

NO THEME

NZASR CONFERENCE 2007

**New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions
Conference 2007: The Conference without a Theme
Programme**

Wednesday 6th June

12:30	Welcome
1.00–3.00	Session 1
	Anna Gade – “Developing” Cham Muslim Communities in Cambodia
	Christopher van der Krog – Interpreting jihad: beyond apologetics and polemics
	Douglas Pratt – Why Dialogue? Christian Engagement in Interfaith Relations
3.00–3.30	Tea and coffee
3.30–5.30	Session 2
	Jürgen Offermanns – When Buddha came to Ultima Thule. The Initial Reception of Buddhism in Sweden from the 17th to the 19th Centuries
	Elizabeth Guthrie – Sraoc Tuk: the magical power of sacred water
	Douglas Osto – The <i>Bhadracarī</i> Verses in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism
7.30	Keynote address
	Mike Grimshaw
	“Bishops, Boozers, Brethren & Burkhas”: A Cartoon History of Religion in New Zealand

Thursday 7th June

8.30–10.30	Session 3
	Erica Baffelli – Telling about religious selves: conversion stories and their role in new Japanese religious movements
	Catherine Laudine – Spiritual Practice as Environmental Activism in an Australian Ashram
	Ann Hardy – Soft Politics: religion, media and melodrama in Aotearoa/New Zealand
10.30–11.00	Tea and coffee
11.00–1.00	Sessions 4 and 5
	<i>Sainsbury Room</i>
	Christine Dureau – Making it true and believing in belief: encountering true beliefs on Simbo, Western Solomon Islands
	Paul Hedges – Defining Religion: A Religious Orientation Typology
	Carmen Moran – The place of humour in spiritual transcendence
	<i>Aspen Room</i>
	Hugh Kemp – How the Swans Landed: interpreting Buddhism's arrival in New Zealand
	Joseph Gelfer – Dog Tags and Rosaries: Two Ways of Doing Masculinity in Men's Ministries
	Farid Rabi – Formularizing of behaviour by religious experiences
	David Kim – The Gender of Jesus in the Fifth Gospel

- 1.00–2.00 Lunch
- 2.00–5.20 Sessions 6 and 7 (with a break from 3.20–4.00)
- Sainsbury Room*
- Rick Weiss – The Limits of Invention in a South Indian Revivalist Tradition
Will Sweetman – Enlightenment and exorcism in two 18th century missionary periodicals
Susanna Trnka – Cleanliness in a Caste-less Context: Purity and Pollution among Fiji's Hindus
Aditya Malik – Dancing the body of God: Rituals of embodiment and tales of justice from the Central Himalayas
- Aspen Room*
- Paul Prinsloo – Tolerance, citizenship and religion education: a basis for rage or hope?
Paul Morris – Christian Nation or Secular State? Religious Policy and Religious Studies in New Zealand
Kath Engebretson – Towards more than mere tolerance: educating young people for inter-religious understanding and engagement
Marian de Souza – A new generation's perceptions and understandings of religious diversity
- 7.30 Conference dinner (Vknow Restaurant)
- Friday 8th June
- 8.30–10.30 Session 8
- Albert Moore – Judas and fiction in the quest for the historical Jesus
James Harding – Rapture Me! Why a historical critic has nothing to say to a dispensational premillennialist
Eric Reppuhn – A Polar Night of Icy Darkness? Toward a Theory of Reenchantment
- 10.30–11.00 Tea and coffee
- 11.00–1.00 Session 9
- Joseph Bulbulia – Anthropomorphism, Niche Construction, and Morality
Bill Cooke – The Meaning and End of Humanism
Greg Dawes – Darwinism and Christianity: the conflict thesis revisited
- 1.00–2.00 Lunch
- 2.00–3.00 NZASR Business meeting

Abstracts

Telling about religious selves: conversion stories and their role in new Japanese religious movements

Erica Baffelli, University of Otago
erica.baffelli@otago.ac.nz

This paper is concerned with the role of conversion stories, in Japanese new religious movements. Conversion stories are widely found in the daily activities of groups, and testimonies are often expressed in the broadcast media language. Typical examples are the stories related to personal experiences, such as those told at the meetings of the religious groups or appear in their journal, newspapers and video. In these, many people repeat stories of conversion, which closely resemble one another. Indeed through their popularization, conversion stories - originally expressing individual experience - seem to become standardized and uniform.

