

**ALASKA \* ALBERTA \* BRITISH COLUMBIA \* IDAHO \* MONTANA  
OREGON \* SASKATCHEWAN \* WASHINGTON**

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
RELIGION AND BIBLICAL STUDIES**

**SPONSORED BY  
THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION**



**MAY 19-21**

**George Fox University**

**Newberg, Oregon**

## **WELCOME TO GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY!**

Welcome to George Fox University for the 2023 Pacific Northwest Regional Conference on Religion and Biblical Studies, sponsored by the American Academy of Religion. This is our first in-person meeting since 2019, so we are very excited to see many of you face to face. We are also happy to welcome those who are able to participate in their sessions virtually.

In the years since our last in-person meeting, a number of significant things have changed, in our world and our region. This year marks an opportunity to regroup and begin to build toward the future. As we collectively navigate the professional and personal challenges that recent years have brought us, we also appreciate occasions like this when we can share in the values of scholarship and collegiality.

This weekend, we especially call your attendance to the following key events:

### **Friday Evening Plenary Address**

The plenary address by Dr. Mark Unno, University of Oregon, on “The Storied Self: The Narrative Self and the Religious Dimension,” will begin on Friday evening at 7:00 pm. The address will be preceded by the opportunity to enjoy greeting follow attendees at our Friday Appetizer Welcome Reception, which begins at 6:00 pm.

### **Saturday Lunch and Business Meeting**

On Saturday from 12:30 to 1:30 pm we will be holding our region’s Annual Business Meeting. We have some important updates to share, as well as a number of key positions to vote on, so we would appreciate the attendance of as many members as possible. Please pick up your pre-ordered lunch and plan on joining us!

### **Saturday Evening Buffet and Presidential Plenary Address**

Join us Saturday evening at 6:00 pm for a (pre-ordered) buffet dinner, to be followed 7:00 pm by our presidential address by Dr. Mari Kim, “The Challenge and Gift of Erotic Faith: Desire, Transformation, and Building Beloved Community.” (You are welcome to come to the presidential address, even if you don’t join us for dinner.)

We want to especially thank the Program Unit Chairs and the Executive Committee for all of their work.

Thank you for your participation and support!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meeting Highlights

Campus Map

Plenary Speakers

Program

- First Session (Friday Afternoon)
- Plenary Address (Friday Evening)
- Second Session (Saturday Morning)
- Third Session (Saturday Afternoon)
- Presidential Address (Saturday Evening)
- Fourth Session (Sunday Morning)

Abstracts

- First Session (Friday Afternoon)
- Second Session (Saturday Morning)
- Third Session (Saturday Afternoon)
- Fourth Session (Sunday Morning)

## Meeting Highlights

| EVENT  | LOCATION, DAY, TIME   |
|--|---|
| On-Site Registration   | Hoover Academic Building Lobby<br>Friday, 1:00-5:00 PM<br>Saturday, 8:00-11:00 AM                   |
| Coffee Breaks  | Hoover Academic Building Lobby<br>Friday, 3:30-4:00 PM<br>Saturday, 10:30-11:00 AM and 3:30-4:00 PM |
| Student Social Hour  | Ruddick/Wood (720 E. 1st St., Newberg)<br>Friday, 4:30-5:30 PM                                      |
| Friday Appetizer Welcome Reception                             | Hoover Academic Building Lobby<br>Friday, 6:00-6:45 PM  |
| Plenary Address<br>Dr. Mark Unno                               | Hoover Academic Building<br>Friday, 7:00 PM   |
| Round Table: “Emerging Technologies and the Classroom”         | Hoover Academic Building (Live & Virtual)<br>Saturday, 11:00-11:45 AM                               |
| Lunch and Business Meeting                                     | Canyon Commons 103<br>Saturday, 12:00-1:30 PM   |
| Student Session on Publishing<br>Charlie Collier, Wipf & Stock | Hoover Academic Building<br>Saturday, 4:30-5:30 PM  |
| Saturday Evening Buffet  | Canyon Commons 103<br>Saturday, 6:00-7:00 PM  |
| Presidential Plenary Address<br>Dr. Mari Kim                   | Canyon Commons 103<br>Saturday, 7:00-8:00 PM  |



414 North Meridian St., Newberg, OR 97132

Austin Sports Complex plus additional parking 1/4 mile ↑



**Campus Facilities**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. Academic Resource Center              | ..... D4 |
| 2. Alumni Plaza                          | ..... D6 |
| 3. Amphitheater                          | ..... E6 |
| 4. Armstrong House                       | ..... B2 |
| 5. Barclay House (Spil)                  | ..... F6 |
| 6. Bauman Auditorium                     | ..... C6 |
| 7. Beats House (Counseling)              | ..... D2 |
| 8. Behavioral Health Clinic              | ..... G5 |
| 9. Brougher Hall                         | ..... C5 |
| 10. Bruin Store                          | ..... D4 |
| 11. Campbell House                       | ..... B6 |
| 12. Canyon Commons                       | ..... F5 |
| 13. Centennial Tower                     | ..... C4 |
| 14. Center Street House                  | ..... B6 |
| 15. Cinematic Arts                       | ..... B6 |
| 16. Costume Studio                       | ..... C7 |
| 17. Duke Athletic Center                 | ..... D7 |
| 18. Edwards-Holman Science Center        | ..... C5 |
| 19. Engineering Maker Hub                | ..... D4 |
| 20. Finance                              | ..... C2 |
| 21. Fry House                            | ..... D2 |
| 22. Hadlock Student Center               | ..... F4 |
| 23. Health and Counseling Center         | ..... C2 |
| 24. Hiebert House (Campus Public Safety) | ..... D2 |
| 25. Hodgkin Studio                       | ..... D2 |
| 26. Hodson House (Event Services)        | ..... B3 |
| 27. Holtan House                         | ..... G8 |
| 28. Hoover Academic Building             | ..... C4 |
| 29. Intercultural Life                   | ..... D2 |
| 30. Klages Center                        | ..... D4 |
| 31. Lemmons Center                       | ..... B5 |
| 32. Lemmons Family Field                 | ..... D6 |
| 33. Lindgen Gallery                      | ..... C6 |
| 34. Mail Services (Room 120)             | ..... F4 |
| 35. Maker's Market                       | ..... D4 |
| 36. Margaret Lemmons House (ADP)         | ..... B2 |
| 37. Meridian Street House (HR)           | ..... B2 |
| 38. Millage Memorial Rose Garden         | ..... C5 |
| 39. Miller Gym                           | ..... E7 |
| 40. Minthorne Gallery                    | ..... B4 |
| 41. Minthorn Hall                        | ..... C5 |
| 42. Morse Athletic Fields                | ..... F8 |
| 43. Murdock Library                      | ..... D5 |
| 44. Nash House                           | ..... B7 |
| 45. North Street Annex                   | ..... C5 |
| 46. Pavilion                             | ..... E3 |
| 47. Pennington House                     | ..... C2 |
| 48. Prayer Chapel                        | ..... E4 |
| 49. River Street House                   | ..... C3 |
| 50. Roberts Center                       | ..... F5 |
| 51. Ron Gregory Atrium                   | ..... C4 |
| 52. Ross Center                          | ..... C6 |
| 53. Schomburg House                      | ..... B6 |
| 54. Senior Art Studio                    | ..... C2 |
| 55. Stevens Center                       | ..... C3 |
| 56. Stoffer Family Stadium               | ..... D7 |
| 57. Student Leadership Offices           | ..... F4 |
| 58. Tennis Courts                        | ..... D5 |
| 59. Thomas Center (Plant Services)       | ..... G8 |
| 60. Vermillion St. House                 | ..... B6 |
| 61. Wheeler Sports Center                | ..... E6 |
| 62. Wood-Mar Hall                        | ..... B4 |

**Student Housing**

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| 63. Anderson House            | ..... B2 |
| 64. Beebe Residence Hall      | ..... E3 |
| 65. Brandt Residence Hall     | ..... G6 |
| 66. Carey Residence Hall      | ..... E3 |
| 67. Chapman House             | ..... D1 |
| 68. Edwards Residence Hall    | ..... D4 |
| 69. Fell House                | ..... E1 |
| 70. Fulton Street House       | ..... C7 |
| 71. Gulley Residence Hall     | ..... F6 |
| 72. Hancock Street House      | ..... C1 |
| 73. Hobson Residence Hall     | ..... F3 |
| 74. Hodgkin House             | ..... D2 |
| 75. Hoskins House             | ..... C2 |
| 76. Keisey House              | ..... B6 |
| 77. Le Shana Residence Hall   | ..... F6 |
| 78. Lewis Apartments          | ..... F3 |
| 79. Macy Residence Hall       | ..... F3 |
| 80. McGrew House              | ..... D2 |
| 81. Millage Duplex            | ..... D2 |
| 82. Newlin Residence Hall     | ..... G6 |
| 83. Parker Duplex             | ..... C2 |
| 84. Pennington Residence Hall | ..... D3 |
| 85. Riley House               | ..... D1 |
| 86. Roy Apartments            | ..... C6 |
| 87. Sutton Residence Hall     | ..... F3 |
| 88. Villa House               | ..... B2 |
| 89. Weesner House             | ..... E2 |
| 90. Weesner Village           | ..... E3 |
| 91. Wilder House              | ..... F2 |
| 92. Willcuts Residence Hall   | ..... E2 |
| 93. Winters Apartments        | ..... C3 |
| 94. Woolman Apartments        | ..... D1 |

♥ Automated External Defibrillator

🅂 Parking

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| A Bauman/Ross Center Parking Lot | ..... C7 |
| B Wheeler/Le Shana Parking Lot   | ..... F7 |
| C Hoover/Wood-Mar Parking Lot    | ..... B4 |
| D Pennington Hall Parking Lot    | ..... D3 |
| E Stevens Center Parking Lot     | ..... B3 |
| F Roberts Center Parking Lot     | ..... G4 |
| G Hobson/Macy/Sutton/Lewis Lot   | ..... G3 |
| H North Street Lot               | ..... G5 |
| I Morse Parking Lot              | ..... G8 |

🅂 Visitor lots or rows

**Information**

If you need assistance, please visit the Information Desk in the Stevens Center (building 55 in quadrant C3), or call the switchboard at 503-538-8383.

## PLENARY SPEAKERS

### PLENARY ADDRESS

Friday Evening, 7:00 pm

Mark Unno, University of Oregon

#### **“The Storied Self: The Narrative Self and the Religious Dimension”**



For human beings, language is like water for a fish. We cannot live without it, and it is the medium that makes us human. More specifically, we are a storytelling species. When our story-making function falters, we start to become lost, as is the

case when, for example, dementia sets in. As unique individuals, we each carry our own unique stories. At the same time, the families, societies, and cultures we inhabit come with their own stories. When we find that our individual stories do not fit with the stores told by various levels of society, we begin to form what Hilde Nelson calls “counterstory” over against the dominant narrative. In presenting the formation of counterstory, she shows that the dominant culture must acknowledge and incorporate the counterstory when a critical mass of representation is achieved. She gives the example of nurses in a hospital coming together to find their voice against the doctors and hospital administration. All of this takes place on what might be called the “horizontal plane” of history and society. Yet, there are cases when it is not possible to achieve critical mass. There may be, however, another dimension that provides resources for expressing one’s counterstory, the vertical or depth dimension that can be found in religion. There are layers to this intersection of the social-horizontal and religious-vertical dimensions, such as internal and external narratives, and moral, social, and political implications. By positing the religious dimension at perpendicular to the horizontal movements of society, we can discover new possibilities for the Storied Self.

Mark Unno is Professor of Buddhist Studies and Department Head of Religious Studies at the University of Oregon, specializing in Pure Land, Zen, and Shingon Buddhism. He is the author of *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light* (2004), editor of *Buddhism and Psychotherapy Across Cultures* (2006), and author of articles on Japanese Buddhism, comparative religious thought, interreligious dialogue, and Buddhism and psychotherapy. He is also the President for the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. In addition to his scholarly research, his Buddhist essays are published in such Buddhist journals as *Tricycle*, *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner’s Quarterly*, and *Lion’s Roar*. <http://mtunno5.weebly.com/>

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

**Saturday Evening, 7:00 pm**

**Mari Kim, 2023 President, PNW Region of the AAR**

**“The Challenge and Gift of Erotic Faith: Desire, Transformation, and Building Beloved Community”**

We navigate multiple and competing understandings of the Good at any given time. Take for instance our current situation as the Pacific Northwest Region whose belonging is being renegotiated with the national American Academy of Religion body, and navigated with members of the Society for Biblical Literature whose regional identities were dissolved. The resulting experiences of ambiguity and ambivalence can be transformative as they generate in us longing for clarity and conviction that integrates our sense of multiple identities and arrives at a fuller sense of belonging — an experience that is core to understandings of beloved community. Exploring our responses to experiences of ambiguity and ambivalence, understandings of erotic faith and the practice of erotic faithfulness can offer a theological anthropology of desire that grows awareness and meaningful insight as we seek to be and become beloved community together.



