

# 2024 ANNUAL

Saturday, June 15 to Monday, June 17, 2024, McGill University, Montreal

CANADIAN SOCIETY  
FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE POUR  
L'ÉTUDE DE LA RELIGION

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

## This Year's Theme

The CSSR's annual meeting will take place in person at McGill University in Montreal from Saturday, June 15 to Monday, June 17, 2024 in conjunction with Congress 2024.

The theme for Congress 2024 is *Sustaining Shared Futures*. "While alarming images of a warming planet infuse the concept with a critical sense of urgency, 'sustainability' transcends even the immense challenges posed by climate change, urging recognition of the interconnectedness of human existence and global action on the overlapping social, economic, environmental, and technological issues that threaten our future.

As members of the global community, we share the responsibility to take on this multi-faceted challenge of a lifetime by way of concerted action across disciplines, bringing into focus its unequal impact, the bounds of our planet, and in turn, our solutions. For this 2024 edition, enmeshing the knowledges of diverse contexts, and amplifying Black and Indigenous perspectives, Congress invites scholars, students, policymakers and community members to reflect on what remains collectively attainable – and what must be done – in the face of this vast and complex imperative in order to bring forth solutions for today, and sustain systems of tomorrow (<https://www.federationhss.ca/en/congress2024>)."

We seek at this year's meeting to provide a platform for dialogue about these important issues with the goal of working towards equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.

## Registration and Annual Meeting Fees

All attendees and presenters at our annual meeting need to be current members of the CSSR and register for both our annual meeting and Congress 2024. Visit our membership page on our website to [join or renew your membership](#) for 2024. [Register for Congress and our annual meeting](#) by visiting Congress 2024 online. Register for Congress by March 31 to receive the CSSR's and Federation's early-bird discount. Presenters whose CSSR membership is not current as of April 15, 2024 will find their proposals disqualified.

## Planning Your Trip

Find information about [planning your trip](#) to Montreal – accommodations, local amenities, travel and transport, and more – on the Congress 2024 website.

## Attending the Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting is being held at the Birks Building (building code: BIRKS) on Saturday and Sunday and the Trottier Building (building code: ENGTR) on Monday. Visit McGill's [interactive map](#) to view the buildings' locations on campus.

Presentations will run 8:30 am-5:00 pm EDT in keeping with the Federation's schedule for Congress. Breaks for networking, lunch, and so forth have been factored into the program to accommodate for other events, dialogue, networking opportunities, and members' work-life balance.

Meeting rooms are equipped with basic audio/visual services – a computer with an internet connection, screen, projector, and HDMI cable. Please do not anticipate or plan for rooms with technology for virtual presentations (e.g., cameras). We ask that you bring the necessary accessories to connect your device to the a/v system (e.g., dongle for mac users). Mac users should bring their presentation slides on a USB stick. If you are using slides for your presentation, please have them ready before the session starts for when you present.

Informal space for conversation, networking, and working is available in Birks 203 on Saturday and Sunday and Trottier 0070 on Monday.

## Annual General Meeting

This year's annual general meeting is Saturday, June 15 at 5:00 pm EDT (Birks 205). Please watch your email and our newsletter for further information about the AGM closer to the date.

## CSSR President's Reception

The president's reception is on Saturday, June 15. Join us for an informal reception of drinks and appetizers at 6:00 pm EDT in the Birks Lobby of the Birks Building. We'll also be announcing our latest book prize recipient.

## Graduate Student Luncheon

The annual graduate student luncheon is on Sunday, June 16 at noon EDT in the Birks Senior Common Room.

## Book Prize

Find out more about the CSSR's [book prize](#) – past winners, the nomination process, and selection criteria – on our website.

## Student Essay Contest

Congratulations to our 2022-23 student essay contest winners – Catherine van Reenen (University of Manitoba), Marie-Ève Ouimette (Université du Québec à Montréal), Audrey Miatello (University of Toronto), and Claire Hamilton (Queen's University).

The undergraduate contest, with a first-place prize of \$250 and second-place prize of \$100, is open to undergraduate students currently registered at a Canadian university who submit a paper on the subject of religion. The graduate student contest, which is open to masters and doctoral students in a religious studies program, has a prize of \$300 for the masters contest and \$650 for the doctoral contest.

Full information about the [undergraduate and graduate contests](#) – including the submission process – is available on our website.

## Webinar Series

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's webinar series organized by Zabeen Khamisa. Subscribe to our [newsletter](#) if you have not already for announcements about the upcoming series and go to [YouTube](#) to view the webinars.

## Questions or Comments About the Program

Thank you to Diana Dimitrova who is the local area coordinator for this year's annual meeting. Email the program chair Alison Marshall at

[programchairs@cssrscer.ca](mailto:programchairs@cssrscer.ca) with any questions or comments. Visit our [annual meeting page](#) on the website for updates over the coming weeks.

## Saturday, June 15

- 10:30 am-12:00 pm Looking Over the Horizon: An Introduction to the Theo-Futures Foresight Approach (Birks 111)  
Bridging Philosophy, Science, and Religion: Modes of History, Text, and Wellness (Birks 205)
- 12:00-1:30 pm Lunch Break
- 1:30-3:00 pm Religion, Law, and Sovereignty (Birks 111)  
The Kids Are Not Alright: Reflections on Teaching Religion in a Dying Field (Birks 205)
- 3:00-3:30 pm Afternoon Break
- 3:30-5:00 pm Eco-Spirituality, Environmentalism, and Sustainability: Causes and Consequences (Birks 111)  
Decolonizing Narratives and Knowledge in Governance, Healthcare, and Law (Birks 205)
- 5:00-6:00 pm Annual General Meeting (Birks 205)
- 6:00-8:00 pm CSSR President's Reception (Birks 111)

## Sunday, June 16

- 8:30-10:00 am Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Resiliency (Birks 111)  
Holistic Practices: Contested and Enmeshed (Birks 205)
- 10:00-10:30 am Morning Break
- 10:30 am-12:00 pm Métis Spirituality and Religion Across the Homeland(s): Community-Led Collective Representations to Strengthen Our Nation (Birks 111)  
Formulating Identity and Citizenship Through Lived Religion (Birks 205)
- 12:00-1:30 pm Graduate Student Luncheon (Birks Senior Common Room)
- 12:00-1:30 pm Lunch Break
- 1:30-3:00 pm La pluralité religieuse et spirituelle à travers le prisme des voix marginalisées/minoritaires
- Première session : Femmes, minorités sexuelles et engagements spirituels (Birks 111)  
Drug-Induced Spirituality (Birks 205)

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| 3:00-3:30 pm | Afternoon Break  |
| 3:30-5:00 pm | La pluralité religieuse et spirituelle à travers le prisme des voix marginalisées/minoritaires |
|              | Deuxième session : Femmes, genres, agentivités et imaginaires religieux (Birks 111)            |
|              | Religious and Secular Entanglements in the Pursuit of Social Justice (Birks 205)               |

## Monday, June 17

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 8:30-10:00 am     | Re-Imagining the Historical and Textual Analysis (Trottier 1080)<br>Media, Technology, and Religion: Podcasting, Digital Rituals, and Psychic Research (Trottier 1090)            |
| 10:00-10:30 am    | Morning Break   |
| 10:30 am-12:00 pm | "Pasts and Futures:" Heritage, the Nostalgic Past, and Transnational Colonialism (Trottier 1080)<br>Philosophy of Religion: On Love, Rebellion, Self, and Empathy (Trottier 1090) |
| 12:00-1:30 pm     | Lunch Break   |
| 1:30-3:00 pm      | Publishing your book in the CSSR Series "Critical Perspectives on Religion," DeGruyter-Brill Press (Trottier 1080)<br>Social Action and Activism (Trottier 1090)                  |
| 3:00-3:30 pm      | Afternoon Break   |
| 3:30-5:30 pm      | Religion and Advocacy, Inclusivity, and Resiliency (Trottier 1080)<br>Written and Unwritten Rules of Research Grant Applications (Trottier 1090)                                  |

## Saturday, June 15

| Time              | Location  | Presentation   | Presenters             |
|-------------------|-----------|--|------------------------|
| 10:30 am-12:00 pm | Birks 111 | Workshop: Looking Over the Horizon: An Introduction to the Theo-Futures Foresight Approach | Presenter: Joel Murphy |

