Ngā Wāhi Tapu/Sacred Place: Continuity and Change

NZASR
AASR
CONFERENCE
2018

University of Auckland, 29–30 November 2018

Welcome from the NZASR

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you to the University of Auckland to participate in the third joint conference of the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions and the Australian Association for the Study of Religions. The call for papers on the theme "Ngā Wāhi Tapu/Sacred Place: Continuity and Change" generated a positive response, and we have a full two-day programme that includes 16 panels, 60 papers, and 4 plenary sessions of keynote lectures and a roundtable event. Several of the panels were organized in advance by members of each association, but most of the individual paper proposals were grouped into panels according to theme, region, and/or religious tradition, which I hope will facilitate more conversations between members from our two associations. Many thanks to several colleagues who assisted with the planning of the conference, especially Will Sweetman, Joseph Bulbulia, Marvin Wu, and Melissa Burnett here in New Zealand, and Cristina Rocha and

Anna Halafoff in Australia. We hope that these fruitful collaborations will continue in the future.

Mark R. Mullins, President NZASR, University of Auckland

Welcome from the AASR

We are pleased to be holding our annual conference once more together with the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions. It is gratifying to note that the conference programme covers a wide range of exciting topics and presenters come from not only Australia and New Zealand but also from several other countries. Many thanks to the NZASR committee, particularly Mark Mullins, Will Sweetman, and Melissa Burnett, for their hard work in putting this conference together. We extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions.

Cristina Rocha, President AASR, Western Sydney University

Notes for Presenters and Session Chairs

Each conference room will be equipped with a computer, data projector, and screen. If you wish to use them, please bring your presentation on a flash drive or some other device and copy it on to the desktop *before* the session begins, so that the progress of each session is not delayed by technical difficulties.

Each presenter on 4-person panels will have 15 minutes for their presentation and those on 3-person panels will be allowed up to 20 minutes. Please plan accordingly so that time is allowed for questions and discussion.

Registration

The conference will begin with tea and coffee served in the Reipae Dining Room from 8:00–9:00 am on Thursday 29 November. Printed copies of the programme, including abstracts, will be available at the registration table.

Refreshment and Meals

Morning and afternoon tea and coffee will be provided for all registrants. Lunch will be provided on Thursday and Friday. All meals offer vegetarian and non-vegetarian options.

Conference Dinner
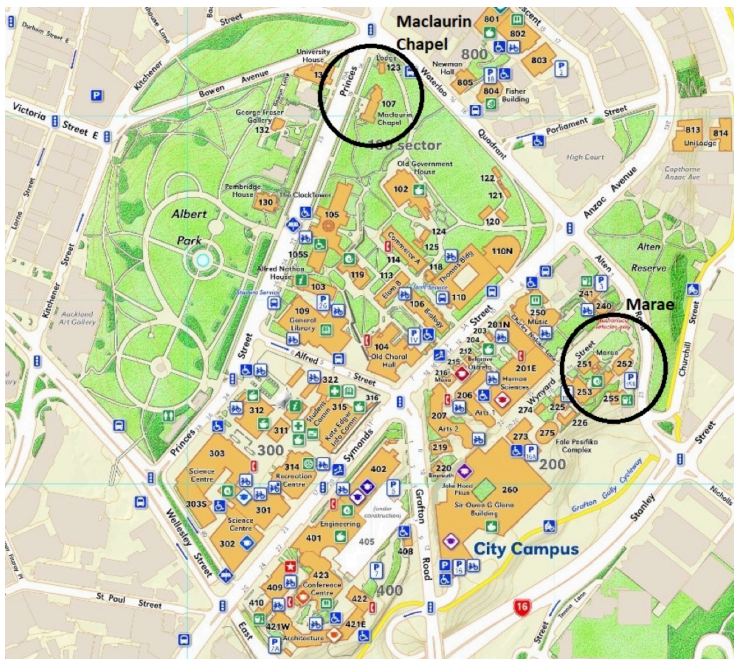
Wine Chambers, 33 Shortland Street, Friday 30 Nov 7:30pm.

Wifi

Select the wireless: UoA-Guest-WiFi
Enter the username: nzasr@2018.com
Enter the password: tkz2gGj4

Campus Map and Conference Venues

Thursday, 29 November

8.00–9.00	Registration, Reipae (Waipapa Marae Dining Room)	
9.00–10.30	Pōwhiri and NZASR Keynote Address	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Plenary 1	Hirini Kaa, Wā-hi Tapu: New Ways of Knowing	
10.30–11.00	*Morning Tea*	Reipae
11.00–12.30	Parallel Sessions I	
Panel 1	Beyond Theodicy	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 2	Explaining the Growth and Diffusion of Religions	Reipae
Panel 3	Buddhism in Aotearoa, Australia and Canada	Room 253-101
12.30–1.30	*Lunch*	Reipae

The AASR Women's Caucas will be meeting during the lunch break

1.30–3.00	Parallel Sessions II	
Panel 4	Religious, Cultural, and Ethnic Diversity	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 5	Buddhist Studies	Reipae
Panel 6	Gender, Sexuality, and Religion	Room 253-101
3.00–3.30	*Afternoon Tea*	Reipae
3.30–5.00	Parallel Sessions III	
Panel 7	Studies of Religion in India	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 8	Studies in the Middle East and Islam	Reipae
Panel 9	The Politics of Religion in Asia-Pacific	Room 253-101
5.15–6.30	Penny Magee Memorial Lecture	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Plenary 2	Jay Johnston, Rewilding Religion	

8.30–10.00	Parallel Sessions IV	
Panel 10	Ritual in Sacred and Secular Space	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 11	Religious Diversity and Interfaith Activity	Reipae
Panel 12	Christianity in Asia-Pacific	Room 253-101
10.00–10.30	*Morning Tea*	Reipae
10.30–12.00	Parallel Sessions V	
Panel 13	Scientific Studies of Religion	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 14	AASR Roundtable	Reipae
12.00–1.00	*Lunch*	Reipae

AGMs for both Associations will be meeting during the lunch break

1.00–2.30	Parallel Sessions VI	
Panel 15	Studies of Christianity	Tāne-nui-a-Rangi
Panel 16	Media and Public Recognition of Religion	Room 253-101
2.30–3.00	*Afternoon Tea*	Reipae

Venue change to Maclaurin Chapel, 18 Princes Street (Building 107)

3.00–4.20	AASR Presidential Address
Plenary 3	Cristina Rocha, Old and New Sacred Places and Objects
4.30–6.00	NZASR Roundtable
Plenary 4	The Longitudinal Study of Virtue and Religion
6.00–7.00	Reception
7.30	Conference Dinner (Wine Chambers, 33 Shortland Street)

Plenaries

NZASR Keynote Address (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)
Wā-hi Tapu: New Ways of Knowing

Hirini Kaa, University of Auckland
h.kaa@auckland.ac.nz

Aotearoa-New Zealand and to differing extents other settler countries, have begun the process of re-understanding the land on which they stand. Through ground-breaking processes such as the Waitangi Tribunal and innovations in disciplines such as history, Pākehā (settler) populations have started the process of listening to Māori (indigenous) ways of understanding the land and the past to inform the present and the future. Some of this means sacred polarities and theological discourse are no longer centred in and solely privilege European sites and discourse, and instead begin to think more about sacred sites here.

And alongside the past comes ways of knowing. The concept of Wā as ways of thinking about both space and time begins to come through. Utilised across the Pacific from the Tongan concept of Tuahi Vā (maintaining sacred spaces between people) to the Samoan Va Tapuia (space made sacred), the Māori concept of Wā is a way of understanding the sacred space between people. It is the root of both Wāhi (place) and Wānanga (the space and time for deliberation of knowledge). These concepts are part of the emergence of Mātauranga (knowledge, ways of knowing and worldviews) as the basis for Aotearoa-New Zealand to renegotiate its own ways of understanding itself, and for the making of new, shared Sacred Places.

Convenor: Mark R. Mullins, President NZASR, University of Auckland

Penny Magee Memorial Lecture (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)
Rewilding Religion: An Aesthetics of Religion Approach

Jay Johnston, University of Sydney
jay.johnston@sydney.edu.au

"Religion is a lek—a network of beacons calling out to our animal bodies." (Schaefer 2015: 207)

The approach to wildlife conservation known as rewilding has garnered increased public interest over the last five years. Publications on the topic span a range of genres from the pragmatics of environmental management to creative non-fiction and volumes encompassing self-help/psychological imperatives to 'rewild the self.' This material contains both explicit and covert references to spiritual belief.

This presentation will examine rewilding as a spiritual practice, utilising an Aesthetics of Religion approach that emphasises religion as a sensory and mediated practice in dialogue with the work on religious affect as developed by Donovan O. Schaeffer. Exploring a concept of religion that is not bound to language, the discussion will pay particular attention to the perceptive requisites for entering into ethical human—other-than-human animal relations and the role of embodied processes of sensory cultivation. To rewild religion, it will be proposed, will require dancing with the other-than-human and include necessarily partial, creative, scary attempts to render the intersubjective steps, wiggles, sounds, and affects into theoretical and methodological form.