DRAFT

# 2023 PNW CONFERENCE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 19, 2023

First Session: 2:00-5:00 pm

**Hoover XXX**     **HEBREW BIBLE**

**Presider:** Jennifer Brown Jones, Liberty University, [jjones118@liberty.edu](mailto:jjones118@liberty.edu)

**4:00-4:30** Parker Arnold, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, [parnold@regent-college.edu](mailto:parnold@regent-college.edu)  
"Right Sight and Poor Perception in the Ark Narrative of Samuel"

**4:30-5:00** Sara Koenig, Seattle Pacific University, [skoenig@spu.edu](mailto:skoenig@spu.edu)  
"I Swear to Tell the Truth": What It Meant and Means to Not Bear False Witness"

**Hoover XXX**     **RELIGION AND SOCIETY**

**Presider:** TBA

**2:30-3:00** Ariel Siagan, University of Toronto, [ariel.siagan@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:ariel.siagan@mail.utoronto.ca)  
"Exploring Revolutionary Violence: The Theology of Christians for National Liberation"

**3:00-3:30** Leila Tarakji, Michigan State University, [tarakjil@msu.edu](mailto:tarakjil@msu.edu)  
"Faith, Self, and Community in Willow Wilson's *The Butterfly Mosque*" (Virtual)

**3:30-4:00**     **BREAK**

**4:00-4:30** Bennett Comerford, Pacific Lutheran University, [bec500@mail.harvard.edu](mailto:bec500@mail.harvard.edu)  
"Religion and Resistance in Modern Bengali Literature" (Virtual)

**4:30-5:00** Jiyeon Kang, Changwon National University, South Korea, [lightsolemn2@daum.net](mailto:lightsolemn2@daum.net)  
"Towards a Convergence between Christianity and Asian Tradition from the 1920's to the 1970's"



**Hoover XXX**     **THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**Presiders:** Sarah Gallant, University of Toronto, [sarahgallant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahgallant@hotmail.com);  
Norman Metzler, Concordia University Emeritus, [npjmetzler@gmail.com](mailto:npjmetzler@gmail.com)

**2:00-2:45** Bruce Hiebert, Associate Professor, University Canada West, [bruce.hiebert@ucanwest.ca](mailto:bruce.hiebert@ucanwest.ca)  
"The Problem of Good"

**2:45-3:30** Christopher Morrissey, Trinity Western University, [Chris.Morrissey@twu.ca](mailto:Chris.Morrissey@twu.ca)  
"Friendship as an Intrinsic Good: Aquinas' Fourth Way Argument from Transcendentals"  
(Virtual)

**3:30-4:00**     **BREAK**

**4:00-4:45** Barry Morris, Independent Scholar, [bkmorris59@hotmail.com](mailto:bkmorris59@hotmail.com)  
"Shame and Guilt: Curating Resources to Face Life's Journey and End"

**Off Campus**     **STUDENT SESSION**

**4:30-5:30** Student Social Hour at Ruddick/Wood (720 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Newberg)

**FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 19, 2023**

**6:00-6:45**     Appetizer Reception  
**Hoover Lobby**

**7:00**     Plenary Address: Mark Unno, University of Oregon, [munno@uoregon.edu](mailto:munno@uoregon.edu)  
**Hoover XXX**     "The Storied Self: The Narrative Self and the Religious Dimension"

## SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 20, 2023

Second Session: 9:00 am-12:00 pm

### Hoover XXX ARTS AND RELIGION

**Presider:** Theresa Henson, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, [theresa.henson@gmail.com](mailto:theresa.henson@gmail.com)

**9:30-10:00** Mary Beth Moser, California Institute of Integral Studies, [mbmoser@comcast.net](mailto:mbmoser@comcast.net)  
"The Art of Gratitude: The Enduring Value of Ex-votos to the Black Madonna"

**10:00-10:30** Marion Dumont, Psychiatric Nurse, Olympia, [mariondumont@gmail.com](mailto:mariondumont@gmail.com)  
"Nature as Muse: Spiritual Healing through Nature, Art, and Dreams" (Virtual)

**10:30-11:00** **BREAK**

**11:00-11:30** Joel Mayward, George Fox University, [jmayward@georgefox.edu](mailto:jmayward@georgefox.edu)  
"Toward Theocinematics: Viewing Terrence Malick's 'A Hidden Life' as Theology"

**11:30-12:00** Octavio Carrasco, Bellevue College, [doctavioc@gmail.com](mailto:doctavioc@gmail.com)  
"Is There Heaven For A G? The Religious Dimensions of Tupac Shakur" (Virtual)

### Hoover XXX HEBREW BIBLE **Research Group on Dress - Hybrid Session**

**Presider:** Antonios Finitzis, Pacific Lutheran University, [finitzak@plu.edu](mailto:finitzak@plu.edu)

**8:45-9:00** Welcome and Introductions

**9:00-9:30** Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, Oslo University, [akgudme@teologi.uo.no](mailto:akgudme@teologi.uo.no)  
"Dressing Up and Dressing Down: An Exploration of Ritual and Social Dress Codes and Transformations in the Hebrew Bible" (Virtual)

**9:30-10:00** Rosanne Liebermann, Aarhus University, [rosanne.liebermann@cas.au.dk](mailto:rosanne.liebermann@cas.au.dk)  
"Scents of Unease: Perfume and Power in the Hebrew Bible" (Virtual)

**10:00-10:30** Søren Lorenzen, Bonn University, [s.lorenzen@uni-bonn.de](mailto:s.lorenzen@uni-bonn.de)  
"Joseph's Coat(s) of Many Modalities: Clothing and Material Agency in the Joseph Novella" (Virtual)

**10:30-11:00** **BREAK**

**11:00-11:20** Christine Palmer, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, [cpalmer@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:cpalmer@gordonconwell.edu)  
"Ensembles of Access: The Puzzling Case of Sacral Apparel on the Day of Atonement"  
(Virtual)

**11:20-11:40** Jennifer Matheny, Nazarene Theological Seminary, [jmatheny@nts.edu](mailto:jmatheny@nts.edu)  
"Ruth and Esther: Sharp Dressed Women" (Virtual)

**11:40-12:00** Scott Starbuck, Gonzaga University, [starbuck@gonzaga.edu](mailto:starbuck@gonzaga.edu)  
"Performative Dress as the Visual Center of Psalm 45"

**Hoover XXX** **HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY AND NORTH AMERICAN RELIGIONS**

**Presider:** Christopher Roberts, Independent Scholar, [robertschristopher4@gmail.com](mailto:robertschristopher4@gmail.com)

**9:00-9:30** Susan Staker, Independent Scholar, [sstaker@mac.com](mailto:ssstaker@mac.com)  
"Joseph Smith's Encounter with Skepticism: A Batter Bible"

**9:30-10:00** Justin Davis, Boise State University, [justindavisphd@gmail.com](mailto:justindavisphd@gmail.com)  
"Shattered Images: Iconoclasm East and West"

**10:00-10:30** Matthew Recla, Boise State University, [matthewrecla@boisestate.edu](mailto:matthewrecla@boisestate.edu)  
Book Review: *Rethinking Christian Martyrdom* (Virtual)

**10:30-11:00** **BREAK**

**Hoover XXX** **NEW TESTAMENT AND THE WORLD OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

**Presider:** Anne Moore, University of Calgary, [amoore@ucalgary.ca](mailto:amoore@ucalgary.ca)

**9:00-10:30** Power and Authority Study Group

This is part of an ongoing research project. This session will involve the discussion of revisions of papers previously presented at past meetings.

Ron Clark, Portland Seminary, [rclark@georgefox.edu](mailto:rclark@georgefox.edu)  
"Associating with the Humiliated: Paul's Hermeneutic of Transformation Among the Oppressed in Romans 12:1-16"

Ralph Korner, Taylor Seminary, [ralph.korner@taylor-edu.ca](mailto:ralph.korner@taylor-edu.ca)  
"Paul's Corinthian *Ekklēsia*: A Non-Misogynistic, Sacred 'Location' for Jewish Manumission Ethics?" (Virtual)

Daniel K. Christensen, Fuller Theological Seminary, [danielchristensen@fuller.edu](mailto:danielchristensen@fuller.edu)  
“The Centurion at Capernaum: Authority, Faith, and Rearrangement in the Kingdom, Matt 8:5-13”

**10:30-11:00**     **BREAK**

**11:00-11:30**     Paul Anderson, George Fox University, [panderso@georgefox.edu](mailto:panderso@georgefox.edu)  
“John and the Medicine of Immortality – Instrumentality or Martyrology?”

**11:30-12:00**     Discussion of Power and Authority publication

**Hoover XXX**     **RELIGION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**Contextual Religious Experiences and Theological Explorations of Meaning**

**Presiders:**     Marcia Webb, Seattle Pacific University, [marcia@spu.edu](mailto:marcia@spu.edu);  
Chakrita Saulina, Seattle Pacific University, [saulinac@spu.edu](mailto:saulinac@spu.edu)

**9:00-9:30**     David M. Gides, University of Providence, Great Falls, MT, [davidmgides@gmail.com](mailto:davidmgides@gmail.com)  
“Christian Nationalism as a Sociological and a Theological Phenomenon and the Hope for Re-integration” (Virtual)

**9:30-10:00**     Liz Rasmussen, University of Puget Sound, [elizrasm@gmail.com](mailto:elizrasm@gmail.com)  
“The Significance of Accessible Language: Improving Religious Literacy in the General Public”

**10:00-10:30**     Sara Salazar, California Institute of Integral Studies, [ssalazar@ciis.edu](mailto:ssalazar@ciis.edu)  
“Rooting Down and Riding the Waves: Exploring the Intersections of Chicanx Mothering, Spirituality, and Decolonial Pedagogies Through Waves of Pandemics”

**10:30-11:00**     **BREAK**

**11:00-11:30**     Anna Lucken, Western Illinois University, [a-lucken@wiu.edu](mailto:a-lucken@wiu.edu)  
“Reversing Raj: Reversing Raj: Hindu Nationalist’s (Re) Imagination of Rishi Sunak” (Virtual)

**11:30-12:00**     Cody Bivins-Starr, University of Aberdeen, [codybivins96@gmail.com](mailto:codybivins96@gmail.com)  
“Madness and the Challenge of Psychiatric Knowledge Production: Initial Explorations in Approaching Psychotic Experiences through a Theology of Wonder

**Hoover XXX**     **RELIGION AND SOCIETY**

**Presider:**        TBA

**9:00-9:30**        Kathryn Rickert, Independent Scholar, [kathrynricket@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynricket@gmail.com)  
"A Tongue Not Understood by the People"

**9:30-10:00**      Aya Hamlish, University of the Puget Sound, [ahamlish@pugetsound.edu](mailto:ahamlish@pugetsound.edu)  
"The Intersectionality between Religious Experiences and Trauma among Transracial Asian Adoptees"

**10:00-10:30**     Barry Morris, Independent Scholar, [bkmorris60@yahoo.com](mailto:bkmorris60@yahoo.com)  
"Phenomenon of 'Community'; Its Obstacles Prey Tell; and Long-Short Recovery Pray Tell?"

**10:30-11:00**     **BREAK**

**11:00-11:30**     Carly Lee, Everett Community College, [carlyjanelee@gmail.com](mailto:carlyjanelee@gmail.com)  
"Earthseed: A Religion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

**11:30-12:00**     Sarah Robinson, Independent Scholar, [sarahrobinson.prof@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrobinson.prof@gmail.com)  
"Converting to Flourishing: Eco-Halal and Eco-Buddhist Farming in Conversation"

**Hoover XXX**     **THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**Presiders:**        Sarah Gallant, University of Toronto, [sarahgallant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahgallant@hotmail.com);  
Norman Metzler, Concordia University Emeritus, [npjmetzler@gmail.com](mailto:npjmetzler@gmail.com)

**9:00-9:45**        Russell Clarke, Tyndale University and Seminary, [russelldclarke@gmail.com](mailto:russelldclarke@gmail.com)  
"Angels and Humanity: Messengers and Stewards Joined in Praise in the Celestial Hierarchy and Karl Barth" (Virtual)

**9:45-10:30**      Norman Metzler, Concordia University Emeritus, [npjmetzler@gmail.com](mailto:npjmetzler@gmail.com)  
"Defining the Kingdom"

**10:30-11:00**     **BREAK**

**11:00-11:45**     Sarah Gallant, University of Toronto, [sarahgallant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahgallant@hotmail.com)  
Round Table: "Emerging Technologies and the Classroom" (Live & Virtual)

**11:45-12:00**     Program Unit Business Meeting

**Hoover XXX**     **WOMEN AND RELIGION**

**Presider:**     Kristen Daley Mosier, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, [kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu](mailto:kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu)

**9:00-9:30**     Anna Lucken, Western Illinois University, [a-lucken@wiu.edu](mailto:a-lucken@wiu.edu)  
"The Ashes of Colonialism: How Colonization Increased Ritual Suicide in India" (Virtual)

**9:30-10:00**     Tazeen Ali, Washington University in St. Louis, [tazeen.ali@wustl.edu](mailto:tazeen.ali@wustl.edu)  
"Embodied Authority: Muslim Women's Experiences as Exegesis"

**SATURDAY NOON, MAY 20, 2023**

**12:00**     Lunch Opens (Lunch must be preordered)  
**Canyon**  
**Commons 103**

**12:30-1:30**     PNW Regional Business Meeting  
**Canyon**  
**Commons 103**

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 20, 2023**

**Third Session: 2:00-5:30 pm**

**Hoover XXX**     **ARTS AND RELIGION**

**Presider:**     Theresa Henson, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, [theresa.henson@gmail.com](mailto:theresa.henson@gmail.com)

**2:00-2:30**     Lori Wells, artist, writer, spiritual ecologist, and facilitator of nature constellations,  
[lorimichellewells@gmail.com](mailto:lorimichellewells@gmail.com)  
"On Behalf of All Life: Daily Art Practice as Prayer"

**2:30-3:00**     Justin Davis, Boise State University, [justindavisphd@gmail.com](mailto:justindavisphd@gmail.com)  
"Kinetic Images: Orthodox Veneration of Icons"

**3:00-3:30**     Theresa Henson, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, [theresa.henson@gmail.com](mailto:theresa.henson@gmail.com)  
"Sculpture: On Immanence, Materiality, and the Consecration of Objects"

**3:30-4:00**     **BREAK**

- 4:00-4:30** Program Unit Business Meeting (Virtual only. This meeting will take place on Zoom. Please email Octavio Carrasco at [doctavioc@gmail.com](mailto:doctavioc@gmail.com) for the link.)
- Hoover XXX** **HEBREW BIBLE**
- Presider:** Sara Koenig, Seattle Pacific University, [skoenig@spu.edu](mailto:skoenig@spu.edu)
- 4:00-4:30** Shawn Thomas, Seattle Pacific Seminary, [thomas1@spu.edu](mailto:thomas1@spu.edu)  
 “Are You Doing It the Wrong Way, or Is What You Are Doing Wrong? Interpreting the Civil War in Judges 20”
- 4:30-5:00** Abel Sitali, University of Pretoria, [sitali07@gmail.com](mailto:sitali07@gmail.com)  
 “The Samaritan Pentateuch: Its Origin and the Israelite Schism in the Persian Period”
- Hoover XXX** **NEW TESTAMENT AND THE WORLD OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY**  
**Current New Testament Scholarship of the Region**
- Presider:** Anne Moore, University of Calgary, [amoore@ucalgary.ca](mailto:amoore@ucalgary.ca)
- 2:00-2:45** Book Review: Stanley N. Helton, *The Text of the Acts of the Apostles in the Writings of Origen*, [snhelton@abccampus.ca](mailto:snhelton@abccampus.ca)  
 Reviewer: Duff Crerar, Emeritus Grand Prairie Regional College, [crerar@telusplanet.net](mailto:crerar@telusplanet.net)  
 (Virtual)
- 2:45-3:30** Book Review: Darrell Udd, *The Original Gospel of Jesus, According to Thomas*,  
[Darrell.udd@gmail.com](mailto:Darrell.udd@gmail.com)  
 Reviewers: Paul Anderson, George Fox University, [panderson@georgefox.edu](mailto:panderson@georgefox.edu)  
 Ron Clark, Portland Seminary, [rclark@georgefox.edu](mailto:rclark@georgefox.edu)  
 Michael A. Williams, University of Washington, [maw@uw.edu](mailto:maw@uw.edu)
- 3:30-4:00** **BREAK**
- 4:00-5:00** Book Review: Kent Yinger, *The Pharisees: Their History, Character, and New Testament Portrait*, [kyinger@georgefox.edu](mailto:kyinger@georgefox.edu)  
 Reviewers: Paul Anderson, George Fox University, [panderson@georgefox.edu](mailto:panderson@georgefox.edu)  
 Ekaputra Tupamahu, Portland Seminary, [etupamahu@georgefox.edu](mailto:etupamahu@georgefox.edu)
- 5:00-5:30** Program Unit Business Meeting

**Hoover XXX     STUDENT SESSION**

**Presider:** Kristen Daley Mosier, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, [kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu](mailto:kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu)

