narrative content. This leads away from the highly verbalised processes of conversion narratives that have been so central to the anthropology of Christianity and towards a more subtle understanding of the way that seemingly competing notions of the sacred are manifest in these festivals. What is more, the ethnographic data both resonates with and develops Coleman's (2014) suggestion that festivals are not so much a stripping away of the structure of everyday lives as the mediation of them.

#### Panel Session 4.C

##### **The Political Values of Religious Studies**

Convener: Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh Chair: Richard King  
(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

- **After Smart: from liberalism to the rebel alliance**  
Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh

This paper discusses three basic models which illustrate the range of political values informing post-1960s Religious Studies (RS) programmes: i) liberalism: for example, Ninian Smart's 'The Political Implications of Religious Studies' in *Religion and the Western Mind* (1987) ii) neo-positivism: for example, Donald Wiebe's 'Why the Academic Study of Religion? Motive and Method in the Study of Religion' (2000) iii) 'left' critique: for example, Timothy Fitzgerald's 'Playing language games and performing rituals: religious studies as ideological state apparatus' (2003) A number of positions are broadly consonant with this third 'post-Marxian' position, including postcolonialism, feminism and environmentalism, leading Majella Franzmann in 2002 to refer to contemporary RS as a 'rebel alliance'. I will argue that the co-existence of these fundamentally different approaches raises fascinating questions about how the underlying political economy of RS is negotiated and represented at an everyday level within the field itself. Because these political values typically remain implicit rather than explicit, I will ask what effect these agonistic undercurrents have upon research and teaching programmes in RS.

- **"Darwinism makes it possible": Religion, Progress and the Conquest of Nature**  
Paul-François Tremlett, The Open University

This paper is part of a larger project interrogating the question of religion and change. For the purposes of this panel, important work has already been done on the wider ideological and political

dimensions of 'religion' as a category of scholarly enquiry (Asad; Fitzgerald; Stack; Tremlett). However, religion and ideas of nature and complexity are implicated together in imaginaries of change, from religion as an integral element of society as a stable, unchanging system (Durkheim; Malinowski; Radcliffe-Brown) to non-linear theories of transformation developed by Lévi-Strauss in his work on myth. In this paper I concentrate on linear imaginaries of change that were developed in the late nineteenth century by Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor and James Frazer among others. Drawing on ideas about evolution, late nineteenth century thinkers assumed that societies developed from loose aggregates of elements that assumed ever more complex and sophisticated forms through time. Religion was central to this narrative, acting both as an initial adhesive to bind the elements together while later becoming an obstacle to development. These ideas were picked up by the likes of Marx and Freud, but also found their way into the strong secularization thesis and have been central to the conceptualisation of modernity and the identity of modern society. Central to these linear theories of change and to their conceptualisation of nature is the parallel drawn between biological and social realms and the assumption that progress is demonstrated through the ability to match statements (as representations) to the world itself. In this paper I draw out the political dimensions of these epistemological moves and their implication in Religious Studies.

- **The Politics of Objects: Commodification, Objectification and Religious Things**  
Jeremy Carrette, University of Kent

The interest in materiality and social objects in anthropology and religious studies is faced with a challenging situation when the dominant late-capitalist world seeks to make all things into objects and commodities for profit and exploitation. Objects and commodities can be part of the material culture of religion, but there is a complex ethical concern when these processes extend to profit motivations or are applied to non-objects, such as persons (as in slavery and pornography). The increased turning of non-object forms—which were not previously objects or commodities—into objects and commodities is the focus of this paper. This is significant, because there are objects and commodities in cultural/religious traditions that may legitimately be objects and commodities, but the process of turning something that is not an object into an object or commodity raises a key ethical and political concern. This paper will examine ways to make a distinction between the classification of objects and non-objects and will illustrate what is at stake in objectification and commodification for scholars of religion. It will examine objectification and commodification from Kant to Marx, from bodies to economics, and examine recent work from psychologists, feminists and scholars of religion that reveal the ambiguity of objects and non-objects. In conclusion, it will seek to show how we need a new critical language for objectification and commodification.