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|----------------|---|--|
| Birks 205      | Panel: Bridging Philosophy, Science, and Religion: Modes of History, Text, and Wellness | Moderator: TBD   |
|                |   | Presenters: Azra Alibhai, The Secularization of Animals: Bridging Science, Religion and Non-Religion in Alternative Modalities of “Spiritual” Wellness |
|                |   | Labeeb Bsoul, The Epistemological Philosophy of History and Strategic Thought of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) and Arnold Toynbee (d. 1975)                    |
|                |   | Michael Gillingham, Entertaining Angels Unaware: Derrida’s Employment of Religious Texts, Traditions, and Motifs in His Seminars on “Hospitality”      |
| 12:00- 1:30 pm | Lunch Break   |  |
| 1:30-3:00 pm   | Birks 111 Panel: Religion, Law, and Sovereignty   | Moderator: Labeeb Bsoul  |
|                |   | Presenters: Zaheeda Alibhai, In the Interest of Justice: Law and Religion  |
|                |   | Carlos Colorado, Self-Determination and Reconciliation in Servatius v. Alberni School District No. 70  |
|                |   | Marie-Ève Melanson, “Deeply Personal Characteristics:” When the Legal Conception of Religion Resembles That of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity  |
|                |   | Solange Lefebvre, and Mathieu Colin, Next time, there will be a revolt!: How religions coped during the Covid-19 pandemic in Canada                    |

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|--------------|-----------------|---|--|
|              | Birks 205       | Roundtable: The Kids Are Not Alright: Reflections on Teaching Religion in a Dying Field | Discussants: Rachel Brown<br>Paul L. Gareau<br>Rebekka King<br>Joseph R. Wiebe   |
| 3:00-3:30 pm | Afternoon Break |   |  |
| 3:30-5:00 pm | Birks 111       | Panel: Eco-Spirituality, Environmentalism, and Sustainability: Causes and Consequences  | Moderator: Xavier Gravend-Tirole<br><br>Presenters: Meghan Richey, Building Resilience in the Ecological Crisis: An Exploratory Study of the Role of Eco-Spirituality for Members of Generation Z<br><br>Doaa Shalabi, Faith-Based Sustainability, the UN-SDGs, and Muslim Youth |
|              | Birks 205       | Panel: Decolonizing Narratives and Knowledge in Governance, Healthcare, and Law         | Moderator: Chris Miller<br><br>Presenters: David Seljak, Indigenous Spirituality and Healthcare in Secular Canada<br><br>Adrienne Tessier, UNDRIP, Land, and Defenders: Shifting Legal Recognition of Indigenous Spirituality in Canadian Jurisprudence                          |
| 5:00-6:00 pm | Birks 111       | Annual General Meeting  |  |
| 6:00-8:00 pm | Birks Lobby     | CSSR President's Reception  |  |



## Sunday, June 16

| Time              | Location      | Presentation  | Presenters  |
|-------------------|---------------|---|---|
| 8:30-10:00 am     | Birks 111     | Panel: Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Resiliency   | <p>Moderator: TBD</p> <p>Presenters: Colby Gaudet, Questioning Devotions, Reorienting Commitments: Using Christian Religious Archives and Church History to Study Indian Residential Schools</p> <p>Clara A.B. Joseph, Decolonizing Narratives: Reframing Thomas Christian Contributions in Colonial Botanical Knowledge and Environmental Preservation in 17th-Century India</p> |
|                   | Birks 205     | Roundtable: Holistic Practices: Contested and Enmeshed  | <p>Moderator: Géraldine Mossière</p> <p>Discussants: Paul Bramadat<br/>Clara Gargon<br/>Leah Mernaugh Bergman<br/>Véronique Jourdain<br/>Noémi Melanson</p>   |
| 10:00-10:30 am    | Morning Break |   |   |
| 10:30 am-12:00 pm | Birks 111     | Roundtable: Métis Spirituality and Religion Across the Homeland(s): Community-Led Collective Representations to Strengthen Our Nation | <p>Moderator: Paul L. Gareau</p> <p>Discussants: Paul L. Gareau<br/>Chantal Fiola<br/>Emily Grafton</p>   |
|                   | Birks 205     | Panel: Formulating Identity and Citizenship Through Lived Religion  | <p>Moderator: Rachel Brown</p> <p>Presenters: Alyshea Cummins, Meaning Making in (non)Religious Identity Narratives</p>   |

Katherine Kelaidis, Conversion as Conquest/Colonialism: The Dynamics of Conversion by Majority Populations to Minority Religions

Marie-Ève Ouimette, Culture et citoyenneté québécoise: une solution pour « assurer nos avenir communs »?

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|---------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 12:00-1:30 pm | Birks Senior Common Room | Graduate Student Luncheon  |  |
| 12:00-1:30 pm |                          | Lunch Break  |  |
| 1:30-3:00 pm  | Birks 111                | Panel : La pluralité religieuse et spirituelle à travers le prisme des voix marginalisées/minoritaires<br><br>Première session : Femmes, minorités sexuelles et engagements spirituels | Modérateur : Youssef Benzouine<br><br>Panélistes : Camille Varnier, Luttés pour le territoire et l'accès aux ressources naturelles : le rôle des femmes Machi face aux industries extractives dans la région de l'Araucanie, Chili<br><br>Nicolas Boissière, Des traditions religieuses et spirituelles à majorité féminine : un regard socio-anthropologique sur l'importance numérique des femmes dans le néo-paganisme<br><br>Mathieu Colin, « Becoming Baphomet » : Satanisme et identités LGBTQI+ |
|               | Birks 205                | Roundtable: Drug-Induced Spirituality  | Discussants: Rubina Ramji<br>Sharday C. Mosurinjohn<br>Alison Marshall<br><br>Respondent: Paul Bramadat  |
| 3:00-3:30 pm  |                          | Afternoon Break  |  |

3:30-5:00 pm

Birks 111

Panel : La pluralité religieuse et spirituelle à travers le prisme des voix marginalisées/minoritaires

Deuxième session : Femmes, genres, agentivités et imaginaires religieux

Modérateur : Anne Letourneau

Panélistes : Geneviève Pigeon, Le sacrifice de Guinier dans Le Livre de Caradoc : le corps de la femme comme objet de transaction

Valérie Irtanucci-Douillard, Mobilisation religieuse des femmes juives orthodoxes en France : pour un avenir inclusif en prise avec la société sécularisée

Diahara Traoré, Religion et imaginaire chez les Africains du Québec : réflexions postcoloniales sur l'intersection de la migration et du genre

Birks 205

Panel: Religious and Secular Entanglements in the Pursuit of Social Justice

Moderator: Nicola Mooney

Presenters: Amali Philips, Dilemmas of Multicultural Accommodation: Cultural Rights and Women's Citizenship Rights

Nicola Mooney, Secularity, and Social Justice in Sikhism: Ideals and Realities

Pauline McKenzie Aucoin, Understanding Religious Traces in Contemporary Canadian Society

Gillian McCann, Teaching Social Justice: Pedagogy, Politics and Decolonization

## Monday, June 17

| Time              | Location         | Presentation  | Presenters   |
|-------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 8:30-10:00 am     | Trottier<br>1080 | Panel: Re-Imagining the<br>Historical and Textual Analysis                                      | Moderator: TBD<br><br>Presenters: Gerjan Altenburg, Why Nātha?<br>Yoga and Yogis in the Guru Granth<br><br>Gabriel Casola, Opinions of the Historical<br>Information About the Conquest of Joshua<br><br>Emmanuel Israel, Reading Paul’s Theology<br>of a Renewed Mind in the Context of<br>Decolonization   |
|                   | Trottier<br>1090 | Panel: Media, Technology, and<br>Religion: Podcasting, Digital<br>Rituals, and Psychic Research | Moderator: Chris Miller<br><br>Presenters: Mary Hale, Cult Followings:<br>What Podcast Reviews and Reviewers Can<br>Teach Scholars of Religion About Asserting<br>Relevance and Defining Expertise<br><br>Xiao Han, Why Are They Still Online? Digital<br>Rituals and Community-Building Among<br>Montreal Han-Chinese Digital Sangha in<br>Post-Covid Era |
| 10:00-10:30 am    | Morning Break    |   |  |
| 10:30 am-12:00 pm | Trottier<br>1080 | Panel: “Pasts and Futures:”<br>Heritage, the Nostalgic Past,<br>and Transnational Colonialism   | Moderator: Diana Dimitrova<br><br>Presenters: Michelle L. Folk, Living<br>Empire at Home and Abroad:<br>Articulations of Transnational<br>Colonialism in the “Everyday and<br>Ordinary”  |

Catherine Ramey, *Maps to Missions: Rev. Walter T. Currie's Travels in Central Angola, 1880s*

