



University  
of Victoria



## CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN RELIGION & SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

University of Victoria, Canada  
Volume 20, Fall 2011



Members of the 2011 external review team: Dr. Michel Desjardins, Department of Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University (left), Dr. Lori Beaman, Canada Research Chair and member of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, and Dr. John Lutz, Department of History, University of Victoria.  
*Photo L. Kenny*

### CSRS Passes Five-Year Review

The centre underwent its fourth successful external review in 2011, receiving high marks for performance in the areas of research productivity, student training, civic engagement and overall contribution to the university's academic mission. In its final report to the university, the review panel praised the range and quality of the centre's activities, which were found to "meet or exceed university and national standards for excellence."

Based on the positive review, the centre has been renewed by the University of Victoria Senate for a further five years to 2016. CSRS director Paul Bramadat noted he was encouraged by the findings and especially by the panel's comments concerning the centre's "growing reputation outside of Victoria as a highly regarded centre of excellence in the study of religion and society."

### India Research Fellowship Launched

A scholarship fund created ten years ago will soon be put toward strengthening the university's capacity in research on South Asia. Beginning in 2012, monies from the Harold Coward Fellowship fund (initiated in 2002 to mark Dr. Coward's retirement) will be used to sponsor visits from Indian scholars of religion to the University of Victoria.

In commenting on the decision, CSRS Program Committee member Sikata Banerjee, a South Asian specialist and the university's associate dean of humanities, welcomed the addition of new resources for research on India. "South Asian Canadians are the second largest minority in Canada, but research on this region is under represented at UVic," she said.

Banerjee added that the fellowship will enrich the UVic community and strengthen its engagement with institutions in India.

Dr. Harold Coward is a leading Canadian scholar of Hinduism and comparative religion. He was the founder and first director of the CSRS from 1992 to 2002 and remains a respected and influential advocate of the interdisciplinary study of religion.

A recruitment process to appoint the first recipient of the award in fall 2012 is currently underway. Those wishing to support the Harold Coward India Fellowship fund through a tax-deductible donation are encouraged to contact the centre's development officer, Karen Whyte, at 250-853-3893.



Ganges River, Benares. The fellowship will be used to sponsor visits from Indian scholars to the University of Victoria.  
*Photo Paul Bramadat*

### IN THIS ISSUE

News and notes | 2011/12 Fellows | Events | Research: features and briefs  
Books | In the Spotlight: Bill Howie

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



CSRS Director, Paul Bramadat

The CSRS offers a unique opportunity to reflect critically upon the complex issues we face as a society both now and in the past. I am always pleased when I hear – as I often do – about the ways our research fellows have been transformed by time spent in the interdisciplinary social and intellectual environment of the CSRS.

The activities profiled in these pages are organized around the constantly evolving network of visiting scholars, graduate students and community members who spend time at the centre each year. As you'll see from the schedule of events, our Wednesday afternoon lectures will range from discussions about ancient rock art in Europe to land

policies in British Mandate Palestine to Indigenous cultural practices in British Columbia to stories about Buddhist women. In other words, there is something for everyone.

Major research initiatives this year (p. 11) will include projects devoted to religious radicalization; the role of religiously affiliated groups in immigrant settlement work; the role of religion and culture in vaccine hesitancy; and the way "spirituality" is framed in hospice palliative care.

In an effort to open our community up to the insights of artists, we teamed up with Doug Jarvis (2010/11 CSRS Artist-in-Residence) and his colleagues at the Open Space Arts Society to offer a week-long conference on the impacts of digital technologies on self, spirit and society (p. 7). Our 2011/12 artist-in-residence, storyteller Margo McLoughlin, is already enriching our understanding of the links between narratives and social change. Watch for Margo's public lecture on Wednesday, March 7, 2012. I am delighted to announce the receipt of a second generous donation from A-I-R patron Yvonne Hsieh (French) in 2011 that is helping to build our artists' program.

You will notice a new feature this year profiling the volunteers who work behind the scenes at the CSRS. Our first profile is of Bill Howie, a key figure in the centre's founding who has remained integrally involved through two decades of growth and development.

It takes a lot of resources to create and maintain so many high-quality research and public lecture programs. I would like to acknowledge the immense contributions, financial and otherwise, we receive from supporters such as Yvonne Hsieh, the Vandekerkhove Family Foundation, the Ian H. Stewart Endowment, the offices of the vice-president research (Howard Brunt) and vice-president academic (Reeta Tremblay), external funders Public Safety Canada, Defense Research and Development Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and CIHR, hardworking members of our governing committees, and the innumerable donors and volunteers who support our work.

I invite you to use this newsletter to shape your intellectual itinerary for the year – we hope you will join us on our travels.



## John Albert Hall Lectures – What Future?

Changes are in the works for the annual John Albert Hall Lecture series. As a 15-year funding agreement between the CSRS and the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia comes to an end in 2011, the parties are considering options for how the program can best be realigned with current needs and priorities.