Convenor: Anna Halafoff, Deakin University

AASR Presidential Address (Maclaurin Chapel)
Old and New Sacred Places and Objects: Materiality and Global Spiritual Networks

Cristina Rocha, Western Sydney University
C.Rocha@westernsydney.edu.au

Since the mid-1980s, the social sciences have turned their focus to tangible things such as the body, the sensual, the lived experience, and material culture as a reaction to constructivism and its emphasis on discourse, symbols, signs and ideologies that may lead to understanding social phenomena as not real. In the study of religion, the material turn was a response to the Protestant assumption that true religion was about 'belief' thus dismissing its materiality. In this presentation I am interested in how belief and religious materiality—sacred objects, places, infrastructures and digital media—are entangled in globalisation processes. In other words, I try to think of how these religious assemblages of human and material elements are shaped and reshaped by constant movement and contact. In particular, I analyse the ways in which places and objects that have recently acquired sacred status enter into older, more established translocal and global spiritual networks, and by doing so are able to travel and 'settle' elsewhere. I suggest that new sacred materialities are able to be added to and take a central place in older assemblages because global flows are rhizomatic, that is, they spread sideways; centres that originate flows can become peripheries and vice-versa.

Convenor: Kathleen McPhillips, Vice-President AASR, University of Newcastle

NZASR Roundtable (Maclaurin Chapel)
The Longitudinal Study of Virtue and Religion

Chair: Joseph Bulbulia, University of Auckland

Philosophers have long held both that virtues hold the key to the greatest human happiness and that virtues must be actively cultivated for civic societies to endure. However, testing these enduring claims has proved challenging because few studies that track individuals over time ask questions relevant to studying virtue production and maintenance.

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) is a national-scale longitudinal study of attitudes and values that repeatedly measures the same New Zealanders each year. Launched in 2009, it has collected from over 30,000 New Zealanders and has generated over 100 peer-reviewed academic publications on topics ranging from responses to natural disaster, to the predictors of economic success among disadvantaged groups, to increasing beliefs in climate change.

This panel features investigators from the NZAVS who discuss the study's preliminary findings and describe new measures we have developed to investigate virtue in survey that was recently sent to 10% of the New Zealand's adult population.

Speakers:
1. Chris G. Sibley (University of Auckland)
2. Anastasia Ejova (University of Auckland)
3. John Shaver (University of Otago)
4. Samantha Stronge (University of Auckland)
5. Geoffrey Troughton (VUW)
6. Daryl Van Tongeran (Hope College)
7. Chris K. Deak (VUW)

Panel 1 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Beyond Theodicy

Theorising Religious Responses to Disasters

Session Chair: Stephen Noakes, University of Auckland

Faith Humanitarian Responses Following Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu

Alice Banfield, Deakin University
alice_banfield@hotmail.com

Following the devastation wrought by Tropical Cyclone Pam when it hit Vanuatu in 2015, spiritual beliefs and church structures played critical roles in people's responses to the calamity. Major church denominations banded together to coordinate with government and other humanitarian actors in an unprecedented way, establishing a new model for collaboration and of integrating faith-based groups within the wider humanitarian system. This paper examines the roles of faith institutions in responding to this disaster. It presents initial findings from my ongoing research into the roles of religion within disaster relief and resilience-building in the Pacific. I argue that Church institutions represent vital organisational resources for responding to disasters throughout the Pacific, and that the innovative collaborative practices undertaken in Vanuatu provide a valuable guide for future response coordination. However, while the relief work following Cyclone Pam was in many ways a success, it was not without challenges. I outline the main challenges in order to highlight how best to learn from this experience. To date, research on the role of religion in times of disaster has paid too little attention to the Pacific. This paper aims to increase attention to humanitarian work with religious actors in this disaster-prone region.

Understanding Disasters: Managing and Accommodating Different Worldviews in Humanitarian Response

Matthew Clarke, Deakin University
mclarke@deakin.edu.au

Humanitarian events affect more than 120 million people across the globe annually. Whilst many of these events are human-induced, a large number of the 400 or so complex humanitarian emergencies that require international response each year are natural. Such events result in loss of live, injure and maim survivors, destroy infrastructure, as give rise to psycho-social trauma. Aid agencies working alongside affected communities must address all these consequences as part of their responses. What is also required though is an appreciation that worldviews will inform how affected communities both understand the cause of the event, their role in the event and how they will subsequently participate in rebuilding or reconstruction programs. Disasters can be affected by religious beliefs. This paper will consider why aid agencies must incorporate (and appreciate) different worldviews around disasters in order to more effectively respond to the needs of communities affected by humanitarian events. It will also identify difficulties and opportunities experienced by individual humanitarian practitioners as well as agencies when working in such environments.

Religion and Disaster Relief: Contours of a Potential Field

Philip Fountain, Victoria University of Wellington
philip.fountain@vuw.ac.nz

Over recent years the global visibility and extent of response to 'natural' disasters has driven new academic work on the complexities of post-disaster social change from scholars in a number of fields. As part of this literature, studies of religion in the context of disaster relief and reconstruction have proliferated. This paper critically examines the ways a number of seminal monographs have conceptualised the relationships of religion and disaster. In my analysis I explore engagements between religion and the neoliberal state, the contested locus of analysis and debates about the roles of religious actors. While these new studies have made remarkable contributions to our understanding of religion and disaster in diverse contexts, they remain oddly unaware of each other and do not yet constitute a distinct field of research. This paper aims to encourage this outcome.

Christianity and Climate Change Adaption: Sea-Level Rise and Ritualising Village Relocation in Fiji

Thomas White, University of Otago
tomwhitesmailbox@gmail.com

Development studies are ambivalent about the relationship between climate change adaption and Pacific Christianity. Biblical belief about Noah's covenant and the End Times are understood to undermine risk perception, while church membership is seen to threaten cross-denominational cooperation, hampering adaptive capacity. Yet the communicative reach and charismatic authority of Pacific churches remains the envy of development specialists working on climate change. This focus on belief and institutional reach, however, neglects how Christian ritual practice can orientate and stabilise faith communities. Drawing on fieldwork in rural Fiji investigating inundation caused by sea-level rise and village migration, this paper shows how ritual practice strengthens community resilience when responding to climate change. In Vunidogoloa, villagers employed the Old Testament myth of Exodus to (re)create ritual responses to vent the emotional/spiritual trauma of leaving their ancestral home. Whereas in the nearby village Vunisavisavi, such ritual responses have been lacking and village relocation remained problematic.

Panel 2 (Reipae)

Explaining the Growth and Diffusion of Religions

Session Chair: John H. Shaver, University of Otago

Christianity Spread Faster in Small, Politically Structured Societies

Quentin D. Atkinson, Oliver Sheehan and Joseph Bulbulia, University of Auckland
Joseph Watts and Russell D. Gray, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History
q.atkinson@auckland.ac.nz

Historians and social scientists have long debated whether Christianity spread through a top-down process driven by political leaders or a bottom-up process that empowered social underclasses. The Christianization of Austronesian populations is well-documented across societies with a diverse range of social and demographic conditions. Here, we use this context to test whether political hierarchy, social inequality and population size predict the length of conversion time across 70 Austronesian cultures. We also account for the historical isolation of cultures and the year of missionary arrival, and use a phylogenetic generalized least squares method to estimate the effects of common ancestry and geographic proximity of cultures. We find that conversion to Christianity typically took less than 30 years, and societies with political leadership and smaller populations were fastest to convert. In contrast, social inequality did not reliably affect conversion times, indicating that Christianity's success in the Pacific is not due to its egalitarian doctrine empowering social underclasses. The importance of population size and structure in our study suggests that the rapid spread of Christianity can be explained by general dynamics of cultural transmission.

'An Unstoppable Force for Good': How Neoliberal Governance Facilitated the Growth of Australian Suburban-based Megachurches

Mairead Shanahan, Macquarie University
maireadshanahan87@gmail.com

Hillsong Church has received local and international scholarly attention, which has observed the church's rapid local and global growth in members and finances. Several other Australian-based Pentecostal churches demonstrate a similar growth trajectory to Hillsong Church: namely, C3 Church, Citipointe Church, Planetshakers, and Influencers Church. To understand this growth pattern, the paper situates the emergence of the churches in the context of policy changes occurring in Australia over the last thirty years. The paper discusses the introduction of economic rationalist policies and neoliberal governance strategies in Australia, arguing that suburban-based Pentecostal churches expanded their activities beyond conducting worship services in part due to the emergence of government policy emphasis on marketisation and privatisation. The paper analyses materials produced by suburban Australian Pentecostal megachurches and their associated educational, charity, and financial organisations. Through an analysis of these materials, the paper finds the emergence of economic rationalist policies in Australia provided opportunities for these churches to expand activities to include running schools, Bible colleges, community care organisations, charity ventures, and financial institutions. The paper shows how the implementation of economic rationalism and neoliberalism assisted in facilitating the growth of Australian-based suburban Pentecostal megachurches.