#### Panel Session 4.D

##### **The Church of Scientology: Doctrine, Practice and Rebellion**

Convener: Stephen Gregg (University of Wolverhampton) Chair: George Chrystides (Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)

Academic writing on the Church of Scientology (CoS) amounts to a very small body of work. Polemics, apostate testimonies or mass-media journalistic accounts currently dominate the associated publishing landscape. A common denominator of all of these academic and non-academic approaches is, however, a focus on the CoS as both an authoritative organisation and as the sole representative of Scientology. This, however, is far removed from the everyday lives of many followers of Hubbard's teachings who also call themselves Scientologists. This panel aims to explore how the CoS has developed strategies for dealing with diversity and opposition within its official teachings and ordinances, before exploring the application of Hubbard's 'Tech' outside the CoS in the Freezone. The panel ends with an examination of religious identity within Scientologies (both inside and outside the CoS) in the light of recent methodological approaches to religious belonging and relational religious identities.

- **“Keeping Scientology Working”: Systematic theology, orthodoxy, and heresy in the Church of Scientology**

Donald A Westbrook, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena

This presentation introduces the concept and content of "systematic theology" with respect to the writings of L. Ron Hubbard counted as scripture within the Church of Scientology. The foundation of Scientological theology is expressed in the reference entitled "Keeping Scientology Working" (KSW, 1965), where Hubbard provided ten points to ensure orthodoxy ("Standard Technology") and eliminate heresy ("squirreling"). These mandates are examined in sequence and against the backdrop of the corporate ecclesiastical and oversight institutions responsible for their strict application, the single most significant of which is the Religious Technology Center (RTC). The place of RTC is historically, theologically, and legally assessed by comparison to regulatory organizations in other traditions, chiefly the Roman Catholic Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Members of the Church of Scientology understand RTC as the most senior protector and enforcer of KSW, but simultaneously there exists a strong sense of responsibility on an individual level to assure that Dianetics and Scientology are delivered "standardly" for the soteriological sake of the group and ultimately humanity. Undergirding this orthodoxical sensibility is an even stronger--and arguably more fundamental--epistemological call to experience the validity and workability of "the Tech" first-hand. As Hubbard wrote in an essay titled "Personal Integrity" (1965): "Nothing in Scientology is true for you unless you have observed it and it is true according to your observation."

- **Scientology behind the Church: The practice of auditing in the free zone**

Aled J LI Thomas, Open University

The growing popularity of auditing, the form of self-help psychiatry developed by L. Ron Hubbard, led to the establishment of the first Church of Scientology (CoS) in 1954. During the establishment of the CoS, auditing developed a distinctly religious angle, which in turn introduced the Scientologist concept of the Thetan (comparable to the Christian notion of the soul) and potential detection of past-lives through auditing sessions. The Church of Scientology gained a considerable number of practitioners in subsequent decades, yet tensions within the movement led to the emergence of the 'Free Zone' – the collective term for those that practise Scientology away from the CoS, but also identify as Scientologists.

The Free Zone consists of a large variety of methods for the practice of Scientology, ranging from organized movements, such as Ron's Org, to independent auditors that offer their services to Free Zone Scientologists. The purpose of this investigation is to consider the dynamics of auditing in the Free Zone. This will involve an examination of how auditing is conducted in an often-unregulated environment, whilst prompting a comparison between the practice and interpretation of Hubbard's teaching in the CoS and other Scientologist movements. This paper will consider the role auditing plays in the Free Zone, attempting to answer questions including how independent Scientologists conduct auditing sessions away from a local Scientologist community, and the varying factors that have led to the nuanced nature of auditing in the Free Zone.

- **Scientology Inside Out: Complicating religious identity in global Scientologies**

Stephen E Gregg, The University of Wolverhampton

The issues raised by the heated disagreement within the Scientologist community addressed in the first two papers of this panel lead to important conceptions which question notions of inside/outside and religious identity and belonging. The CoS does not consider those that practice Scientology away from the church to be Scientologists, while many Free Zone groups argue that their vision of

Scientology possesses a greater relation to Hubbard's original purpose for his technology. Similarly, clear identity markers between Dianetical practice and Scientology practice *within* the CoS, in addition to the hierarchical nature of Scientology teaching systems and membership, means that conceptions of religious belonging are contested and complicated not only between the Freezone/CoS but also within these identity labels. In addition, changes to management structures since the death of Hubbard, the enormous growth of published apostate testimony and recent legal judgments on Scientology's status in diverse global contexts all lead to a critiquing of religious identity in relation to the labels 'Scientology' and 'Scientologist' which complicates inherited academic uses of the terms.