The lectures' origins date back to 1933, when the diocese became trustee of a large bequest from Victoria philanthropist John Albert Hall. The purpose of the trust, as dictated by Hall's will, was to establish "a lectureship for the propagation of knowledge of the Christian religion, with special reference to the relation of religion to science and contemporary thought." For many years, the fund supported educational programs at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria. Following the opening of the CSRS in 1992, an agreement was reached to have the centre

take over production of a high-profile public lecture series on an annual basis, with funding provided by the diocese.

A lot has changed since the time of John Albert Hall. In response, the sponsors have been brainstorming new uses for the John Albert Hall funds. Possible options could include community-based research on homelessness or other social issues, sponsorship of an Indigenous or global-south researcher at the CSRS, or a collaborative partnership with one or more of Victoria's faith communities. One certain thing is the bond of trust and good will that has grown between the diocese and the CSRS through the years, something both parties are committed to continuing. A final decision will be reached by early 2012.

Lt. col. John Albert Hall (1869–1933).  
Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Anglican Diocese of BC.



Committee appointees Sajoo, Srivastava and Vahabzadeh

## Committee Appointments

The CSRS Program Committee, the centre's main governing body, is pleased to welcome the appointment of **Peyman Vahabzadeh** from UVic's Department of Sociology for a three-year term. In addition, **Hari Srivastava**, emeritus professor of mathematics at the University of Victoria, and **Aryn Sajoo**, an Islamicist at Simon Fraser University, were appointed to the centre's community Advisory Council.

## Religious Studies News

**Paul Bramadat** will serve as acting director of the Religious Studies Major Program in 2011/12, filling in for **Martin Adam**, who is on leave. Dr. Adam will spend the first part of the year as Numata Visiting Professor in McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies and the second part travelling and conducting research in India. The RS program is pleased to welcome **Tamsin Jones** and **Tom Aechtner** (CSRS teaching fellows) and **Andrew Wender** as guest instructors in 2011/12, in addition to regulars **Shamma Boyarin** and **Harold Coward**. Seats

are filling quickly for all of the RS offerings, reports program secretary **Sheila Adams**. Of special interest are new courses in existentialism and religion, women, gender and sexuality in religion, and religion and pop culture. In other developments, the RS program has a new student course union and will offer a brown bag lunch series for RS students, every second Monday at 1 pm in the CSRS library. Visit the Religious Studies Major Program website at <http://web.uvic.ca/rels/index.htm>.

## Mergers and Acquisitions

*The following weddings, engagements and births were celebrated by members of the CSRS community over the past year. Our congratulations and very best wishes to all!*

**Erica Dodd** (associate fellow) and **Alan Batten** (chair of the Friends of the Centre) were married on October 18, 2011 in Victoria.

**Christa Hunsfeld** (2010/11 Winnifred Lonsdale fellow) married **Derek Murray** on July 23, 2011 in Abbotsford, BC.

**Rebekka King** (2010/11 visiting Research Fellow) married **Tim Langille** on August 20, 2011 in Morrisburg, Ontario.

**Eleni Neta Boyarin**, a third child for 2010/11 CSRS teaching fellow **Shamma Boyarin** and wife **Adrienne**, was born December 16, 2010.

**Thomas Patrick Russell McDonough** arrived on April 23, 2011, a second son for associate fellow **Graham McDonough** and **Pia Russell**.

**Siwan Wesgaard Andersen Tastan** was born May 11, 2011, to visiting graduate fellow **Angela Andersen** and **Mehmet Turan Tastan**.



Erica Dodd and Alan Batten, longtime associates of the CSRS, were married on October 18, 2011. Photo R. Langford-Kimmitt

## 2012/13 CSRS FELLOWSHIPS

### UVic Faculty Fellowships

The centre sponsors two course-release stipends per year for UVic faculty members from any discipline to conduct a six-month term of residence and study at the centre. The annual deadline for applications is **November 1, 2011**. [www.csr.uvic.ca](http://www.csr.uvic.ca)

### Graduate Student Fellowships

The CSRS offers four fellowships to UVic graduate students valued at \$5,000 each. The deadline for applications for the 2012/13 academic year is **February 1, 2012**

### Harold Coward India Research Fellowship

Deadline **November 30, 2011**

### CSRS Artist-in-Residence Fellowship

Deadline **April 16, 2012**

### Visiting Research Fellowships

Deadline **February 1, 2012**

For full details on the CSRS fellowships, visit [www.csr.uvic.ca/fellowships/index.php](http://www.csr.uvic.ca/fellowships/index.php)

### Call for Papers

*Illumine: The Journal of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society Graduate Students Association*  
Submissions for the 2012 issue are invited from graduate students at Canadian educational institutions. Deadline: **February 1, 2012**  
Details at [www.csr.uvic.ca/Publications/illumine.php](http://www.csr.uvic.ca/Publications/illumine.php)

Middle East and Islamic Consortium of BC 4th Annual Student Conference  
Simon Fraser University, Saturday, March 24, 2012  
Deadline for abstract submissions: **January 15, 2012**  
Details at: [http://www.ccsmsc.sfu.ca/meicon/meicon\\_bc\\_4th\\_annual\\_student\\_conference](http://www.ccsmsc.sfu.ca/meicon/meicon_bc_4th_annual_student_conference)