Religious Urbanism in Singapore: Competition, Commercialism and Compromise in the Search for Space

Orlando Woods, Singapore Management University
orlandowoods@smu.edu.sg

This paper explores the recursive relationship between religious praxis and urban environments. It advances the concept of "religious urbanism" to show how urban environments play an active role in shaping the praxis of religion, and how religious groups adopt secular logics in response to the pressures of urban environments. Such logics have given rise to new, more pragmatic forms of spatial reproduction that lead to the desecularisation of space. Desecularisation involves religious groups diminishing the secular properties of space, rather than attempting to achieve any lasting notion of sacredness. Drawing on the restrictive religio-spatial context of Singapore, I demonstrate how fast-growing (mostly Christian) religious groups are forced to compete with various stakeholders for space, which has led to a commercialisation of religious praxis, a more functional approach to the reproduction of space, and the creation of various politics. Combined, these factors have come to define religious urbanism in Singapore, and raise questions about the gulf between the planning and praxis of religion in urban environments around the world.

Buddhism in Aotearoa, Australia, and Canada

Session Chair: Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, University of Auckland

Placing Buddhism in Aotearoa

Sally McAra, University of Auckland
sallymcara@gmail.com

In 1973, a Buddhist teacher, Ven. Ananda Bodhi, visited New Zealand
with a retinue of mostly Canadian followers, and ran a three-month re-
treat beside Lake Rotoiti. Some followers remained and established the
Wangapeka Retreat centre near Nelson, where, in 1983, they consecrated
a stupa, the first in New Zealand.

The seventies through to the nineties saw the emergence of diverse Bud-
dhist groups (with members ranging from middle-class, Pakeha converts
to immigrants who were brought up with Buddhist cultural heritage). It
was a time in which land was relatively affordable, leading to the con-
struction of various kinds of retreat centres or temples.

This paper presents a brief survey of the history of selected Buddhist or-
ganisations that emerged in that time period, as groundwork for a collab-
orative history project being developed with the New Zealand Buddhist
Council (NZBC). I link my preliminary findings to themes laid out in a
forthcoming chapter on Buddhism in settler-colonial societies, which I
co-authored with Franz Metcalf in the USA and Anna Halafoff in Aus-
tralia.

I draw on connections made over ten years serving on the NZBC, as well
as several years of postgraduate anthropological research about Buddhism
in Australia and New Zealand.

Buddhist Buildings in Australia: Sacred Connections and Contestations

Anna Halafoff, John Powers and Ruth Fitzpatrick, Deakin University
anna.halafoff@deakin.edu.au

Accounts of Buddhist buildings in Australia date back to the mid-19th Century Gold Rush period, and stories of the establishment of the first Australian Buddhist Centres and Temples feature prominently in digital oral histories of Buddhist leaders featured in the Buddhist Life Stories of Australia (BLSA) website. The BLSA project is a crowdfunded online resource featuring 17 video interviews with representatives of Buddhist communities in Australia. A key finding of the BLSA study is a deep level of connection felt by Buddhist leaders with the Australian bush, particularly expressed in narratives regarding the creation of the first Buddhist Centres and Temples in this country. These stories also reveal strong interconnections between so-called Asian and Western Buddhists in Australia, evident in the levels of mutual support among diverse communities in settling and sinking roots there. Finally, Buddhist buildings, while seemingly less controversial than other religious minorities' places of worship, have also long-been sites of contestation and state regulation and control. These BLSA findings align with community experiences of building Buddhist structures in England (Tomalin and Starkey, 2016), but also provide new insights on how Buddhism in Australia differs from other Western societies, specifically as a result of its geographical location.

Global Planting of Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains

Yoshiko Ashiwa, Hitotsubashi University, and David Wank, Sophia University
ashiwayoshiko@yahoo.co.jp; davidwank@yahoo.com

In Canada, a project has been underway for 20 years to recreate the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains of China—Mounts Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo, and Emei on seven square kilometers of rural land 100 kilometers north of Toronto. This project, which is expected to continue for decades, will create the largest Buddhist site in the world outside of China. It a local manifestation of a wave of the globalization of modern Chinese Buddhism ongoing since the early 2000s. The effort to build the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains began as the individual aspiration of a monk who started a small temple in Toronto and, under his successor, has grown into a large state-level project having financial and administrative support from the Chinese Buddhist Association, which is a semi-government organization in China. It is now described in such various ways as a Buddhist temple, Chinese civilization, and a public park. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in 2018 and documentary sources, this paper examines how the head monk is creating sacredness, and how it is being defined for the future of Buddhism in Canada. We argue for the need to reconceptualize the meaning of sacredness for Chinese Buddhism in the twenty-first century.

Panel 4 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Religious, Cultural, and Ethnic Diversity in Australia

Session Chair: Paul Hedges, Nanyang Technological University

Religious Diversity and Social Cohesion: A Consideration of Basics

Gary D. Bouma, Monash University
gary.bouma@monash.edu

The threat to Social Cohesion of religious diversity continues to excite social theorists and policy makers. There is often a failure to clarify what is meant, desired, or qualifies as social cohesion. Getting this right before exploring challenges to this desideratum is essential to clear thinking and successful policy formation. This paper proposes a definition, examines contextual conditions affecting its meaning, and outlines the basic mechanisms for achieving social cohesion. It finally argues for the use of 'living well together' as a more suitable desideratum.

Imagining Asian Australia: Religion and National Symbolism at the Time of Federation

Marion Maddox, Macquarie University
marion.maddox@gmail.com

Australia's conscious 'engagement with Asia' is often traced to Prime Minister (1991-1996) Paul Keating's reorientation of Australian diplomacy, defence and trade policy in the early 1990s. This belated recognition of Australia's place in the world was, among other things, a repudiation of the Anglo-centric orientation that had dominated Australian policy for much of the preceding century, most infamously in the 'White Australia Policy', which, from 1901 until 1966, restricted immigration to members of certain European ethnic groups. Australia's colonial identity might have made such attitudes seem long fixed. Nevertheless, before the federation of the separate Australian colonies in 1901 into a single Commonwealth, Australian intellectual and political life saw a substantial interest in Asian cultures and, especially, religions. This paper is part of a larger project about religious influences on figures who shaped Australian Federation. Here, I report on archival research, concentrating particularly on the colonies of Victoria and South Australia, and how the 'idea' of 'Asian religions' provided a reference point as they shaped the religio-political framework for the emerging Commonwealth of Australia.

Facets of Diversity in Australia: An Empirical Examination of Attitudes to and Contact across Ethnic and Religious Difference

Miriam Pepper and Ruth Powell, NCLS Research and Charles Sturt University
mpepper@ncls.org.au; rpowell@ncls.org.au

Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world, with more than a quarter of the population born overseas and over 300 ancestries reported in the 2016 Census. As studies of social cohesion over the last decade have demonstrated, Australia is also a relatively cohesive society in comparison with other western nations. But whereas some forms of diversity may be accepted at large, others are resisted, and encounters across difference are restricted. In this paper we examine attitudes to and contact across various facets of diversity and how these interface with religious commitments. We draw on data collected from the 2018 Australian Community Survey (run by NCLS Research), a quantitative survey of 1,200 respondents representative of the Australian population on age, gender, education and location. Specifically, we compare views about ethnic diversity in Australia with views about religious diversity, and how these interact with individual religion, religiosity and spirituality. We also examine patterns of social contact across ethnic and religious difference. We discuss implications of the ways in which various forms of religious and spiritual identification, appreciation and expression do and don't figure in openness to and connection across difference.

Ethnic Diversity: Transforming Catholic Communities and Culture in Australia

Tracy McEwan and Kathleen McPhillips, University of Newcastle
tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au; kathleen.mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

Despite the growing secularisation of Australian society, the proportion of Australians that identify as Catholic for the purpose of the Australian Census has remained relatively stable since the 1960s. This is largely due to the impact of a continuing pattern of migration that has stabilised the Catholic population. Indeed, if it were not for the significant number of migrants from non-English speaking countries the Catholic population in Australia would be in decline. While Catholic identity remains stable, there has been a general drift away from active participation in Catholic Church communities in recent years. The changing patterns of participation can be attributed to a variety of social, economic and cultural factors, but a growing feature of current Catholic congregations is their ethnic diversity. This paper will use data gathered in 2016 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) to explore the religiosity and participation of Catholic church-attenders born in non-English speaking countries. It will consider, from a sociological perspective, how the impact of ethnic diversity is transforming Catholic communities, culture and practices of piety and devotion and discuss what this might mean for the future of the church in Australia.

Panel 5 (Reipae)

Buddhist Studies

Session Chair: Will Sweetman, University of Otago

Comparative Study of the Pussadeva's and Paramanuchit's *Paṭhamasambodhi* Manuscripts

Akbordin Rattana, University of Otago
akbordin.rattana@postgrad.otago.ac.nz

The *Paṭhamasambodhi* is a genre of Life of Buddha literature that was popular in mainland Southeast Asia in the past. The oldest fragment manuscript found in former Lanna region in Northern part of Thailand dates back to 1574. The stories in the *Paṭhamasambodhi* usually includes the Bodhisatta's life in Tusita Heaven, his final birth as Prince Siddhattha, his enlightenment, his *parinibbāna*, and the distribution of the Buddha's relics. The texts in this genre always bear the same title that is the *Paṭhamasambodhi*.

The *Paṭhamasambodhi* is important because it was one of the standard sermonic texts in the past. The volume of the *Paṭhamasambodhi* is so vast. For example, hundreds of manuscripts by the name of the *Paṭhamasambodhi* have been found in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, and Southern part of China. In addition, the mural paintings in the temples in these areas resemble the stories and episodes in the *Paṭhamasambodhi*.

