

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN NORTH AMERICA: NOVEMBER 22, 2002

The Pluralism Project at Harvard University Conference, Toronto, Canada
Held in conjunction with the 2002 American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting

Invited Guests

From Canada:

Religion and Ethnicity in Canada

Harold Coward

Harold Coward is a Research Fellow and Former Director of The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, and a Fellow, Royal Society of Canada. He is currently Chair, Ethics Committee, Genome BC and Co-Director of the SSHRC/NSERC funded Coasts Under Stress project, a 6 million dollar 5 year study of human and environmental health in Canada's Coastal Communities. He also directed *A Cross-Cultural Dialogue on Health Care Ethics* (Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1999), a 3 year SSHRC/Ford Foundation funded study of how to do health care ethics with sensitivity to Canada's religious and minority cultures, now used in nursing and medical schools. With G. Hartrick he authored "Perspectives on health and cultural pluralism," *Clinical and Investigative Medicine* (2000).

Paul Bramadat

Paul Bramadat is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Winnipeg. His research interests include religion and contemporary culture, religion in Canada, and multiculturalism. He is the author of *The Church on the World's Turf* (Oxford University Press, 2000), an ethnographic study of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at McMaster University. He has published articles in *Ethnologies and Canadian Ethnic Studies*, and is the co-editor, with David Seljak, of *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*.

David Seljak

David Seljak is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University. He is director of the St. Jerome's Centre for Catholic Experience. His primary area of research and teaching is the academic study of religion and Canadian society. He has published widely on religion and nationalism. His recent publications include: "Canadian Identity and the Persistence of Religion," *International Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue Internationale D'études Canadiennes* (2001), and "Why the Quiet Revolution was 'quiet': The Catholic Church's reaction to the secularization of nationalism in Quebec," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association: Historical Studies, 1994-1995*(1996). He is currently working on project with Paul Bramadat (University of Winnipeg) on religion and ethnicity in Canada.

Sheila McDonough

Sheila McDonough is Professor Emerita at Concordia University. Dr. McDonough completed her PhD in 1963 as the first female graduate of McGill's Institute of Islamic studies. She has published over 30 chapters and articles and four books, most recently *Gandhi's Responses to Islam* (D.K. Printworld, New Delhi, 1994) and *The Flame of Sinai: Vision and Hope in Iqbal* (Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 2002). She has worked with the United Church of Canada to foster interfaith dialogue and promote Christian-Muslim relations.

University of Toronto

Arti Dhand

Arti Dhand is an Assistant Professor at the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. A scholar of Hinduism, her research interests include the Mahabharata and the Ramayana (Hindu epics); Hindu ethics, Gender Issues in Hinduism, and Violence and Non-Violence in the Indic Traditions.

Pamela Klassen

Pamela E. Klassen is an Associate Professor in the Department and Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. A scholar of religion in North America, her research interests include religion and reproduction, twentieth century Christianity, and medical anthropology. She is currently working on a SSHRC-funded research project exploring the intersection of religion and biomedicine in Toronto. Her related publications include: *Blessed Events: Religion and Home Birth in America* (Princeton University Press, 2001), and "Sacred Maternities and Postbiomedical Bodies: Religion and Nature in Contemporary Home Birth," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (2001).

Walid Saleh

Walid Saleh completed his PhD at Yale University Program in Islamic Studies in 2001. A former Assistant Professor in the Religion Department at Middlebury College, he is currently an Assistant Professor affiliated with the Center for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto.