# 2011 / 12 FELLOWS

## UVic Faculty Fellow



Jordan Stanger-Ross (History)  
*The First United Church and the Politics of Poverty in 20th-Century Vancouver*

## Visiting Research Fellows



Scott Dolf (Yale Divinity School)  
*The New Love Mysticism? Neo-Charismatic Christianity in America*



Brian Froese  
(Canadian Mennonite University)  
*Diabolism and Post-1960s Protest: Conservative Subgroups, Cultural Critique and the Significance of Evil*



Harutyun Harutyunyan  
(Westphalian Wilhelm University)  
*The Role of Religion in Political and Military Conflicts in Armenia*



Ann-Katrin Hatje  
(Umeå University, Sweden)  
*Rewriting Swedish Welfare History with a Focus on Religious Dimensions*



Victor Hori (McGill University)  
*Little Jade: The Language of Zen*



Dietrich Jung  
(University of Southern Denmark)  
*To Be a Modern Muslim: Islam and the Formation of Modern Subjectivities*



Jackie Larm (University of Edinburgh)  
*Kagyü Samye Ling: A Tibetan Buddhist Monastery and Cultural Centre in the South of Scotland*



Anton R. Lovink (Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University)  
*The Ethnically Diverse, Racially Inclusive Gay-Positive Anglican Church of Canada?*



Mohammad Molavi  
(Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran)  
*A Comparative Study on Hadith in Modern Qur'anic Commentaries*



William S. Morrow (Queen's University)  
*Neo-Assyrian Influences on Biblical Literature*



Sarah Moser  
(University of Massachusetts Lowell)  
*Re-imagining the "Muslim World"*



Paul Razor (Virginia Wesleyan College)  
*Reclaiming Prophetic Liberalism: Liberal Religion in the Public Square*

## CSRS Artist-In-Residence



Margo McLoughlin (Storyteller)  
*In the Land of the Rose-Apple Tree: Tales of Early Buddhist Women*

## Community Sabbatical Fellows



Bob MacDonald  
(Anthony Macauley Associates)  
*The Hebrew Psalter as Story*



Suzanne Rumsey  
(Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Anglican Church of Canada)  
*"But the Torch Will Never Go Out": Solidarity for a Lifetime*

## Vandekerkhove Family Trust Graduate Student Fellows



Julie Froekjaer-Jensen  
(MA Candidate, Indigenous Governance)  
*Haida Land-Based Cultural Practices: A Framework for the Restoration of Haida Culture*



Martin Hoffman (MA Candidate, History)  
*Religion, Identity and Land in Mandate Palestine*

## Ian H. Stewart Graduate Student Fellows



Kylee-Anne Hingston  
(PhD Candidate, English)  
*Religion and Disability in the Mid-19th-Century Novel*



Genevieve von Petzinger  
(PhD Candidate, Anthropology)  
*Symbols of the Spiritual: Divinely Inspired Motifs in European Ice Age Rock Art*

## Winnifred Lonsdale Fellow



Justine Semmens  
(PhD Candidate, History)  
*Symbolic Violence, Female Aggression and Civility in France, 1550-1650*

## Religious Studies TA Graduate Student Fellow



Joanna Dawson (MA Candidate, English)  
*Diaspora and Pastoral Power in Thomas King's Truth and Bright Water and Leslie Silko's Ceremony*

## Religious Studies Teaching Fellows



Thomas Aechtner (Oxford University)  
*Propaganda and Counter-Propaganda in the Global Evolution Wars*



Tamsin Jones (University of Victoria)  
*Resurrecting the Subject: Philosophy of Religion and Trauma*

## Associate Fellows

Harold Coward (University of Victoria)  
*Religious Studies in Canada: A Personal Retrospective*

Erica Dodd (University of Victoria)  
*Liturgical Instruments of the Early Christian Church*

Robert Florida (University of Victoria)  
*Ethical Issues in Modern Buddhism*

Michael L. Hadley  
(University of Victoria)  
*Faith-Based Ethics for Uganda*

William L. Howie  
(United Church of Canada)  
*CSRS Founder and Honourary Fellow*

Terence Marner (University of Regina)  
*The Medieval Concept of "L'Homme Armé" in the 20th-Century American West*

Graham McDonough  
*What Catholic Schooling Means to Adolescents as Lay Persons in the Church*

Jordan Paper (York University)  
*The Theology of the Chinese Jews*

John Sandys-Wunsch  
(Thorneloe University)  
*An Introduction to the Old Testament for Non-Specialists*

Radha Banerjee Sarkar (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts)  
*Silk Road: A Crossroad of Ideas on Art, Religion and Trade*

Terry Sherwood (University of Victoria)  
*Satire in Early Modern England*

## WEDNESDAY PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

CSRS public lectures are held on Wednesday afternoons from 4:30–5:30 pm.