On this presentation, I will compare the two versions of the *Paṭhamasambodhi*, i.e., Paramanuchit's version and Pussadeva's one, and then discuss the factors that effect similarities and differences between the two versions.

Time, Narrative and Meaning in The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*: A Theological Recovery

Douglas Osto, Massey University
d.osto@massey.ac.nz

In "Historical Consciousness as an Offering to the Trans-Historical Buddha" (*Buddhist Theology*, pp. 111–35) John Makransky attempts to reconcile what he calls "historical consciousness" with an awareness of the soteriological activity of the "trans-historical Buddha" (that is the Buddha's enlightened awareness) within history. However, the nature of this "historical consciousness" remains unexplored by Makransky. In the first part of this paper, I employ ideas developed by Paul Ricoeur and Hayden White to problematize this notion of historical consciousness in order demonstrate that it does not represent an *a priori* superior epistemology that needs to be unconditionally accepted by contemporary Buddhists. In the second part, I hermeneutically recover the implicit philosophy of time and narrativity found in the Mahāyāna *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. Through a theological (critical-constructive) investigation of this important sūtra, I argue that its worldview implicates a philosophy of time that not only needs to be taken seriously by contemporary Mahāyāna theologians and historians, but that also shares striking similarities to some contemporary philosophical notions about time. Since the *Gaṇḍavyūha* offers sophisticated philosophical views of time and narrativity grounded in Mahāyāna Buddhist ethical concerns such as universal compassion, it provides a useful position with which to critique contemporary historical narratives. I conclude that contemporary Buddhists should remain critical of the modern "historical consciousness," and reject ethically and philosophically dubious contemporary historical narratives.

The Buddhist Psychology of Fabricated Identity against the Narrative of "Religious Fundamentalism"

Jnanalok Shraman, Government City College, Chittagong
tapano11@yahoo.com

As a group of modern scholars pioneered by Torkel Brekke and Richard Gombrich dissents on applicability of the western concept, 'Religious Fundamentalism' in Buddhism, prompting other such as Y. Karunadasa to introduce new terminologies such as exclusivism. This paper will critically examine the early Buddhist psychology of extremism, *antavāda* as a transcending theory that encapsulates the limitation of Abrahamic and Indian religions and accords with its principle of middle way (Pāli. *majjhima paṭipada*).This application will identify limitation of the earlier concepts, 'Buddhist Fundamentalism' and 'exclusivism' in the light of Buddhist psychology, and writings of modern humanistic psychologists, such as Erick Fromm and Abraham Maslow. It subsequently will progress on extrapolating ample canonical instances to theorize the Buddhist psychology of religious extremism (Pali: *antavāda*) establishing its Omni-malevolent inherency. It will show that embedded ideation (Pali: *antaggahikaditthi*) of commoners, regardless of its 'creative motivational factors' inherently possesses a 'reactive' mentality, thus bearing its inherent outflows: violations and all other evilness. The theory of extremism tries to meet the criteria of what west identifies as threatening to the modernism, and asks to avoid, but it parts away specifically when non-reactiveness is identified as 'non-fundamentalism' or in other words: non-threatening to the modernism!

Panel 6 (Room 253-101)

Gender, Sexuality, and Religion

Session Chair: Rosemary Hancock, University of Notre Dame

'Sticks and Stones': Anti-trans Discourses and Conservative Christianity

Caroline Blyth, University of Auckland
c.blyth@auckland.ac.nz

'Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me'. Really? Critical theorists have long highlighted the fallacy of this well-worn phrase, contending that language (written, oral, and visual) can be a source of 'symbolic violence', which has the capacity to inflict profound injury. In this paper, I use critical discourse analysis to explore the transphobic violence embedded in conservative Christian interpretations of the Bible, which Christian pastors and theologians disseminate to sizable audiences via popular social media forums. I investigate the potential socio-cultural impact of conservative Christian biblical interpretations, and the role they play in sustaining intolerance and discrimination against already vulnerable trans communities. Specifically, I assess the power of these interpretations to shape public and political debates about trans identities and undermine trans rights. The reality and legitimacy of trans people continue to be hotly debated in legal, political, and public forums around the world, including Aotearoa. I will turn a critical eye on these debates, asking if conservative Christian interpretations of the Bible are complicit within them, thus serving to perpetuate and justify the relentless systemic injustices experienced by people *because* they are trans.

"Let Him Romance You": Rape Culture and Gender Violence in Evangelical Christian Self-Help Literature

Emily Colgan, Trinity Theological College
ecolgan@trinitycollege.ac.nz

Since its publication in 2005, *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul* by John and Stasi Eldredge has sold millions of copies worldwide and appeared on numerous bestselling book charts. The Eldredges explore what it means to live as a "fully alive and feminine woman: a woman who is truly captivating." They insist that one thing "every woman longs for" is "to be seen and desired, to be sought after and fought for." Moreover, they suggest that the most important "lover" a woman can have is God. I argue that both the rhetoric employed in this book and the biblical imagery used to support it contributes to a culture of gender violence. Combining a feminist hermeneutic with a rhetorical methodology, I explore the ideologies at play in *Captivating*, arguing that it is only by exposing the violence inherent in the Eldredge's "romance with God" rhetoric that it becomes possible to resist the rape-supportive undercurrents of this book.

Contested Embodiment in Anti-Abortion Prayer Vigil Activism: Regulating Women's Bodies

Sarah-Jane Page, Aston University
s.page1@aston.ac.uk

Women's reproductive health is an increasing area of contestation in the UK. Whilst access to safe abortion services is seen by the United Nations as a woman's fundamental right, this is tempered by increased activism by those opposed to abortion. This activism is often, though not exclusively, religiously framed, with participants' intention to dissuade women from seeking abortion services. Based on an ethnography of over 20 prayer vigils at abortion clinics across the UK, this presentation will explain the forms that prayer vigil activism take, the materials used in this campaign (e.g. prayer cards, rosary beads, images of Our Lady), and the dominant messages that are conveyed. Firstly, women are constructed in terms of essential motherhood (Lowe and Page 2018), where motherhood is seen as a natural status for women. Secondly, although activists understand their activities as offering support and help to women, women accessing abortion services experience their presence as a form of shaming. Thirdly, religion is both embraced and denied by activists, as they attempt to make their message appealing in an increasingly secularised environment. Anti-abortion prayer vigil activism therefore conveys secular-sacred contestations in the regulation of women's bodies.

A Jew, Transgender Day of Remembrance and the Inclusion and Exclusion of Sacred Space

Hannah Rossiter, University of Auckland
hannah.rossiter@auckland.ac.nz

Drawing upon my PhD research in the trans communities of Aotearoa New Zealand, I explore the role of religion plays in these communities. With a particular focus on the Transgender Day of Remembrance, I explore the ways Jewish trans people engage with the day when it is held at St Matthew-in-the-City.

Transgender Day of Remembrance, falling on November 20 each year, it commemorates those trans people who have been murdered, over the last year. Given the high levels discrimination trans people face transgender day of remembrance has become the primary ritual within many Western trans communities to remember trans people who have died.

Panel 7 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Historical and Ethnographic Studies of Religion in India

Session Chair: Christine Dureau, University of Auckland

The Caste Question in Eighteenth-Century Protestant Missions

Will Sweetman, University of Otago
will.sweetman@otago.ac.nz

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Catholic missions in India were riven by fierce debates—the so-called Malabar rites debates—over the toleration of caste practices among converts. A similar debate in the mid-nineteenth century pitted the Lutherans of the Leipzig mission against other Protestant missionaries. Lutherans were pioneers of Protestant mission in India and in many respects they followed Catholic precedent—something the denominational historiography of Protestant mission has been reluctant to acknowledge. The practice of the eighteenth-century founders of the Lutheran mission was invoked by both sides in the nineteenth-century Protestant debate on caste, but there has been little scholarly examination of the question of whether, why and to what extent Protestant missionaries in the eighteenth century tolerated caste. This paper re-examines the primary sources—the extant letters and diaries of the Protestant missionaries of the early eighteenth century—and argues that, as in many other aspects of their missionary practice, the founders of the Lutheran mission followed Catholic precedent in allowing their converts to continue to acknowledge caste difference. However, they offered a quite different rationale for their practice, one which has made it harder for Protestant historiography to acknowledge the extent of their toleration of caste.

From Madness to Sacredness: Making of Koyappappa as a Saint in Kerala

P. C. Saidalavi, Australian National University
saidalavipc19@gmail.com

This article shows how a fellow, who was considered mad during most of his life time, came to be invested with saintly authority and veneration in a small town in Kerala, India. Most of the studies on Muslim saints in South Asia have emphasised that the saints' membership in a sufi order and claims about belonging to the lineage of Prophet Muhammad are key factors in accruing legitimacy and authority to them as saints. I explain, through ethnographic accounts conducted at the shrine of Koyapapa and oral narratives collected from the locality, how Koyapapa came to be recognised as a saint. Koyapapa passed away in 1984 and the shrine was built in the following year where he was buried. I show that a host of local processes such as personal encounters of many people in the locality, the support of the elite, the approval of religious scholars, the circulation of miracle stories and the daily rituals and yearly festivals have been the key factors in establishing the religious authority and legitimacy of Koyapapa as a saint. This contests the dominant ideas in South Asian scholarship regarding the factors that organise the legitimacy and authority of the saints.