**4:30-5:30** All things publishing with Charlie Collier from Wipf & Stock

**Hoover XXX     THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**Presiders:** Sarah Gallant, University of Toronto, [sarahgallant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahgallant@hotmail.com);  
Norman Metzler, Concordia University Emeritus, [npjmetzler@gmail.com](mailto:npjmetzler@gmail.com)

**2:00-2:45** Gilad Elbom, Oregon State University, [gilad.elbom@gmail.com](mailto:gilad.elbom@gmail.com)  
“The Kabbalistic Messiah”

**2:45-3:30** Scott Ables, Oregon State University, [scott.ables@gmail.com](mailto:scott.ables@gmail.com)  
“Bridge Building in 8<sup>th</sup> Century Jerusalem with the ‘Friendly’ Polemic of John of Damascus”

**3:30-4:00**     **BREAK**

**Hoover XXX     WOMEN AND RELIGION**

**Presider:** Kristen Daley Mosier, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, [kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu](mailto:kristen.daley-mosier@garrett.edu)

**2:00-2:30** Yvonne Candelario, University of South Florida, [ycandelario@usf.edu](mailto:ycandelario@usf.edu)  
“Feminist Theory and Pedagogy in the Academic Study of Religion: A Decade in Review, 2012-2022”

**2:30-3:00** Norah Yinuo Chen, California Institute of Integral Studies, [ynorahchen@gmail.com](mailto:ynorahchen@gmail.com)  
“Claiming the Womb: An Exploration of Women’s Reproductive Rights and Institutionalized Religions through Deconstructing China’s Two-Child Policy and Abortion Bans in the United States”

**3:00-3:30** Program Unit Business Meeting

**3:30-4:00**     **BREAK**



## SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 2023

- 6:00-7:00** Buffet Dinner (Dinner must be preordered)  
**Canyon Commons 103**
- 7:00-8:00** Presidential Plenary: Mari Kim, PNW AAR President  
**Canyon Commons 103** “The Challenge and Gift of Erotic Faith: Desire, Transformation, and Building Beloved Community”

## SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 21, 2023

Fourth Session: 9:00 am-12:00 pm

- Hoover XXX** **HEBREW BIBLE**  
**Research Group on Dress - Hybrid Session**
- Presider:** Scott Starbuck, Gonzaga University, [starbuck@gonzaga.edu](mailto:starbuck@gonzaga.edu)
- 8:45-9:00** Welcome and Discussion
- 9:00-9:20** Christopher S. Morrissey, Trinity Western University, [chris.morrissey@twu.ca](mailto:chris.morrissey@twu.ca)  
“Undressing Tyranny, Thwarting Genocide, and Beheading Armies: Dressing for War as PDE (Principle of Double Effect) Reasoning in the Book of Judith” (Virtual)
- 9:20-9:40** Robert Vanhoff, Torah Resource Institute, [robvanhoff@gmail.com](mailto:robvanhoff@gmail.com)  
“Hadassah Wears Esther: Attire, Allusion, and Identity in the Megillah” (Virtual)
- 9:40-10:00** Allen Hamlin, Trinity College, [Allen.Hamlin.2021@trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk](mailto:Allen.Hamlin.2021@trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk)  
“Warp and Weft: Clothing as Multivalent Connecting Device in Joshua 9”
- 10:00-10:20** Moshe Rachmuth, Portland State University, [rachmuth@pdx.edu](mailto:rachmuth@pdx.edu)  
“Boaz’s Misunderstood Promise to Ruth”
- 10:20-11:00** **BREAK**

- 11:00-11:20** Selena Billington, Independent Scholar, [selena.billington@gmail.com](mailto:selena.billington@gmail.com)  
“Why Does Aaron Alone Get/Have to Wear Wool and Linen?”
- 11:20-11:40** Jennifer Brown Jones, Liberty University, [jjones118@liberty.edu](mailto:jjones118@liberty.edu)  
“The Warrior Divine Dress in Isaiah”
- 11:40-12:00** Gilad Elbom, Oregon State University, [gilad.elbom@gmail.com](mailto:gilad.elbom@gmail.com)  
“The Garments of God: How Multiple Interpretations Cloak the Text”

DRAFT

# ABSTRACTS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 19, 2023

First Session: 2:00-5:00 pm

## HEBREW BIBLE

**4:00-4:30** Parker Arnold, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, [parnold@regent-college.edu](mailto:parnold@regent-college.edu)  
“Right Sight and Poor Perception in the Ark Narrative of Samuel”

When the ark of YHWH returns to Israelite territory after its brief but brutal tenure in Philistine hands, readers encounter a surprise. While the initial reception is excitement among the Israelites (1 Sam 6:13), the tone quickly darkens when the residents of Beth-Shemesh are struck (נכה; Sam 6:19). Because a similar striking has already happened to the Philistines—already established in the narrative to be Israel’s persistent rivals—one might expect this outlash to be reserved for those who oppose Israel and their God. It is thus understandable that YHWH’s striking in Israelite territory presents a jarring theological issue. How can YHWH strike YHWH’s own people? More than that, the reason provided in the MT for such striking (“... for they [the people of Beth-Shemesh] looked at the ark of YHWH)—is not only peculiar but it evokes significant questions around the way the Book of Samuel portrays the relationship between humanity and the presence of YHWH in the ark. To make matters worse for the interpreter, this verse is a minefield of text critical issues set within a portion of 1 Samuel that is heavily debated on redactional grounds. In this paper I will wade through all of the aforementioned issues, uncovering a Leitwort in the larger context that will be instrumental in providing coherence and interpretive import to this difficult text. Textual and redaction criticism will support a close reading of 1 Sam 6:19 and other related texts identified via ראה (ra’ah) as a Leitwort, giving rise to an interpretive move towards the necessity of perceiving YHWH on his own terms, stemming from responses to his presence. In other words, this story in the Book of Samuel portrays the importance of a posteriori means of relating to YHWH’s presence.

**4:30-5:00** Sara Koenig, Seattle Pacific University, [skoenig@spu.edu](mailto:skoenig@spu.edu)  
“I Swear to Tell the Truth”: What It Meant and Means to Not Bear False Witness”

Though frequently reduced to the simple admonition, “don’t lie,” this commandment turns out to be more complicated than that, and obeying this commandment becomes more interesting and even applicable to the world today. While the commandment does include a commitment to truth, it also raises questions about being a witness, inside and outside of courtrooms. By considering the reception history of the commandment, this presentation will touch on potential ways we could follow it in a world where our “neighbors” include our global neighbors and even those we might not know.

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY

**2:30-3:00**

Ariel Sagan, University of Toronto, [ariel.siagan@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:ariel.siagan@mail.utoronto.ca)

“Exploring Revolutionary Violence: The Theology of Christians for National Liberation”

In my paper I will argue that theology provides for communities receiving colonial and state violence an organizing framework that gives justification for armed resistance and revolutionary violence. The endogeneity of revolutionary violence challenges the prevailing notion that members of liberation movements emerging in former colonies are “brainwashed” by ideologies external to them. It will also challenge the notion of non-violent resistance as the only legitimate response of Christians who are navigating the postcolonial condition. In the civil war happening in the Philippines, as elsewhere, theology is a source of concepts and paradigms that help armed groups and their advocates to construct the reality of their situation and craft a plan to fight back that includes the utilization of violence despite some church’s hesitation against it (World Council of Churches 2013; John Paul II 2004; Sontag 1989). I am investigating the group called Christians for National Liberation (CNL) to know how theology shape their members worldview and how they shape their theology as Christians actively participating in a slow civil war. They participate both in civil society and civil war: in forming and influencing public reason by referring to higher transcending moral order and in waging peoples war by agitating revolutionary violence among people of faith.

I will demonstrate the endogeneity of revolutionary violence among people of faith by sketching how members of CNL understand themselves and the programs they do in relation to a perceived enemy. The Philippine state in the collective imagination of CNL is the enemy. The Philippine state is a creation of US colonial governance. Although the Philippines was granted independence, many of the facets of nation formation such as the writing of the constitution and military training among others were influenced by the US colonial government (White 2014; Constantino 1978).

Many political liberation movements that emerged in Asia, Africa, and Latin America after formal colonialism from 1950s to 1980s counters state formations whose trajectory is towards fulfilling colonial interest. These liberation movements offer a vision of a state that carries forward a national interest.

I am currently conducting field work in the Philippines approaching my research through the methodologies of constructive grounded theory. I will be immersed in the communities of CNL, engaging them with semi-structured interviews. I am conducting interview with ten CNL members and following them in communities where they organize.

**3:00-3:30**

Leila Tarakji, Michigan State University, [tarakjil@msu.edu](mailto:tarakjil@msu.edu)

“Faith, Self, and Community in Willow Wilson’s *The Butterfly Mosque*” (Virtual)

As it engages in processes that simultaneously negotiate, define, and delimit (American) Islam, G. Willow Wilson’s *The Butterfly Mosque: A Young American Woman’s Journey to Love and Islam* (2010) presents a Muslim American journey in the Islamic world wherein the author attempts to position herself in relation to Islam and the global Muslim community or Umma. Raised without religion, Wilson (1982--) discovers Islam during her college years and after graduation decides to take a teaching job in Cairo, where she formally converts to Islam. There, she also meets Omar, who introduces her to Egyptian culture, and the two eventually fall in love and get married. Wilson’s text

is an autobiographical conversion narrative, representing her path to Islam and illustrating a simultaneous journey of the heart and mind. As such, this essay builds upon contemporary scholarship pertaining to American converts to Islam including the genre of conversion narratives, as well as essential themes and critical texts within this genre.

This essay further highlights an expression of Muslim Americanness that is influenced by the author's racial identity, gender, sociocultural background, and historical context. Wilson's journey is very much shaped by her specific position as a privileged white American woman who is living in Egypt and reimagining her beliefs and identity in a post-9/11 world. Significantly, her experiences illustrate the intersection between faith, self, and community, wherein her private internal experience of conversion develops into a public and communal expression of faith. Engaging with issues of Islam vs. West, American individualism and community belonging, private vs. public expression of religion, and American Islam in the context of the Global, Wilson's perspective as an American convert to Islam offers a unique opportunity for a nuanced understanding of Muslim Americanness.

**4:00-4:30**

Bennett Comerford, Pacific Lutheran University, [bec500@mail.harvard.edu](mailto:bec500@mail.harvard.edu)  
"Religion and Resistance in Modern Bengali Literature" (Virtual)

My paper introduces and investigates the writings of an influential Bengali intellectual, *littérateur*, and early convert from Hinduism to Christianity. Michael Madhusudan Datta (1824-1873) was educated in English-medium schools at the height of British rule in India and grew up enamored with European culture and English literature. Although he began his literary career writing in English, he switched to writing in Bengali in 1856. To better understand this transition, which Datta never outright explains, my textual analysis begins with a close study of his English-language socio-theoretical essays, "The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu" and "On the Importance of Education for Hindu Females." Drawing on the theoretical frameworks articulated and insinuated in these texts, I then turn to Datta's two untranslated Bangla-language satirical dramas, *Is This What They Call Civilization?* and *There Is No Fool Like an Old Fool*. While Datta's earlier English-language works include direct averments of colonial ideologies, such as his explicit affirmation of the Anglo-Saxon mission "to civilize" and "to Christianize" the Hindu, his later Bengali-language writings cast penetrating light on persistently oppressive social norms and institutions, centered on the interplay of race, religion, and gender in colonial Bengali society. These plays indicate a marked shift toward a position of resistance, exemplified by critical portrayals of British influences on Bengali society and depictions of the blatant racism that accompanied colonial rule. My paper not only seeks to better understand why Datta draws upon the language of race and religion to facilitate this transition, but also how such a shift in perspective is representative of an emergent resistance to colonialism.

**4:30-5:00**

Jiyeon Kang, Changwon National University, South Korea, [lightsolemn2@daum.net](mailto:lightsolemn2@daum.net)  
"Towards a Convergence between Christianity and Asian Tradition from the 1920's to the 1970's"

How did Christian civilization encounter and assimilate into Asian traditions in China in the early twentieth century? I will do a comparative analysis between thought of Wu Leichuan (1870-1944), a Chinese Christian thinker, and thought of Ham Seok-heon (1901 – 1989), a notable figure in S.Korea. In North East Asia at the time, many thinkers paid great attention to the idea of nationalist autonomy and self-determination. I will explore the roots of Asian social thought within Wu and Ham's thought systems as Christian thinkers.

## THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

**2:00-2:45** Bruce Hiebert, Associate Professor, University Canada West, [bruce.hiebert@ucanwest.ca](mailto:bruce.hiebert@ucanwest.ca)  
“The Problem of Good”

The problem of evil for theology is well established. What is not so understood is the problem of good. The existence of good is no less a problem than that of evil once the premise of a Good God is eliminated. Human moral perceptions of both Good and Evil problematize the possibility of God’s intervention in this world. As the first part of an anticipated multi-part study of the theological problem of Good, this paper examines how Good is constructed by the human brain as a structural response to perceptions. Good is not an abstraction, it’s a moral perception human beings apply to specific sets of circumstances based on neurologically built-in channels of moral analysis in combination with social training. Examined carefully, these channels identify why specific aspects of human imagination of divine agency emerge as they do. Carefully examining the way Good is constructed provides insight into the nature of Good as a transcendent phenomenon representative of a problematic God.

This approach follows from the exploration of Alan Page Fiske into the structures of human social life and the examination by his students and colleagues into the way these structures form a moral framework for human decision making. In particular, I expand this model to include seven moral frameworks building on the insights of John Bolender and the recognition that the mathematical structure of the brain is not algebraic but geometric. Thus there are not four (Fiske), five (Bolender), but seven approaches to finding the Good. As these seven are unpacked, the essence of divine Goodness is revealed as a specific blending of human moral perceptions in the face of absolute questions. Subsequent sections of this project will explore how Problematology (Meyer) assists in creating an understanding of divine Goodness based on human moral reasoning.