Sept-Dec 2011: David Strong Building, Room C118

Jan-Apr 2012: Engineering and Computer Science, Room 124

All lectures are free and open to the public. For lecture details visit the UVic online events calendar at [www.events.uvic.ca](http://www.events.uvic.ca)

Sept. 14, 2011	Tamsin Jones	<i>Resurrecting the Subject: Philosophy, Religion and Trauma</i>
Sept. 21, 2011	Jackie Larm	<i>Fish are Friends, Not Food? Perspectives on the Treatment of Animals from Tibetan Buddhists in Scotland</i>
Sept. 28, 2011	J. Kent Donlevy	<i>Freedom of Conscience Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Current Issues in Canadian Education</i>
Oct. 5, 2011	Ann Katrin Hatje	<i>From an Orthodox Lutheran to a Modern Welfare State: Religious and Historical Perspectives on Sweden, 1850–2000</i>
Oct. 12, 2011	Justine Semmens	<i>Harlots in the Household? Sexual Deviance in the Criminal Courts of France, 1564–1654</i>
Oct. 19, 2011	Jordan Stanger-Ross	<i>"The Wettest Spot in the Dominion of Canada": Conceptualizing Poverty in Early 20th-Century Vancouver</i>
Oct. 26, 2011	Arthur and Marilouise Kroker	<i>Exit to the Posthuman Future</i>
Nov. 2, 2011	Doug Jarvis	<i>Imaginary Friends</i>
Nov. 16, 2011	Tom Aechtner	<i>Uncle Ham Wants You! Propaganda and Counter-Propaganda in the Evolution Wars</i>
Nov. 23, 2011	Kylee-Anne Hingston	<i>"So Nigh to Glory is Our Dust": Religion and Disability in the Mid-19th-Century Novel</i>
Nov 30, 2011	Graham McDonough	<i>Internal Renewal of the Church: Why Catholic Education Needs to Consider the Agency of Laypersons</i>
Jan. 11, 2012	William Morrow	<i>The Extermination of the Canaanites: Effects of Violence on the Development of a Biblical Tradition</i>
Jan. 18, 2012	Genevieve von Petzinger	<i>Divine Origins: Did Shamanistic Practices Inspire the Earliest Art?</i>
Feb. 1, 2012	Paul Rasor	<i>Religious Pluralism, Religious Freedom and Multicultural Policy: Lessons from Three Tolerant Societies</i>
Feb. 8, 2012	Julie Froekjaer-Jensen	<i>Connecting People, Land and Spirit: Why Indigenous Land-Based Cultural Practices Matter</i>
Feb. 22, 2012	Terry Sherwood	<i>Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil: Satire in Early Modern England</i>
Feb. 29, 2012	Alan Batten	<i>Would the Discovery of Extra-Terrestrial Life Affect Our Religious Beliefs?</i>
Mar. 7, 2012	Margo McLoughlin	<i>"Knowing This Body to be Like Foam": Stories of the First Buddhist Women</i>
Mar. 14, 2012	Martin Hoffman	<i>Land, Law and Religion in British Colonial Palestine</i>
Mar. 21, 2012	Scott Dolf	<i>Jesus Is Not My Boyfriend: Neo-Charismatic Love Mysticism and Its Contemporary Critics</i>
Mar. 28, 2012	Dietrich Jung	<i>Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere</i>
Apr. 4, 2012	Brian Froese	<i>Jesus Saves: The Lure of Horror and Cultural Decay in the Post-1960s Apocalypse</i>

## Islamic History Month Canada October 2011

*Copernicus, Galileo  
and Beyond:  
Renaissance  
Interactions with  
Arabic and Islamic  
Science*

### GEORGE SALIBA

Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Culture, Columbia University

Wednesday, October 26, 2011, 7:00 pm, Social Sciences and Math Bldg, A120

In this illustrated talk, Professor Saliba will trace the influence of Islamic mathematics on Renaissance astronomers, providing an overview of Islamic theories developed in response to flaws inherited from Greek astronomy and their impact on the work of Copernicus, Galileo and other European astronomers well into the 17th century.

George Saliba's research explores the development and transmission of Islamic scientific ideas from late antiquity to early modern times. His books include *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (2007) and *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories during the Golden Age of Islam* (1994). Professor Saliba holds an MSc in Semitic languages and a PhD in Islamic Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley.



George Saliba



Pamela Klassen

## 2011/12 John Albert Hall Lectures

### *Testimonies of the Spirit: Christianity, Media and the Politics of Confession*

#### **Pamela Klassen**

Department and Centre for the Study of Religion  
University of Toronto

**January 19, 20, 23, and 25, 2012, 7:00 pm,  
Social Sciences and Math Building,  
Room A102**

These lectures examine the impact of changing media on Christian practices of confession, or “spiritual testimony,” through the 20th and 21st centuries. Drawing on prominent figures and episodes in North American Protestant history, the talks consider how spiritual testimonies are shaped by the media through which they are produced, whether in memoirs, photographs, church liturgy, Facebook, or reality TV, while highlighting the profound influence of Protestant confession on the rise of the new media culture in North America obsessed with the personal testimonial.