Sam Victor, *Christianity, Community, and Capital: How a Montreal Church Redefines Profit for Social Good*

Trottier  
1090

Panel: Philosophy of Religion:  
On Love, Rebellion, Self, and  
Empathy

Moderator: TBD

Presenters: Marc Lalonde, *Rebellion or Love? Comparing the Exclusive Humanism in Albert Camus' *The Outsider* and the Integral Humanism in Morely Callaghan's *Such is My Beloved**  
Seyedhanif Mirrahimi, *Gadamer's Hermeneutics in Historical Studies and its Application to Religiosity and Empathy Among Iranian Women in the Safavid Era*

Christopher Moreman, *On the Verisimilitude of the Christian Eternal Soul and Buddhist Anatta*

12:00-1:30 pm

Lunch Break

1:30-3:00 pm

Trottier  
1080

Roundtable: Publishing your book  
in the CSSR Series "Critical  
Perspectives on Religion,"  
DeGruyter-Brill Press

Discussants: Christopher Austin, Diana  
Dimitrova, Rubina Ramji, Aaron Sanborn-  
Overby

Trottier  
1090

Panel: Social Action and Activism

Moderator: TBD

Presenters: Faezeh Izadi, *Ethics of Charitable Giving in Shia Tradition: Unraveling Strands of Thought*

Rachel Matheson, *Mystic Saint or Cult of Grandeur? Joan of Arc and the Concept of Greatness*

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|--------------|------------------|--|---|
|              |                  |  | Amadou Togola, Crise multidimensionnelle au Mali : L'implication du haut conseil Islamique de Mali dans le processus de paix  |
| 3:00-3:30 pm | Afternoon Break  |  |   |
| 3:30-5:30 pm | Trottier<br>1080 | Panel: Religion and Advocacy, Inclusivity, and Resiliency  | Moderator: TBD<br><br>Presenters: Jacqueline Giesbrecht, Sacredness, Accessibility, and Inclusion: Disability Advocacy in the Christian Church<br><br>Xavier Gravend-Tirole, Le bonheur et le bien-être: quel rôle pour le développement personnel en spiritualité?<br><br>Catherine Holtmann, Muslim Family Safety: Theorizing Vulnerability and Resiliency<br><br>Yael Machtinger, 'Til Death Do Us Part:' Can Law & Religion Sustain a Shared Future in Combating IPV? |
|              | Trottier<br>1090 | Written and unwritten rules of research grant applications | Letitia Henville, University Affairs, "Ask Dr. Editor"  |

## INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

**Azra Alibhai, Independent Scholar**

### **The Secularization of Animals: Bridging Science, Religion and Non-Religion in Alternative Modalities of "Spiritual" Wellness**

In the history of science and religion, the role of animals and Animal-Assisted-Interventions occupy a paradoxical position such that it has been perceived as non-scientific, of very recent origin and devoid of spiritual and religious roots (Faver, 2009; Hanrahan, 2011). Yet, scientific research points to the role that animals, specifically dogs have played in social relationships, therapeutic modalities and sacred narratives in many ancient and modern cultures and religions (Fine, 2010). Emerging research indicates that ancient and indigenous societies regarded animals as sacred beings and spiritual guides. The connection between humans and animals embodied in Indigenous societies can be seen in a variety of other faiths and societies for

instance Zoroastrian, Christian, Hindu and Muslim societies. This paper explores the role that animals play as an alternative modality in spiritual adaptations to illness and as therapeutic bridges to wellness. From a contemporary and epistemological standpoint, I argue that more studies are needed to understand the spiritual connection between humans and animals as a historical relationship, a source of spiritual companionship, protection, comfort and as this paper demonstrates, a healing relationship.

**Zaheeda Alibhai, University of Ottawa**

**In the Interest of Justice: Law and Religion**

Against the backdrop of several legal cases, this presentation explores how Muslim women who choose to wear a niqab or a hijab draw from, engage with, and build upon sociological understandings of lived religion that conflict with legal definitions over what constitutes tolerable or intolerable religious identities and practices. I argue that the legal regulation of religion, in our case Muslim women's sartorial religious practices, is anchored within notions of the authoritative rights of the state that adjudicate the ways that religion ought to be embodied in the public sphere and how citizens are permitted to differ.

**Gerjan Altenburg, St. Francis Xavier University**

**Why Nātha? Yoga and Yogis in the Guru Granth**

When yoga (jog) and yogis (jogīs) appear in academic work on Sikhism, they usually come up in the context of so-called "true yoga" (sahaj jog; gurmukh jog; and, shabad surat jog)—a Sikh understanding of yoga that places it in line with the practice of reciting or remembering the divine name (nām simran). But, the Śri Guru Granth Sahib (hereafter the Granth) also contains passing references to postural yoga and yogic ascetics; rich discussions of twelve schools of yoga; and dialogues between Sikhs and Nātha yogis (followers Gorakṣa). Although such depictions of yoga and yogis are certainly polemical, read carefully these passages can offer a unique, overlooked, and informative snapshot of what yoga might have looked like as a living tradition in North India by and around the time when the Granth was canonized (1604 CE), at least in the imaginations of its authors/redactors.

**Labeeb Bsoul, Khalifa University**

**The Epistemological Philosophy of History and Strategic Thought of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) and Arnold Toynbee (d. 1975)**

Some ascribe the founding of historical philosophy to the Italian philosopher Vico (1668–1744), while others credit the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755). In fact, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), a Muslim historian, was the first to recognize that history, like any other science, required inquiry. Both view history as a science of circumstances and events with profound causes, following Arnold Toynbee (d. 1975). As a result, it is an ancient, original piece of wisdom that deserves to be considered one of its sciences. Criticism, observation, comparison, and examination were all part of Ibn Khaldun's and Toynbee's techniques. They used scientific criticism to examine historical stories, their sources, and historians' methodologies, studying and comparing numerous versions in order to eliminate falsifications and exaggerations and

arrive at an objective understanding of what had truly transpired. Many narratives contained lies because writers aimed to please a king or serve a sect's goals. For their own purposes, the newsmakers and storytellers purposefully cheated and misrepresented the information. In order to be capable of effective criticism and clarification, Ibn Khaldun and Arnold Toynbee urged historians to become educated, accurate in observation, and proficient in comparing text with subtext. This is the intention of the article.

### **Gabriel Casola, Concordia University**

#### **Opinions of the Historical Information About the Conquest of Joshua**

There is a problem with the historical truth in the Book of Joshua found in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament. This is about Joshua's conquest. Whether that is historically true or not, evidence may support either belief. However, getting evidence from Joshua's conquest is a challenge for the idea that his conquest is truthfully accurate. No information found from the conquest might be enough to argue that the events that happened in Joshua did not happen. However, what could be understood is that no evidence was found only at the time when certain individuals checked the historical accuracy of the conquest. There could have been evidence that they did not find. The topic is problematic because the answers to the problem are different. Six individuals have opinions about the conquest of Joshua's historical truth based on their research. Daniel Hawk argues that an issue in Joshua for historical critics is its miraculous events. What Joel Drinkard acknowledges is that certain archaeological evidence seems to support the conquest model of Joshua. However, when further excavations are done then there is a conflict with the evidence found before in support of the conquest. David Merling's argument is that certain people have become unsatisfied with Joshua's Conquest Theory and the explanation of the arrival of the Israelites in Canaan. Michael Grisanti explores that a consensus among scholars was established during the 1960s. Furthermore, Jericho was unrelated to the Israelite conquest of the land that pertains to Canaan and Grisanti includes an essay about the Canaanite city of Ai. Then, Neil Silberman and Israel Finkelstein identify a discrepancy discovered in archaeology. This is between the situation of the land of Canaan and the Bible at the time when the conquest was thought to have happened from 1230 BCE to 1220 BCE. These ideas are ways in which this subject is critically explored.

### **Carlos Colorado, University of Winnipeg**

#### **Self-Determination and Reconciliation in *Servatius v. Alberni School District No. 70***

This paper considers a legal dispute that began over a smudging demonstration in a Port Alberni classroom in 2016. While there was disagreement over the details of the events that occurred at John Howitt Elementary, the petitioner, the schools district, and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) also diverged on whether the smudging demonstration at the heart of the dispute should be framed as a "religious" ceremony. Whereas the act of labeling traditional Nuu-Chah-Nulth practices as "religious," for the sole purpose of restricting them, is an act of colonial and secular power, I consider how the NTC and school district's positions can be construed as manifestations of Indigenous self-determination and Reconciliation, respectively. Finally, the paper analyzes how the BC Supreme Court judgement and the Court of



Appeal's dismissal take positions in relation to Reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination, including through references to the TRC's Calls to Action and the UNDRIP.