**2:45-3:30** Christopher Morrissey, Trinity Western University, [Chris.Morrissey@twu.ca](mailto:Chris.Morrissey@twu.ca)  
“Friendship as an Intrinsic Good: Aquinas’ Fourth Way Argument from Transcendentals”  
(Virtual)

The first principles for moral reasoning are known connaturally (i.e., without recourse to any explicit philosophical anthropology or theological metaphysics), at least according to Germain Grisez, John Finnis, John Boyle, and other proponents of the New Natural Law Theory (NNLT) approach to moral philosophy. The basic human goods (e.g. as identified by Finnis in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*: life and bodily health, theoretical knowledge for its own sake, play and bodily performance, aesthetic experience, sociability, practical reasonableness, and religion) are intrinsic goods. As intrinsic goods, they are therefore the first principles for moral reasoning, since they are the ends – intrinsically worthwhile for their own sake – that are aimed at by any human action, at least when human action chooses means that we are not irrational or pointless. This paper argues that Finnis’ seven intrinsic goods are also identifying goods that are transcendental by their very nature. In particular, the fifth intrinsic good of sociability is studied, insofar as it identifies the goods of love and friendship as transcendental. The nature of such goods, as transcendental, can then be later investigated by theology and philosophy of religion in terms of their natural implications, even if practical reason requires no such theoretical investigations as premises for moral reasoning (as is argued by NNLT). Aquinas’ Fourth Way ought to be understood as one such approach: i.e., as arguing from a

transcendental intrinsic good to the necessary existence of a God who is not just pure actuality but a supereminent source of transcendental friendship. The Fourth Way is best reconstructed as reasoning via these steps: (P1) things exist that are more or less perfect, e.g., friendships; (P2) if things are more or less perfect, something is maximally perfect; (C1) something exists that is maximally perfect; (P3) if something exists that is maximally perfect, it is truest; (C2) the truest exists; (P4) if something exists that is maximally true, it has maximal being; (C3) maximal being exists; (P5) if maximal being exists, it is cause of any actualized perfections; (C4) the cause of any actualized perfections exists; (P6) if the cause of all actualized perfections exists, God exists; (C5) God exists. Therefore, while practical reason, strictly speaking, requires no metaphysics or natural theology, its identification of intrinsic goods nonetheless identifies transcendental goods that point beyond themselves to a transcendental source, which can be identified through theoretical contemplation (itself another intrinsic good, of a transcendental nature).

**4:00-4:45**

Barry Morris, Independent Scholar, [bkmorris59@hotmail.com](mailto:bkmorris59@hotmail.com)

“Shame and Guilt: Curating Resources to Face Life’s Journey and End”

A. Introduction. Why revisit shame and guilt? How are they different—related—with personal, interpersonal and social justice motivators, with eschatological cautions? To whom may we go to resource, curate, our struggles with a sustaining hope (while there’s time)?

B. Naming, revisiting, and applying. 1) shame tends to be downplayed while parlance evokes its reality. Shame is an occasion for an end-of-life Chief Dan George prayer. 2) Guilt manifest in court chambers, confessions of sin, 12 step recovery from addictions circles. 3) Shame and guilt meditatively illumine lives caught in the entrenched patterns of addiction. Guilt lets us know when we have acted badly; shame tells us we are bad.

C. Cautions, yet motivators: 1) Shame and guilt as obsessive realities – if hope lacks help/helpers, life may slip into inertia or despair. 2) That which Moltmann references, like peace, shame’s goad “stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present.” Guilt complements shame. 3) Via an ‘equality of sin and inequality of guilt’ Niebuhr thesis: “Theologies are rightly suspected of imperiling relative moral achievements of history.

D. To whom – for curated healing? 1) consider Bonhoeffer’s Ne Year’s letter to friends, family and the compromised WWII Confessing Church. “Are we of any use?” 2) biblical narratives/intercessions provide pertinent helpmates (serving hope). Nathan’s parabolic enticement to King David to own his shameful acts of adultery and killing of a faithful army commander. Thief’s request to Jesus. Shame-covering act of the first humans.

E. Summary Haiku.

## FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 19, 2023

7:00

Plenary Address: Mark Unno, University of Oregon, [munno@uoregon.edu](mailto:munno@uoregon.edu)  
“The Storied Self: The Narrative Self and the Religious Dimension”

For human beings, language is like water for a fish. We cannot live without it, and it is the medium that makes us human. More specifically, we are a storytelling species. When our story-making function falters, we start to become lost, as is the case when, for example, dementia sets in. As unique individuals, we each carry our own unique stories. At the same time, the families, societies, and cultures we inhabit come with their own stories. When we find that our individual stories do not fit with the stories told by various levels of society, we begin to form what Hilde Nelson calls “counterstory” over against the dominant narrative. In presenting the formation of counterstory, she shows that the dominant culture must acknowledge and incorporate the counterstory when a critical mass of representation is achieved. She gives the example of nurses in a hospital coming together to find their voice against the doctors and hospital administration. All of this takes place on what might be called the “horizontal plane” of history and society. Yet, there are cases when it is not possible to achieve critical mass. There may be, however, another dimension that provides resources for expressing one’s counterstory, the vertical or depth dimension that can be found in religion. There are layers to this intersection of the social-horizontal and religious-vertical dimensions, such as internal and external narratives, and moral, social, and political implications. By positing the religious dimension at perpendicular intersection to the horizontal movements of society, we can discover new possibilities for the Storied Self.

## SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 20, 2023

Second Session: 9:00 am-12:00 pm

### ARTS AND RELIGION

9:30-10:00

Mary Beth Moser, California Institute of Integral Studies, [mbmoser@comcast.net](mailto:mbmoser@comcast.net)  
“The Art of Gratitude: The Enduring Value of Ex-votos to the Black Madonna”

At major sanctuaries to the Black Madonna throughout Italy and beyond, devotees over the centuries have made offerings known as ex-votos, Latin for “out of a vow,” to give recognition for healing received at a time of great need. This art of gratitude often takes the form of a narrative painting with the words “PGR,” per grazia ricevuto – for grace received – along with an inscription of the specific details of the circumstances of the event.

These testimonies of divine connection provide a fascinating insight into the past. They offer a historical record of everyday dangers and communal catastrophe. At the same time, they tell of survival, resilience, and collective action. Making offerings at sacred sites is an ancient practice, as evidenced by devotional items found throughout Italy.



In this visual presentation, I will share images of some of the ex-votos still in existence at Marian sanctuaries. More than 10,000 ex-votos in Italy have survived the ages, although many have been lost, stolen, or destroyed.

The viewing of ex-votos invites us into conversation across time and suggests a meaningful spiritual practice that can be utilized today. They ask us to pay attention to not only what has happened in the places we inhabit, but also to what is happening. They encourage us to ask: What am I grateful for? Who is helping me? How am I acknowledging that? What am I giving back in return for the gift I received?

As we seek deeper connections that carry us forward into uncertain times, creating expressions of gratitude offers a practice of relationship and reciprocity with the natural world.

**10:00-10:30** Marion Dumont, Psychiatric Nurse, Olympia, [mariondumont@gmail.com](mailto:mariondumont@gmail.com)  
“Nature as Muse: Spiritual Healing through Nature, Art, and Dreams” (Virtual)

This presentation will highlight my contribution to the anthology, *Spiritual Healing after Sexual Violence: An Intersectional Guide*, edited by Debra Meyers and Mary Sue Barnett. As a writer, artist, and practitioner of the healing arts I will present ideas that emerge out of my experience and understanding of the interconnectedness of nature, art, and spirituality. I view the human being as an integrative, dynamic organism that includes spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional elements. Through my writing and art I weave the visible and invisible, the sacred and the mundane, sharing stories and projects inspired by nature and informed by human experience, engagement with non-human worlds, dreams, ancestral work and myth. For this presentation I will engage the audience in story, practice, and visual image with the intent to inspire the reader in their own healing journey.

**11:00-11:30** Joel Mayward, George Fox University, [jmayward@georgefox.edu](mailto:jmayward@georgefox.edu)  
“Toward Theocinematics: Viewing Terrence Malick’s ‘A Hidden Life’ as Theology”

Can cinema function as a form of theology beyond the limits of conventional systematic approaches? In this paper, I answer this question in the affirmative by looking to the cinema of American filmmaker Terrence Malick. Before turning to filmmaking, Malick had been on an academic path, studying philosophy at Harvard under the mentorship of Stanley Cavell, being awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to undertake a PhD at Oxford under the supervision of Gilbert Ryle on the concept of “world” in Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein (Ryle rejected Malick’s topic for being “not philosophical enough”), teaching phenomenology courses at MIT, and publishing a scholarly English translation of Heidegger’s *The Essence of Reasons*. Subsequently, Malick’s cinema has been described as both “Heideggerian” and “Kierkegaardian,” and film scholars and philosophers alike have lauded his films for their metaphysical magnitude. More than philosophical, Malick’s cinema from *The Tree of Life* onward has also been recognized for its theological/religious dimensions due to prominent Christian allusions, as well as an evocative sense of the transcendent through the captivating images, powerful music, and mythopoetic tone. To take this theological inquiry further, I propose that Malick’s cinema is not merely illustrating philosophical or theological concepts, but is actively doing a type of unconventional philosophical theology via the cinematic form—rather than a theology \*of\* film or film \*and\* theology, this is film \*as\* theology, what I am calling “theocinematics.” In constructing a method of theocinematics, I draw upon the theological aesthetics of David Brown and the phenomenological film theory of André Bazin, discerning a

connection via their mutual understanding of "sacramentality," that is, how human beings might experience the transcendent divine Other in and through immanent cultural forms. I then demonstrate this theocinematic approach through theological film criticism of Terrence Malick's 2019 film, "A Hidden Life."

**11:30-12:00** Octavio Carrasco, Bellevue College, [doctavioc@gmail.com](mailto:doctavioc@gmail.com)  
"Is There Heaven For A G? The Religious Dimensions of Tupac Shakur" (Virtual)

This paper argues that Tupac's life and work reflect a theological/political vision of black existence in the United States that can be illuminated through W.E.B. Du Bois' notions of tragic soul-life, spiritual strivings and double consciousness. Furthermore, Tupac's music and public comments perform an interrogation of God as creator/absent father/devil-in-disguise that gives us a profound glimpse of the spiritual and political struggles America still faces today. Hip-hop for Tupac was a praxis of sustenance and survival as I will show through my analysis of his lyrics from "Trapped," (1992) "Only God Can Judge Me," (1996) and "Only Fear of Death," (1997). Drawing on Charles Long's notion of religion as "orientation" to examine the role of Tupac's myth as a significant, sustaining aspect of alienated youth culture (black, brown and white) I will develop my vision of Tupac as a public intellectual and religious figure.

## **HEBREW BIBLE**

### **Research Group on Dress - Hybrid Session**

**9:00-9:30** Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, Oslo University, [akgudme@teologi.uo.no](mailto:akgudme@teologi.uo.no)  
"Dressing Up and Dressing Down: An Exploration of Ritual and Social Dress Codes and Transformations in the Hebrew Bible" (Virtual)

An example of a ritualized dressing down event could be the high priest's linen clothes in Leviticus 16 or the dress-related petitionary mourning behavior in the Book of Jonah. There are several examples of Hebrew Bible characters dressing up in order to prepare themselves for an encounter. For instance Esther before she has an audience with King Ahasuerus, Judith before she meets with Holofernes, Job is asked to tighten his belt as preparation for his encounter with God and the Israelites don travel clothes before they depart from Egypt in the Book of Exodus. Whereas, the latter could be said to be at least ritual-related, the former three examples belong in the category that I would call social rather than ritual. Generally, this seems to be a tendency in Hebrew Bible cases of dressing up and down, dressing down tends to be more ritualized than dressing up. This observation will guide my investigation as I map Hebrew Bible cases of dressing up and dressing down and ask, is it more 'ritual' to dress down, and if yes, then why?

**9:30-10:00** Rosanne Liebermann, Aarhus University, [rosanne.liebermann@cas.au.dk](mailto:rosanne.liebermann@cas.au.dk)  
"Scents of Unease: Perfume and Power in the Hebrew Bible" (Virtual)

Many texts in the Hebrew Bible describe perfume as a form of dress employed by people of high status and/or wealth, while both men and women are said to wear perfume to enhance their sexual attractiveness. Given these generally positive portrayals of perfume, it is unclear why other biblical passages (e.g. Isa 57:9; Ezek 23:41; Prov 7:16-20) evoke the use of perfume as an inappropriate practice when conducted by women in a sexual context. I propose that focusing on the materiality

of perfume can shed light on why this might be the case. This involves examining the materials that make up the perfumes mentioned in the Hebrew Bible—such as myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon—and what social roles they might have played, especially in relation to the construction of gendered identities. It also includes taking into account the sense of smell itself: how scents are processed in the limbic system of the brain, meaning they evoke powerful emotions and memories. It follows that those who have access to scented materials can use them to wield emotional power over others. I argue that it is this potential inherent in perfumes that provokes some biblical writers to portray their use by women as dangerously manipulative in certain non- socially normative contexts.

**10:00-10:30** Søren Lorenzen, Bonn University, [s.lorenzen@uni-bonn.de](mailto:s.lorenzen@uni-bonn.de)  
"Joseph's Coat(s) of Many Modalities: Clothing and Material Agency in the Joseph Novella"  
(Virtual)

Clothing is a key motif in the Joseph novella. Previous scholarship has emphasized how Joseph's various coat-shifts accompany the reversals he experiences within the narrative and how they signify a change in the protagonist's social status. This paper will widen the lens and explore the different modalities of Joseph's coats by examining their functions and how they are entangled with various human and non-human actors, not simply Joseph. Instead of approaching the garments as a narrative ploy, as symbols of change, or as simple and passive objects, the material agency of the various coats and how they affect their bearer and perceivers will be analyzed. Finally, the narrative arc that begins with Joseph's reception of a special coat by his father (Gen. 37:3) and ends with his ability to give coats to his brothers (Gen. 45:22) will be clarified in light of the coats' material agency.

**11:00-11:20** Christine Palmer, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, [cpalmer@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:cpalmer@gordonconwell.edu)  
"Ensembles of Access: The Puzzling Case of Sacral Apparel on the Day of Atonement" (Virtual)

In Israel's wilderness sanctuary, ritual boundaries are marked by cloth. Fabric, color, weave, and ornamentation all serve to demarcate boundaries of holiness and define spheres of access. Priests ordained in the same sacramental textiles as the tent's coverings are given access to the ritual spheres that correspond to their dress. Ordinary priests are dressed in tunics and caps of twined linen that reflect the linen hangings of the outer court where they serve. The high priest, clad in multi-layered garments mirroring the elaborate wool and linen weaves of the inner sanctuary, is invested with authority to access the sanctuary. To tread upon holy ground, one must be cloaked in the cloth that defines that sphere. Yet, this pattern breaks down on the Day of Atonement when the high priest enters the Holy of Holies clothed in plain linen garb that is not at all reflective of the lavish ornamentation found in the inner sanctuary. Some scholars interpret this change of dress as a divestment that signals humility, while others see it as investment with 'heavenly garments' of greater glory. This paper examines the role of dress in providing access to the inaccessible realm of the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Viewed through the lens of dress theory, a new perspective is advanced toward understanding the ritual enactment of approaching the divine presence.

**11:20-11:40** Jennifer Matheny, Nazarene Theological Seminary, [jmatheny@nts.edu](mailto:jmatheny@nts.edu)  
"Ruth and Esther: Sharp Dressed Women" (Virtual)

This paper will explore intertextual connections through the function of dress, desire, and ethnic-identity with the characters of Ruth and Esther. Scholars have revealed intertextual relationships between Ruth and Esther through gender, ethnicity, and identity (Avnery, Peters). Ruth and Esther also demonstrate meaningful literary and thematic connections as texts in the Megilloth, and have been suggested as the thematic frame of the Megilloth (Davis). As a literary frame to this important collection in the Writings, these texts are named after marginalized women who alter identity through dress. Attention to particular items of dress will illuminate how dress functions in scandalous negotiations, shaping the future(s) of Israel.