Other Canadian Academics

Mathieu Boisvert

Mathieu Boisvert is a Professor in the Département des sciences religieuses at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Professor Boisvert is author of *The Five Aggregates: Understanding Theravada Psychology and Soteriology*.

www.unites.uqam.ca/dscrel/profs/departement/boisvertm.html

Saroj Chawla

Saroj Chawla (Ph.D., York) is Assistant Professor (Arts) and Undergraduate Program Director in the Department of Sociology at York University. In her teaching and her writing, Prof. Chawla champions a "compassionate perspective" in sociology. Her academic interests include religion, comparative philosophy, classical theory, ethnicity/race relations, family, and women's studies. She has published articles on female empowerment and goddess worship, and non-eurocentric approaches to social change. Prof. Chawla is a recipient of the John O'Neill Award for Teaching Excellence (2000). www.arts.yorku.ca/soci/facstaff/people/chawla.html

Carol B. Duncan

Carol B. Duncan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her academic degrees include: B.A. (Toronto); M.A. (York); Ph.D. (York). Her areas of study are: religion and culture of the African diaspora, Caribbean religions, especially the Spiritual Baptist and Orisha religions, postcolonialism, cultural studies, educational studies, especially critical pedagogy, and women's studies.

www.wlu.ca/~wwrandc/faculty/cduncan/

Michael Lanphier

Michael Lanphier is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Deputy Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University. He worked with Janet McLellan on "The Role of Religion and Religious Institutions in the lives of Elderly Newcomers", featuring Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists within the Greater Toronto Area.

Janet McLellan

Janet McLellan is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research interests include the relations between ethnic identity, religion and multiculturalism; Buddhist immigrants and refugees in Canada; Buddhists in Malaysia, Cambodia and Thailand; and the Tiep Hien Order in France. Her most recent book is *Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto* (University of Toronto Press, 1999). www.wlu.ca/~wwrandc/faculty/jmclellan

Jamie S. Scott

Jamie S. Scott (Ph.D., University of Chicago) is Associate Professor in the Division of Humanities at York University. Though he has published widely on various kinds of religious autobiographical literature, Professor Scott's current research interests range widely in interdisciplinary studies in Religion and Literature and Religion and Geography. He is editing *Religion, Geography and Post-Colonial Literatures*, a collection of essays on the social, economic and political implications of the representation of sacred space and religious landscapes in post-colonial literatures. Funded by a major research grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, he is writing a book, *Representing God: Christian Missions and Canadian Literatures in English*. He is conducting comparative research on the literary representation of Christian missions in post-colonial writings in English for a book provisionally titled, *Writing Back to a White God: Christian Missions and the English Literatures*

of Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Native Peoples. This work on the literary aspects of Christian mission studies has also involved Professor Scott and colleagues in the Division of Humanities in a two-year seminar series, "Mission Studies at York." www.yorku.ca/human/people/scott.html

Terry Woo

Terry Woo is Assistant Professor in the Department of Comparative Religion at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Terry Woo graduated from the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto in 2000. Her dissertation dealt with how Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist teachings about women, and popular beliefs and practices affected the lives of women during 713 to 756. She is also interested in the current state of religious development within the Chinese-Canadian community. Most recently, she has researched the use of spirit shrines in shops and restaurants in the Metropolitan Toronto Area Chinatowns.

Metropolis Project www.metropolis.net

John Biles

John Biles is the international project liaison for the Metropolis Project Team at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, as well as the senior policy officer for the Canadian Studies Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage. These two positions as well as his prior position with the strategic policy and research group of the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage, have led to an interest in a range of research interests around immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship. Key research areas include political participation, religion and public policy, and federal diversity policies.

Humera Ibrahim

Humera Ibrahim is the Metropolis Project Liaison for the Strategic Policy and Research Unit at the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage. She has worked extensively with immigrant and refugee communities, more specifically on issues of settlement, trauma and torture, racism, and experiences of second generation youth. She is also on the National Board of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. She completed her Masters of Social Work at Carleton University with a focus on gender, domestic violence, and immigrant integration.