### **Alyshea Cummins, University of Ottawa**

#### **Meaning Making in (non)Religious Identity Narratives**

Religious affiliation is steadily declining across generations in Canada, which is especially evident amongst the Millennial generation. This presentation is interested in how Millennial participants make meaning in favour of and in favour from religion at significant touch points and turning points experienced in the Canadian context. It is interested in identifying the moments in which religion is strengthened, changed, or negotiated away in the lives of our participants who were socialized into religion. By analyzing the personal experiences of participants where their religious identity was challenged, we can answer the following questions:

1. What are some important touch points or turning points that impact religious identity?
2. How do participants resolve the cognitive dissonance experienced at these various touch points or turning points in favour of or in favour from religion?
3. Which social-psychological factors appear to make religious identities more resilient to change and decline?

Through this examination, we contend that while certain socialization factors appear important in reinforcing religious outlooks across generations, mainly discussing religion and community engagement, without the ability to make meaning with religion at the intersection of touch points and turning points, participants are more likely to fall into the trend of religious transformation, decline, or foregoing religion entirely; leaving little to nothing to be passed down across generations.

### **Michelle L. Folk, Campion and Luther Colleges at the University of Regina**

#### **Living Empire at Home and Abroad: Articulations of Transnational Colonialism in the "Everyday and Ordinary"**

Britain's 1839 Postage Act and introduction of the Penny Post in 1840 contributed to a letter writing revolution across the British Empire. People came to use the reformed, more accessible, and growing postal system to maintain family connections that were impacted by distance. Their personal correspondence – anecdotes, small events, personal struggles, family conflict, and more – were often about the happenings of daily life. While seemingly too individual, trivial, or boring, letter writing can be read as autobiographical storytelling reflecting larger societal narratives. Personal letters were a commonplace way of circulating constructions of what letter writers and recipients saw as "home" and "abroad." Using the letter book compiled in 1838 by Maria Dobbs to commemorate her daughter Jane, I will examine how colonials "told the story" of empire – how they built, maintained, and made sense of it – through sharing the "ordinary and everyday" in their correspondence about India during British colonialism.

### **Colby Gaudet, Concordia University**

### **Questioning Devotions, Reorienting Commitments: Using Christian Religious Archives and Church History to Study Indian Residential Schools**

While Christian church bodies in Canada have responded to the calls to action released in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, religious studies scholars at Canadian universities have been slower to apply the relevant calls to action in a widely recognizable or organized way. My paper will be a methodological reflection on my study of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) through archival sources. I will survey the field of recent academic engagement on this topic and present critical observations I have made from my research. My comments will synthesize aspects of the methods and frameworks that I have found useful amid current public discourses of decolonization, indigenization, truth-telling, and reconciliation. Since the 1990s and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the term ‘Indian Residential School’ has come to signify the system of residential schools for Indigenous children launched and operated by church-state collaborators. Yet, the IRS terminology narrows our understanding of colonialism and assimilative education by disregarding two other modes of schooling deployed in Indigenous communities: the day schools and mission schools. I will parse these differences and emphasize the particular necessity for committed study of pre-Confederation missions and mission schools. In many contexts, mission schools of the colonial era laid the literal and conceptual groundwork for the later launching of the residential and day school systems. I will stress the impacts of Christian denominational differences on pedagogy and the lived experiences of Indigenous students at church-operated schools. Drawing tools from the well-trod domain of ‘church history,’ I will recommend the application of denominational lenses via archival work in church collections. By following the records of specific church bodies, we might elucidate with greater clarity the evolving conflicts, synchronicities, or collaborations of ideologies, policies, and practices among members of church and state over several centuries.

### **Jacqueline Giesbrecht, Queens University**

#### **Sacredness, Accessibility, and Inclusion: Disability Advocacy in the Christian Church**

In many conceptualizations of the sacred, the sacred requires an “other,” – the profane or an out-group. In ancient Israel, this group included people with disabilities, deemed “defected,” who were not allowed in the Israelite religious community's sacred spaces. While some Christian circles still emphasize this “cursed” understanding of disability, there are other contemporary Christian theologians and disability advocacy groups that emphasize a liberatory theology of disability. Using Foucault’s concept of utopia and heterotopia, I demonstrate that these theologians and organizations offer the possibility of a sacred space that is inclusive rather than exclusive and other. I then consider the potential contributions of this inclusive sacred in society more broadly and the guidance it could provide in the pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable future.

### **Michael Gillingham, University of Alberta**

#### **Entertaining Angels Unaware: Derrida’s Employment of Religious Texts, Traditions, and Motifs in His Seminars on “Hospitality”**

The “problem” of the refugee, displaced person, and/or immigrant continues to create major challenges all over the world today as millions of people are on the move. Derrida addressed this topic in two seminars in the years 1995–1997 as he discussed the theme of “hospitality.” Derrida’s many textual sources referenced in these published lectures are broad and varied, including a number of references to what might be termed “religious” characters, stories, and themes from Greek, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. I want to briefly survey these references and then provide a discussion of Derrida’s employment of “religion” and “religious” characters, stories, and themes as he builds his argument. I will make the claim that Derrida risks sacralizing the “stranger” (refugee, displaced person, immigrant) as he invokes both the real physical dangers and the moral imperative to welcome the “stranger” across the borders of the modern nation state.

### **Xavier Gravend-Tirole, Université de Montréal**

#### **Le bonheur et le bien-être: quel rôle pour le développement personnel en spiritualité?**

Dans certains cercles proches de la « spiritualité classique », on entend souvent un dédain dans la manière de regarder certaines formes de développement personnel (Bonomelli 2022 ; Rimlinger 2021 ; Redeker 2006). Or dans certains milieux écologistes proches de « spiritualités de la nature », surtout féminins, il semble que ces démarches de développement personnel, centrées sur le soi, mais tendues vers un idéal d’accomplissement ou de performance, ne soient pas aussi problématiques qu’on pourrait le craindre (Marquis 2014). Cette proposition se propose donc de réexaminer l’articulation du spirituel et du psychologique à l’aune de l’écologie : existe-t-il une zone grise telle que le « psychospirituel ? » Et si oui, que révèle cette hybridité pour la psychologie ? Ce faisant, il s’agira de réinterroger d’abord le statut et ce qui peut être entendu par développement personnel, examiner le degré de « captation » capitaliste, et évaluer (autant que faire se peut) le réel mieux-être qui en découle chez les personnes s’en inspirant. Il faudra également poursuivre la réflexion sur le rôle des (éco)émotions dans la réalisation de sa vie spirituelle et le rôle particulier de l’intelligence émotionnelle à cet égard – en saisir son articulation avec l’écoanxiété, par exemple. En ligne de mire, le propos voudrait interroger cette idée d’un développement personnel égocentrique, et voir en quoi il y pourrait y avoir derrière un désir de vie vertueuse, à la base de la spiritualité selon Ammerman (2013). Ce faisant, l’intention sera d’une part de mieux comprendre certains contours sémantiques, théoriques et pratiques possibles d’une spiritualité chrétienne écologique, et d’autre part déceler en quoi l’espérance peut également bénéficier d’une meilleure confiance dans le monde... et en soi.

### **Mary Hale, Saint Mary's University**

#### **Cult Followings: What Podcast Reviews and Reviewers Can Teach Scholars of Religion About Asserting Relevance and Defining Expertise**

A study of podcast reviews and reviewers of podcasts on New Religious Movements (labeled as “cults” in podcast genres) revealed a scarcity of interest on the part of reviewers regarding whether scholars of religion were being consulted as experts by any of the recommended

podcasts. Given that the literature shows that podcasts are seen by the public as avenues for acquiring new knowledge on subjects the listeners are already engaged with, the reliance on what we in the field would see as experts is disheartening. This study looks at how a lack of substantive definitions for foundational concepts (like “research” and “cults”) combine with the Gramscian notion of “common sense” to conspire against what we, as scholars of religion, might see as a necessary voice — our voices — in these conversations.