**11:40-12:00** Scott Starbuck, Gonzaga University, [starbuck@gonzaga.edu](mailto:starbuck@gonzaga.edu)  
"Performative Dress as the Visual Center of Psalm 45"

Psalm 45 is unique among the songs of the Psalter in that it is a hymn glorifying a human being. Equally odd for the psalter, although intelligible within the ancient Near East, is a celebration of the human being, the human king, as divine. Setting the psalm further apart from the remainder of the collection is the suspicion among many interpreters that it represents, or at least refers to, a wedding ceremony. Despite significant scholarly attention to Psalm 45, much of its artistic vision and ideological power remains diffused and elusive to commentators. As such, scholars tend to import framing assumptions to make sense of the psalm, often pressing the psalm into preconceived notions of Zion theology, royal ideology, or ancient matrimony.

Ironically, the most striking elements of the text, its references to dress, have not been pursued as the obvious clues to unlock the performative claims of the psalm. This study attempts to fill this interpretive lacuna through a type of visual exegesis of Ps 45 with special attention to its dress cues. In Ps 45, male and female actors are told to dress themselves with clothing, scent, and object adornment, all of which signal a performative connection with deeper ontologies of beauty, justice, truth, martial efficacy, and international cohesion. Ultimately, dress is used to navigate theological concepts of immanence and transcendence. When the centrality of dress is allowed to take center stage in the interpretation of Ps 45, connections between hyperbolic vocal adornment and performative visual cueing cohere artistically, reflecting the high hopes deep concerns faced by those who look to political rule to soothe the anxiety of regal transcendence.

### **HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY AND NORTH AMERICAN RELIGIONS**

**9:00-9:30** Susan Staker, Independent Scholar, [sstaker@mac.com](mailto:sstaker@mac.com)  
"Joseph Smith's Encounter with Skepticism: A Batter Bible"

Recently scholars, including Joseph Smith's biographer Richard Bushman, have sympathetically revisited the notion that "an encounter with skepticism" provides a useful context for considering Joseph's religious project. Their common introductory trope: that Joseph may have encountered Thomas Paine and his scathing critique of the King James Bible through his family. In her memoir, Joseph's mother Lucy recalls that her father-in-law, Asael, a universalist and skeptic unhappy to hear that Lucy and his son Joseph were attending Methodist meetings, "threw Tom Pains age of reason

into the house and angrily bade him read that until he believed it." First published in 1794, Thomas Paine's book was much read and much hated in America for its sharp dismissal of the Bible. But in hating his book, readers encountered Paine's celebration of nascent "historical criticism" coming from the continent.

In the earliest surviving scene Joseph dictates for his Book of Mormon, King Benjamin sits with his sons, including Mosiah, and reads from inherited records that include a Hebrew Bible, carved on brass plates brought by his ancestors to America from Jerusalem shortly before the Babylonian captivity. As well as a cache of gold plates, kept by his ancestor Lehi's descendants, including Benjamin. Soon Benjamin passes these records to Mosiah, initiating an unbroken line of seer characters, who read and write and edit ancient records found at the edge of the King James Bible, translate lost records, and receive God's "secret things, hidden things." Such seer characters endure along the arc of Joseph's work.

Already in this first scene starring a named, Bible-reading seer (many others follow, including Jesus God in America), Joseph exhibits a canny talent for deploying narrative to investigate problems both personal and religious, a talent honed the previous year dictating his purloined pages. This paper investigates how Joseph's narrative-activity depends on and yet swerves from the Bible. And explores how these swerves enact a response to skeptical critiques such as Paine's. Joseph's innovations include the enduring seer characters, "witnesses" who report on events—the lack of named "eye-witnesses" (or "ear-witnesses") amongst Bible narrators a site of recurring disdain from Paine. Joseph also early on comes to prefer an I-voice narrator over the grand omniscient Bible narrator. Joseph's better Bible with its plausible witnesses sets him on a radical path towards gods as men and men as gods.

**9:30-10:00** Justin Davis, Boise State University, [justindavisphd@gmail.com](mailto:justindavisphd@gmail.com)  
"Shattered Images: Iconoclasm East and West"

This paper seeks to address the different forms of Christian Iconoclasm as found in Eastern Orthodox Christianity in the 8th and 9th Centuries and Western Christianity as embodied in the Protestant Reformations. I will highlight the arguments used by various iconoclasts, as well as the responses by their corresponding iconodules. The resolutions between eastern and western iconoclasm also differ wildly. In the East icons were restored and grew in importance in liturgical and private devotion, while in the West a schism resulted where use of images belongs primarily to the Catholic Church and various Protestant denominations foundationally oppose them. Yet even still the use of different images has slowly grown to cover the four bare walls advocated for during the period of confessionalization. The paper will conclude by comparing the use of images across the board including images incorporated by iconoclasts.

**10:00-10:30** Matthew Recla, Boise State University, [matthewrecla@boisestate.edu](mailto:matthewrecla@boisestate.edu)  
Book Review: *Rethinking Christian Martyrdom* (Virtual)

This book argues that we have been mistaken about the fundamental assumption that Christianity is the key to understanding the "Christian" martyr. Examining martyrdom in early Christian history, Matt Recla argues that the violent deaths of martyrs, real and imagined, were appropriated for Christian institutional life. Through deconstructing martyrdom and appreciating the complexity of

the martyr, we recognize martyrdom not as a socio-historical phenomenon inherent to particular ideologies, and not as a religious “identity” but as the institutional co-optation of violence. The Christian apologist Tertullian argued that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, but while the seed may be the key to martyrdom, the blood is the key to the martyr.

The book shows how martyrs exceed the bounds of institutional narrative. Centering analysis of martyrdom first around the martyr's existential difference and the complex biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors that lead to willing death, this book sheds new light on the motivations of martyrs, our fascination with them, and the parasitic relationship of religion to violent death.

### **NEW TESTAMENT AND THE WORLD OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

**11:00-11:30** Paul Anderson, George Fox University, [panderso@georgefox.edu](mailto:panderso@georgefox.edu)  
“John and the Medicine of Immortality – Instrumentality or Martyrology?”

According to Bultmann and others, the exhortation to eat and drink the flesh and blood of Jesus (Jn. 6:53ff.) resembles the Ignatian “medicine of immortality,” whereby those who partake of a sacred meal ingest the life of the gods in the tradition of Egyptian Mystery Religions. If this is so, John 6:51-58 must be considered instrumentalistic and thus antithetical to John’s pervasively Christocentric soteriology. However, when one considers this passage (*Eph.* 20) and others from Ignatius, his thrust is not theophagic proper. Rather, his emphasis is upon the unity of the church. Salvation rests within the authorized community and its communal worship—under one bishop—who represents the singular Lord and his apostolic representatives. Thus, it is not the “loaf” which produces life, but the “one” loaf (as opposed to the surrogate meals of the docetizing schismatics) that is life producing. Likewise, the Johannine exhortation to ingest the flesh and blood of Jesus follows the emphasis that the bread he offers is his flesh given for the life of the world on the cross (Jn. 6:51). The exhortation in John, therefore, emphasizes neither a meal nor a sacramental rite, but willingness to embrace the way of the cross—costly discipleship under the imperial-cult requirement of Domitian—a call to martyrological faithfulness. Those who wish to be raised with Christ on the last day must be willing to suffer with him in the here and now, if required by the truth. Such an emphasis is fully compatible with Johannine Christology and soteriology, and therefore needs not be attributed to an alien source.

### **RELIGION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

#### **Contextual Religious Experiences and Theological Explorations of Meaning**

**9:00-9:30** David M. Gides, University of Providence, Great Falls, MT, [davidmgides@gmail.com](mailto:davidmgides@gmail.com)  
“Christian Nationalism as a Sociological and a Theological Phenomenon and the Hope for Re-integration” (Virtual)

Christian nationalism, or White Christian nationalism, almost unanimously considered by academics as a negative phenomenon, has become a focus of scholarly and public concern over the last five to 10 years in the United States. The phenomenon is interesting and somewhat unique from a scholarly standpoint as, unlike some others, it can be, and has been, approached from both social sciences and from religious studies or theological perspectives. From the social sciences perspective, well-known studies like Samuel L. Perry and Andrew L. Whitehead’s 2020 *Taking America Back for God*:

Christian Nationalism in the United States or Philip S. Gorski and Samuel L. Perry's 2022 *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to Democracy*, use sociological data to explore various aspects of Christian nationalism - trying to establish what it is using surveys or locating what sociological markers are most likely to be present in those who are considered Christian nationalists (based on the combination of other markers). Sociological factors can include perceptions of the threat of COVID, perceptions of the role of slavery in the civil war, race and immigration considerations, level of education, and others. On the other hand, theologians try to explain or understand the phenomenon in terms of strictly faith-related factors. These factors, mainly distortions or deviations from mainstream Christian doctrine or ideas, can include ideas about ethnicity, notions of masculinity, and the quest for power. What most of the sociological and theological scholarly appreciations of Christian nationalism have in common is that reasons other than those typically or directly associated with belonging to a Christian faith tradition (or consistency with Christian doctrine) are the most determinative of Christian nationalist adherence. Furthermore, theological works, like Carter Heyward's 2022 *The Seven Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism: A Call to Action*, will often offer recommendations for mitigating the negative effects of Christian nationalism. This paper will use the re-integration into mainstream Christianity of the *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) in Germany after the Nazi era, a movement similar enough to what has been defined as Christian nationalism in the United States, to argue that the separation between mainstream Christian doctrine or traditional religious adherence sociologically understood and Christian nationalism provides a degree of hope for mitigating its negative effects. That is, the fact of effective post-Nazi-regime church re-integration of Nazi-supporting churches may offer a model for dealing with Christian nationalism in the United States.

**9:30-10:00**

Liz Rasmussen, University of Puget Sound, [elizlras@gmail.com](mailto:elizlras@gmail.com)

“The Significance of Accessible Language: Improving Religious Literacy in the General Public”

This study investigates how scholars can use elementary-level language and vocabulary to communicate important religious concepts and terms to the general public. To improve religious literacy, I will suggest how religious studies scholars can convey religious terms and information in an effective and accessible way to a larger diverse audience. Many researchers have conducted studies on grade school children and the religious literacy used to communicate with them. However, researchers rarely consider the literacy demographics of the adult population in the United States. Statistics on the average literacy rates in the U.S. suggest any information should be communicated at a 5th-grade reading level to reach the majority of people in the United States. In a 2021 study, Dr. Peter J. McDonald and Associate Professor Philip Savage from McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, investigate and critique the readability of the academic prose used in humanities articles, including religion studies publications. McDonald and Savage's study revealed that the language used in the literature required a post-secondary degree to comprehend, signifying a language gap between scholars and the general public. To engage in conversation with people from all educational backgrounds, researchers must communicate religious terms and concepts using language available to the vast majority. This research is a quantitative study based on the analysis of data collected through anonymous online surveys. The participant sample will target 100 teenagers and adults in the United States from various diverse educational backgrounds using the “snowball” sample approach. Participants will read a short op-ed, listen to a three-minute audio clip, and then take a survey. Survey questions ask about participants' comprehension of religious terms such as “double belonging” and “religious pluralism” (e.g., What words or concepts did you find confusing?

If any?). The collected data will be analyzed to find common themes based on grounded theory. Based on the analysis of the collected data, I will suggest how religious scholars can effectively communicate religious scholarship to people from various educational backgrounds by using easy and accessible language. This study will contribute to understanding the importance and impact of using accessible language to convey religious scholarship to the broader adult population.

**10:00-10:30** Sara Salazar, California Institute of Integral Studies, [ssalazar@ciis.edu](mailto:ssalazar@ciis.edu)  
“Rooting Down and Riding the Waves: Exploring the Intersections of Chicax Mothering, Spirituality, and Decolonial Pedagogies Through Waves of Pandemics”

This paper will explore how transformative Chicax mothering and spiritual practices, rooted in tradition and culture, support the co-creation of decolonial pedagogies and practices in the higher education classroom during waves of pandemics. Through highlighting traditional practices, such as limpias, reconnection to land and growing traditional plants, foods, and herbs for healing, and platicas, that guide me on my mothering journey, I will investigate how these same tools and intersections are employed to foster mental and physical survival and healing in the home and in the classroom. My work as a mother directly informs my work as an educator and my work as an educator informs the ways in which I mother my two young children. In “Decolonial P’urhepecha Maternalista Feminist Motherwork and Pedagogy” in *The Chicana Motherwork Anthology*, scholar Gabriela Spears- Rico writes about the intimate bonds between these overlapping spheres of labor. As academic Mothers of Color, our labor is not contained in neatly categorized boxes. Motherwork becomes part of our intersectionality, as mothering and motherhood permeate our homes, writing, and pedagogy. Decolonial maternalista feminist pedagogy is integral to the legacy we’re leaving our students and our children. I will analyze the ways in which the once complementary roles of mother and educator became symbiotic and how this new integral space became fertile ground for use of decolonial pedagogies and practices in the struggle for survival during pandemics. In her essay “Mothering as Revolutionary Praxis” in *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines*, scholar Cynthia Dewi Oka writes, “The revolutionary struggle against a colonial, racist, hetero-patriarchal capitalism, which has for centuries separates us; arranged us in structured oppositions to each other; reduced our bodies to raw resources for abuse, exploitation and manipulation; and, in the words of Franz Fanon, occupied our breathing, is today the struggle for a world—no, many worlds—where we might exist and thrive as each other’s beloved. Mothering is a primary front in this struggle, not as a biological function, but as a social practice.” In this paper I argue that mothering and teaching are synergetic intentional social practices for liberation and healing.

**11:00-11:30** Anna Lucken, Western Illinois University, [a-lucken@wiu.edu](mailto:a-lucken@wiu.edu)  
“Reversing Raj: Reversing Raj: Hindu Nationalist’s (Re) Imagination of Rishi Sunak” (Virtual)

On the 25 of October 2022, Rishi Sunak began serving as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The appointment of Rishi Sunak has been declared a victory for Hindu nationalists. With his appointment came an explosion of online professions that Sunak as the lion of India who would not only right the wrongs done to India by British rule but also work to ensure Hindutva ideals. The British-born Hindu quickly garnered attention from Hindu nationalists within India and the diaspora. The entire rhetoric of the Hindutva movement has set up the conditions necessary for Rishi Sunak to be seen as the person who takes back what Britain stole. Because much of the conception of



Hindutva was through the Indian diaspora, it should be no surprise that the diaspora and Indian population have created many online shared spaces. In online forums, Hindu nationalists of the most extreme views are often referred to as trads. Following the 2014 general election in India, Narendra Modi and the BJP became India's dominant political authority. The Hindu nationalist rise to power resulted in an explosion of online Hindutva forums, many of which post vulgar and slanderous claims about Muslims and Indians who reject Hindu nationalism. In many cases, trads can be critical of other nationalists and even the BJP itself. While hostile, the relationship between trads and the BJP is still largely fueled by their shared theocratic dogma. Online violent extremists like the trads operate unchecked through many social media platforms. They often call for acts of violence and are critical players in creating extremist narratives. In many of my encounters with them and through scholarly work, trads tend to post violent hate speech with a tone of humor. It is common for memes to contain content aligned with Hindutva ideals, such as islamophobia and denigration of Islamic religious symbols. Even more common are images that blast liberal culture worldwide. For the most part, social media posts from trads contain references to how much better off India will be under Modi and the BJP. Extreme examples are images depicting the murder of Muslims and non-Hindutva aligning Indians. But I noticed an interesting trend when the world began to look towards Rishi Sunak and his appointment as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Many of the violent memes shifted from anti-Muslim rhetoric to glorifying the Hindu leader of the country that so profoundly affected India.