What are the characteristics of such popularized conversion stories as a language for expressing subjective religious experience? Are people direct testimonies influenced by “standard model” created by the media? The analysis will be based on media materials (magazines, *mangas*, videos) and on some group members’ interviews on personal religious experiences. These interviews have been collected during a two-year fieldwork in Japan.

Anthropomorphism, Niche Construction, and Morality

Joseph Bulbulia, Victoria University of Wellington
joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz

Two important evolutionary trends in the naturalistic study of religion are seemingly at odds with each other. According to the anthropomorphism hypothesis (Guthrie, Barrett, Atran) religiosity emerges from our accidental tendency to over project agency onto the slate of reality. According to the solidarity hypothesis (Irons, Wilson, Johnson, Bering) religiosity evolved as an adaptation to police morality and co-ordinate collective action. This paper motivates “The Casper Rapprochement,” according to which anthropomorphic tendencies give rise to moralizing patterns of thought and behavior. I first evaluate recent experimental evidence suggesting that believing in ghosts makes us good. I then show how only very minimal cultural arrangements are sufficient to scaffold ghostly commitments that police. Throughout I urge that the best explanation for the persistence of religion must combine what is correct in both naturalistic accounts.

The Meaning and End of Humanism

Bill Cooke, University of Auckland at Manukau
bill.cooke@manukau.ac.nz

The word ‘humanism’ was, so far as we know, coined in 1808, and yet the idea of being a humanist predated it by several centuries, and what could be seen as a generally humanist attitude is considerably older still. This paper traces the career of ‘humanism’ in its first century and explores some of the implications for its second century. Some of the questions raised include: how did humanism arrive at the variety of meanings it has today? Can humanism be defined effectively? And to what extent does defining humanism also limit it? And what relations has humanism had with ‘religion’ over the period in question?

Darwinism and Christianity: the conflict thesis revisited

Greg Dawes, University of Otago

gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz

A number of historians writing on Darwinism and Christianity claim to have defeated what they call the “conflict thesis.” But all they have defeated is one, philosophically uninteresting form of that thesis. There are other forms of the conflict thesis that remain entirely plausible, even in light of the historical record.

Making it true and believing in belief: encountering true beliefs on Simbo, Western Solomon Islands

Christine Dureau, University of Auckland

cm.dureau@auckland.ac.nz

This paper addresses the question of belief as unselfconsciously employed by anthropologists in understanding cross-cultural conversion to Christianity. I describe an ultimately irresolvable fieldwork question that was put to me during my fieldwork in an avowedly Christian society about how a good Jewish man could possibly not be Christian. Liam Gold stayed on Simbo for several months, during which time he came to be widely liked and respected but regarded with perplexity for his non-Christianity. A conversation about Liam with some of my key informants centred on the practical significance of belief in Christian practice in Simbo and Australian societies. It rapidly became clear that the term glossed as “believe” (*vasosoto*) by Tinoni Simbo, which I used to explain that Jews do not believe that Jesus was the messiah, only made their puzzlement about his non-conversion more intense. Drawing on historical analyses of the concept by Malcolm Ruel and others, I analyze the Simbo term, *vasosoto*, and briefly outline the history of conversion on Simbo to argue that our mutual misunderstanding speaks to the inherent historical cultural specificity of the concept of belief.

Towards more than mere tolerance: educating young people for inter-religious understanding and engagement

Kath Engebretson, Australian Catholic University

k.engebretson@patrick.acu.edu.au

The need for inter-religious understanding and engagement, more than mere tolerance, has been cogently argued. This paper will briefly summarise these arguments, and then move on to describe and identify preliminary findings from a research project on best practice in education for inter-religious understanding and engagement, particularly focusing on secondary schools. The examples will be drawn from case studies of Muslim, Christian and Jewish schools, and will be provided as signposts for the way forward in this essential area of education.

“Developing” Cham Muslim Communities in Cambodia

Anna M. Gade, Victoria University of Wellington

anna.gade@vuw.ac.nz

Cham Muslim communities of Cambodia experience the dislocation and discontinuity from the period of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) as they seek to recover from the social catastrophe of the Khmer Rouge regime. This rebuilding now takes place under conditions of global Islamic revitalization. Fieldwork data that reflect community concerns show that messages of transnational Islam are received in contemporary Cambodia in terms of dominant models of international “development.” Examples of programs of new mosque construction suggest how revitalization for poor Muslim communities, often explained in terms of a doctrine of reform, is theorized in Cambodia as Islamic social imaginaries of capacity-building.