This paper contextualises these complicated dynamics of religious belonging and categorisation in the light of Chryssides and Gregg's 'relational continuum of identity' approach to the insider/outsider issue, to serve as a useful case study for a more nuanced understanding of religious belonging and identity within Scientology/Scientologies and the wider Study of Religion.

### Panel Session 5.A

#### **'Religion and Culture in Scotland: New Practices in Local Contexts'**

Convener/Chair: TBC

(Darwin Lecture Theatre 1)

The panel, which consists of three Scottish presenters, explores the way in which several recent forms of alternative spirituality have interacted with Scottish culture – how they can embrace, re-imagine or transcend it. The panelists examine three examples of counter-cultural spirituality: the Presbyterian Church of Luss, which has created a pilgrimage centre to revitalise a lost content of Scottish spirituality; the Jehovah's Witnesses, who perceive the world outside the Watch Tower Society to be ruled by Satan; and Dugald Semple, known as the 'Scottish Thoreau', who advocated vegetarianism, pacifism and the 'simple life'.

- **Pilgrimage in Scotland: Recovering and reframing a land of lost content**  
Marion Bowman, Open University

As a result of the Reformation, pilgrimage in Scotland ceased to be part of mainstream religiosity in a predominantly protestant, Presbyterian context. The routes, practices, materiality and relationality of pilgrimage were fractured. In the late 20th century, however, pilgrimage has increasingly been rediscovered, reframed and revived.

Iona has become a pilgrimage destination for a range of protestant Christians; the Presbyterian church in Luss created a pilgrimage centre and path, reframing the landscape of Luss as a site of faith tourism and anti-sectarianism. The Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum campaigns 'to develop and promote Christian Pilgrimage Walking Routes throughout Scotland', while Scotland's Churches Trust promotes (initially) six ancient Scottish pilgrim routes. Christian Scottish-based business Holy Socks is founded on 'a combination of novelty socks and the ancient idea of life as pilgrimage'

This paper examines how the restoration and reframing of the lost content of Scottish pilgrimage praxis and infrastructure is being envisaged as a way of reclaiming what is now presented as an era of lost content/ content in Scottish religiosity. Elements of Celticism, anti-sectarianism, vernacular religiosity, heritage and roots tourism, contemporary non-aligned spirituality, materiality, topophilia, nationalism, proselytism and pragmatism combine to present and promote pilgrimage in Scotland in the 21st century.

- **A Scottish view of Jehovah's Witness: A study of cultural outsiders**  
George D Chryssides, York St John University

Mainstream Christianity has frequently drawn on the doctrine of Christ's incarnation to infer that God enters the world in forms to which the receiving culture can relate. By rejecting traditional mainstream doctrines of the incarnation, Jehovah's Witnesses tend to avoid cultural adaptation, preferring to disseminate a consistent globalised message, defined by its Governing Body.

Mainstream Scottish Christian denominations can trace their historical roots in Celtic saints and Scottish political and religious history, and interact with Scottish culture, including its distinctive language and literature, and most recently the Scottish Nationalist movement. Jehovah's Witnesses, by contrast, remain the cultural outsiders, historically and theologically. They emerged through American mission rather than from Scottish spirituality, and do not engage in political matters, since political organisations are part of Babylon.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' inroads in Scotland necessitated minimal cultural adaptation. Although Scottish culture is distinctive, few of its customs are incompatible with the Society's teachings. There is no need to translate the Bible into Gaelic, since Scots can readily access the New World Translation in English. Cultural events such as ceilidhs are not forbidden, but they would not be organised by a congregation. Figures like Robert Burns can be commended for his love of the Bible, but are not celebrated, since this would be "creature worship". In sum, Jehovah's Witnesses remain cultural outsiders, seeking to proclaim a globalised message rather than adapt to provide cultural expressions of "the truth".

- **'Life reform' in the earth Twentieth Century: A Scottish example of a European phenomenon**

Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh

This paper presents a case study of a Scottish exponent of the 'Simple Life', Dugald Semple (1884-1964), in Renfrewshire and Ayrshire. It is based on a small archive of Semple's material which I will place in a comparative European context. The son of a Church of Scotland elder and member of the 'respectable' lower/middle class, Semple was apprenticed as an engineering draughtsman before 'dropping out' to go 'back to the land'. In his alternative career as journalist, photographer and amateur naturalist, Semple's interests included voluntary simplicity, pacifism (he was a conscientious objector to the 1916 Conscription Act), vegetarianism, and a form of Transcendental religion influenced by Tolstoy, Thoreau and Gandhi. Between the world wars he and his wife Cathie, daughter of a Unitarian minister, lived in a hill farm colony where they practised the 'simple life' and from where Semple set up a No Stipend League to oppose the tithe on land by the Church of Scotland.