### **Xiao Han, Université du Québec à Montréal**

#### **Why Are They Still Online? Digital Rituals and Community-Building Among Montreal Han-Chinese Digital Sangha in Post-Covid Era**

My research encompasses an analysis of five digital Chinese Buddhist groups in Montreal, who utilize a variety of digital platforms and have significantly expanded their online presence since the beginning of COVID-19. As we transition into the post-pandemic era, with the reopening of physical Buddhist groups, burning questions arise: Will these digital practices persist despite the reopening of physical temples, and if so, what drives their continued commitment to the digital practice? I will answer these key questions by presenting in-depth, scenario-based ethnographic case studies and by exploring their specific Buddhist ritual practices in digital spaces, as well as how they create their own sense of community within such environments. My central argument is that Chinese Buddhist communities have been revolutionizing the religious landscape using the most advanced technology available. Their digital approach, initially adopted as a temporary measure, has evolved into a full-fledged, permanent, and self-sustaining mode of practice, creating their special Buddhist universe in North America.

### **Letitia Henville, University Affairs, “Ask Dr. Editor”**

#### **Written and unwritten rules of research grant applications.**

Talk and Q and A with Letitia Henville from University of Affairs.

### **Catherine Holtmann, University of New Brunswick**

#### **Muslim Family Safety: Theorizing Vulnerability and Resiliency**

The Muslim Family Safety Project is a research partnership designed to build bridges of understanding between Muslim and Arabic families and public family violence service providers including domestic violence outreach workers, child protection workers and police in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The project is building a culturally integrative approach to family safety that respects both Muslim collectivist values and Canadian individualist approaches to family violence intervention (Ashbourne & Baobaid 2019). Sociological research on religion and family violence (Nason-Clark et al, 2018) highlights the ways in which religion can increase the vulnerability of religious people to abuse. However, when religious groups and public service providers become aware of the unique needs of religious minority families, religious resources can be harnessed to support resiliency in a process of change. This paper uses a social ecological framework to explore vulnerabilities and resiliencies of Muslim families experiencing violence.

## **Emmanuel Israel, Trinity College and the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto**

### **Reading Paul's Theology of a Renewed Mind in the Context of Decolonization**

We in the West live in a time when there is an urge for decolonization and antiracism within and outside the church and a time when the failures of the church in these movements are being explored and analyzed. The urge to decolonize is to free the colonized from their political and economic struggles and a process where human society welcomes new humanity. For Frantz Fanon, the struggle against colonization cannot be abolished without structural economic changes. However, that is not enough. For the newly independent nations they “must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man (Fanon, 1963).” This means a way of thinking about themselves, a new rational mind. On Fanon’s proposal, I see a similarity between Fanon’s words and Paul’s admonition in Romans 12:2. Paul’s understanding of humanity makes him conclude that sin eventually yields moral insanity. Like the Gentile’s mind depicted in Romans 1, which could not be liberated from passions, neither could the biblically educated Jewish mind of Romans 7. Craig Keener writes, “the law offers a clearer knowledge about God and his moral demands, but it informs rather than transforms (Keener, 2019).” Paul sees the need for a new identity and not mere behavior control, which the law can provide. This new mind, which he calls the mind of the Spirit, means Christians should not be controlled by their old feelings, habits, or passions because God has started the transformation to the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit in the believers shapes their thinking and provides them with Spirit-inspired wisdom and understanding. This does not mean believers would not struggle with fleshly thoughts or predispositions. However, it means that when they operated in their unrenewed mind, they only had the power of the flesh but as believers in Christ, though they are in the flesh, they have the Spirit’s power to help choose between right and wrong. While Paul was not referring to colonization and racism, he warned the believers in Rome not to conform to the pattern of the world. The pattern of the world is the pattern whereby “sinful choices have corrupted moral discernment” (Keener 2019). For this discussion, I am using Fanon’s understanding of the colonized world expressed as colonization and racism as the pattern of this world. The plan is to discuss what is a decolonization reading of Paul’s concept of “be transformed by the renewing of the mind” in decolonization and antiracism projects? Our shared future would be based on our shared understanding of humanity. I will use analytical textual analysis to study and understand the text and its meanings. It helps me to study contemporary biblical scholarship on Romans 12 and the works of Fanon.

## **Faezeh Izadi, University of Calgary**

### **Ethics of Charitable Giving in Shia Tradition: Unraveling Strands of Thought**

My paper aims to navigate the complex landscape of charitable giving within the Shia tradition, aiming to identify diverse strands of thought shaping ethical considerations in this practice. The paper begins by introducing five prominent theories of moral giving: Giving from the Heart, Giving to the Neediest, Giving Mindfully, Giving to Overcome Unjust Policies, and Considering Excessive Wealth as a Debt to be Repaid. Subsequently, it provides a detailed examination of charity in the Shia tradition, delving into the four primary elements of charity — the giver, the

resource, the recipient, and the mechanism of delivery. Through an in-depth review, the paper reveals significant variations in perspectives governing these elements within Shia tradition. The final section discusses the connections between these views and the five above mentioned theories, emphasizing the complexity of the issue. I emphasize the significant role played by the jurists' authority in shaping the multifaceted nature of charitable giving.

**Clara A.B. Joseph, University of Calgary**

**Decolonizing Narratives: Reframing Thomas Christian Contributions in Colonial Botanical Knowledge and Environmental Preservation in 17th-Century India**

This paper will examine the Hortus Malabaricus (1678-1693) and the contributions of the Thomas Christians to the volumes to highlight the complex interplay between colonial powers, indigenous communities, and the natural environment. Firstly, the paper will introduce the 17th-century source, emphasizing the role of the Church and the State in creating knowledge. Secondly, the paper will unravel the politics that contextualize the role of the Thomas Christians in the creation of this source. Finally, the paper will revisit prevalent decolonial discourse to show how and why it neglects the diverse and multifaceted roles that Christian communities have played in various aspects of Indian history, including the contributions to Eco-Ministry by the Jesuit, Robert Athickal. Ultimately, the project contributes to the fields of Decolonial Studies and Religious Studies, offering a nuanced re-evaluation of historical narratives and contributing to a more inclusive understanding of the intricate connections between religion, colonialism, and environmental knowledge in India.

**Katherine Kelaidis, National Hellenic Museum**

**Conversion as Conquest/Colonialism: The Dynamics of Conversion by Majority Populations to Minority Religions**

This paper explores the question of conversion by individuals belonging to the majority population to minority religions, framed within the broader context of colonialism. Historically, the imposition of foreign ideologies and religious beliefs has been a pivotal strategy employed by colonial powers to exert dominance over subjugated societies. However, a less explored aspect of this colonial dynamic is the voluntary adoption of minority religions by members of the majority population, challenging conventional narratives of religious imposition. The study investigates the motivations, mechanisms, and consequences of this intriguing form of conversion, seeking to unravel the multifaceted intersections between religion, power, and colonialism. Through an examination of historical and contemporary case studies, the research illuminates the complex interplay of social, political, and cultural factors that drive individuals from dominant religious groups to embrace minority faiths. We will focus particularly on the ways in which these new converts often come to dominate the public face of religious traditions and seek changes to the tradition in order to make them conform with Western/dominant modes of thinking and religious practice. This paper contributes to the nuanced understanding of conversion as a dynamic and multifaceted process within the colonial paradigm. By shedding light on the motivations and implications of majority individuals

embracing minority religions, it enriches discussions on the complex interplay between religious identity, power dynamics, and colonial legacies.

**Marc Lalonde, Concordia University**

**Rebellion or Love? Comparing the Exclusive Humanism in Albert Camus' *The Outsider* and the Integral Humanism in Morely Callaghan's *Such is My Beloved***

This presentation compares the exclusive humanism in Albert Camus' *The Outsider* and the integral humanism in Morely Callaghan's *Such is My Beloved*. This is achieved by juxtaposing the two main protagonists, Meursault and Father Dowling. Exclusive humanism, says Charles Taylor, constitutes a moral ideal about human flourishing that refuses to affirm any higher realm of value beyond the finite human life. For Meursault, this expresses itself as rebellion. In contrast, integral humanism, as articulated by Jacques Maritain, involves a theocentric depiction of the human being rooted in supernatural grace. For Father Dowling, this plays out as love of neighbour. The comparison of these two humanisms not only throws each into radical relief but discloses a central link between hope and ethics. Specifically, Meursault's absurdist denial of hope pairs itself with an amorality, while Father Dowling's affirmation of Christian hope involves a loving concern for the other human being in need.