Canadian Islamic Congress

Wahida Valiante

Wahida Chishti Valiante is a family therapist who specializes in family mediation, domestic violence, and couple and marital therapy. She is a pioneer in the field of developing therapeutic interventions, for treating family conflict and intergenerational issues from Islamic perspective based on the Qur'anic definition of human psyche, human behavior, and family relationships. Valiante has made numerous presentations to academic institutions and professionals both nationally and internationally on the development of human personality and the role of family

and religion. She is a published author on the South Asian family, domestic violence, and the social work interventions. Valiante is also the National Vice President of Canadian Islamic Congress, and is a political and social activist. She has a private consulting and counseling practice in Toronto.

http://www.canadianislamiccongress.com/r1/about_cic.shtml

Canadian Zoroastrian Scholars

Yezdi Antia

Yezdi Antia, one of the founding members and a past president of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, is the son of a punthaky, and was raised in Devlali, India. He was one of the two organizers of the First North American Zoroastrian Conference held in Toronto in 1975. He was ordained a priest before the age of twelve, and like many other priests, had learned the ritual but remained ignorant of the religion. In 1967 he came to Toronto, Canada, as a civil engineer and volunteered his services as a priest whenever they were required. He read numerous books on Zoroastrianism, but it was only when he came upon a translation of the Gathas that he began to acquire a coherent picture of the fundamental principles of the religion. In his studies of the Gathas, he uses the translations of Taraporewala, Insler, Sethna, and D.J. Irani.

<http://www.zarathushtra.com/z/article/dgm/vol10.htm>

Jehan Bagli

Jehan Bagli obtained a Doctorate in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of London, and was the director of research at the Wyeth-Ayerst Research Laboratories in Princeton, NJ until his retirement. He became an ordained Zoroastrian priest at age 14, and established the first Zoroastrian publication in North America "Gavashni" in 1974. This publication has since become the FEZANA journal. Dr. Bagli is an accomplished Zoroastrian scholar and researcher.

<http://www.vohuman.org/Author/Bagli,Jehan.htm>

Other Canadians

Terry Woo

Terry Woo graduated from the University of Waterloo, in Waterloo, Ontario with a degree in Systems Design Engineering, and one in Psychology. His novel, *Banana Boys* (The Riverbank Press, 2000), is about five Chinese Canadians, "Bananas" (read: yellow on the outside, white on the inside), caught in between two cultures which do not seem to accept them fully.

www.bananaboys.com

From the United States:

Muslims in the American Public Square (MAPS) www.projectmaps.com

Sulayman S. Nyang

Sulayman Nyang has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. He teaches at the department of African Studies, Howard University in Washington, DC. He served as department chair from 1986 to 1993. He also served, from 1975 to 1978, as Deputy Ambassador of the Gambian Embassy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He is currently the Lead Developer for the African Voice Project of the Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution. Professor Nyang has served on the boards of the African Studies Association, the American Council for the Study of the Islamic Societies and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists. He is also a member of the Academic Council of the Center for the Muslim-Christian Understanding. He is a frequent lecturer on college campuses, Islamic centers and national conventions of various Islamic organizations of North America. He has written extensively on Islamic, African and Middle Eastern affairs and has also contributed over a dozen chapters in edited books. His recent book, *Islam in the United States of America* (1999), is a collection of essays written over several years.

www.projectmaps.com/investigators.htm

Zahid Bukhari

Zahid H. Bukhari is currently working as Director, Pew Project: Muslims in the American Public Square, and Fellow, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Dr. Bukhari has a Masters in Economics from the University of Karachi and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Connecticut. His research interests have focused on religion and politics in the United States. He has vast experience in all aspects of survey research. From 1978-1983, he worked as founding executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion (PIPO), Islamabad, a member of Gallup International. He also participated, from 1993-1995, in a national study of the Islamic centers/mosques across North America conducted by the Islamic Resource Institute, Los Angeles, CA. He has published and presented papers on Islam and development, Muslim public opinion in the U.S. and other related topics in national and international forums. Dr. Bukhari has an extensive experience of working with various Islamic organizations and also with other religious groups in the U.S. He was one of the founders of the National Islamic Shura Council, a representative body of the American Muslims consisting of four national Islamic organizations. Dr. Bukhari also worked as Secretary General of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) from 1990 to 1995. Since 1996, he has also been the chairman of ICNA Relief, a not-for-profit relief organization, which operates national and international projects.