**11:30-12:00** Cody Bivins-Starr, University of Aberdeen, [codybivins96@gmail.com](mailto:codybivins96@gmail.com)  
"Madness and the Challenge of Psychiatric Knowledge Production: Initial Explorations in Approaching Psychotic Experiences through a Theology of Wonder"

Contemporary scientific and psychiatric approaches to the experience of madness frequently cite the need to alleviate mental suffering as justification for epistemologies which prioritize explanation and classification. Drawing primarily on the philosophy of experience-expert Wouter Kusters, this paper contends that madness is better accounted for when taken seriously as an experience which broadens the possibilities of human knowledge. Scientific and psychiatric forms of approaches to knowledge underly the societal tendency to see those experiencing madness as disordered and threats to institutional forms of knowing. By interrogating these two primary institutional responses to psychotic experience, the paper explores the possibility of taking seriously mad-persons and the ways they understand reality - both metaphysical and theological. Countering the limitations in approaches to psychotic experience requires an openness to madness as a potentially revelatory and metaphysically informative experience. This analysis ends with the suggestion that this openness is best understood in a theological register of wonder.

### **RELIGION AND SOCIETY**

**9:00-9:30** Kathryn Rickert, Independent Scholar, [kathrynricket@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynricket@gmail.com)  
"A Tongue Not Understood by the People"

The efficacy of religious practices and dialogue, past, present, and future, relies upon the use of vocabularies and contexts that fit those who participate in them. Our word choices and the tone of voice we use to listen, write, speak, read, think, and pray weigh heavily upon the outcome of such collaborative, dialogical practices.

" "XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth. It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, understood of the people.

Religion. of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 1801."

This past anchored reflection on present day use of words for what matters most, looks into what happens when faith words fail, and explores (Christian, and others) faith, in other words and images.

Beginning with observations of some of the ways in which our current lexicons of faith are in trouble, this paper offers examples and invitations to both gurus and débutantes to join in the search for "a tongue that is understood of the people." (or tongues that are)

The paper uses the "unstable connections" of many Zoom meetings to enter into a reflection upon our present "season of distress." It goes on to suggest that a faithful response to such seasons might be found in an image of "holy strings", the kind that binds across great divisions, stresses, and debris without oppression. Holy strings that are something like the three-dimensional, somewhat messy, always asymmetrical spider webs of the Pacific Northwest, stronger and more flexible than steel, with jewel-like beauty, yet, all but invisible unless the sun shines upon them.

This lexicon and images are offered as invitations to both gurus and débutantes, to enter into these collaborative, dialogical practices, as faithful practices of on-going, developmentally flavored, living faith traditions.

**9:30-10:00**

Aya Hamlish, University of the Puget Sound, [ahamlish@pugetsound.edu](mailto:ahamlish@pugetsound.edu)

"The Intersectionality between Religious Experiences and Trauma among Transracial Asian Adoptees"

The existing literature has explored racial/ethnic identity development, racial and ethnic socialization patterns, adoption microaggressions, and naming and birth name reclamation practices (Reynolds et al., 2021). Transracial adoption from Asian countries have been prevalent among white parents in the U.S.. For example, the international adoption of Chinese children to the United States began in 1998, as a result of population control efforts in China called the "one-child policy" (Andrew, 2007). Some researchers have investigated the consequences associated with transracial adoption, especially when it comes to identity formation and development as an adolescent. The process of identity development is most impacted by family socialization, since it is primarily formed within a family environment, community, and society (Reynolds et al., 2021). However, there has not been much research examining the intersectionality between lived religious experiences and transracial adoptee identity. For adoptees, religious affiliation is an expression of individual and emotional attachment, a way of belonging (Navarro, 2019). While many religious institutions have promoted international adoption, with adoptees growing up in religious communities, they can also be sites of trauma. Adoptees of color, in particular, have experienced racial stigma and discrimination within their own religious community. To engage in conversations about identity and adoption, researchers must begin conversing with scholars.

This qualitative study is based on the analysis of data collected through in-depth, semi-structured, interviews using video conference or person to person; with the target sample size of 10 transracial

Asian adoptees, aged 21 or over, in the United States. During the interviews, participants are asked questions from the following three categories: community, religion/spirituality, and adoption/family. Questions ask participants about personal stories and information to better understand the connection between religious experiences and adoptee identity (e.g., Would you share your religious experiences in your religious communities? What were your experiences like?). The collected data are analyzed for common themes and patterns found based on modified grounded theory. The analysis shows the importance and impact of understanding the religious experiences of adoptees, and how these experiences intersect with issues of identity.

**10:00-10:30** Barry Morris, Independent Scholar, [bkmorris60@yahoo.com](mailto:bkmorris60@yahoo.com)  
“Phenomenon of ‘Community’; Its Obstacles Prey Tell; and Long-Short Recovery Pray Tell?”

“Community” is seldom realized unless buttressed by strategies for and structures of justice-making and keeping -- pervasive insecurities persist.

Definitions and depictions abound, making little difference despite plenty of word-smithing. There are thus sociologists depicting absences of community: “alienation”; “anomie”; “hidden injuries of class.” and homeless/ex-cons as “redundants”.

Community's erosions pervade, persist— not only Covid-19-related. Inter Alia: “loners” (as in sports bars); “casuals” (as in swimming pools and libraries); “on the fringe” (even intentional 12-step groups for addiction recovery); “marginals” (even worship services and those dreaded “passing of the peace” moments if a marginal presence); “drop-outs” (as in schools, group sports); “a statistic” (as an overdose death); “disenfranchised” (as from one’s home, contra to axiom where they have to receive and accept you); “clingers” (as a single person clinging to the remains of a loved one or pet, symbolic of a life once shared); and not all, “also-ran’s” (those who do not win or place in competitive races); “under the radar” (when come time to assemble a memorial eulogy); “self-righteous” (do not confess a need for community); and surely, “bowling alone” (Putnam’s metaphor for substantial loss of community opportunities and practices);

Are there evidences of efforts to foster/support community practices? Biblically, there is the thief’s plea to Jesus to advocate for his soul in the face of their pending Crucifixion (“re-member me when you come into your kingdom”); Jesus’ affirmation to the woman caught in adultery for the then community’s chance to show off their alleged righteousness but dared not publicly throw the first stone when challenged (“neither do I condemn thee”); and/or Tillich’s Shaking of the Foundations sermon adopted by many therapists and inclined theologians, “You are accepted (and accept the affirmation that you are so ... despite the fact that you [feel] unacceptable.)”. Then there is the RC Mass’ pronouncement “Lord, I am not worthy to be under your roof -- formerly, “not worthy to receive you” -- but only say the word and I shall be healed.”

Covid realities expose/flush myriad insecurities undermining possibilities of “community.” Advocacy for a “basic income”/ “guaranteed livable income” policies and its income distribution/re-distribution sign a justice vision; alas, via realpolitik, little actual adoption by government levels and their support apparatuses.

Nonetheless, two examples sign hope engaged: a Metro Vancouver network named “A Community Aware” (ACA) and the “Metro Vancouver Alliance (MVA).”

To the end/telos:

“All real life is meeting” (Buber, I and Thou)/ Breaking-bread: where, with whom, how long?  
/Mirrors dimly hoping .... (I Cor. 13)

**11:00-11:30** Carly Lee, Everett Community College, [carlyjanelee@gmail.com](mailto:carlyjanelee@gmail.com)  
“Earthseed: A Religion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

Is Octavia E. Butler’s Earthseed a religion that people ought to follow even though it was born from a work of modern speculative fiction?

Over the last half century, religion scholars William Alston (Macmillan 1972), Ninian Smart (Macmillan 1991), and Michael Molloy (McGraw Hill 2010) have identified comparative elements that a religious movement ought to have in order to be considered a religion. For this paper, I am using the most recent 2018 list of eight essential elements of world religions by Molloy (8th edition) which include: Belief System, Community, Central Myths, Ritual, Ethics, Characteristic Emotional Expression, Material Expression, and Sacredness. These elements of religion are broad enough to allow for the complexities of culture and time, but specific enough to exclude religious movements not yet fully formed enough to be identified as their own.

In the dawn of a new global pandemic many fans of science fiction and afrofutursim hailed Octavia E. Butler as more prophetic and more accurate in her development of the Parable Series (Parable of the Sower and Parable of the Talents) than even she would have feared. Butler saw ecological, political, and religious patterns of the past which she used to construct a not so distant dystopian reality if humankind were to continue on our trajectory. Butler studied the patterns of global warming to predict food shortages, extreme inflation, and greater disparity between socioeconomic classes and patterns of how, when, and why people turn to religion and how these religions can be conduits for both positive and negative change to, not predict, but develop a new religion that would speak to the people of the not so future world. Earthseed is the religion that was revealed to Butler’s main character Lauren Olamina in the Parable series and readers witness the power of positive change it has upon its community in the midst of a powerful state religion, described as a now mainstream radical Christian cult, that is wreaking havoc upon its people. And it is not just the fictional characters within the novel that Earthseed has spoken to; but Earthseed now has a following in our reality as well. This paper will analyze Octavia E. Butler’s Earthseed religion against Molloy’s eight essential elements of religion to answer the question: Is Octavia E. Butler’s Earthseed a religion that people ought to follow even though it was born from a work of modern speculative fiction?

**11:30-12:00** Sarah Robinson, Independent Scholar, [sarahrobinson.prof@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrobinson.prof@gmail.com)  
“Converting to Flourishing: Eco-Halal and Eco-Buddhist Farming in Conversation”

Recognizing the need for sustainability—a cyclical notion of continual replenishment of natural systems, including human communities, toward mutual flourishing—can be described as a conversion experience, renewing ethical and practical commitments. Converts to agricultural sustainability often recover the notion of inherent value in the beasts, birds, bees, flowers, and food plants, a range of beings morally sublimated in industrial systems where monetary value dominates the agricultural landscape. The author’s U.S.-based case studies display Muslim and Buddhist sustainable agricultural practices highlighting ethically integrated relationships of care, offering a social, economic, and environmental alternative to exploitative industrial agriculture.

In Chicago, Taqwa Eco-food Cooperative (2002-2009) provided locally and sustainably produced halal meat, permissible for Muslims. Taqwa leaders educated on integrating ethics with food practice, emphasizing tayyib, or wholesomeness. Taqwa combined ethical reflection with practice improving the health of consumers, lives of animals, livelihoods of farmers, as well as the Muslim prayerful tradition of slaughter, not undertaken lightly. Green Gulch Farm is a part of the San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC), which was founded in 1962. Managers and apprentices cultivate several acres facing the Pacific Ocean, producing vegetables for farmer's markets, local restaurants, and for the SFZC community. In interviews, leaders reflected on sustainable farming and the Buddhist concept of dependent co-arising, dynamic interdependence.

Each case study represents a unique context in time, place, and social location, which affords both a strong critique of industrial agriculture and a local-scale alternative designed for mutual flourishing. The case studies demonstrate sustainable, local, religiously oriented projects, producing viable alternatives for food production and distribution. The religious notions of dependent co-arising and tayyib socially support sustainable conversions to concretely care for people, land, water, agricultural ecosystems, and nonhuman living beings eaten as food.

### **THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**9:00-9:45**

Russell Clarke, Tyndale University and Seminary, [russelldclarke@gmail.com](mailto:russelldclarke@gmail.com)

“Angels and Humanity: Messengers and Stewards Joined in Praise in the Celestial Hierarchy and Karl Barth” (Virtual)

The significance of creation stewardship is often overlooked in many churches, yet this is central to understanding humanity as made in God's image. Furthermore, angelic beings are frequently ignored in evangelical churches beyond and acknowledgement of their existence as divine messengers mentioned in biblical texts. Angelic nature presents an enigma – spiritual beings who occupy exalted positions in proximity to God yet seem inferior to human beings in that they are not made in God's image. Thus, Angelology has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of creation. God's plan for creation, and humanity's place in creation.

Stewardship as a principle will be explored and expanded to incorporate the priestly element of praise as part of humanity's representation of God on earth. Although the earth is the primary theatre of human praise, all creation praises God; thus, there is an opportunity to explore the heavenly element of creation and how this relates to humanity. Angels are spiritual creatures who act as God's entourage in heaven and messengers on earth, providing a point of contact with humanity between earth and heaven; therefore, angelology contributes to a broader theology of creation. To better understand angels and heaven in this discussion, two key texts on angels will be explored and examined: Pseudo-Dionysius's Celestial Hierarchy and Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics. The analysis of each text will be brought into dialogue with a general meaning of 'angel' in scripture, and Psalm 148 and Revelation 4-5 will be used specifically to highlight the key insights of Pseudo-Dionysius and Karl Barth. In conclusion, humanity joins with the angels and creation in praise; humanity as stewards and priests leading worship under the lordship Jesus, and angels as messengers and witnesses to God's kingdom, until Jesus' return when the angels will cease being messengers, while humanity continues as stewards.

**9:45-10:30** Norman Metzler, Concordia University Emeritus, [npjmetzler@gmail.com](mailto:npjmetzler@gmail.com)  
“Defining the Kingdom”

Given the generally acknowledged centrality of the kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus and the writings of St Paul, it is important to achieve as much theological clarity regarding the nature of the kingdom. 2 currently widely accepted schools of biblical interpretation challenge traditional approaches to the biblical evidence. Despite significant evidence that Jesus proclaimed a future kingdom that he would return to establish at the eschaton, the notion of “inaugurated eschatology” championed by Oscar Cullmann claims that the kingdom of God already began with the Incarnation, and will be completed in the Parousia. A second innovative and widely adopted interpretive school is “new creationism” promoted by NT Wright, who challenges the traditional other-worldly portrayal of the heavenly kingdom. He reinterprets the biblical references that appear to support a “spiritual” kingdom, arguing instead for a physical hereafter called the “new creation.” We challenge these broadly accepted biblical trends on the basis of a close reading of the biblical witnesses, concluding that the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus and promulgated by St Paul is (1) a strictly eschatological future reality that is however anticipated in this present life, and (2) a spiritual new creation that is dramatically different from and superior to this present physical creation.

**11:00-11:45** Sarah Gallant, University of Toronto, [sarahgallant@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahgallant@hotmail.com)  
Round Table: “Emerging Technologies and the Classroom” (Live & Virtual)

The emergence of technologies like “ChatGPT” have recently alarmed many educators. How well can AI-generated content mimic the scholarship of human beings? Can we reliably determine if something has been created with the assistance of AI? Such new technologies demand the consideration of important ethical questions as well as existential questions for the Social Sciences and Humanities. This round table session invites participants to consider emerging technologies and the classroom. The following questions will begin our discussion:

- What technologies do students expect to access and how do they use them?
- How do educators utilize these technologies, both inside and beyond the classroom?
- Have any pedagogical issues arisen while utilizing new technologies?
- How are accessibility and equity addressed by these technologies?