**Solange Lefebvre, Université de Montréal**

**Mathieu Colin, Université de Montréal**

**Next time, there will be a revolt!: How religions coped during the Covid-19 pandemic in Canada**

The pandemic, along with the sanitary measures put in place by provincial governments, disrupted collective life right down to its very foundations. In particular, religious groups had to adapt to the restrictions in place, and find new ways of interacting with their followers, even reinventing themselves, particularly in terms of conducting rituals and ceremonies (Barreau 2021). Similarly, some religions have also sought to make contact with governments in order to advance their cause and role in the public sphere, notably on the issue of vaccines or compliance with sanitary measures (Edmonds and Flahault 2021). The initiatives put in place by religious groups have sometimes generated controversy (El-Majzoub et al 2021, Riskedahl 2020), but have also made it possible to respond to the needs of the faithful in terms of community, online presence and rituals (Rehmani et al 2023, Tompoudi 2023). This presentation will exploit national data from an international comparative research project between Canada, Germany, Poland and Ireland to show how four religious traditions (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Jewish) have evolved during the pandemic. The presentation will focus in particular on the relationship of these groups to digital technology and vaccination.

**Yael Machtiger, Bar-Ilan University and the City University of New York**

**'Til Death Do Us Part:' Can Law & Religion Sustain a Shared Future in Combating IPV?**

This paper critically reflects on an ongoing qualitative empirical study of domestic abuse/intimate partner violence (DA/IPV) in diverse and legally plural contexts. Using a multi-method approach including qualitative interviews, I encourage individuals on the margins to place their experiences of violence at the centre of the analysis in the tradition of socio-legal storytelling in order to evaluate domestic violence in religious communities and beyond. The paper will reflect on how legal institutions and practices sustain a shared future with religious ones, exploring when law – both civil and religious law – enters these moments, of DA/IPV. In exploring the different legal and socio-cultural dimensions of DA/IPV that emerge, this paper historicizes and questions the existing gaps between the legal and the social and the extent to which religious women consistently experience law in the absence of justice.

**Rachel Matheson, McMaster University**

### **Mystic Saint or Cult of Grandeur? Joan of Arc and the Concept of Greatness**

In her final magnum opus, *The Need for Roots*, the French philosopher and mystic, Simone Weil, offers an incisive critique of the concept of greatness. She argues that a “false” conception of greatness, characterized by force, might, and prestige, has dominated social, political, and religious institutions since the Roman Empire, leading to a condition of uprootedness and a tendency toward uprooting others. However, she suggests that a “true” form of greatness has been preserved within the mystical tradition. This paper will elucidate Weil’s critique of greatness by examining her reading of the military leader and mystic, Joan of Arc, whom Weil interprets as a model of both the “false” greatness of a chauvinistic nationalism and the “true” greatness of a patriotism rooted in the recognition of fragility and impermanence.

**Marie-Ève Melanson, Université du Québec à Montréal**

### **“Deeply Personal Characteristics:” When the Legal Conception of Religion Resembles That of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

In recent years, some scholars of law and religion in Canada have argued that only objective characteristics of oneself that “cannot be changed” (e.g., race), as opposed to “deeply personal characteristics or feelings” (i.e., sexual orientation and gender identity), should be considered as a valid basis for an equality claim (Benson, 2013; Buckingham, 2018; Bussey, 2020). This argument is regularly mobilized to weaken the equality claims of LGBTQ+ people when they conflict with the religious practices of a group. This paper contends that this argument is unlikely to succeed in Canadian courts and, more generally, explores why claims for religious freedom tend to fail when cast against the right to equality of LGBTQ+ people. Drawing on Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence, I show that religion is construed analogously to sexual orientation and gender identity in law; that is to say, it is constructed as a category of identity that is primarily dependent on a self-assessment. Viewed in this way, not only is religion less likely to be robustly protected in law but arguments seeking to diminish the value of “deeply personal characteristics or feelings” are likely to weaken the protection of religion itself.

**Syedhanif Mirrahimi, University of Calgary**



## **Gadamer's Hermeneutics in Historical Studies and its Application to Religiosity and Empathy Among Iranian Women in the Safavid Era**

This research paper applies Gadamer's hermeneutical approach to study the connection between religiosity and empathy among Iranian women in the Safavid Era. It emphasises the importance of adopting a hermeneutical attitude to interpret past events objectively. The thesis explores the link between the religiosity of Iranian women and their empathy for the social movement in Iran. Gadamer's critical hermeneutical approach is utilised to understand subjective experiences within a cultural and historical context. This study follows Gadamer's principles and takes a comprehensive approach to defining religiosity, operationalising empathy, and considering cultural factors that influence Iranian women's perspectives on that era. Ethical considerations, potential challenges, and a holistic interpretation of religiosity and empathy are included in the research design. The paper concludes that understanding is an ongoing process influenced by bias and aesthetics. It highlights the importance of self-reflection in the iterative research process. This research enriches understanding of the interplay between religiosity, empathy, and cultural context among Iranian Canadian women by bridging the gap between Gadamer's theoretical framework and empirical research in hermeneutics.

## **Christopher Moreman, California State University, East Bay**

### **On the Verisimilitude of the Christian Eternal Soul and Buddhist Anatta**

Past efforts at finding common ground between Christianity and Buddhism have tended towards bringing Buddhist philosophical concepts closer to Christian ones, especially in terms of the continuity of self and the nature of the divine. I wish to propose an argument moving in the opposite direction, drawing Christian conceptions of an eternal soul closer to the Buddhist concept of anatta (not-self). In short, I argue that the Self can be viewed in essentially identical ways when observed through what often seem to be diametrically opposed positions – i.e., the eternity of the resurrected soul in Christianity and the emptiness of the non-existent self in Buddhism. At the heart of my argument lies the paradoxical nature of infinity/eternity as it pertains to the sense of individuality normally experienced by humans; a sense which is responsible for the seeming incompatibility of systems.

## **Marie-Ève Ouimette, Université du Québec à Montréal**

### **Culture et citoyenneté québécoise: une solution pour « assurer nos avenir communs »?**

Cette présentation examine la transition entre les programmes Éthique et culture religieuse (ÉCR) et Culture et citoyenneté québécoise (CCQ). L'abolition récente d'ÉCR au profit de CCQ témoigne d'une réponse à nos préoccupations contemporaines comme l'environnement, le numérique, la sexualité, etc. La nécessité d'amputer la culture religieuse de la formation citoyenne a d'ailleurs été justifiée au nom de ces dernières. Dans le contexte du thème « Assurer nos avenir communs », les stratégies de formation à la citoyenneté du nouveau programme sont analysées, mettant l'accent sur les enjeux éthiques et environnementaux, et le compare à son prédécesseur, ÉCR. La réduction de la place accordée à la culture religieuse est évaluée en termes d'impact sur la cohabitation dans un monde pluraliste et la construction d'un

avenir durable. Cette analyse explore la philosophie de CCQ dans la formation de la citoyenneté actuelle et future en fournissant des perspectives sur son alignement avec les objectifs de développement durable de l'UNESCO.

### **Catherine Ramey, University of Waterloo**

#### **Maps to Missions: Rev. Walter T. Currie's Travels in Central Angola, 1880s**

In 1886, Canadian Reverend Walter T. Currie and his wife, Clara Wilkes-Currie, travelled from Boston (Massachusetts), through Liverpool (England) and Lisbon (Portugal), to land in Portuguese colonial Angola on the west coast of Africa. During his early years in Angola, Currie journeyed throughout the interior, mapping the environment, engaging with the people, and seeking out a location for a Canadian-run mission station. While Currie went to Angola as a missionary set on "bringing" Christianity and western conventions to Angolans, he often presented himself as an "explorer" by producing maps and ethnographies of central Angola and Angolans. Centring Currie's travels in the 1880s, I argue that missionaries were crucial to colonial projects of establishing and reinforcing colonial borders and "othering" colonised people. I extend Currie's travels in Angola into a global discussion of the problematic nature of "exploration" (as settler colonialism) in the late twentieth century.

### **Meghan Richey, University of Victoria**

#### **Building Resilience in the Ecological Crisis: An Exploratory Study of the Role of Eco-Spirituality for Members of Generation Z**

What is it like to be a young person facing the ecological crisis? How are members of Generation Z in Canada experiencing their mental health and their relationships with nature? And what role does eco-spirituality play in navigating a rapidly changing world? In collaboration with individuals from Generation Z, my PhD research explores young adults' physical, emotional, and spiritual relationships with nature, and considers paths forward that support both human and planetary health. In my presentation I will focus on how, for my interlocutors, eco-spirituality seems to offer a foundation for 1) deeper connection and identification with the natural world, 2) a means of embodiment, purpose, and enchantment, and 3) an experience of interdependence and belonging to something greater than oneself. I will consider how these experiences help to illuminate the individual and collective healing potential of eco-spirituality for addressing ecological breakdown and building resilience in young adults.