www.projectmaps.com/investigators.htm

Pluralism Project

Diana Eck, [Director](#)

Grove Harris, [Project Manager](#)

Clare Giles, [Research Associate](#)

Pluralism Project Advisors

Vasudha Narayanan

University of Florida, Gainesville, Department of Religion
Hinduism in the U.S.; Hindu-Muslim Interactions in Ritual Spaces; Women in the Hindu Tradition

Paul Numrich

University of Illinois/Chicago

[Buddhist Chicago Project: A Scholarly Study of Chicago-area Buddhists and their Organizations](#)

Paul D. Numrich is a research Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Loyola University Chicago, conducting research out of the department's McNamara Center for the Social Study of Religion. Dr. Numrich co-directs the Religion, Immigration and Civil Society in Chicago Project, a three-year scholarly investigation of religion's role in the social engagement of recent immigrant groups (funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts), and also directs projects on culturally competent health care for immigrant Buddhist and Hindu patients (funded by the Donors Forum of Chicago) and local Christian responses to increasing religious diversity (funded by the Louisville Institute). Dr. Numrich's publications include an award-winning book, *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples* (University of Tennessee Press, 1996); portions of the volume *Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America* in the acclaimed Religion in American Life Series (Oxford University Press, 2001); and essays entitled "Recent Immigrant Religions and the Restructuring of Metropolitan Chicago," "How the Swans Came to Lake Michigan: The Social Organization of Buddhist Chicago," "Health Care and the New Immigration," and "Marriage, Family, and Health in Selected World Religions: Different Perspectives in an Increasingly Pluralist America."

Richard Seager

Hamilton College, Religious Studies Department
Buddhism in the U.S.

Robert Stockman

DePaul University, Religious Studies Department; Institute for Baha'i Studies
Baha'i History; World Religions in America; Interfaith Activities; Baha'i Curriculum Development

Yifa

Hsi Lai University
Monastic Regulation and Institutions; Chinese Buddhism; Humanistic Buddhism; Vinaya from Chinese Resources

Pluralism Project Affiliates**Vivodh Anand**

Indo-American Cultural Society

[Edison's Navratri: A Report on Religious Conflict in the Community](#)

Linda Barnes

Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA
[The Boston Healing Landscape Project](#)

Patrice Brodeur

Department of Religious Studies at Connecticut College, New London, CT
[The Pluralism Project at Connecticut College](#)

Stuart Chandler

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
[Western Pennsylvania's Evolving Religious Pluralism](#)

Stuart Chandler (Ph.D., Harvard University) is Assistant Professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Professor Chandler is also Managing Editor of, and was an Editorial Board Member (2000-2002) for, the *Journal of Global Buddhism*. His forthcoming book is titled: *Creating a Pureland on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*.

Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, with student researchers José-Josiah Estéban Rodríguez-Sanjuro and Anne Chernick

Rollins College
[Religious Life in Orlando, Florida \(1900-1999\)](#)

Claude Jacobs and Bill McNeece, Hashim Al-Tawil, and Paula Drewek

The University of Michigan—Dearborn
[Mapping the Religious Landscape of Detroit, Michigan](#)

Jeanne H. Kilde

Macalester College and the University of Minnesota
[Mapping Religious Pluralism in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area](#)

Lance Laird

The Evergreen State College
Re-mapping the Religious Landscape of Western Washington

Rita Lester, with student researchers Jeff Clinger and Jenn Ortegren

Nebraska Wesleyan University
Changing Religious Landscape of Lincoln, NE

Mark W. MacWilliams with student researcher Casey Peterson

St. Lawrence University
[Mapping the New Religious Landscape of the North Country \(Upstate New York\)](#)

Viggo Mortensen

University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark
Mapping the Religious Landscape of Aarhus, Denmark

Corrie Norman

Converse College

[Gender, Food, and Meaning: Mapping Religious Diversity in Charlotte, NC](#)

Corrie Norman is Assistant Professor of Religion and Director of the Rome Program at Converse College in Spartanburg, SC. She is an historian of Christianity and has published several articles and one book on early modern Catholicism in Italy. She also publishes on religion and higher education and is editor of a forthcoming volume on religion in the southern United States. Her current research intersects with the Pluralism Project, and concerns the relationships between food and religion. She has published articles and essays and is working on a book related to that theme. Recently, her article about her students' work with the Pluralism Project, "Savoring the Sacred: Understanding Religion Through Food," appeared in the Phi Kappa Phi Forum.