Despite his intensely realised local interests, Semple's commitments to dietary reform, back to the land and a universalised spirituality were shared with *lebensreform* currents in continental Europe, especially in Germany and Switzerland, while Semple himself spoke in Norway, Canada and the US. At the same time Semple's version of 'life reform' was influenced by Presbyterian culture and reproduced some of its key inflections. Rediscovering Semple's 'lost' biography demonstrates the value of a combination of fine grained local studies and comparative enquiry in reconstructing the history of alternative religion.

Panel Session 5.B

**Fiction in the Study of Religion: Three Case Studies**

Convener: Ethan G. Quillen (University of Edinburgh) Chair: TBC  
(Darwin Lecture Theatre 2)



The use of fiction in the study of religion is both old and new. While fictional texts, such as novels, poetry, film, and television programs have been used in the past to discuss how authors might adopt religious discourse into their imagined worlds, how that is theorized, and then analyzed, is a somewhat new endeavor. This panel will present three case studies wherein the 'use' of fiction will provide equally nuanced and significant approaches to the study of religion. Beginning with a more theoretical perspective, the first presentation by Jonathan Tuckett will anchor the panel by asking how an interpretation of a 'fictional' religion might alter our perceptions about how we examine those that are 'non-fictional.' The second presentation, by Clement Grene, will isolate this discussion by focusing on a distinct source: the literary approaches to the 'historical Jesus.' By looking at the narrative qualities that underscore the search for the historical Jesus, this paper will develop from the previous one the idea that even when a textual analysis is meant to interpret something as 'genuine' or 'real,' it is also influenced by the fictionalization of that topic. Lastly, the final presentation, by Ethan Quillen, will develop even further from this argument by presenting a discursive examination of the 'gospel novel,' a truly fictionalized version of the life of Jesus, written in a particularly critical way, as a source of Atheism. By developing its focus from the previous presentation, this third one will provide not only a theoretical perspective on the study of 'religion' in fiction, but how that medium might provide for us a means with which to further experiment with the manner in which we do that.

- **The Jesus of history and the Christ of literature: Literary approaches to historical Jesus research**

Clement Grene, University of Edinburgh

The area of historical Jesus research is one of the most hotly-contested within all of Biblical studies. Ever since the boom of the late nineteenth liberal lives of Jesus, scholars have always tended to conceptualize and write about the historical Jesus in the form of a narrative. Whether they acknowledge it or not, this means that factors such as aesthetic considerations play as important a role as historical plausibility in their reconstruction of Jesus. This paper will briefly examine a number of historical Jesus texts that are notable in this regard. Among the key ones will be Gerd Theissen's *Shadow of the Galilean*; Bruce Chilton's *Rabbi Jesus*, J.D. Crossan's *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, Harold Bloom's *Jesus and YHWH: The Names Divine*, and A.N. Wilson's *Jesus: A Life*. The thread I will be tracing between all of these is to what extent each of these writers allow personal aesthetic preferences to trump historical plausibility; to what extent they are open with themselves and their readers about the fact that they are doing this; and the way in which some use an authoritative, omniscient narrator-like voice in relating their theories, making their arguments seem stronger not because they are more persuasive but because of the narrative-like qualities of their work.

- **An Atheist Gospel: The quest for the fictional Jesus and the gospel novel as atheist discourse**

Ethan G. Quillen, University of Edinburgh

In many ways similar to the precarious nature of defining 'religion,' the meaning of 'Atheism' is as equally difficult to define with any sort of certainty. Not only is the term described by academics in a number of various historical and theoretical iterations, those who identify as 'Atheist' oftentimes do not do so in accord with other Atheists. Therefore, any attempt at stipulating a broad or useful meaning of the term is usually fraught with equivocality. Instead, we might find better success in seeking out how the term has been discursively used, avoiding the hazards of term stipulation on one end, while gaining a much more nuanced interpretation about how individuals use particular discourses in order to define their own identities on the other. This paper will be an attempt at doing this, using three novels as discursive data. As such, it will be broken into three parts: an introduction of what I mean by a 'fictional Jesus' and how it relates to the notion of an 'historical Jesus;' a description of what might entail a 'gospel novel;' and three examples with which to test my hypothesis that these represent a unique type of Atheist discourse. In the third part, this paper will focus much of its attention on the three texts chosen for this examination—Moorcock's *Behold the Man*, Crace's *Quarantine*, and Pullman's *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*—striking a