'Lourdes of the East': Anglo-Indian Pilgrimage to Indian Marian Shrines

Robyn Andrews, Massey University
Brent H. Otto, University of California, Berkeley
r.andrews@massey.ac.nz; botto@berkeley.edu

Anglo-Indians, a colonial mixed-descent and westernized Christian minority, left India in large numbers for western countries over the decades following Independence in 1947. Our earlier research indicates that they migrated with a resilient devotion to Christianity, though influenced by western secularism. In accord with Marian devotion and pilgrimages being common features of Catholicism worldwide, large numbers of Anglo-Indians (both migrants long settled in the west and those in India) are making pilgrimages to Marian shrines in India—at Vailankanni and Bandel—where they surprisingly engage in rituals and devotions that resemble Hindu and Indian Christian practices. This aligns them more closely with the pilgrimage rituals of other Indian religions, as well as with inculturated post-Vatican II Indian Catholicism, and shows a departure from traditionally having valued their distinctly modern, western-styled practice of Christianity.

Our ethnographic fieldwork in Vailankanni explores the pilgrimage experiences and practices of Anglo-Indians. It seeks to understand the meanings they attribute to their experiences. We considered questions such as: How can such pilgrimages be understood in terms of the social, cultural and religious identity of this largely Catholic ethnic group? How do they understand their embrace of devotional practices previously shunned by Anglo-Indians?

Cultural Immersion Trips: Finding Sacred Places and Spaces in India

Paul Robertson, University of Auckland
prob014@auckland.ac.nz

In recent decades, cultural immersion trips to seemingly exotic third-world destinations, have become a popular activity for high school and tertiary students groups as they seek authentic experiences of other cultures, and aspire to develop their own spirituality and often through "voluntourism", contribute "something" to the host societies. India has become one common destination for such sought exposures to world religions.

Drawing on literatures on pilgrimage, tourism, short-term mission and development, my doctoral research attempts an anthropological understanding of the many competing and often contradictory dynamics at play in immersion encounters. The fieldwork for this study focussed on a school group of 42 participants from a number of New Zealand Catholic schools, who spent six weeks in India, working as volunteers in Kolkata, engaging with NGOs and visiting tourist and sacred sites across the country. The study considered the immersion participants' experiences and those of hosts.

This paper explores how in the immersion participants' experiences of formal sacred spaces, especially during periods of liminality and reaggregation, the apparently familiar is rendered unfamiliar. Therefore, in order to control the meanings from their experiences, immersion participants develop formal and informal sacred spaces for their reflective processing.

Panel 8 (Reipae)

Studies in the Middle East and Islam

Session Chair: Douglas Pratt, University of Auckland

The Construction of an Iranian Lineage for Manichaeism

Iain Gardner, University of Sydney
iain.gardner@sydney.edu.au

In Manichaeism the relationship of Mani and his community to other religions and churches was established by a lineage of true messengers sent by God from the land of light. Mani is the final Apostle of truth and his wisdom the most complete and universal teaching to which all are called. Although the inclusion of figures such as Buddha and Zarathushtra from outside of the Judaeo-Christian tradition has attracted attention from scholars, the majority of extant texts focus on a Biblical lineage including antediluvian figures such as Adam, Seth and Enoch and culminating with extensive treatment of Jesus. Manichaeism is thus primarily located within a Semitic framework.

This paper will argue that the Chester Beatty codex titled *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani* contains within it a book that establishes an Iranian lineage for Mani and his community, more relevant to the non-Aramaic-speaking populations of the Sasanian Empire. Native epic traditions and their culture-heroes are utilised to frame the advent of Mani and his teaching. If this can be demonstrated it will have radical consequences for an understanding of Manichaean identity and the relationship of the community to other religions.

Palestine as an Islamic Holy Land

Christopher van der Krogt, Massey University
C.J.vanderKrogt@massey.ac.nz

For Muslims, as for Jews and Christians, Palestine is a land of prophets; indeed, most of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an lived there—including such figures as David and Solomon. Jerusalem, usually referred to in Arabic as al-Quds (the Holy) was for a time the Islamic direction of worship (*qibla*). The Prophet Muhammad, it came to be believed, ascended to heaven via the "farthest place of prostration" (*al-masjid al-aqsa*), namely the Temple Mount (the Haram al-Sharif or noble sanctuary).
After Muslims conquered Palestine, the Dome of the Rock (al-Qubbat al-Sakra) and the Aqsa Mosque were built, the former in particular advertising the supersession of Islam over the earlier Religions of the Book. Like Jerusalem, Hebron, with its tomb of the patriarchs, would become a place of holiness not only for Jews and Christians but also for Muslims. Focussing on such case studies, this paper explores the development of Palestine as an Islamic holy land and the consequences of this sanctification for interreligious relations through history.

The Sanctity of the Mosque: Continuity and Change

Mehrnosh Lajevardi Fatemi, Western Sydney University
m.lajevardifatemi@westernsydney.edu.au

Post-migration religious groups are changing the spaces in which they reside. In a constructive process, their interactions and processes of identity-building affect the socio-spatial conditions in which they seek to satisfy their religious and cultural needs. Focusing on impact of these processes within the Muslim landscape in Sydney, this paper looks at Muslim populations: ethno-religious identities, communities and societies. Mosque, as an Islamic 'shrine', ideally should serve to ease the tension felt by many migrants concerning ethnic segregation and the construction of new identities while they adapt to their new environment. It offers them a sense of security and acceptance; a feeling of belonging in their newly-settled social field. In order to establish a comfortable initial sense of territoriality, of 'being at home' in their new milieu, the majority of Muslims surround themselves with people of shared values who are also experiencing a shift in their habitus and spiritual capital. To the ever-growing Muslim diaspora, the reassuring sight of the mosque offers a safe haven of continuity. However, one emerging challenge is that the burgeoning number of mosques has also led to some wider public anxiety, and conflict, as local communities begin to feel displaced.

Faith and Social Exclusion: A Divisive Source or a Reconciliatory Force?

Mortaza Shams, University of Waikato Islamic Studies Group and the Anglican Action Centre for Social Justice
mortaza_shams@yahoo.com

This paper argues that the role that faith plays in many social realms, more than anything else, can be explained by its reconciliatory nature. However, sometimes it takes more than a traditional reconciliatory role, that seeks to satisfy all parties, to deal with certain situations. Social exclusion is an example par excellence of such situations where playing a traditional reconciliatory role is not sufficient. When it comes to social exclusion, faith, by working within the status quo, might be actively playing a traditional reconciliatory role while unwittingly siding with the dominant against the dominated and therefore being a divisive source. As such it is the lack of flexibility in its reconciliatory role, rather than a decisive bias, which is problematic when it comes to the involvement of religion in issues related to social exclusion. The present paper suggests a replacement for the 'cheap reconciliation' favouring the dominant group by strengthening the status quo when dealing with social exclusion: a reconciliation that rejects domination at its core and builds a fair foundation for societal relations based on equal partnership rather than selling the domination to the dominated in a comforting tone.

Panel 9 (Room 235-101)

The Politics of Religion in Asia-Pacific

Session Chair: Geoffrey Troughton, Victoria University of Wellington

Unsanctioned Religion in an Atheist State: Falun Dafa as Alternative Morality

Stephen Noakes, University of Auckland
s.noakes@auckland.ac.nz

While most analyses of China's campaign against the Falun Gong religious movement focus on the institutional reasons underpinning the July 1999 crackdown, we explore the moral reasoning behind the state's actions. Applying a framework initially developed by Austrian thinker Eric Vogelin, we argue that Falun Gong invoked the ire of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on account of its theistic philosophy, which focused on transcendence of the secular world as the ultimate and highest purpose of human existence, and which is inherently in tension with the "gnosticism" of the CCP. We then employ this notion of binary moral systems to explore in greater detail two rival understandings of social progress, as well as the Party's responses to the moral basis of Falun Gong.

Religious Opposition to Constitutional Revision in Japan

Mark Mullins, University of Auckland
m.mullins@auckland.ac.nz

Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe, is currently promoting revision of the postwar Constitution (1947) based upon a Draft Amendment prepared by the Liberal Democratic Party in 2012. Included in the proposal are significant changes to Articles 20 and 89, which define religious freedom and religion-state separation. The proposed revisions include the addition of a phrase stipulating that "social rituals" and "customary practices" are outside the scope of the strict enforcement of religion-state separation. This paper will review the religious opposition to the government's initiative and consider why the revisions would likely eliminate future lawsuits against the state or Shinto institutions for violation of religion-state separation surrounding Shinto-related practices (*jichinsai*, *kōshiki sanpai*) and lead to the erosion of individual rights and freedoms—particularly for religious minorities—by reintroducing coercion into public life and institutions.