Dog Tags and Rosaries: Two Ways of Doing Masculinity in Men’s Ministries

Joseph Gelfer, Victoria University of Wellington

joseph@gelfer.net

The Christian men’s movement is often equated squarely with Promise Keepers, but this is a mistake. Promise Keepers is just one of many men’s ministries comprising the Christian men’s movement. Some ministries have a denominational focus, others do not. This paper looks at two men’s ministries in order to highlight the movement’s diversity, and how masculinities are performed in different ways: the evangelical Band of Brothers and the National Fellowship of Catholic Men (NFCM). In particular, Band of Brothers presents a traditional model of masculinity, whereas NFCM incorporates elements typically perceived as feminine.

“Bishops, Booze, Brethren & Burkhas”: A Cartoon History of Religion in New Zealand

Mike Grimshaw, University of Canterbury

michael.grimshaw@canterbury.ac.nz

This paper argues that cartoons provide a rich source for societal analysis in New Zealand often overlooked by scholars, especially scholars of religion. For while the NZ cartoon archive has produced cartoon collections of general NZ history; Prime Ministers & Premiers; the role of women and of rugby, little if any work has been done on the way religion has been represented in New Zealand cartoons. This paper is a presentation of a research project of the past several years which aims to present a history of religion in NZ from colonial times to the present day as represented in cartoons. It argues that cartoons are an under-utilised collection of public opinion regarding religion in New Zealand, providing access to the representation of events, beliefs and personalities that both reflect and create public opinion regarding religion in ‘godzone’. The paper will take the form of a presentation and discussion of a series of cartoons providing ‘the popular/unpopular’ view of religion in New Zealand.

Sraoc Tuk: the magical power of sacred water

Elizabeth Guthrie, University of Otago

eguthrie@earthlight.co.nz

Since the revival of Buddhism in Cambodia after 1979, magical monks and powerful kru (guru/teacher) have broken out like wildfires all over Cambodia, offering both physical and spiritual healing to their devotees. One of the religious practices used by these charismatic healers is “sraoc tuk:” throwing or sprinkling water that has been ritually sacralised with candles, incense and the recitation of sacred mantras. When performed by powerful monks, sraoc tuk is believed to relieve suffering and enhance good fortune.

Highly respected religious leaders such as the Sangharaja Tep Vong and Buth Savong have spoken out against the practice as unorthodox, and there have been recent moves on the part of the ministry of cults and religion to prohibit the practice of sraoc tuk by Buddhist monks. However, such controls are unlikely to succeed due to the current popularity of the practice. Enthusiasm for sraoc tuk is widespread among all levels of society; in fact, many of Cambodia’s high-ranking officials regularly undergo this treatment. Monks believed to be expert in this practice generate income for their monasteries and exert considerable influence on their devotees.

The importance of sraoc tuk for contemporary Khmer Buddhism is reflected in the fact that well-known sraoc tuk monks are brought to overseas Khmer communities in the USA, Canada, France, Australia and New Zealand to perform sraoc tuk. This paper will examine some possible origins for the ritual, explore the parameters of sraoc tuk practice in contemporary Cambodia, and describe the recent visit of a sraoc tuk monk to Khmer diaspora communities in New Zealand.

Rapture Me! Why a historical critic has nothing to say to a dispensational premillennialist