balance between textual and discursive analysis, by focusing on both the texts and those individuals who authored them. To conclude, this paper will make a final argument that this type of analysis not only better defines how we might use fiction in the study of religion, but also how that might more clearly provide for us a source for the 'meaning' of concepts such as religion and Atheism.

#### Panel Session 5.C

#### **Religion, Ethics, and Economic Life (Session 2)**

Conveners: Anna Strhan and David Henig, University of Kent) Chair: Anna Strhan (Darwin Lecture Theatre 3)

See Session 2.C for Session 1 and panel outline.

- **Feeding the customer 'Sufi food' and the ethics of care and responsibility in a Mumbai restaurant**

Shaheed Tayob, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious Diversity, Gottingen

Restaurant food as a commodity is most commonly associated with the acts of preparing, selling, serving and of course eating. In contrast, the ethical act of feeding refers to relationships of dependency towards ones children and pets or the poor. This paper argues for a consideration of the notion of feeding as part of an ethics of care and responsibility in a Mumbai restaurant. The history of this restaurant is connected to the Sufi-pir status of its founder. Through an ethnographic exploration of the narratives and practices of the descendants of the founder, employees and customers, this paper seeks to illuminate the ethics of food preparation and sale. Food is treated here as a commodity and a product that is sold, but also as a source of nourishment and vitality for its clientele. Feeding the less fortunate and caring for the well being of neighbors is an ethical responsibility. Equally important is the ethical principle of eating what one sells. A balance is thus struck between a profit motive and an ethics of care and responsibility towards customers that includes considerations of the quality of ingredients used, prices charged and an ambience of simplicity in the restaurant.

- **Mosques and supermarkets: Faith, space, economy and urban renewal in Germany**

Petra Kuppinger, Monmouth College

Recent debates about urban renewal, gentrification, and urban branding praise the role of cultural institutions in urban revitalization. Museums, convention centers, or historical districts are celebrated as bringing renewed interest, visitors, and revenue to disadvantaged urban quarters. Framed in a secular idiom, these discussions pay no attention to the possibility of urban renewal via religious institutions/spaces. This paper introduces the Salam Mosque complex in Stuttgart, Germany and chronicles how this faith-based spatiality turned a nondescript industrial quarter into a vibrant and profitable spatiality. With the mosque as an "anchor," industrial spaces became a religious, cultural, and economic center that attracts thousands of visitors every day. I illustrate that the mosque provided a solid anchor for commercial transformations, and that religion has played a prominent role in these changes. In this Islamically-inspired landscape, coffee shops and restaurants do not serve alcohol, supermarkets offer *halal* food items, and stores sell women's Islamic fashion. Islam frames this profitable landscape where businesses offer goods and services for the pious and others, and unique forms of sociality and conviviality have emerged over time. Theoretically, this paper engages questions about the role of faith-based spatialities and initiatives in the configuration of urban spaces and economies.

- **Does economic insecurity predict religiosity? Evidence from the European Social Survey**

Ingrid Storm, University of Manchester

Economic development and increase in material security have been suggested as primary causes of secularisation in the West. Norris and Inglehart (2004) argue that under insecure conditions, humans

have a need for authority and predictability, which makes them more likely to hold religious beliefs and participate in ritual. However, little is known about whether and how short term changes in the economy affects religiosity in developed countries. The recent economic recession, and the financial insecurity faced by many households in Europe, both increases the relevance of such questions, and the availability of data to address them.

The European Social Survey has data from 32 countries over six waves, covering the period from 2002 to 2012. Using a multilevel model, we examine national economy indicators including unemployment levels, income inequality and GDP, as well as individual level economic insecurity, and household income. We find that lower income, GDP and social welfare availability are associated with more religiosity, while unemployment is associated with less religiosity. Using a fixed effects model, we find no clear evidence that national rates of religiosity have changed over time in response to economic change. The mixed evidence for the insecurity hypothesis suggests several avenues for future research.