#### **Lecture 1**

**Thursday, Jan 19, 2012, 7 pm**

*Media, Spirituality and Imagining Canada*

#### **Lecture 2**

**Friday, Jan 20, 2012, 7 pm**

*Picturing the Soul: Protestant Missionaries and their Photographs*

#### **Lecture 3**

**Monday, Jan 23, 2012, 7 pm**

*Protestant Potlatch: Confession and the Ethics of Storytelling*

#### **Lecture 4**

**Wednesday, Jan 25, 2012, 7 pm**

*“Spiritual Radio”: Testimony and the Optimism of Communications Technologies*



The John Albert Hall Lectures are made possible through financial support from the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia.

Protestant missionary and amateur photographer Frederick Du Vernet in northern BC, ca. 1909.

*Photo courtesy Prince Rupert City & Regional Archives.*

*Professor Pamela Klassen’s work draws on approaches from history, anthropology, religious studies and theories of modernity to explore the significance of religion in North American society. Her major publications include Spirits of Protestantism: Medicine, Healing and Liberal Christianity (2011), Blessed Events: Religion and Home Birth in America (2001) and, with Courtney Bender, After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement (2010). She holds a PhD in anthropology and religion from Drew University and is currently director of the Religion in the Public Sphere Initiative at the University of Toronto. For more information visit Pamela’s website at <http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/pklassen>.*



CSRS Advisory Council chair and diocesan executive officer Bruce Bryant-Scott, right, with keynote speakers Patricia Vickers and Mark MacDonald, Anglican Indigenous Archbishop of Canada. The two gave a joint public lecture on the impact of colonial and religious structures on abuse in First Nations communities.

## Safe Church Conference

The CSRS joined with the Anglican Safe Church Consultation to organize “Partnering for Prevention: Addressing Abuse in Our Communion and Our Communities” in June 2011 at the University of Victoria. The three-day conference drew over 60 delegates from Australia, Canada, the UK, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia, the US and Nisga’a First Nation. The Anglican Safe Church Consultation is an international network dedicated to preventing and responding to the abuse of children and adults in faith-based and secular communities.

# OFF LABEL 2011

OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 2

Victoria's Open Space Arts Society, in partnership with Digital Weeks (Zurich), the CSRS, UVic Visual Arts Department and other community partners, is pleased to present OFF LABEL, a week-long event that brings together an international group of artists and intellectuals to explore health, spirituality and the effects of technology in a digitally mediated world. The festival, located at multiple sites around Victoria, includes gallery exhibitions, performances, workshops, lectures, panel discussions and thematic excursions.

## UVIC SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

### Wednesday, October 26

#### *Exits to the Posthuman Future*

A public lecture by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, Pacific Centre for Technology and Culture  
4:30-5:30 pm, David Strong Building, Room C118

#### *Festival Reception and Gallery Exhibition*

7:00 pm, Audain Gallery, Visual Arts Building

#### *Visiting Artist Talk with Art Clay*

8:00 pm, Visual Arts Building, Room A162

### Thursday, October 27

#### *Festival Workshops*

10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Hickman Building, Room 110

### Wednesday, November 2

#### *Imaginary Friends*

A public lecture by Doug Jarvis, 2010/11 CSRS Artist-in-Residence  
4:30-5:30 pm, David Strong Building, Room C118



Arthur and Marilouise Kroker of UVic's Pacific Centre for Technology and Culture will give a keynote address for the OFF LABEL Festival as part of the CSRS's Wednesday Public Lecture series, October 26, 4:30 pm, in DSB C118.



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## Reel Spirituality: A Film Series

Last Friday of the month, 2:30-4:30 pm,  
Fine Arts Building, Rm 103

The films in this year's series explore themes of morality, culture and the role of myth in the human spiritual journey. Screenings will be followed by a brief moderated discussion. Free and open to the public.

### Fall 2011

Friday, September 30, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **Into the West**

(Michael Newell, USA, 1992, 97 min.)

Friday, October 28, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **The Secret of Roan Inish**

(John Sayles, USA, 1995, 103 min.)

Friday, November 25, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **Shane**

(George Stevens, USA, 1953, 118 min.)

### Winter 2012

Friday, January 27, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **Gone Baby Gone**

(Ben Affleck, USA, 2007, 114 min.)

Friday, February 24, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **Smoke Signals**

(Chris Eyre, USA, 1998, 89 min.)

Friday, March 30, 2:30-4:30 pm

#### **The Namesake**

(Mira Nair, USA, 2006, 122 min.)

## FRIENDS OF THE CENTRE: COMING UP

### Visit to St. Sophia's Orthodox Church

Thursday, November 24, 2:30 pm

This visit will include a presentation on the Russian Orthodox religion and a tour of the church's exquisite collection of original iconography and mosaics. For information or to reserve a spot contact [csrs@uvic.ca](mailto:csrs@uvic.ca) or phone 250-721-6325.

### Dragon Boat Festival Luncheon

Saturday, June 23, 2012, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

A luncheon and interfaith dialogue with members of the Chinese Friendship Association.

The Friends of the Centre are members of the public who share an interest in the scholarly study of religion. Members receive a newsletter, notification of all CSRS-sponsored events and access to special events organized exclusively for our community Friends.