### WOMEN AND RELIGION

**9:00-9:30** Anna Lucken, Western Illinois University, [a-lucken@wiu.edu](mailto:a-lucken@wiu.edu)  
“The Ashes of Colonialism: How Colonization Increased Ritual Suicide in India” (Virtual)

Scholars of Indian culture and religion have studied the ritual immolation of women (sati) for centuries. It remains one of the most contentious rituals of Hinduism despite its rarity in contemporary practice. Beginning with the Greek conquests of the Indian subcontinent, outsiders confronted by sati rarely recognized their role in the practice and attempted to control and regulate the ritual. With each new century and each new colonizing power, their laws and regulations seeking to control sati only increased their practice. I assert that the presence of colonizers increased the practice that was perhaps only figurative at first. Men died in droves fighting to protect India and left behind widows with no one to care for them. Furthermore, their presence threatened Hinduism and effectively threatened the women coerced into becoming martyrs of resistance.

I will present both śruti and smṛti that were used by Brahman to justify the increased practice of Sati throughout the Portuguese and English colonization of India, some of which are my own translations. Examples include The Agni Purāṇa, The Brahmapurāṇa, and The Manusmṛiti, among many others. I also have extensively researched first-hand accounts of sati as witnessed by missionaries, travelers, and colonizing authorities. No discussion of sati can be complete without also including a discussion of jauhar, a loosely related yet equal form of dramatic protest.

I round out my paper by discussing the various laws and regulations imposed by colonizing authorities that were nothing short of an attempt to control the practice, not forbid it. Then, I discuss the statistics of sati following the partition of India with the inclusions of Roop Kanwar, the 2002 sati of Kuttu Bai, and the unnamed woman from 2008. Three sati in fifteen years is far better than the hundreds that occurred annually in the centuries India was colonized. It is foolish to place all of the credit for the decline on the newly enacted legislation. I conclude that the end of official colonization is the primary contributor to the decline in sati.

**9:30-10:00** Tazeen Ali, Washington University in St. Louis, [tazeen.ali@wustl.edu](mailto:tazeen.ali@wustl.edu)  
"Embodied Authority: Muslim Women's Experiences as Exegesis"

This paper is based on research from my new book and examines a reconceptualization of Islamic legal rulings on sexual violence in the American Muslim context. I use textual analysis of two khutbahs (sermons) delivered at the Women's Mosque of America (WMA), the first female-only mosque in the US established in 2015, to document the diachronic change in conceptions of Islamic law and sexual violence.

The WMA is an emergent volunteer-run religious institution for Muslim women and their (female) interfaith allies in Los Angeles wherein women exclusively preach, lead prayer, and worship at monthly Jummah services. The WMA represents a growing recognition of women's marginalization in traditional mosque spaces in the US. Its emergence speaks to a history of exclusion of women in mosques in the US through inadequate prayer spaces, scarcity in leadership roles, and limited access to religious learning.

I argue that the WMA serves as a nascent site for the production of a new Islamic discourse on sexual violence that moves beyond textual approaches to law and treats Muslim women's experiences as a valid source of Islamic knowledge. In their reformulations of Islamic exegesis and law concerning sexual and domestic violence, WMA khateebahs (female preachers) foreground the lived experiences of Muslim women even as they also draw from Islamic sacred texts.

The emergent WMA discourse on sexual violence draws on the Qur'anic themes of justice and compassion, and the Prophetic Sunnah through the lens of lived communities and argues for moving beyond legal frameworks that take for granted women's bodily vulnerability and their susceptibility to violence within their own households and communities.

Exploring how the WMA has developed a new genre of khutbahs based on women's experiences, I suggest that khateebahs do not reproduce existing male forms of leadership. Rather, they cultivate specifically feminine forms of Islamic authority rooted in vulnerability and embodied experiences. Within this feminine form of authority, women's bodies serve as important sites of knowledge through which to approach Qur'anic exegesis. I also explore how khateebahs' openness in discussing

sensitive subjects creates a nurturing atmosphere in which congregants also feel comfortable sharing their own vulnerabilities.

## **SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 20, 2023**

**Third Session: 2:00-5:30 pm**

### **ARTS AND RELIGION**

**2:00-2:30**

Lori Wells, artist, writer, spiritual ecologist, and facilitator of nature constellations,  
[lorimichellewells@gmail.com](mailto:lorimichellewells@gmail.com)  
“On Behalf of All Life: Daily Art Practice as Prayer”

Last year, I joined the #100dayproject global artmaking community with the intention of creating and posting daily creative work. Leaning on the guidance and companionship of my longtime dreamwork circle mates and my deep connection with the tenets of spiritual ecology, I approached each painting as a sacred act. An act of devotion. To the Earth. To my Self. To myself as the earth.

I asked myself daily, “who wants to speak through me?” and kept my heart open to the immanent wisdom and numinous wonder of life as well as the grief and uncertainty that pervades our modern relationship with the natural world.

The resulting 100 paintings are my votive offerings to nature. I blessed each one not only with the quality of my attention, concern, and gratitude, but also with gold paint to create simple sacred images in praise of the living world around us.

Making art, praying art, became a ritual act for me. Out of the ritual artmaking arose another creative act... the act of writing. My creativity became fueled by the conviction that creating is a sacred gift, meant to be shared, especially given that it’s a deep communication with the mystery that surrounds and fills us all. So, every day, I shared these acts of devotion through social media and in person. In the act of sharing, the cycle of creation was renewed and became ever flowing. The response I received from my community was deeply moving. A beautiful cycle of giving and receiving was birthed.

In painting my fellow beings, a deep grief burned inside me for lost species, devastated landscapes, and discarded spiritual knowing that once kept us all in balance with the earth. Every day I sat down to write about these beings, I read about their challenges and mourned their deaths, their peril, and their struggle. Consciously, I lived and breathed with them, not turning away from the pain, remembering every day that I am them and they are me, painting my way through every emotion. And then I would invite my viewers to live and breathe with them as well, hoping to ignite a sense of loving urgency in our modern hearts.

For this presentation, I will share images, insights, and the ongoing impact from my project, and speak about how everyone can consider bringing this type of devotion into their own lives. On behalf of all life.



**2:30-3:00** Justin Davis, Boise State University, [justindavisphd@gmail.com](mailto:justindavisphd@gmail.com)  
"Kinetic Images: Orthodox Veneration of Icons"

Orthodox Christians regularly venerate icons of Christ, Mary, and saints. The physical act of veneration is one that requires action, including crossing oneself, bowing, prostrations, kissing the icon, or in some cases weeping in front of the icon, or being anointed with oil in connection with an icon. Icons serve as the focal point of prayers and confession. These kinetic acts demonstrate the interaction between a physical medium and a spiritual exercise. In this spiritual asceticism community is formed, lived out, and people are reconciled to one another. There are even several icons that emit myrrh and people are anointed with the oil for physical healing. This paper will seek to highlight the physical actions associated with icon veneration and the role that they play in the affirmation of humanity of those participants as well as how they create a community and bring people towards healing of the whole person including physical, spiritual, and social restoration.

**3:00-3:30** Theresa Henson, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, [theresa.henson@gmail.com](mailto:theresa.henson@gmail.com)  
"Sculpture: On Immanence, Materiality, and the Consecration of Objects"

Art's capacity to reveal new worlds means, for the artist, an ever-expanding sense of access and facility with presence and meaning. The awareness could also be considered as curiosity emboldened by a widening scope of the materially possible and how materials signal beyond themselves. My presentation is a poetic and philosophical exploration of sculpture in terms of immanence. More, how intrinsic presence and meaning might manifest in the making, in development and release. I consider how several cultures consecrate objects, and what commonalities might occur in contemporary art arenas, and for me as a sculptor, the experience of making these objects. Through an articulation of my own methodologies and genealogy, I articulate a personal sculptural vision about immanence, materiality, and the consecration of objects.

#### **HEBREW BIBLE**

**4:30-5:00** Shawn Thomas, Seattle Pacific Seminary, [thomas1@spu.edu](mailto:thomas1@spu.edu)  
"Are You Doing It the Wrong Way, or Is What You Are Doing Wrong? Interpreting the Civil War in Judges 20"

Chapter 20 of Judges contains an account of YHWH appearing to deceive the united tribes of Israel in their war against the tribe of Benjamin. YHWH twice implies that the united tribes will be victorious, but they instead suffer two crushing defeats. Though they finally prevail in the third battle, the victory unsettlingly illuminates a fraught relationship between YHWH and Israel in epilogue of Judges.

This study accounts for the impetus behind the war, considers the account's reception history and formulates two opposing interpretive strategies to make sense of YHWH's seemingly deceptive behavior. The interpretive strategies utilize intertextual connections within the Hebrew bible involving rape, oracular inquiries before battles, and the mysterious figure of Phinehas. They arrive at two possibilities: YHWH was either signaling that united tribes were wrongfully consulting YHWH or were wrongfully prosecuting the war against Benjamin. Either way, the theological implications of a broken relationship with YHWH are considered within the larger context of the canons of the Synagogue and the Church.

4:30-5:00

Abel Sitali, University of Pretoria, [sitali07@gmail.com](mailto:sitali07@gmail.com)

“The Samaritan Pentateuch: Its Origin and the Israelite Schism in the Persian Period”

The Samaritan Pentateuch, its origin, and relationship to the Jewish Pentateuch is a topic that biblical scholars have debated for over two centuries. With the assumption that both the Samaritan community and the Samaritan Pentateuch share a common origin, some scholars have argued that such origin could be traced to the sixth, fifth, or even the fourth centuries BCE. Others have argued for a later date in the hellenistic period stretching from 331 to 31 BCE. Some have yet postulated that the Samaritan Pentateuch was nothing but a derivative document of the Jewish Torah, while others have gone on to defend the view that it was the Jewish Torah instead that was derived from the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Determining the actual date and origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch is admittedly not an easy enterprise, which is why the topic has been in discussion for so long without unanimity. Be it as it may, the present study shall evaluate all the arguments and ultimately defend the view that it originated out of a common heritage shared between the Jews and Samaritans in the Persian period. While the separation between the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel in the monarchical period is well attested in the Bible (1 Kings 11:26-40), there is no credible reason to believe that the torah could have originated in that period. For one thing, the compilation of the torah as we know it, let alone the Samaritan Pentateuch, had not even been completed at that time. The origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch may therefore be found in the Persian period, when the text of the torah is believed to have been consolidated into one legitimate document.

The events of (Nehemiah 9:24; 10:31, 32) in which some hostilities erupted between the returning Judahites and those they found resident in Judah, whom they characterized as 'the people of the land,' thereby disputing their Israelite ethnicity, seems to have marked the beginning of the rift between the Jews and Samaritans. Ultimately, the events surrounding the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem from which the Samaritans were outrightly denied participation, seems to have led to what has been characterized as an 'irrevocable schism' between the two groups. The present author shall argue that the Samaritan Pentateuch originated out of the common mosaic traditions inherited by both groups, but to which the Samaritans included some variants prompted by some ideological differences between them.

## **NEW TESTAMENT AND THE WORLD OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

### **Current New Testament Scholarship of the Region**

2:00-2:45

Book Review: Stanley N. Helton, *The Text of the Acts of the Apostles in the Writings of Origen*, [snhelton@abccampus.ca](mailto:snhelton@abccampus.ca)

The book to be reviewed is a study is to ascertain the textual identity of the text of Acts as used by Origen (ca. 185-254 CE). The research includes an analysis and evaluation of Origen's citations of and allusions to Acts, with that information providing the basis for reconstructing and analyzing Origen's text of Acts, and thereby locating his text of Acts within the history of the transmission of the New Testament. The working hypothesis at the outset of this research is that Origen's text of Acts should be most akin to the text of Acts found in MS 1739 with perhaps some intermittent Western readings and a few Byzantine readings. The assumptions of previous scholars suggest this hypothesis. The results of this research, to the contrary, show that Origen's text of Acts is most akin to Codex

Vaticanus (B03), following closely other Primary Alexandrian MSS, with no distinct Western readings, but in some cases, Origen shows knowledge of readings that reappear in some later secondary Alexandrian and Byzantine MSS of Acts.

**2:45-3:30** Book Review: Darrell Udd, *The Original Gospel of Jesus, According to Thomas*,  
[Darrell.udd@gmail.com](mailto:Darrell.udd@gmail.com)

We begin with a question and a hypothesis: “What is the cultural come of the *Gospel of Thomas*?’ If we can answer that question, we may be able to enter the appropriate hermeneutical circles to interpret it and understand its myth and message. We find that the best description of the cultural world of the GTh is a Hellenic and Platonic version of an Israelite world, non-Christian, and stridently anti-Judean. The first three parts of the book provide sufficient warrant for reading the *Gospel of Thomas* with its own cultural world. The fourth part presents this reading with a brief introduction, translation and commentary. A final chapter summarises findings, reaches conclusions and raises questions for further inquiry.

**4:00-5:00** Book Review: Kent Yinger, *The Pharisees: Their History, Character, and New Testament Portrait*, [kyinger@georgefox.edu](mailto:kyinger@georgefox.edu)

Who were the real Pharisees? And, most importantly for Christian readers, how does this picture help to understand Jesus and the gospels better? These and other questions regarding the much-maligned ancient Pharisees are addressed and answered.

### **THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**2:00-2:45** Gilad Elbom, Oregon State University, [gilad.elbom@gmail.com](mailto:gilad.elbom@gmail.com)  
“The Kabbalistic Messiah”

In theological terms, the kabbalistic concept of reincarnation proposes a new understanding of the messianic idea. If time is perceived as a journey toward salvation, each of the reincarnations on the road to personal and collective rectification is a prefiguration of the messiah. While the coming of the messiah will signify the end of the process, the Kabbalah acknowledges the fact that total repair is unfeasible. Since it is practically impossible to avoid mistakes, every generation, even the most righteous one, will introduce additional setbacks, further delaying the liberation of the inherently imperfect soul from the tyranny of sin: from the clutches of selfish, harmful or otherwise impure forces. The tension between error and rectification is evident in the kabbalistic portrayal of the supernal worlds, where certain divine configurations are characterized by the impulsive energy of youth, while others lean toward the equanimity of old age. The duality of tempestuous vigor and mature serenity seems to have steered the Kabbalah toward the two-messiah theory. Appropriated and developed by various kabbalistic texts, this essentially Midrashic concept tells the story of two messiahs: the son of Joseph and the son of David. Representing the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph is a warrior messiah who signifies the beginning of the last days. Representing the tribe of Judah, the son of David is a stately messiah who signifies the completion of all rectifications. A practical messiah, the son of Joseph harnesses his combative nature to the construction of an efficient administrative framework. A spiritual messiah, the son of David injects this framework with meaningful content that promotes loving-kindness. Distinguished by his zeal, yet somewhat lacking in mercy, the former receives guidance from the latter. Like other kabbalistic concepts, the messiah

is envisioned as a cooperative enterprise rather than a perfect individual. In literary terms, no kabbalistic narrative is premised on the singularity of a main character. The ten spheres, the five divine configurations, and the two messiahs are interdependent agents that must collaborate to advance the collective goals of humanity: to negotiate the tension between selfishness and selflessness. In this context, the idea of reincarnation stems from the belief that no soul is the sole beneficiary of its body. The right to inhabit a domain, celestial or corporeal, is not granted exclusively. The idea of reincarnation designates the self as a public being whose life is to be shared with others.