James Harding, University of Otago

james.harding@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Publishing phenomena such as Hal Lindsey, *The Late, Great Planet Earth* (1970) and, more recently, the Left Behind novels of Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, both bear witness to, and have helped to create, an efflorescence in dispensational premillennialism, a form of evangelical Christianity in which the idiosyncratic presentation of biblical texts in the Scofield Reference Bible (Oxford 1909 and 1967), which is rooted in the thought of John Nelson Darby, has attained canonical status. A backlash to the treatment of Christian bibles by dispensational premillennialists has emerged among Christian scholars, who have sought to reclaim the books of Daniel and Revelation in particular for their own agendas, principally by appeal to historical criticism. This paper submits examples of the latter, especially recent works by Kenneth Newport, Craig Hill, Michael Northcott, and Barbara Rossing, to scrutiny, and argues that such attempts to reclaim Christian bibles can only succeed in an interpretive community that is primed to accept the premise that historical criticism enables the critic to discover a plausible construal of the correct meaning of the text. As such, it has nothing to say to dispensational premillennialists, whose rhetoric involves fostering distrust of academic biblical scholarship. This points to the inherent contradictions in the Christian use of historical criticism, and challenges confessional scholars, on the one hand, to re-examine the use of historical criticism as a tool of biblical interpretation, and non-confessional scholars, on the other hand, to see historical criticism of biblical texts and the complexities of their modern reception as part of the same phenomenon, and as equally deserving of scholarly scrutiny.

Soft Politics: religion, media and melodrama in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Ann Hardy, University of Waikato

a.hardy@waikato.ac.nz

According to Peter Brooks the melodramatic mode, an inherently secular framework, is the primary mode of textual representation in the modern world. What happens when programme-makers attempt to deal with religion within this framework? What happens when evangelical religious groups try to influence secular processes of governance, but must make that attempt primarily through the channels of the media and therefore shape their actions to suit media values?

This paper looks at two New Zealand examples: the television series *The Insiders Guide to Happiness* (Gibson Group, 2004) and the media coverage of the 2004 public protests led by the Destiny Church - to explore the ways in which they might both draw on melodramatic conceptions of culture and religion. It evaluates the applicability of Brooks' theory to these cases and speculates about the implications of the application of the melodramatic mode for representations of religion in popular culture.

Defining Religion: A Religious Orientation Typology

Paul Hedges, University of Winchester

paul.hedges@winchester.ac.uk

Many attempts have been made to provide a satisfactory definition of religion, but none have met with universal approval. In this paper, I will begin by briefly indicating why, I believe, previous definitions have failed to prove satisfactory. I will then contextualize my proposal in relation to the work of such scholars as Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Ninian Smart and Frank Whaling. In the light of these discussions, I will suggest that rather than looking for, or trying to define, some type of 'thing' called a 'religion', we should be seeking for that which is 'religious'. Certainly, there is no uniformity to this, but, by building a picture of 'family resemblances', the typology will suggest that things can, more or less clearly, be classed within the family of religions. Moreover, the typology is based around the idea of 'orientation' – that is to say, a religion is something that orientates peoples lives to things which are 'religious'. It should be mentioned that while this paper recognizes the problem implicit in the use of the term 'religion', I will nevertheless recommend that we retain it as both a useful and distinct category.

How the Swans Landed: interpreting Buddhism's arrival in New Zealand

Hugh Kemp, Victoria University of Wellington

h.kemp@xnet.co.nz

In this paper, I offer a model for understanding the arrival of Buddhism in New Zealand. Two key periods are offered: the Obscurest and the Modern. The Obscurest period includes aspects of pre-historical Maori myth, the religion of the Chinese goldminers of the 19th century, and the role that Theosophy played in bringing Buddhism to New Zealand in the early 20th century.

The Modern period, dating from the mid 1970s, is comprised of Buddhist traditions which immigrants have brought, and also the neoteric traditions of converts. I argue that the emerging contours of Buddhism in New Zealand are a consequence of this latter Modern period. The Obscurest period, while being of interest, has not influenced today's Buddhism in New Zealand.

A clear chronological sequence of five historical periods emerges: Maori myth (pre-historical), Chinese goldminers (late 19th Century), Theosophy (early 20th Century), Neoteric (from mid 1970s) and Immigrant (from 1980s). I conclude by suggesting that Buddhism in New Zealand is eclectic, and has yet to find a place of consolidation and cultural integration. Nevertheless, the emergence of a uniquely Kiwi Buddhism should not be ruled out.