### **David Seljak, St. Jerome's University**

#### **Indigenous Spirituality and Healthcare in Secular Canada**

In the social imaginary defined by "secular Canada," religion should have no public role, and, where religious belief and practice clash with putatively universal norms, they should be disallowed. Paul Bramadat and I outline how the Canadian secular story – by marginalizing religion and spirituality – has inspired practices and norms in the Canadian healthcare system

that harm Indigenous populations. More recently, in response to the dramatically poorer health outcomes of Indigenous peoples compared to the non-Indigenous populations, hospitals and other healthcare providers have increasingly adopted reforms that are more open to spiritual claims and practices and more deferential to elders, families, and complementary healing modalities (e.g., smudging, sweat lodges). It is our sense that some of the most promising signs of reconciliation between Indigenous and settler Canadians as well as the emergence of a post-secular future are visible in healthcare contexts.

### **Doaa Shalabi, University of Waterloo**

#### **Faith-Based Sustainability, the UN-SDGs, and Muslim Youth**

One of Today's greatest challenges is climate change, along with the need for sustainable practices essential in combating it. For many religious youths, faith-based sustainability emerges as a potential, yet largely untapped, source of wisdom. This wisdom can help address the challenges that our world is facing today and for the generations to come. This paper will address three primary research questions, specifically: what are sustainability principles that can be developed based on Islamic teachings? how can these faith-based sustainability principles relate/support the achievement of the SDGs? And how do Muslim youth relate and practice those faith-based principles? Through an analysis of the Islamic Prophetic traditions (Hadeeth), the paper will offer a novel Islamic sustainability framework, revealing six social principles, three economic principles, and two environmental principles. These faith-based sustainability principles were mapped with the SDGs to highlight how those principles can help achieving the global goals. Finally, the paper will showcase how Muslim youth view these faith-based sustainability principles and whether they can implement them in their everyday lives.

### **Adrienne Tessier, University of Saskatchewan**

#### **UNDRIP, Land, and Defenders: Shifting Legal Recognition of Indigenous Spirituality in Canadian Jurisprudence**

Canadian courts are frequently called upon to adjudicate issues related to Indigenous spirituality. These cases range from Indigenous communities and Nations protecting their traditional territories, the litigating the presence of smudging in schools, or asserting their right to seek culturally informed health care for Indigenous children. This paper canvasses the case law on concerning the interactions with Indigenous spirituality or beliefs and Canadian colonial law, particularly the *Ktunaxa Nation v. BC*, *Servatius v. Port Alberni School District*, and *Saugeen First Nation* cases. My focus is on how Indigenous spirituality does not mask neatly on to colonialist, Christianized perceptions of spiritual belief and practice that are deeply embedded in Canadian law. Drawing from *R. v. Montour*, I suggest that the more frequent use of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by Canadian courts has led to increased legal recognition and empowerment of Indigenous spirituality within the colonial justice system. This research was supported in part by a SSHRC Masters Canada Graduate Scholarship. I acknowledge that I am a white settler engaging in this work, and understand that I have an obligation to do so with sensitivity and respect.

**Amadou Togola, Université de Sherbrooke**

### **Crise multidimensionnelle au Mali : l'implication du haut conseil Islamique du Mali dans le processus de paix**

Depuis 2012 le Mali vit une crise multidimensionnelle et c'est l'intensification, durant ces dernières années, des conflits communautaires qui a détérioré la cohésion dans différentes régions du pays. Plus précisément, le conflit entre éleveurs et agriculteurs et la création des groupes auto-défenses Peulh et Dogon ont bouleversé le vivre ensemble dans le Centre et le Sud du pays. Pour faire face à ce conflit, plusieurs couches de la population, dont les notables régionaux et les religieux, ont procédé à des médiations pour la paix et la cohésion sociale. L'implication des religieux dans le processus de paix et de cohésion sociale a été fait par l'intermédiaire du Haut Conseil Islamique du Mali (HCIM). Quel rôle le HCIM et les religieux ont-ils joué dans le processus de paix au Mali ? Quels ont été les incidences de leur médiation dans le processus de paix ? Quelles ont été les difficultés rencontrées par le HCIM et les religieux dans ce processus ? Il est vrai que les médiations pour la paix et la cohésion sociale ont fait l'objet de préoccupations de la part des religieux au Mali, mais elles n'ont pas totalement atteint les résultats attendus, et ce, pour diverses raisons. Cette communication explorera ces questions dans le contexte malien, en mettant en lumière les tenants et les aboutissants des processus de paix qui ont cours depuis 2012. Pour renforcer ses efforts de médiation pour la paix le HCIM a créé une commission nationale de réconciliation. Grâce aux missions de cette commission des résultats prometteurs ont été obtenus dans les régions de Mopti et de Ségou. Ces efforts ont permis la levée de blocus imposé sur certains villages dans lesdites régions en 2019. C'est grâce aussi à cette commission que le l'Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Mali et le gouvernement ont trouvé un terrain d'entente. Les efforts de médiation de paix menés par le HCIM avaient aussi permis de trouver un entre belligérants dans le cercle de Niono en 2021. Le Haut Conseil Islamique du Mali a aussi un rôle important dans le conflit intercommunautaire qui a éclaté entre Peulh et Dogon.

**Sam Victor, McGill University**

### **Christianity, Community, and Capital: How a Montreal Church Redefines Profit for Social Good**

Drawing from ongoing ethnographic research in Montreal, this paper explores the intersection of religion, heritage, and political economy in citizens' attempts to build shared urban futures. Amidst a real estate crisis that displaces non-profit and community organizations due to skyrocketing rents, an evangelical church in downtown Montreal has transformed its historical 19th century building into a secular "community hub." The priest imagines the building as a bulwark against anti-social urbanism, as well as vector through which to redeem the public image of Christianity. Foregrounding the specifically economic logic of "innovation" that now pervades heritage preservation discourses, I examine this church's attempt to redefine the meaning of "profit" through a moralized economic vision that ties the building's real-estate value to its promise of "social impact." This initiative represents more than a practical response to urban challenges; it embodies a critical renegotiation of religion's role within the narrative of modern, secular Quebec, as well as the enduring privileges of material Christian heritage.

## PANELS

### **La pluralité religieuse et spirituelle à travers le prisme des voix marginalisées/minoritaires**

Commandités par le Chantier de recherche « Religions, Féminismes et Genres » (RFG) du RéQEF, les deux panels qui suivent proposent des conférences dont les sujets permettent d'ouvrir la réflexion sur une pluralité d'expériences religieuses et spirituelles. Le chantier RFG constitue un espace spécifique, au sein des études féministes québécoises, qui s'intéresse aux manifestations du religieux, telles qu'elles sont consignées dans les discours et les pratiques passées et actuelles. En mobilisant des expertises issues des sciences des religions, de la théologie, de la littérature, de l'anthropologie et de l'histoire afin de stimuler des échanges interdisciplinaires, ces deux sessions laissent émerger des voix féminines et/ou féministes, marginalisées, autochtones, africaines, LGBTQI+, qu'elles soient inscrites dans la réalité ou la fiction. Les liens du féminin et de la nature sont abordés, de même que les attentes sociétales reliées au genre et à la sexualité et les stratégies de survie déployées par les personnes marginalisées et/ou minorisées.

#### **Première session : Femmes, minorités sexuelles et engagements spirituels**

**Modérateur :** Youssef Benzouine, Université de Montréal

#### **Panélistes :**

##### **Camille Varnier, Université du Québec à Montréal**

##### **Luttes pour le territoire et l'accès aux ressources naturelles : le rôle des femmes Machi face aux industries extractives dans la région de l'Araucanie, Chili**

Dans la culture mapuche, peuple autochtone du Chili et d'Argentine, les Machi (guérisseur-se-s) jouent un rôle essentiel. Véritables autorités spirituelles, intermédiaires entre la terre des vivants et celles des ancêtres (entre le Wenu Mapu et le Nag Mapu), elles ont à charge la santé, le bien-être et l'équilibre du peuple mapuche (Lesser 2006; Kimelman 2008). Les plantes médicinales (canelo, copihue, maqui, laurel, etc.) qu'elles utilisent lors des rituels ou cérémonies de guérison sont considérées comme sacrées et proviennent généralement « d'espaces écologico-culturels » mapuche (Pizarro Díaz et al. 2008; Neira Ceballos et al. 2012) tels que les menoko (marécages), les trayenko (sources ou cascades) ou les lewfu (rivières). Pourtant nécessaires à l'équilibre et la survie de la Nation mapuche, ces espaces sont de plus en plus menacés sous la pression des industries extractives, en particulier forestières, qui envahissent la région de l'Araucanie et le Wallmapu (territoire mapuche) depuis près d'un siècle. De la déforestation à la destruction des ressources naturelles (pollution des eaux, érosion des sols, saccage de la biodiversité), elles transforment considérablement le paysage et affectent profondément le système social, culturel et, de fait spirituel, mapuche (Galafassi,

2012). À partir d'entretiens réalisés auprès de plusieurs acteur·ice·s mapuche dans la région de l'Araucanie au Chili (période février/mars 2024) dans le cadre de mon stage postdoctoral, cette communication abordera tout autant les difficultés rencontrées par les femmes Machi en ce qui a trait à l'accès et au contrôle de leurs ressources naturelle, que la transformation de leur rôle au sein des communautés dans un contexte de revendication identitaire.