**2:45-3:30**

Scott Ables, Oregon State University, [scott.ables@gmail.com](mailto:scott.ables@gmail.com)

“Bridge Building in 8<sup>th</sup> Century Jerusalem with the ‘Friendly’ Polemic of John of Damascus”

John of Damascus is more than a compiler of tradition, who polemicized against heretics. The prominent eighth century sectarians in Jerusalem divided over the Council of Chalcedon (451), but John recognized they accepted the Nicene Creed. In fact, all would confess the double consubstantiality, that Christ was both at once fully human and fully divine, at the heart of Chalcedonian Christology, while maintaining their confessional commitments rejecting the Council’s Definition. Resting primarily on four grounds, John’s conceptualization of heresy is better understood when contextualized in terms of his treatment of heterodox views. Four grounds are treated, John’s understanding and use of: 1) tradition, 2) philosophy, 3) authority, and 4) Scripture, which I treat first to prepare the following analysis of John’s polemic against specific heresies. I conclude that John, although a man of his time, is more interested in bridge building with sectarians than excluding the heterodox from the liturgical life of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, as the strict use of the term heresy might imply, which has modern implications for his use in ecumenical dialog.

### **WOMEN AND RELIGION**

**2:00-2:30**

Yvonne Candelario, University of South Florida, [ycandelario@usf.edu](mailto:ycandelario@usf.edu)

“Feminist Theory and Pedagogy in the Academic Study of Religion: A Decade in Review, 2012-2022”

This literature review examines how American scholars from the academic study of religion introduce, incorporate, and utilize feminist pedagogy and practice for teaching in the religious studies classroom. This review focuses on literature from the past decade (2012-2022) in hopes of informing current feminist scholars of religion to which gaps in feminist theory need consideration for our future pedagogical tasks as scholars of religion. This review also encourages the view that contemporary critics of religion utilizing feminist perspectives ought to do so in service of feminism, not faith. For this reason, the literature review draws from the study of religion in public higher education, not theology nor faith-based scholarship. The concluding aim is to reveal the position of feminist scholars of religion as both critics and caretakers.

**2:30-3:00**

Norah Yinuo Chen, California Institute of Integral Studies, [ynorahchen@gmail.com](mailto:ynorahchen@gmail.com)

“Claiming the Womb: An Exploration of Women’s Reproductive Rights and Institutionalized Religions through Deconstructing China’s Two-Child Policy and Abortion Bans in the United States”

The two-child policy in China and the abortion bans in select states around the U.S. may seem like two opposite challenges for women. In essence, they both signify control over a woman’s

reproduction by a government entity. Both laws also reveal religious ideologies about claims over women's bodies, female sexuality, and desired forms of female labor. How these contemporary laws came to be, vividly shows the extent to which religions continue to shape what many of us believe to be modern secular societies. This paper also demonstrates, through the examples of China and the United States, that despite the many differences in religious philosophies and practices, the control and surveillance of women's reproduction has been a major function of many religions around the world through history. This paper argues that such functions had much less to do with spirituality and morality than it had to do with fear, power struggles, and human division—the oldest story of “us” versus “them”. Through the lenses of philosophy, theology and historical analysis, this paper deconstructs the religious roots of China's two-child policy and abortion bans in the United States. Based on this comparative analysis, the author highlights two existing practices as antidotes to these androcentric religious teachings: first, the affirmation of women's historical spiritual contributions and inherent divinity to challenge male perspectives; second, the education and promotion of “sexual pleasure” as defined and experienced by women, which may or may not be coupled with procreation.

### **SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 2023**

**7:00-8:00**

Presidential Plenary: Mari Kim, PNW AAR President  
“The Challenge and Gift of Erotic Faith: Desire, Transformation, and Building Beloved Community”

We navigate multiple and competing understandings of the Good at any given time. Take for instance our current situation as the Pacific Northwest Region whose belonging is being renegotiated with the national American Academy of Religion body, and navigated with members of the Society for Biblical Literature whose regional identities were dissolved. The resulting experiences of ambiguity and ambivalence can be transformative as they generate in us longing for clarity and conviction that integrates our sense of multiple identities and arrives at a fuller sense of belonging — an experience that is core to understandings of beloved community. Exploring our responses to experiences of ambiguity and ambivalence, understandings of erotic faith and the practice of erotic faithfulness can offer a theological anthropology of desire that grows awareness and meaningful insight as we seek to be and become beloved community together.

## SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 21, 2023

Fourth Session: 9:00 am-12:00 pm

### HEBREW BIBLE

#### Research Group on Dress - Hybrid Session

9:00-9:20

Christopher S. Morrissey, Trinity Western University, [chris.morrissey@twu.ca](mailto:chris.morrissey@twu.ca)  
“Undressing Tyranny, Thwarting Genocide, and Beheading Armies: Dressing for War as PDE (Principle of Double Effect) Reasoning in the Book of Judith” (Virtual)

The narrative of the book of Judith shows how “dressing to kill” opposes consequentialism. By applying “Principle of Double Effect” (PDE) just war reasoning, I interpret Judith’s dress ritual as symbolically showing that “assassinating Holofernes” is not her directly intended aim. Instead, her action is clothed in righteousness. Her action does not fail the critical PDE test by which each component of her action may be assessed.

The object of Judith’s act, i.e., its objective form, is the following chosen means: her action separates the body of the Assyrian army from the proper authority of its commanding head, which has the power to control its movements against her people. Holofernes’ severed head and body, contrasted with Judith’s own pairing of hair and garments, thus symbolizes the object of her action as directed towards a good means: viz., disabling a genocidal army.

Judith’s sandals symbolize how this chosen means is directed: to walk through the dirt, towards the end which is her ultimate purpose; i.e., not murder, but the just cause of saving the lives of, and preserving the bodily integrity of, herself and her people. Judith’s direct intention cannot be characterized as aiming at murder (“the assassination of Holofernes”) because the righteous orientation of her subjective intention is not directed at an intrinsic evil (viz., acting directly against the life of another human being). Rather, it is directly focused on the minimal accumulation of dirt during sandals’ movement: i.e., choosing to sever the enemy army from its commanding authority, thereby using the minimal force required in the act of self-defense (for the purpose of thwarting genocide).

Judith’s minimal deployment of force is symbolized by her tiara as the right intention which guides her direct intention. The unintended side-effect of her direct intention is something that indirectly adorns her action at the same time: the separation of Holofernes’ head from his body. While she foresees the evil of the ending of a human life, she does not arrogate that power to her own self; rather, she prays for the unintended evil side-effect of her action to be in accordance with divine providence (Jud 9:1–14, 13:5, 13:7). Her prayers are evidence of her subjective right intention. She directly wills the morally permissible good (separating the genocidal Assyrian army from the command and control of its head) and only indirectly wills the foreseen evil (of ending the life of another human being).

**9:20-9:40** Robert Vanhoff, Torah Resource Institute, [robvanhoff@gmail.com](mailto:robvanhoff@gmail.com)  
“Hadassah Wears Esther: Attire, Allusion, and Identity in the Megillah” (Virtual)

This paper traces references to dress in the book of Esther and highlights the role of clothing at key moments in the narrative as an index of both personal (inner) and social (outer) identity formation and negotiation. Almost nothing is revealed or concealed in this story except in conjunction with the mention of a garment. In contrast with her uncle Mordechai, whose character displays constant integrity between inner and outer aspects of ethnic identity, Esther is taken up in a whirlwind of events in which her character inevitably slips and misgives the very values Mordechai had intended to instill in her. All the weight of the Jews’ survival comes to bear upon the matter of this orphan-turned-queen’s loyalty to a secret; one she has faithfully kept from her youth but which had never become a life-and-death issue. Esther resolves to reaffirm and prioritize this hidden truth, even at the cost of her life. While crucial to the unfolding of the story itself, the significance of clothing in the Megillah is simultaneously keyed to certain garment metaphors found in the Hebrew prophetic tradition more broadly, suggesting deliberate compositional intertextuality.

**9:40-10:00** Allen Hamlin, Trinity College, [Allen.Hamlin.2021@trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk](mailto:Allen.Hamlin.2021@trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk)  
“Warp and Weft: Clothing as Multivalent Connecting Device in Joshua 9”

While the connection between clothing and identity in BH narrative has been readily affirmed in recent scholarship, this connection has been largely overlooked in the book of Joshua. In this paper, I will argue that the clothing references in the account of the Gibeonite deception in Josh 9 serve to continue the trope in the book of Joshua of evolution of identity found in Rahab, Joshua, and Achan (each of which feature their own engagement with textiles). Additionally, we will see that this scene of identity concerns and the clothing-based intertextual connections to Deut elevate the evolution of identity trope from individualistic concerns to national ones, and reveals a primary concern—not with the fate of the native Canaanite peoples—but rather with the quality of Israel’s own identity as a faithful, YHWH-following people. Josh 9 thus provides to the Israelite people as a whole both a warning regarding the potential course of their own behavior, and instruction (or reminder) for their ongoing campaign in the land. We will thus see that the clothing language in Josh 9 functions as a multivalent connecting device, operating at various layers of context: its immediate narrational surroundings; the larger flow of the book of Joshua; and in dialogue with the Pentateuch. Taken together, these multivalent connections fostered by clothing language provide a refreshed and robust understanding of the identity concerns found in Josh 9.

**10:00-10:20** Moshe Rachmuth, Portland State University, [rachmuth@pdx.edu](mailto:rachmuth@pdx.edu)  
“Boaz’s Misunderstood Promise to Ruth”

This paper is a development of the paper I have presented last year, based on the remarks I have received from the group. Last year, with the support of a forgotten essay by Moshe Katz (1936), I challenged the common reading that Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley wrapped in her *mitṣpaḥath*. If indeed he gave her six measures, then a *mitṣpaḥath* must be a bigger garment that can serve as an impromptu sack, as all the above translations express. If, however, a *mitṣpaḥath* is similar in size to a *bandanna*, then it cannot carry six measures (*kavin*), for that would be the equivalent of more than seven liters (two gallons). If, on the other hand, the word *שש* (*shesh*) doesn’t mean “six” but a smaller measure, that amount would not be enough to feed Naomi for a long time, and would not be a proper charity. The new reading I proposed was that Boaz sends the “shesh” as a code: a

secret message that communicates his intention to marry, to feed and to beautifully clothe Ruth. According to this reading, Boaz turned the artifact, a simple bandana, to a mentifact, a married woman's headdress, that symbolizes his commitment to marry Ruth. Due to the different names of such headdresses in different towns, Ruth doesn't understand the mentifact and it is left for Naomi to reassure her.

Based on the remarks I have received I have done three main revisions. First, I changed the opening so as to frame early on the intention of the paper, i.e. to uncover a pun that was clear to the original readers but lost its meaning for all later readers. Second, I have researched women headdresses names in the Modern Levant, and will show some photographs and paintings whose rights I hold, some from a visit I have made to the British Museum taking some pictures of headdresses from Hebron. Lastly, I have read more generally into the use of puns in Biblical literature so that I can present a broader perspective on the location of the "shesh" pun in the tradition of ancient textual wordplay.

**11:00-11:20** Selena Billington, Independent Scholar, [selena.billington@gmail.com](mailto:selena.billington@gmail.com)  
"Why Does Aaron Alone Get/Have to Wear Wool and Linen?"

My current research project on dress in the Hebrew Bible concerns an apparent contradiction between two commandments in the Hebrew Bible. On the one hand, we have the well-known prohibition against wearing "a garment made of two different materials" (Lev. 19:19; NRSV), or more specifically, "clothes made of wool and linen woven together" (Deut. 22:11; NRSV). On the other hand, in Exodus 28, the LORD commands that the garments in which Aaron is to be consecrated as the prototype high priest are to be made of *tĕkēlet*, *'argāmān*, and *tōla'at šānī* and fine linen—i.e., dyed wools and fine linen. In the paper on which I am working, I will: (1) demonstrate that the phrase "*tĕkēlet*, *'argāmān*, and *tōla'at šānī*" does indeed signify three colors of dyed wool; (2) review the few archaeological examples of textiles from the southern Levant consisting of a mixture of wool and linen; (3) discuss the apparent contradiction and develop the proposal that Exod. 28 and Deut. 22:11 together constitute an example of a sumptuary law—a law which either *forbids* or *prescribes* the wearing of specific styles by specific classes of persons; (4) review the study of sumptuary law; and (5) explore the implications that arise from the recognition of Exod. 28 and Deut. 22:11 together as a biblical example of a sumptuary law.

**11:20-11:40** Jennifer Brown Jones, Liberty University, [jjones118@liberty.edu](mailto:jjones118@liberty.edu)  
"The Warrior Divine Dress in Isaiah"

Recent research into YHWH's garments in the OT has identified a variety of ways in which divine dress is described. Of particular interest is Ehud Ben Zvi's observation that the post-exilic literati demonstrate a noteworthy dis-preference for remembering the divine garments. This dis-preference is indeed notable, but the book of Isaiah includes three references to YHWH's clothing. The discussion below will explore the ways that the passages can be read in light of one another and consider why they were used. Ultimately, this analysis suggests that while in Isaiah 6:1 God is depicted as the divine ruler, the later references in Isaiah 59:17 and 63:1–3 allude to the YHWH rising from that throne to personally intervene in his creation as the divine warrior, with the passages and his clothing offering an encapsulated portrait of God's rule as the holy king who acts with justice and righteousness.



**11:40-12:00** Gilad Elbom, Oregon State University, [gilad.elbom@gmail.com](mailto:gilad.elbom@gmail.com)  
“The Garments of God: How Multiple Interpretations Cloak the Text”

This paper focuses on the various roles that articles of clothing play in several biblical narratives, paying special attention to the books of Esther and Judith. Examined from kabbalistic perspectives, the major characters in these narratives can be interpreted as reflections of the divine configurations in the world of emanation. In this context, the clothes that they wear can be seen as metaphorical garments that allow them to be cloaked, suffused, or indwelt by the holy spirit. More specifically, Esther and Judith, each in slightly different ways, are earthly embodiments of the heavenly queen: the Shekhinah. In that capacity, they seem to challenge and revise the traditional image of the king: the male warrior who functions as a messianic savior. While serving primarily as a theological platform, kabbalistic hermeneutics can also be used to inspect these biblical narratives from psychological points of view. Along these lines, pivotal scenes that celebrate the replacement of one wardrobe with another become turning points that expose the psychological mechanisms of major and minor characters.

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