The Gender of Jesus in the Fifth Gospel

David W. Kim, University of Sydney

davidwj_kim@yahoo.co.uk

The figure of the Historical Jesus that has been analysed in contemporary history is customarily depicted through images of a male human being. The narratives and parables of the synoptic Gospels witness the non- or anti-feminine characteristics, even though the names or titles each author has applied are diverse. The Matthean appellation of Immanuel represents the Jewish Messiah as 'God (is) with us', while the narrator of the first Gospel (Mark) adopted the religious occupations of Jewish Rabbi, Prophet, and Miracle Worker. The Lukan text is not exceptional, as Jesus is typically called Lord, which the Hebrew Torah reserved for 'Yahweh'. On the other hand, the paper will not only critically re-evaluate the Johannine *Ego Eimi* sayings, but also, in terms of a non-canonical tradition, it will explore the ancient documents of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654, 1, 655 and Nag Hammadi II, 2 to unveil the theosophical nature of Jesus for the Thomasine community of early Christianity. The *Logia* tradition of Thomas in relation to Q will contribute a fresh insight through the principle of self-definition.

Spiritual Practice as Environmental Activism in an Australian Ashram

Catherine Laudine, The University of Newcastle

catherine.laudine@newcastle.edu.au

Om Shree Dham is a farm and also an ashram at Cedar Creek in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia, where ancient Vedic fire practices for purifying and healing the atmosphere are performed regularly by a group of white Australians. The main fire practice is known as Agnihotra and as well as removing the toxic conditions of the atmosphere through the agency of fire, the practice is understood to heal the practitioner. Agnihotra practitioners believe that these practices are our last chance to right the balance on earth before some final ecological cataclysm takes place.

At least one member of this group joined because he felt that he was doing more thereby in the cause of environmental activism than he had been doing previously as the Newcastle organiser for Greenpeace. Viswan feels that homa therapy is also pro-active direct action like Greenpeace but of another kind. This is now his preferred form of direction action.

This paper – based on one of the case studies for my doctorate – looks at Viswan's explanation of these practices and at his reasoning regarding the efficacy of Agnihotra and raises some questions about the implications of this.

Dancing the body of God: Rituals of embodiment and tales of justice from the Central Himalayas

Aditya Malik, University of Canterbury

aditya.malik@canterbury.ac.nz

Kumaon is a mountainous region in the Indian Himalayas bordering on Nepal in the east and Tibet in the north. Together with the province of Garhwal, Kumaon forms one of the most recently established states of India, Uttarakhand. Several powerful gods and goddess reside here along the banks of sacred rivers and on the snow covered mountain peaks. Though it is claimed that some of these deities may have initially “travelled” to Kumaon from Nepal, they are now very much rooted in the land and culture of Kumaon. These gods are present in hillside shrines in villages and in rituals of embodiment in which they enter and speak through the bodies of sensitive “dancers” (*nacnevala*) during intense “awakening” sessions (*jagar*). While each deity is strong and effective in dealing with issues that face devotees, many Kumaonis gently assert that there is a hierarchy amongst these “Kumaoni” deities. The deity who is considered the most powerful of them all is Goludevta who is known as the “God of Justice” (*nyay devta*). Goludevta’s advice on matters of justice is, among other means, also sought through rituals of embodiment in which the god speaks through a “dancer” to his devotees. The dancer (*nacnevala*), who is also referred to as the deity’s “horse” (*ghoda*) is transformed or “awakened” through the words and music of an “awakener” (*jagariya*) who tells the story of Goludevta which is essentially about the injustices experienced by God in his own life-story. By telling this story of injustice the “awakener” literally *causes* the god of justice to be embodied. What does it mean, in this context to “awaken” God and to embody him? What does it mean to dance God? And, why does God dance? During the ritual of “awakening” first the “awakener” and then the “dancer” tell the God’s story. Although they tell the same story, can we draw a distinction between the speech and words of the “awakener” and the speech and words of the “dancer”? Moreover, what does “justice” mean in this context? In this paper I explore the possibility of a hermeneutics of dance, ritual speech and justice in the context of the religious cult of Goludevta.

Judas and fiction in the quest for the historical Jesus

Albert Moore, University of Otago

The paper will discuss the interplay of imaginative fiction and historical reconstruction in the recent “controversial novel” by C.K. Stead, *My Name was Judas* (2006, Vintage Books, London). Although written as a literary fiction, the novel raises issues familiar from the “quest of the historical Jesus” and suggests alternative possibilities.