To learn more about becoming a Friend visit [www.csrs.uvic.ca](http://www.csrs.uvic.ca)



St. Sophia's Orthodox Church, Victoria

# Open Secularism and the Debates Surrounding Religious Minorities in Canada

The following commentary was prepared by CSRS director Paul Bramadat for a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in February 2011. The topic of discussion was social inclusion and religious minorities in Canada. A full transcript of the session is available online at <http://bit.ly/n897LV>.

I will use my formal remarks this morning to share some good news, some bad news and some comments about the place of secularism in the debates surrounding religious minorities in Canada.

As most of us know, many of the institutions and policies that address religion in Canada emerged to quell conflicts between Protestants and Catholics. While these inventions have done a good job of keeping the peace between the two solitudes, by the 1960s it became clear that new institutions and new policies were needed for the postcolonial, multicultural world that was emerging.

We invented new policies, most significant among them the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act, and we layered these policies on top of the older structures.

However, the new policies, laws and ethos of religious pluralism did not eliminate the Christian values that remained from the 19th century. In practice today, the system is full of contradictions. Sometimes, Canada's relatively progressive principles on human rights and reasonable accommodation shape the outcome of public debates. Other times, the outcome is determined by 19th-century, often

xenophobic, public opinions about newcomers and religious minorities.

Today, we hear echoes of both these traditional and more recent perspectives in the debates over appropriate responses to polygamy, same-sex marriage, the wearing of kirpans or hijabs, or the use of gay-positive teaching materials in schools. Sometimes, these perspectives lead to scenarios that must seem bizarre to some religious minorities, such as the frequent references to the separation of church and state in discussions about same-sex marriage on the one hand and the constitutional guarantees for publicly funded Roman Catholic schools on the other.

On some issues, we as a society claim to be adamantly secular, while on other issues, we privilege one particular religious group over all others and over the principle of the separation of church and state.

The good news is that, compared to many other Western liberal democracies, Canada is performing well on these matters. Legal mechanisms such as human rights codes, employment legislation, the Criminal Code and the Charter are in place for religious minorities to seek redress for discrimination. Federal bodies such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada and a variety of provincial ministries and programs exist to support anti-racist and pro-inclusion initiatives that benefit minority religious communities. Even better than these structural supports, there is, I would say, a political culture and a widespread if not unconditional ethos in Canada that promotes inclusion and diversity.

There is bad news too, of course. Although Canadians take pride in the formal structures we have created to protect cultural diversity, these structures are not enough. They cannot stop one student from hurling anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim or anti-Sikh insults at another. Policies and laws, by themselves, do not make it easy for someone to lodge a complaint or talk to a neighbour. As such, we must be vigilant about protecting and even enhancing the structures of multiculturalism in Canada.

What broader issues are at stake here? It is worthwhile to remember that the debates around major issues such as national security, multiculturalism and accommodation, as well as those involving seemingly minor issues such as residential zoning, sports regulations and tax policies, reflect controversies taking place in every Western liberal democracy about the future of secularism and the place that the religious claims of minorities ought to have in supposedly secular societies.

Recently, Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor popularized the idea of a tension between "open" versus "closed" secularism. Although there are a great many forms of secularism throughout the West, when most people use the term "closed secularism" they refer to a society in which important segments of the public sphere are framed as off-limits to religiously identifiable citizens and religiously rooted public claims.



His Holiness Mirza Mazroor with Prime Minister Harper at the inauguration of Baitan Nur Mosque in Calgary, Canada's largest mosque. Photo by itzafineday via flickr.



Religious demonstrators in Quebec City. Photo by kenficara via flickr.

## NEW BOOKS

### New publications from CSRS fellows and associates

#### *Our Enigmatic Universe: One Astronomer's Reflections on the Human Condition*

Alan Batten (Melrose Books, 2011)



#### *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*

John Harding, Victor Sögen Hori, Alexander Soucy, eds (McGill-Queens University Press, 2010)

#### *Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization and the Afterlife of Development*

Daromir Rudnyckij (Cornell University Press, 2011)



#### *The Trouble with Sauling Around: Conversion in Ethnic American Autobiography, 1965-2002*

Madeline Walker (University of Iowa Press, 2011)

#### *Beyond the Gods and Back: Religion's Demise and Rise and Why It Matters*

Reginald W. Bibby (Project Canada Books, 2011)

#### *Illumine: Journal of the CSRS Graduate Students Association, Vol.9, No.1, 2010.*

It is an article of faith among many Canadians that people ought to leave their religious identities at the door when they enter city hall, the courtroom, a classroom, Parliament or other public spaces. In these places, we say they should function simply as citizens, not as religious citizens, and they should translate their religious motivations into secular terms that can be understood by all other citizens.

Closed secularism sounds like a good way to keep the tribalism, misogyny and violence often associated with religion out of the public arena. Moreover, in theory, it protects the rights won by women, religious communities, and gays and lesbians, among others.

I appreciate these concerns personally. However, for those religious minorities who cannot, or will not, conceive of themselves as anything but religious citizens, an explicitly or implicitly closed secularism conveys the message that Canada does not welcome them as they are.