Contronymic Secularism and the Christian State sedition cases in Fiji

Thomas White, University of Otago
tomwhitesmailbox@gmail.com

In Fiji, 'secularism' is contronymic. It signs for two separate referents, which are opposites. For some Fijians, particularly religious minorities and the government, 'secularism' means the equal treatment of religions by the state. It embodies the arch-democratic ideals of liberty and equality, and centres a good and Godly society on the principle of religious freedom. Yet for other Fijians, particularly within the Christian indigenous community, 'secularism' is something quite different: a base cosmology hollowed out of any moral or spiritual value. It means a world cut-off from God, and indeed, entails a fundamental hostility to religious beliefs and ideals.

That 'secularism' is contronymic is barely recognised in public debate, where failure to dialogue is perceived the result of the other sides' bad faith, not because of missed meanings. This facilitates a divisive politics where national consensus is traded for in-group political capital. The Christian State sedition cases in 2017, which prosecuted two indigenous movements for sedition after they declared their two provinces as independent Christian States in response to the 'godless' secular 2013 Constitution, provides a neat example of this contronymic dynamic.

The Problem of Religious Freedom: An Analysis of Australian Government Inquiries into Religious Freedom

Elenie Poulos, Macquarie University
elenie.poulos@hdr.mq.edu.au

It was the growing religious diversity in Australia that led to the first national review of religious freedom by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1998. In the ensuing report, concerns focussed on discrimination against minority religious groups but the consensus at the time was that religious freedom was generally well protected. By 2017 Australia had developed a religious freedom 'problem' largely focussed on issues raised in the context of the debate about same-sex marriage.

This paper explores the changing representation of the 'problem' of religious freedom by examining the Commonwealth parliamentary and statutory body review reports of inquiries into religious freedom from 1998-2017. These reports and proposals for policy reform have influenced the perception of the problem of religious freedom just as they sought to address 'the problem'. Using Bacchi's (2009) *What's the Problem Represented to be*? (WPR) approach to policy analysis, this paper challenges the idea that religious freedom is 'fixed' and easily understood, and that the 'problem' is only about how to protect it better, balancing it against other rights. The problem of religious freedom does not exist in isolation: it has a political history and it is this history that this analysis explores.

Panel 10 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Ritual in Sacred and Secular Space

Session Chair: Caroline Blyth, University of Auckland

Sacred Renovations: The True Jesus Church Houses

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, University of Auckland
m.inouye@auckland.ac.nz

In the Auckland suburb of Royal Oak, next to a primary school and a shopping mall, is a nondescript church building bearing the words "True Jesus Church." Originally the building belonged to another Protestant church, but the members of the True Jesus Church purchased it and renovated it according to their requirements. Now, this building becomes a sacred space, transformed by the Holy Spirit as church members—all of them ethnic Chinese—sing, pray, and speak in tongues.

The True Jesus Church came to Auckland in 1990, but was founded in Beijing in 1917. The earliest meeting places of the church were private homes, including the living space above church founder Wei Enbo's silk shop. How did this building take on sacred dimensions? How do the quotidian and extraordinary uses of this space overlap? Who inhabited this space, stopped by, transformed it with sacred experience?

The sources for this paper are the early publications of the True Jesus Church, produced from roughly 1917-1922. I argue that the universalistic, ever-expanding character of Christianity introduces sacred meaning into the ordinary structures and activities of everyday life. Instead of transforming them entirely, however, these sacred contexts jostle up against more quotidian realities.

"This is Israel in Brazil": Using Materiality to Create a Spiritual Epicentre in The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God

Kathleen Openshaw, Western Sydney University
k.openshaw@westernsydney.edu.au

The Temple of Solomon in São Paulo is the new international headquarters of Brazilian neo-Pentecostal megachurch *The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God* (UCKG). It is an ambitious replica of the biblical temple built by King Solomon. The Temple was constructed with materials imported from Israel, and heavily adopts elements of Jewish material culture and Old Testament narratives. In the Universal Church, Judaism and Israel command spiritual authority. Drawing on two years of ethnographic research in the UCKG's Australian headquarters, during which time I joined congregants on pilgrimage to the Temple, I argue that by appropriating the spiritual power of Jewish and Israeli materiality, the UCKG has created a new epicentre of extraordinary spiritual power for its congregants in an industrial district of a megacity. The Temple provides access to the Holy Land for the UCKG's mostly poor Brazilian congregants, many of whom could never afford to travel to Israel. It has also become a place of pilgrimage for its global congregants. This paper contributes to scholarly discussions of the importance of materiality in creating sacred places, and more broadly, sacred places and pilgrimage within Pentecostalisms from the Global South.

The Sydney Jewish Museum as a Fluctuating Sacred Space

Breann Fallon, Sydney Jewish Museum and University of Sydney
bfallon@sjm.com.au

The museum as a sacred site and as a religious experience is a concept that has seen much airtime in the Religious Studies academy in recent years; the Sydney Jewish Museum being a unique case when considering this. Established by Australian Association of Holocaust Survivors 25 years ago, it is a space almost entirely dedicated to the trauma that befell the numerous victim groups targeted during the Holocaust and contains three memorials for victims of the Holocaust; *The Star*, *The Children's Memorial*, and *The Sanctum of Remembrance*. The continuing act of memorialisation indicates that ritual takes place in this space each day. Critically, with people at the core of this space—Holocaust survivors, their descendants, and the broader community—new rituals and experiences are being created frequently, both consciously and unknowingly. Employing Catherine Bell's 1994 work, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, this presentation shall highlight new rituals and experiences that have been freshly created in the context of the Sydney Jewish Museum and traditions that have changed. This shall raise for debate the ability for Museums to be spaces in which sacrality, ritual, and the religious experience are constantly being constructed and redefined by those at their core.

Without God

Brodie Quinn, University of Auckland
bqui016@aucklanduni.ac.nz

"*Without God*" is a short, 12-15-minute documentary film, currently in production, that investigates contemporary atheism and non-religious communities in New Zealand through focusing on Humanist associations, *Skeptics* meetups, and other secular gatherings such as the *Sunday Assembly* "atheist church." In 2017, the Pew Research Centre reported that the "religiously unaffiliated" make up the third largest religious group in the world. Recently, anthropologists have begun studying secularist communities, interpreting their worldviews, beliefs, rituals, and social lives in ways similar to anthropological studies of religious faiths and institutions. Matthew Engelke's research on humanism in Britain has been a leading contributor to this recent disciplinary interest, examining humanist views on death, morality, and happiness. While surveys such as Pew's and the NZ Census can show the number of people who identify as non-religious, they do little to explain how these people orient themselves morally, spiritually, or socially. Many non-religious people purposively organise and gather (often weekly), follow ritual practices, reinforce group identity, and share their beliefs. Through interviews and observational filming, "*Without God*" explores these groups and practices, and shows how many religiously unaffiliated people in NZ find communality and orient their worldviews through engaging with like-minded peoples and ritualistic secular practices.

Panel 11 (Reipae)

Religious Diversity and Interfaith Activity

Session Chair: Gary D. Bouma, Monash University

Affirming Diversity: Plurality and Pluralism in the Context of Religious Materiality

Douglas Pratt, University of Auckland
d.pratt@auckland.ac.nz

Religion is given expression in diverse forms of art, architecture, image and material objects, all of which provides substance to the notion of religious 'space'. For some, this evokes an iconoclastic reaction, especially in contexts of claims to exclusive truth and value. Contrariwise, where such materiality is embraced and valued per se, the religious life is enriched and religious diversity affirmed. This paper will explore issues of plurality and materiality in religion today. It will examine a range of constructs of pluralism with a view to extending the basis for critical and constructive discussion beyond the standard Hickian common-basis construct, and to address issues arising from the impacts of exclusivist religious ideologies upon religious materiality. Such impacts include, for example, the extreme iconoclasm wrought of ISIS in parts of the Middle East, involving the destruction of religious objets d'art. This negative phenomenon pertaining to religious space will be discussed in the context of a critical review of religious exclusivism and contrasted with situations where religious imagery, or iconography, is given positive regard. Arguably it is in the affirmation of diversity, in both theoretical and material terms, that contemporary exclusivist, or anti-diversity, ideologies may be challenged and countered.

The Secular Realm as Interfaith Space

Paul Hedges, Nanyang Technological University
ispmhedges@ntu.edu.sg

Most modern societies have a secular constitution. While diverse interpretations of secularism exist (e.g., British, French, Indian, Turkish), generally they distinguish between the public sphere as secular, and the private realm where religion may exist. The distinction between the public and private spheres is, however, unstable and regularly breached, while theorists such as Jürgern Habermas and Charles Taylor have posited that religious discourse has a rightful place within the public sphere. Moreover, since 9/11, many states have increasingly divested support and encouragement into interfaith activities, often related to notions of social cohesion or counter radicalisation narratives; a matter Patrice Brodeur, Anna Halafoff and others have discussed. As such, the secular and public sphere arguably becomes at the same time a religious sphere, at least one imbued with a spirit of interfaith cooperation. This is, itself, problematic, as different religious communities relate to interfaith discourse in varied ways, and may even be hostile to what they perceive to be its intention and agenda. Nevertheless, a particular discourse of the secular realm as an interfaith space seems inherent in the contemporary context. The shaping of this will be explored in this paper.