The place of humour in spiritual transcendence

Carmen Moran, University of New South Wales

c.moran@unsw.edu.au

Scholars across multiple disciplines agree that humour can be related, albeit in various ways, to spirituality. For example, some scholars have debated whether humour is a cause or consequence of spiritual transcendence. This paper looks at claims made for humour in the context of spirituality. Rather than focus on the historical, theological perspectives on humour, this paper considers perspectives from contemporary views of spirituality, and contemporary scholarship on humour. This paper delineates certain fundamental characteristics of humour which parallel characteristics of popular, contemporary approaches to spirituality. At the same time, it posits that any attempt to relate humour to spiritual transcendence will be limited unless the complexity of humour is accounted for. Numerous variables contribute to similarities and differences in spirituality, humour, and their relationship. Life stage is one variable that is of special relevance in a discussion that includes humour. Accordingly, this paper gives special consideration to humour, spirituality, and personal transcendence in life-stage context.

Christian Nation or Secular State? Religious Policy and Religious Studies in New Zealand

Paul Morris, Victoria University of Wellington

paul.morris@vuw.ac.nz

This paper explores the implications for Religious Studies in New Zealand of the development of religious policy. The author led a project developing a National Statement on Religious Diversity under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development and the Human Rights Commission. The first part of the paper maps the process and reports the public responses to the national consultation. The second part analyses these and discusses the contentious issues raised, focussing on the questions of national identity. The third part of the paper relates the findings and analysis to the teaching of Religious Studies in New Zealand universities. The conclusion makes a number of suggestions for bringing our teaching closer to the religious realities 'out there', so to speak and the implicit agenda of our programmes.

When Buddha came to Ultima Thule. The Initial Reception of Buddhism in Sweden from the 17th to the 19th Centuries

Jürgen Offermanns, Lund University

j.offermands.rel.hist@telia.com

The academic study of Western Buddhism started in the 1980s. While the growing scholarly interest in Western Buddhism during the past two decades resulted in a wealth of important writings on Asian immigrant and Western convert communities, socially engaged Buddhism, or interfaith dialogue, research on the historical reception of Buddhism in the West is still in its infancy. Cursory outlines of the early encounters between Buddhism and Western culture, usually starting with the arrival of Buddhist manuscripts in Europe in the early 19th century, are primarily used as convenient prologues to more specific investigations.

But the westernization of Buddhism already commenced in the sixteenth century with the first Jesuit missionary letters from China and Japan and the best-selling travel literature describing the peculiar “religion of the Fo.” These reports not only comprehended information regarding the Buddhist teachings and practices, but also they were a mirror image of European intellectual history of religion. The initial reception of Buddhism in Europe can only be understood in the context of the religious, political or social discourses occurring at the time. During the passing on of the Buddhist religion into European culture it was not the subject of faith that was discussed; what really received attention and interest were the theological, philosophical, and social questions in Europe, which could be either supported or refuted by Buddhism.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the research concerning the historical adaptation of Buddhism in the West by an analysis of the Swedish reception of Buddhism from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The main focus lies on two questions. What kind of sources on Buddhism were accessible to Swedes at this time and how did the cultural and religious circumstances in Sweden influence the understanding of the Buddhist tradition?

The *Bhadracarī* Verses in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism

Douglas Osto, Massey University

d.osto@massey.ac.nz

The *Bhadracarīprañidhāna* is a collection of sixty-two Buddhist verses originally composed in Sanskrit probably sometime around the sixth century CE. Largely devotional, these verses recount in the first person, a bodhisattva’s aspiration to worship all Buddhas and become enlightened for the sake of all beings. By the eighth century, the *Bhadracarī* was incorporated into the concluding chapter of the *Gāndavyūha-sūtra* as the words of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. From this time, the text gained popularity throughout the entire Asian Buddhist world. In the Indian and Tibetan traditions it is referenced in numerous literary sources and appears in Sanskrit and Tibetan inscriptions. Evidence suggests that beyond their semantic significance these verses were considered a *dhāraṇī* or ‘spell’, which would bestow merit upon its reciter. This paper will examine the religious importance of the *Bhadracarī* in terms of its both its semantic content and talismanic power within Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

Why Dialogue? Christian Engagement in Interfaith Relations

Douglas Pratt, University of Waikato

dpratt@waikato.ac.nz

For nearly 2000 years the primary stance of Christianity and Christians towards other faiths and their peoples was to treat them as radically ‘other’ and the targets of evangelical mission. During the 20th century a sequence of dramatic changes occurred, principally through the ecclesial organs of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, even though many Christians (and others) are by no means adequately aware of them.