One new way forward is to adopt, and perhaps to enhance, "open secularism"; to aim for a society in which we are guided by the much-valued Charter principles but in which we strive to develop laws, policies and a broader ethos in which religious claims and identities are welcomed in virtually all parts of our society. Open secularism will not be easy, but the current situation is contentious, litigious and confusing; it is also not easy.

This is not a call for relativism. As a society, we might decide still to exclude the kirpan from

certain places and we might still decide that judges must remove obvious signs of religious identification. Such difficult decisions will never be based on a full consensus but can be made and conveyed in terms of practical concerns and Charter principles.

In an open secular society, one can and must say no to religious groups from time to time, but much depends on the way one says no. In the current climate, in some places in Canada, the "no" is often delivered in a dismissive and humiliating way. Equally problematic is the fact that the "no" is delivered often uncritically, as though our Charter principles were value-free dictates written in stone rather than a laudable but imperfect set of human inventions reflecting the values and interests of specific groups at specific times.

If we were to adopt a more open form of secularism, perhaps we could overcome the current and rather confusing situation, in which we say with some of our policies and practices that we welcome religious minorities, and with other policies and practices that we do not; or that we welcome religious people only when they adopt a secular public persona. The current arrangement, it seems to me, alienates members of these minorities and also robs the public sphere of the insights they might contribute.

I thank you for inviting me to address this panel. I look forward to fruitful conversations.

*"If we were to adopt a more open form of secularism, perhaps we could overcome the current confusing situation in which we say with some of our policies that we welcome religious minorities and with other policies that we do not."*



Children at a Sikh gurdwara, Abbotsford, BC.  
Photo by Gurumstuk\_Singh via flickr.

## Researching the Islamic Architecture of the Alevi in Turkey

By Angela Andersen

Buildings can be the setting for religious rites, the homes of deities, centres of learning or points of pilgrimage. Although architecture is often used to conceal certain elements of religious practice, the same buildings can present a public face with a bold message about the place of religion in society. The scale and decoration of much Islamic religious architecture communicates to believers and non-believers alike. For other communities, particularly those that have had to disguise themselves to avoid persecution, architecture must suit their need for concealment, just as monumental buildings suit the needs of the dominant.

This inconspicuous architectural tradition presents some exciting challenges to me as a scholar of architecture. I spent much of 2010 in Turkey seeking out buildings used by a community known as the Alevi. Defining Aleviism is a tricky endeavour, but in short, they are an Islamic minority who follow traditions linked to Shi'ism in a predominantly Sunni land. The Alevi are thought to have been present in what is now Turkey since the 13th century, and until recent times were a predominantly rural people living in village communities with village architecture. During the early 16th century, when the Sunni Ottoman Empire fell out with the Safavid Empire in Persia, which had declared Shi'ism to be the state religion, the Alevi gained a reputation for dangerous political leanings and religious hereticism. According to unofficial statistics, as Turkish census data does not record variations in Islamic practice, the Alevi today number somewhere around 15 million people.

When I began my quest for Alevi buildings, I was told by a prominent Turkish art historian that "there is such a thing as Alevi culture but not Alevi architecture." This statement is based on the idea that architecture must be part of a movement with identifiable stylistic traits, and designed by architects and engineers of the highest order. His words fuelled my determination to focus on Alevi buildings and my conviction that there is a story to be told by everyday architecture built by the people who use it.

I set out on trips to Alevi regions with a naïve optimism that I would find architectural "payload." What I discovered generally took the shape of derelict wood frame buildings patched over time and used to store old furniture and farm implements. "Was this used for the *cem*?" I would ask, inquiring after the communal ceremony of the Alevi. When I identified a roof structure that used timber beams to create geometric patterns, I wandered Anatolia with a photo, seeking similar examples in Alevi buildings like someone searching for their missing pet. No documents in the Ottoman archives, no architects' biographies, no stylistic analysis of tiles or stone carving: this was solely about connecting religious practices to the simple buildings that house them.

I am interested in examining the Alevi through their architecture because the story of Islam in Turkey often emphasizes a legalistic, government-sanctioned view of Islam that does not correspond to the lived experience of many Anatolian Muslims. In fact, Alevi eschew many of the practices that define Sunnism, including the five daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan. Instead, they focus on a community with connections to elder teachers known as *Dedes* ("Grand-fathers"). Their communal gathering brings together men and women and focuses on music and poetry, community dispute resolution and discussion of religious themes. These ceremonies take place within buildings that often have other purposes, such as the largest house in a village, a barn or storage building.

The Alevi do indeed have architecture, but by blurring the lines between religious spaces and the structures needed for daily life, the community avoided detection during dangerous times and has unwittingly changed my approach to researching Islamic architecture.

*Angela Andersen is a PhD candidate in art history at Ohio State University and a 2011 visiting research fellow at the CSRS.*

Door and roof timbers of a storage building previously used as an Alevi *cem* (ceremony) site, Sivas Province, Turkey. The date of construction is unknown. Photos Angela Andersen.



## Snapshot: Five Projects in Progress at the CSRS

### Religion, Radicalization and Securitization: Canadian Perspectives

**Duration:** 2009–12

**Mission:** An international group of academics teams up with Canadian security specialists to co-author a book on religiously motivated violence.