The Dynamics of Religious Faith and Community Organizing: A Case Study of the Sydney Alliance

Rosemary Hancock, University of Notre Dame Australia
rosemary.hancock@nd.edu.au

This paper takes as its starting point the relationship of faith to civic activism and political participation and is based on (currently active) participatory action research with the Sydney Alliance—an IAF-affiliate organization in Sydney, Australia that brings together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim organizations with Unions and other community organizations to work on issues of equality, access, and social justice within Sydney. The paper argues for a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between faith and political practice, and investigates whether the community organising of the Sydney Alliance, in their use of specific forms of relational political practices and conscious engagement of religious individuals and organizations in the political life of the city, may (or may not) enact more inclusive public relationships and reimagine the boundaries of political community in Sydney.

The Capacity to Hope: Interfaith Efforts for Creating Peace and a "Good" World

Sarah Haggar, University of Auckland
shga757@aucklanduni.ac.nz

With pervasive global conflict and risk, people undergo many attempts to make the world a "good" place. Coming from the perspective of the anthropology of the good, which seeks to understand efforts for, and understandings of, good, I analyse the workings of hope amongst the interfaith movement, which is a manifestation of the everyday efforts of diverse religious people trying to build a peaceful society. I explore how interfaith actors engage with their hopes to work against a spectre of world disaster and seek to pre-emptively protect New Zealand, which they perceive as "good" and "not-yet" enmeshed in conflict, from global events of disharmony. Such pre-emptive action involves the careful navigating of potentially disruptive differences within the interfaith movement, and navigating diverse social landscapes in ways often invisible to society. This work, I argue, is entrenched in hope, which becomes an integral way that people engage with and (re)conceptualise their worlds, moving towards peace and understanding, reflecting the idea of the future as amenable to change. From the unpredictable potential for conflict, hope emerges as a means through which interfaith actors pre-emptively care for their society, allowing them to believe they are capable of radically altering their world(s).

Christianity in Asia-Pacific

Session Chair: Mark Mullins, University of Auckland

The Dynamics of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples' Catholic Practice: From Amis' Colonial Experience to Urban Migration

Kuriko Okada, Sophia University
okada.gemma.kuriko@gmail.com

The presentation would further explore the dynamics and functional roles of "becoming" and "being" Catholics among "Amis," the largest indigenous peoples' group in Taiwan.

Presently, about 80 percent of 16 groups of Austronesian indigenous peoples that make up about 2.4 percent (562,926 people) of Taiwan's population are estimated to have become Christians after the end of Japanese colonization. During Taiwan's high-growth economic period started from the 1960s to 1970s, Indigenous Peoples' urban migration made half of their population to become "urban indigenous," and pastoral care for them has been considered as one of the important issues for Church ministry. Although the strong relationships of Christian Churches with indigenous peoples have drawn scholars' attention, the discussion on Catholicism has been overlooked.

By presenting the ethnographic data collected in Amis' home villages and the urban Catholic communities, I will show how Amis' "traditional" cosmology, which has been discussed as animistic and pagan worship, was influenced by the Japanese imperialism policies to shift to Christianity. Moreover, by introducing the administration system and activities run in Amis Catholics' urban lay communities, I would also like to consider how the Catholic faith has been intimately involved with Amis' urban lives.

Migrant Filipinos and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan

Takefumi Terada, Sophia University
tterada@tka.att.ne.jp

Japan has entered an era of an aging population, and the Roman Catholic Church is no exception. While young Japanese Catholics do not come to church, migrant Filipinos are having various contacts with the Church in Japan. At present Filipino residents nationals in Japan exceeds 260,000. Aside from several large urban centers such as Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, Filipinos are also seen at provincial towns and villages throughout the country as many have married with Japanese males. This phenomenon started in late 1970s when a number of Filipinas came to Japan to work. By the beginning of 1990s, in several churches under the Tokyo Archdiocese, Filipino communities became an integral part of the Japanese-dominant churches. In many parishes Filipinos and Japanese are still divided as Filipinos basically attend the English or Tagalog Mass. But recently, there are also churches where Filipinos and Japanese jointly celebrate bilingual/ international Mass on regular basis. Filipinos have introduced various forms of devotion into the church in Japan as well. In 2010, an unique church was established in Yamagata Prefecture where the majority members are Filipinos and their children, with only several Japanese Catholics.

An Un/Holy Place: Denominational Conflict and Converted Landscape on Simbo, Western Solomon Islands

Christine Dureau, University of Auckland
christinedureau@gmail.com

When Seventh Day Adventism arrived on Simbo in the 1920s, Methodists responded violently. Consequently, the small SDA community fled deep into the bush to a place occupied by the evil spirits of women who had died in childbirth, establishing the village of Tuku ("Closed"), which became one of the key foci of SDA-Methodist disputation.

Both denominations simultaneously held themselves to have transcended pre-Christian forces and attested to the real dangers of a landscape peopled by them. For those of Methodist lineage, Tuku remained a place of evil spirits that attack SDA women of reproductive age who, almost literally, live in the time-space of Darkness. SDAs, however, saw themselves as having converted a hostile noumenal landscape into a "truly Christian" locale, a village that was both sacred place and demonstration of religious authenticity.

I draw on Trouillot's Historicity I and Historicity II to consider the significance of partially reconstituted pre-Christian cosmologies of place to contemporary, theological struggle and symbolic contestation as revealed in these clashing understandings of Tuku.

Panel 13 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Scientific Studies of Religion

Session Chair: Nicholas Thompson, University of Auckland

Science and Religion: Beyond Ethnocentrism

Gregory W. Dawes, University of Otago
gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz

The literature on science and religion has become tediously predictable. Advocates of science suggest a conflict between the two, advocates of religion argue they are complementary, while critics suggest that 'science' and 'religion' are recent and unhelpful categories. One reason for the unproductive state of the field is that it restricts itself, for the most part, to modern science and Christianity. My project is to broaden the discussion, by identifying differing forms of science and religion. As well as the protoscientific knowledge of small-scale societies, I shall examine three forms of science: (a) science as integral cosmology (as found in classical Chinese thought), (b) science as natural philosophy (as found in medieval Europe) and (c) science as specialized activity (modern science). When it comes to religion, I shall distinguish (a) 'diffused' religion, in which there is no clear distinction between religious practices and other social institutions, (b) 'institutional' religion, which has distinct bodies of doctrine and practice, and (c) the privatised religions of modern societies. These distinctions allow us to identify the differing ways in which science and religion have been, and continue to be, related.

Measuring Religion in the Field: A Comparison of Self-Report, Firsthand Observations, and Third-Party Judgements in a Rural Fijian Village

John H. Shaver, University of Otago
john.shaver@otago.ac.nz

Though social scientific research on religion often employs self-report measures, we currently have little idea of how well self-reported behaviour corresponds to actual practice. The present talk addresses this concern by examining self-report of religious beliefs and behaviour and their relationship to observed practice across a year of fieldwork in a remote Fijian village. Data analyses indicate that while self-reported practice predicts observed behaviour, there are systematic intracultural differences in reporting biases. Though women report higher levels of practice than men, men engage in more practice than women. Moreover, there is no difference in ancestor belief between men and women at the population level, but women who attend Christian ritual report lower levels of belief in the ancestors. Sex differences in belief and behaviour are interpreted as due to Fijian cultural practices, namely patrilocality and a sexual division of labor where women's domestic obligations act as a constraint on their ritual behaviour. Thus, while self-report measures are somewhat reliable predictors of ritual behaviour, data indicate that the relationship between self-report and actual ritual practice is subject to cultural variation. Finally, third party judgements of ritual behaviour are found to be more reliable predictors of actual practice than self-report.

The Evolution of Major World Religions is Marked by Increases in Speciation Rate

Anastasia Ejova, Remco Bouckaert, Quentin D. Atkinson and Joseph Bulbulia, University of Auckland
Simon J. Greenhill, Joseph Watts and Russell D. Gray, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History
Jakub Cigán, Silvie Kotherová, Jan Krátký, Radek Kundt and Eva Kundtová Klocová, Masaryk University
anastasia.ejova@auckland.ac.nz

Religious traditions are not stable systems of belief and practice. Instead, they undergo modification through events such as the reinterpretation of doctrine, errors in the translation of central texts, and new revelations by vassals. These types of events have been argued to be part of a broader mechanism of "cultural evolution", in which human practices are passed on stably through social learning, but with opportunity for incremental change. While instances of modification in religious beliefs and practices have been widely documented, relatively little is known about more general patterns of religious evolution. A barrier to testing macro-level patterns has been the lack of formal phylogenies (evolutionary trees) that represent the history of different religious traditions. To the extent that religious history is tree-like, and to the extent that it is possible to construct phylogenies of various religions traditions, biological quantitative techniques can be applied to answering broader questions about religious history. Here, we develop phylogenies of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism/Sikhism, illustrating how quantitative phylogenetic analysis methods can be used to study increases in schism rates. We uncover increases similar in magnitude to the Christian Protestant Reformation in all the other traditions except Islam.