In this paper I briefly review the nature of, and reasons for, this change and discuss some of the key issues and problems that have arisen.

Tolerance, citizenship and religion education: a basis for rage or hope?

Paul Prinsloo, University of South Africa

prinsp@unisa.ac.za

Religion continues to be the basis for many acts of intolerance and violence on the local as well as global arena. Yet the teaching about religions continues to be seen as a possible basis for more just and tolerant societies. Is “knowing about” other religions the missing link? Will the teaching about religions in schools contribute to more tolerant citizens? Do we have any reason to believe that it can? Or is the notion that the teaching of religions can contribute to a more just society underestimating the role and complex mix of ideologies and socioeconomic realities?

Up to 1994, South African primary and secondary education was based on and promoted a Christian worldview and belief system. In 1996 South Africa accepted a new dispensation with the National Policy on Religion and Education. This policy is a specific response to questions raised by a society known for its liquid diversity, risks, unpredictability and supercomplexity. The policy is furthermore the “result” of a process compromised by different groups’ interests and ideologies. It is built on assumptions about the role of religion and it also endorses a particular view of citizenship. The broad aim of the policy is to contribute to the empowering of our learners as critical citizens who can participate in a pluralistic, multi-religious and complex society. As part of the curriculum to prepare learners for citizenship, religion education is foreseen to play an important role.

In the light of a specific notion of citizenship, the policy identified the following elements as being crucial for every citizen to have:

- A sound knowledge about religions.
- Increasing self-awareness.
- An understanding of the “other”.
- Critical abilities for thinking about religions and religions; learners who have the powers of critical reflection in thinking through problems of religious or moral concern.
- Emphasis on morality and values, such as respect for diversity, reduced prejudice, and increased civil toleration.

The paper will explore and question the “black box” assumptions of the Policy using discourse analysis as well as theory evaluation. The epistemological and ontological assumptions will be discussed and interrogated. The paper will close with an initial critical evaluation of the possibilities of the Policy to really contribute to a more just and compassionate society.

Formularizing of behaviour by religious experiences

Farid Seyed Rabi, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes-Sorbonne

faridrabi2000@yahoo.com

In this article it is been studied an explanation about regularizing process of religious behaviour through sociological perspective.

The hypotheses are:

- Religious experience as an psychic and emotional reward stimulate individual to repeat it for regaining such rewards.
- Religious experience ability to produce such rewards frequently, will conditioning the man to reoperate previous actions related to the experience.
- The actions as religious practices (in view of the man) are primary regulations of religious behaviour.

- In the long time, the religious experiences increasingly will regularize religious behaviour of the man. In other words the rewards will be related to more regularized religious behaviour.
- religious behavioural regulations (religious experience approach) are parts of the social interaction between man and God.

The hypotheses will be examined through documental survey.

A Polar Night of Icy Darkness? Toward a Theory of Reenchantment

Eric Repphun, University of Otago

i-con-o-clast@ihug.co.nz

The word reenchantment has become increasingly common in many areas of the academy, but rarely is this usage accompanied by any serious inquiry into what the idea of reenchantment might entail. Starting with the conception of reenchantment as suggested by Max Weber's narrative of disenchantment and moving through an assessment, based on an extensive survey, of the myriad of uses of the word, this paper seeks to establish a meaning, or, more properly, a set of related meanings, of the concept of reenchantment. Properly understood, reenchantment offers a way to expand upon and contemporize Weber's foundational work on the sociology of religion. In addition, reenchantment can offer new and fruitful ways of exploring difficult questions of value and utility in our technology-saturated consumer society.

A new generation's perceptions and understandings of religious diversity: Implications for religious education

Marian de Souza, Australian Catholic University

marian.desouza@acu.edu.au

The impact of globalization has made the world an increasingly small place in terms of mobility and accessibility and it has resulted in large movements of people from one context to another, thereby increasing the exposure and impact of one culture upon another. In addition, in recent years, the tensions between the US (and therefore, Australia) and the Middle East which has culminated in tensions between Christians and the Muslim world has been the focus of newspaper headlines, politicians' speeches and so on. As a result, the cultural and political façade of Australian society has been coloured by opportunism, ignorance and misunderstanding which has led to fear, distrust and prejudice.