Karen Prentiss

Drew University

Historical Religions New to the American Context in Northern and Central New Jersey

Allen Richardson

Cedar Crest College

[Religious Diversity and the Re-definition of Community in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Coal Region](#)

The Vraj affiliate research project is documenting the creation of a multi-million dollar temple (haveli) near Pottsville, Pennsylvania which will be the spiritual headquarters in the western hemisphere for the Vallabha Sampradaya, a north Indian bhakti sect. The temple, which is in the final stages of completion, was dedicated this summer over a month long period in which visiting goswamis or spiritual leaders performed rituals that brought life to an image of Sri Nathji, a special form of Krishna as a child. The research continues to explore the creation of sacred space in a transplanted north American environment, examining sources of authority within the tradition and in the perception of devotees who are first and second generation immigrants. The next phase of the work will also involve the relationship between the sect and residents of greater Pottsville which is part of northeastern Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region.

Thomas Russell

Western Kentucky University

[Bible Belt Religion: Mapping the Religious Landscape of "The Corridor"](#)

Lawrence Snyder

Western Kentucky University

[Bible Belt Religion: Mapping the Religious Landscape of "The Corridor"](#)

Jeanne Matthews Sommer

Warren Wilson College

[Asheville's Spiritual Odyssey](#)

George Wiley

Baker University

[World Religions in Northeast Kansas](#)

George Wiley teaches world religions courses and directs a student research project profiling religious sites in northeast Kansas. The project's research includes profiles of the Kansas Zen Center (Lawrence), Rime Buddhist Center (Kansas City), Baha'i Center of Topeka, and Islamic Center of Topeka. His research interests include the religious diversity of Kansas, the theology of St. Paul, and Christian sexual ethics.

Yifa

Hsi Lai University

Monastic Regulation and Institutions; Chinese Buddhism; Humanistic Buddhism; Vinaya from Chinese Resources

[Other American academics](#)

Jack Hawley

Jack (a.k.a. John Stratton) Hawley is professor and chair in the Religion Department at Barnard College, Columbia University. Much of his published research focuses on devotional traditions of North India, especially Hindu goddesses and the worship of Krishna and his consort Radha. He has edited two comparative volumes, *Saints and Virtues* (California, 1987) and *Fundamentalism and Gender* (Oxford, 1994), and is working with Kimberley Patton on a third: *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religion Imagination* (Princeton, forthcoming). From 1989-1997 Professor Hawley was Director of the National Resource Center for South Asia at Columbia.

www.barnard.edu/religion/hawleycv.html

Eboo Patel

Eboo Patel received his doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University (2002), where he studied on a Rhodes Scholarship. He currently teaches Religion and Social Justice and Community Development for the Urban Studies Program of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. He also serves as Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based international organization that brings youth from different faith communities together in interfaith service-learning programs.

Elijah Siegler

Elijah Siegler received his AB from Harvard, his MA and his C. Phil from UC Santa Barbara, all in Comparative Religion. He is presently completing his doctoral dissertation on the history and practice of Daoism in North America, the first substantial work on the subject. Besides American Daoism, he has published articles on New Age channeling movements and on morality in TV police dramas. His research interests include new, immigrant and popular religion in the United States and Canada, religion and media, and religion in China.

Other International Guests

Benita von Behr

Board Member

Religious Studies Media and Information Service, Marburg, Germany

http://www.remid.de/remid_english.htm