Religious Change is Simpson's Paradox: A National Scale Longitudinal Investigation of Religious Change

Joseph Bulbulia, University of Auckland
joseph.bulbulia@gmail.com

NZ Census figures show religious affiliation is declining. However, this average trend is the product of two opposing trends at the level of individuals: de-conversion among those who are religious and conversion among those who are not. Estimating the religious switching dynamics of individuals has been challenging because nearly all relevant data sets, such as national censuses, do not track individuals over time. To investigate stability and change simultaneously at both social and individual levels, we built a national-scale longitudinal study of attitudes and values that repeatedly measures the same New Zealanders each year. We used a hidden first-order Markov model to analyze responses from 9951 individuals over a six year period, from 2009-2014. This approach confirmed the society-wide trend to disaffiliation and showed that it arises predominantly from a relatively high de-conversion rate among young people. However, the data also revealed an unexpected feature: as non-religious individuals age, they become more likely to convert. Thus, counter-intuitively, while New Zealand society as a whole is becoming more secular over time, individual New Zealanders are becoming more religious. This finding illustrates the power of national-scale longitudinal designs to clarify the dynamics of core beliefs across the lifespan.

Panel 14 (Reipae)
AASR Roundtable

Challenges for the Study of Religion in Australia: The Next Decade, and Beyond?

Convenors:
Cristina Rocha and Adam Possamai, Western Sydney University
Marion Maddox, Macquarie University

Australia's religious landscape is changing in the 21st century. Globalisation, urbanisation, digital and social media, and increasing refugee and migration intakes from different source regions (from Asia, the Middle-East, Latin America and Africa rather than Europe and the UK) have contributed to greater diversification and renewed significance of religion in Australia. Debates on same-sex marriage and abortion laws demonstrate how religion has moved to the public sphere and is a site of negotiation of identity and values in Australia. In this panel, we want to tease out how these processes will affect the place of religion in the next decade.

Speakers:

1. Gary Bouma (Monash University)
2. Marion Maddox (Macquarie University)
3. Ruth Powell (NCLS Research)
4. Adam Possamai (WSU)
5. Cristina Rocha (WSU)
6. Josh Roose (ACU)
7. Paul Babie (Adelaide University)

Discussant: Anna Halafoff (Deakin University)

Panel 15 (Tāne-nui-a-Rangi)

Historical and Sociological Studies of Christianity

Session Chair: Paul Babie, Adelaide University

Revisiting the Reliability of Apostate Narratives

Nicholas Thompson, University of Auckland
nj.thompson@auckland.ac.nz

Apostasy is a particular kind of religious defection. The apostate's identity derives from the fact that she is not a member of the group she has left. Secondly, she is supported by an "oppositional group". Both features shape the stories that apostates tell about their reasons for leaving. Scholarship has treated these narratives as unreliable because the apostate's identity is closely tied to the expectations of her supporters and the anticipated prejudices of the reading public. Recently, however, we have seen growing public revulsion at past failures to pay serious attention to past reports of abuse in religious organisations—for example in the Catholic Church or in the case of the Rotherham scandal. This trend seems at odds with scholarly doubt about the veracity of apostate narratives. While there is no straightforward way out of this impasse, this paper argues that we should not assume a priori that apostate narratives are unreliable—even when they clearly serve the interests of dominant prejudice such as Islamophobia. Instead, historians dealing with these texts should treat them journalistically, trying to verify their claims where they can, and expressing agnosticism or doubt where they can't.

Applying Social Network Analysis to Historical Sources: The Case of Charles Strong and the Australian Church

Patricia Curthoys, Macquarie University
curthoys@tpg.com.au

This paper explores the application of Social Network Analysis to the study of the politically active network associated with Rev. Charles Strong and his independent congregation, known as the Australian Church, in Melbourne in the decades before and after Federation. Members of the Australian Church included Members of Parliament, a chief justice, union leaders, feminist activists and leading participants in public debate. This church-based network was central in the shaping and institutionalisation of Australia's political settlement. The paper discusses the ways in which SNA can be used to trace relationships among members of this network, the development of their ideas on religion-state relations and the interrelation of religion and politics. In particular we hope to chart and analyse density in relationships (who communicated the most with whom) and patterns of hierarchy (who deferred to whom). As well we will explore the role of both strong and weak ties in facilitating communication and in the production of new ideas. In so doing we hope to elucidate the ways the church network operated as a forum for testing, challenging and refining members' ideas about religion-state questions as well as how the network members' various positions contributed to wider public debates.

Silence, Secrecy and Power: Understanding the Royal Commission Findings into the Failure of Religious Organisations to Protect Children

Kathleen McPhillips, University of Newcastle
kathleen.mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse handed down its final report in December 2017. Its findings spread to 17 volumes and it is the most detailed report into institutional failure of child protection ever held. Volume 16 was the largest contriubtion to the final report with 3 separate books noting the failure to protect children from sexual abuse across a number of religiuos organisations, most notably the Catholic Church. This presentation looks at the findings of the Royal Commission into religious organisations and the implications for these groups as they consider the implementation of the recommendations on religious culture, organisational structure and theolgy. The presentation also looks at some of the responses to the recommendations from the Catholic Church. The importance of this process cannot be understated for the future of religious organisations and as New Zealand prepares to begin its own inquiry into institutional child sexual abuse.

The Branding of the Devil: A Sociology of Exorcism

Adam Possamai, Western Sydney University
a.possamai@westernsydney.edu.au

Working from the perspective of the sociology of contemporary religion, this paper discusses the social construction of the phenomenon of exorcism, and how exorcism is located today in the current consumer culture, in which branding and differentiation are of social significance. It is argued that, within societies where religions compete with each other more and more, ministries of exorcism and deliverance have become part of this process of branding and differentiation. This thesis is then developed and tested by drawing on and analysing original data concerning the work of deliverance and exorcism documented by an experienced and philosophically-trained Catholic exorcist operating in southern Europe over a ten year period. On the basis of these original data, it is concluded that the Catholic Church had expanded the ministry of exorcism into the wider ministry of deliverance as a form of branding and differentiation, and as a clear counter-branding against charismatic Protestant movements.

Media and Public Recognition of Religion

Session Chair: Philip Fountain, Victoria University of Wellington

Representing Ringatū: Images of the Ringatū Faith in Public Culture

Ann Hardy, University of Waikato
a.hardy@waikato.ac.nz

In 1967 when the Ringatū church held a centennial celebration at Muriwai near Gisborne it was portrayed by the NZBC news service as a quaint Māori religious movement that was fading into the past. Now, 50 years later, with the titular membership at around 200 in Ruatahuna, the active membership of Ringatū in that heartland of the faith is indeed low – one member claims it is as few as 13 people (Temara, 2015). Nevertheless, the making of visual and narrative mythologies around the church in audio-visual culture has proceeded in counter-direction to its membership.

The bicultural television series *Tangata Whenua* in its episode 'The Prophets: Tuhoe Ringatu' (1974), provided one of the first extended presentations on Ringatū for the general public, while the filmmaker Vincent Ward has twice explored the life of a woman, Puhi, who was married to a son of the prophet Rua Kenana, in his films *In Spring One Plants Alone* (1980) and *The Rain of the Children* (2007). This paper investigates the artistic strategies of Ward's work in particular (cf. Fleming 2011, Read 2004), looking at their employment of a 'transformational' aesthetic (Fleming, 2011) derived from international art cinema.

Religion and Media in Independent Ukraine: Churches, Politics and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

Denys Shestopalets, Monash University
denys.shestopalets@monash.edu

This paper investigates several key issues linked to the growing presence of religion in the Ukrainian media since 1991.

First, it analyses how various media in Ukraine have responded to the division in Ukrainian Orthodoxy and to the existence of two major Orthodox organisations with conflicting ideological agendas. Of central importance here will be measuring the amount of attention given by the mainstream newspapers, TV channels and web resources to specific churches and their leaders.

This segment also aims to demonstrate the role of politics and political actors in turning the Orthodox conflict in Ukraine from a relatively marginal topic, discussed in the 1990s mainly by specialised or low-profile news outlets, into a staple subject in the mainstream media.

Secondly, the paper will also shed light on how the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, unfolding since 2014, has influenced the representation of religion in the Ukrainian media. The focus here will be on the portrayal of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate as a religious organization serving the interests of the Russian political regime.

As a case study, the paper will use media coverage of the all-Ukrainian pilgrimage for peace in Ukraine organized by this church in July 2016.

Dao Mau: From Oppression to Recognition

Binh Thi Thuy Tran, University of Auckland
tbin787@aucklanduni.ac.nz

In its six-century history Dao Mau, an indigenous Vietnamese religion, has faced legal sanctions and socially stigma. In these contexts, its practitioners have secretly persisted in performing *len dong*—a ritual practice that induces moments of ecstasy in connecting mediums with the souls of male and female deities. These moments are stereotyped as capricious or superstition. In *len dong*, the bodies of mediums incarnate spirits of all genders through their idiosyncratic rituals. These spiritual performances help its participants balance their mental health and guide their behaviour in the mundane world. In particular, some practitioners strongly believe that their material life improves after serving these spirits well. This belief has spread significantly among businesspeople and politicians, contributing to the visibility of Dao Mau in mainstream society. On December 1, 2016, Dao Mau was officially recognized as the world's intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO after five-year advocacy by the government, scholarly experts, mediums and the religion's followers, leading to a boom in its ritual practices across the country.

I argue that official recognition of Dao Mau as a cultural treasure helps to sustain its continuity at the cost of only partially reflecting its religiosity.