This paper, will focus on these changing social and political contexts that have begun to characterize Australian society. It will discuss the implications for religious education particularly for a new, emerging generation who has grown up against this backdrop of factional and regional wars and natural disasters worldwide and it will explore their perceptions, experiences and understandings of religious diversity which is a feature of contemporary society.

Enlightenment and exorcism in two 18th century missionary periodicals

Will Sweetman, University of Otago

will.sweetman@otago.ac.nz

The Jesuit *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (1702-1776) and the Lutheran *Hallesche Berichte* (1710-1772) are almost exactly contemporary and many of the reports of India which they contain were written from the same Indian region, and have similar concerns. This paper will examine two very different aspects of these missionary reports. On the one hand the missionaries may be seen as agents of the Enlightenment in their efforts to use European science in the service of mission. On the other hand both sets of missionaries accepted the reality of demonic possession and were not above engaging in exorcism themselves, while at the same time being critical of each other's involvement in such practices. Their reports contributed to a still lively discussion of such matters in Europe. The paper will conclude by examining the reception of the mission reports in Europe and the use made of them in religious and anti-religious polemic among Catholics, Protestants and others.

Cleanliness in a Caste-less Context: Negotiations of Purity and Pollution among Fiji's Sanatan Hindus

Susanna Trnka, University of Auckland

s.trnka@auckland.ac.nz

This paper addresses the meanings ascribed to Hindu practices of maintaining bodily cleanliness (or being 'saf') in a social context of very limited caste. I argue that in the absence of caste boundaries, for Fiji's Hindus cleanliness is a marker of religious and ethnic identity that is used to differentiate Indo-Fijians from Fijians, and Hindus from Muslims and Christians. Hindus' adherence to the precept of praying only while being "clean" is furthermore utilized as a significant means of assessing devotion and moral conduct within the Sanatan Hindu religious community. Based upon fieldwork in a Hindu women's kirtan or devotional singing group in Fiji, this paper specifically considers the ways in which Hindu women understand and evaluate the bodily enactments they undertake to transform their bodies from "dirty" to "clean." By examining the cases of women who were accused of praying despite being "polluted", the paper furthermore addresses the ways in which Hindu women actively re-interpret and collectively negotiate the precepts of cleanliness in order to allow for the expression of their religious devotion.

Interpreting jihad: beyond apologetics and polemics

Christopher van der Krogt, Massey University

c.j.vanderkrogt@massey.ac.nz

Explanations of jihad by contemporary Western interpreters often reflect the views of 'modernist' Muslims who hold that Islam permits only defensive warfare. Particular emphasis is placed on the 'greater jihad', the struggle against the self in order to achieve submission to Allah, which is portrayed as the primary meaning of jihad in Islamic thought. As a corollary, Muslim terrorists are characteristically described as having 'hijacked' their religion, distorting its peaceful message into one of hatred and violence for purposes incompatible with authentic Islam.

By contrast, polemical interpretations commonly present jihad in an essentialist manner as a permanent divine mandate to wage war upon unbelievers. Thus, Muslim terrorists are fully representative of Islam and the Muslim community, and the modernist interpretation of jihad as defensive is deemed to be misguided or disingenuous.

Both interpretations of jihad are influenced by the agendas of Westerners themselves, notably a desire to promote rapprochement with Muslims and to delegitimize contemporary expressions of jihad such as those of the Palestinians and al-Qaeda. This paper explores the varying interpretations of jihad offered by Western writers and endorses the more nuanced and historically based analysis of more objective and critical scholars.

The Limits of Invention in a South Indian Revivalist Tradition

Rick Weiss, Victoria University of Wellington

rick.weiss@vuw.ac.nz

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's influential volume, *The Invention of Tradition*, remains a milestone in scholarly approaches to the study of tradition. However, in emphasizing conscious manipulations of tradition, and in employing a notion of invention that lacks nuance, the authors of that volume do not sufficiently acknowledge the degree to which invented traditions draw from prior traditions. I explore here the limits of conscious constructions of tradition, arguing that traditions that serve as powerful touchstones for identity cannot be invented *ex nihilo*. I look at an instance of elite formulation of tradition, the Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu, South India, in the first half of the twentieth century, which articulated a new formulation of Tamil tradition based largely on European models and ideals. I argue that the Dravidian Movement failed to win political support because they discarded nearly all the components of prior Tamil tradition, and the novel tradition they authored in turn was unrecognizable to ordinary Tamils.