**Investigators:** Paul Bramadat (UVic); Lorne Dawson (University of Waterloo)

**Sponsor/Funder:** Public Safety Canada and Defense Research and Development Canada

**Big Question:** What do we really know about “homegrown” religious extremism in Canada, how do we know it and what can we do about it?

### The Role of Religiously Affiliated Immigrant Settlement Agencies in British Columbia

**Duration:** 2011–12

**Mission:** Gather and analyze information from front-line personnel working in religiously affiliated immigrant settlement programs (Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Unitarian) in British Columbia.

**Investigator:** Paul Bramadat (CSRS)

**Sponsor/Funder:** Metropolis British Columbia

**Big Question:** What kinds of immigrant services are religious communities in BC providing, and how do they view their status within the broader federal and provincial immigration framework?

### Religious and Cultural Roots of Vaccine Hesitancy

**Duration:** 2011–12

**Mission:** Experts from the health disciplines and social sciences will gather in December 2011 to begin disentangling some of the major social and cultural issues associated with vaccine hesitancy.

**Investigators:** Paul Bramadat (CSRS); Julie Bettinger (UBC); Maryse Guay (University of Sherbrooke); Réal Roy (UVic)

**Sponsor/Funder:** Quebec Population Health Research Network (RSPQ) and Quebec Ministry of Health

**Big Question:** Why do some groups and individuals hesitate to vaccinate their children? How large is this cohort in Canada and to what extent is religion a factor in the decision not to vaccinate?

### Perspectives on Spirituality in Hospice Palliative Care: Beyond Traditions

**Duration:** 2010–12

**Mission:** To produce a follow-up volume to *Religious Understandings of a Good Death in Hospice Palliative Care* (pending early 2012 from SUNY Press) that focuses exclusively on spirituality in end-of-life care.

**Investigators:** Paul Bramadat (CSRS); Harold Coward (CSRS); Kelli Stajduhar (Nursing/Centre on Aging)

**Sponsor/Funder:** Canadian Institutes for Health Research

**Big Question:** What issues arise for the dying, their loved ones and their professional caregivers in an age in which traditional religious belief is being replaced for some with the statement “I’m spiritual but not religious”?

### Religion and Citizenship in Canada: Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

**Duration:** 2010–11

**Mission:** To prepare a report by prominent Canadian scholars of religion on contemporary Christians, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs in Canada and their views on citizenship.

**Investigator:** Paul Bramadat (UVic)

**Sponsor/Funder:** Citizenship and Immigration Canada

**Big Question:** What do Canadian policy makers need to know about religious minorities in Canada and their perceptions of what it means to be a citizen?

*For more information on research at the CSRS, visit our website at [www.csr.s.uvic.ca](http://www.csr.s.uvic.ca).*



Members of the Spirituality in Hospice Palliative Care research team, Victoria, March 2011.



Members of the Religion, Radicalization and Securitization research team, Victoria, December 2010

*Photos L. Kenny*

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Bill Howie, in his element aboard *Curious*

## In the Spotlight: William Howie

In this first in a new series profiling the centre's amazing cast of friends and supporters, we turn the spotlight on one of our most distinguished mentors, Rev. William Howie, CD, RCN, CF (Ret.) While serving as United Church Conference Minister for Vancouver Island in the late 1980s, Bill was among the founding "holy trinity" of forward-thinking religious leaders in Victoria (with Roman Catholic bishop Remi de Roo and Anglican bishop Ron Shepherd) who envisioned a non-denominational centre for the study of religion at the University of Victoria. It was a radical idea in the highly secular academic environment in BC at the time, but the three persevered, winning the approval of university leaders, recruiting new allies from UVic faculty ranks to help implement the project, and laying the groundwork for the creation of a multi-million dollar endowment.

The CSRS opened in 1993, but Bill's work did not end there. In the years since, he has been a steady guiding presence for a succession of CSRS directors, and is chiefly responsible for the array of ingenious community outreach strategies that have made the CSRS so successful at bridging the "town-gown" divide. Some notable contributions include his role as founder and first chair of the Friends of the Centre (currently 250 members), co-creator of the annual community seminar and community sabbatical fellowship programs, and architect of the

bicameral governance structure that ensures both academic and community oversight of the centre. Bill also served as the first community relations officer from 1997-2000, overseeing the design of an information database that ensures the orderly dissemination of thousands of CSRS notices each year to the campus and community.

In later years, Bill (a former naval officer and master skipper) began hosting visiting parties of researchers aboard his yacht. The "sailing seminars" have become a popular annual event, providing a memorable BC-coast experience for the scholars from all over the world who visit the centre each year.

In sum, so much of what makes the centre the thriving place it is today can be traced back to the dedicated efforts of Bill Howie over the past 25 years. For all of these reasons, and many more, we salute you Bill, our grinning, wise and talented captain of the CSRS.

*The William Howie Endowment, created with funds donated from the United Church of Canada, supports annual operating expenses of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society. Those wishing to make a tax-deductible donation to the Howie Fund are encouraged to contact the centre's development officer, Karen Whyte, at 250-853-3893.*

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