**Nicolas Boissière, Université du Québec à Montréal**

**Des traditions religieuses et spirituelles à majorité féminine : un regard socio-anthropologique sur l'importance numérique des femmes dans le néo-paganisme**

De nos jours, des milliers d'individus s'investissent dans le néo-paganisme, à savoir cet ensemble de traditions religieuses et spirituelles contemporaines faisant revivre des systèmes religieux préjudiciaire, préchrétien et préislamique. Si toutes les études portant sur ces traditions ont documenté la diversité des profils sociodémographiques de leurs pratiquant·e·s, celles-ci abondent néanmoins sur un point : les milieux néo-païens, quelque soit les contextes socioculturels dans lesquels ils s'inscrivent, sont à majorité composé de personnes s'identifiant comme femmes. À partir d'un regard socio-anthropologique, l'objectif de cette communication sera ainsi de proposer quelques pistes d'analyse afin de comprendre pourquoi. Pour ce faire, je reviendrai particulièrement sur trois aspects : la (re)valorisation de figures féminines dans l'imaginaire néo païen ; la socialisation que les personnes identifiées comme femmes connaissent dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines, mettant l'accent sur l'émotionnel et le sensible ; et la créativité rituelle néo-païenne, permettant entre autres la guérison et l'empuancement du Soi.

**Mathieu Colin, Chaire UNESCO-PREV (prévention de la radicalisation et de l'extrémisme violents) and Université de Sherbrooke**

**« Becoming Baphomet » : Satanisme et identités LGBTQI+**

Si l'assimilation de la communauté LGBTQI+ au « satanique » ou au diabolique n'est en soi pas nouvelle (Colin 2022, Burack 2008, Ashfar 2006), la visibilité croissante de certains mouvements satanistes, tels que le Temple Satanique (The Satanic Temple) et l'implication grandissante d'individus LGBTQI+ en leur sein, est un phénomène davantage récent et qui pose plusieurs questions : pourquoi cette communauté se retrouve-t-elle en des groupes satanistes, et comme le symbole de Satan devient-il un outil identitaire au service de la cause LGBTQI+ ? Cette communication utilisera une méthode socio-historique et les résultats d'entrevues issues de notre thèse de doctorat (Colin 2022) pour démontrer que le symbole de Satan s'impose pour certains individus, qui se sentent en marge des doctrines religieuses traditionnelles, rejetés par l'Église, opprimés par les systèmes patriarcaux des religions institutionnalisées, en tant que vecteur de contre-pouvoir, mais surtout d'identité, de libération sexuelle comme retournement de stigmat (Farred 2000) dans un contexte de « guerres culturelles » aux États-Unis.

**Deuxième session : Femmes, genres, agentivités et imaginaires religieux**

**Modérateur :** Anne Letourneau, Université de Montréal

**Panélistes :****Geneviève Pigeon, Université du Québec à Montréal****Le sacrifice de Guinier dans Le Livre de Caradoc : le corps de la femme comme objet de transaction**

La notion de « sacrifice » développée par l'anthropologie (Mauss et Hubert, ainsi que Girard, notamment) permet de faire une lecture du Livre de Caradoc, œuvre anonyme du XIIe siècle, en recentrant l'analyse autour du personnage féminin de Guinier, elle qui est pourtant régulièrement déplacée dans les marges du récit par la narration. Au cours d'une cérémonie au cœur de la forêt, sous une pleine lune, le corps de Guinier est charcuté pour que le personnage principal, Caradoc, survive. Si Guinier ne meurt pas physiquement de cette opération rituelle, elle est néanmoins incapable de réintégrer la société et doit, malgré son geste, s'exiler. À l'intersection des enjeux de sacralité, de ritualité et de sacrifice du féminin, cette présentation souhaite mettre à profit les approches issues de l'étude du religieux afin de mieux comprendre les jeux de pouvoir mis en œuvre dans le texte choisi.

**Valérie Irtanucci-Douillard, Université du Québec à Montréal****Mobilisation religieuse des femmes juives orthodoxes en France : pour un avenir inclusif en prise avec la société sécularisée**

Depuis les années 2010, un phénomène d'empouvoirement des femmes juives orthodoxes émerge en France, qui remet en cause les traditions, les normes et les équilibres qui prévalent dans les courants juifs orthodoxes. Ce phénomène s'inscrit dans une dynamique de transmission d'un savoir, d'engagement dans les pratiques religieuses publiques et mixtes, d'habilitation à diriger des communautés mixtes et à exercer une influence sur leurs fidèles, tout en intégrant les enjeux sociétaux tels que le féminisme. À travers un exemple d'empouvoirement via les réseaux sociaux, analysé à la lumière de l'approche éthique de la religion de Mahmood (2009), nous examinerons les stratégies mises en œuvre par ces femmes pour affirmer leurs voix et leurs places dans le judaïsme, en particulier par l'appropriation des sources religieuses, la revendication de fonctions et de rôles religieux et leur participation à la sphère publique.

**Diahara Traoré, Université du Québec à Montréal****Religion et imaginaire chez les Africains du Québec : réflexions postcoloniales sur l'intersection de la migration et du genre**

Cette présentation explore la relation complexe entre la religion, l'imagination et le genre chez les Africains du Québec. S'appuyant sur des entrevues semi-structurées menées depuis l'été 2023 avec des personnes originaires d'Afrique de l'Ouest, d'Afrique de l'Est et de la région de l'océan Indien, notre analyse utilise un cadre postcolonial inspiré du concept de Homi Bhabha de la « familière étrangeté ». Axée sur le contexte migratoire, notre recherche examine les éléments clés de la façon dont la religion façonne l'imaginaire des communautés africaines au Québec. En examinant les perspectives spécifiques au genre, nous visons à démêler l'impact nuancé des rôles et des identités de genre sur les expériences religieuses. Grâce à cette exploration, nous espérons apporter un éclairage nouveau sur l'interaction complexe entre la

religion, l'imagination et le genre, et favoriser une meilleure compréhension des divers récits des communautés africaines qui naviguent dans les transitions culturelles au Québec.

### **Religious and Secular Entanglements in the Pursuit of Social Justice**

Although social justice is typically positioned as a secular, liberal, modern, and Western project, social justice antecedents exist in many religions. Religions often voice and seek to enact particular visions of society and religion has long been a site of and space for social reform. This panel explores the intersections between religious and purportedly secular social justice framings in relation to struggles against social injustice articulated around citizenship, rights, gender, racism, inequality, and decolonization. Even as these issues may point to the limits of the social impact of explicitly religious modes of social justice, their entanglements with non-religious models may also suggest productive and commensurable commitments in imagining and creating more just societies. Nevertheless, questions yet remain: how is the religious to accommodate the secular, how is the secular to make space for the religious, and what are the relations of the religious and the secular to social transformation?

**Moderator:** Nicola Mooney, University of the Fraser Valley

#### **Panellists:**

##### **Amali Philips, Wilfrid Laurier University**

##### **Dilemmas of Multicultural Accommodation: Cultural Rights and Women's Citizenship Rights**

The rights of religious and cultural minorities and the ideals and values of democratic citizenship are two areas that have caused the most tension in multicultural or plural societies. Using comparative examples from India, Canada, and Sri Lanka, the paper interrogates the contentious issue of group rights and women's human rights in particular reference to religious and cultural-based personal laws. The examples considered exemplify how cultural claims and identity politics can undermine women's right to equal citizenship. The paper highlights the limits of multicultural accommodation and its potential to deal with the impacts of group rights on the equality rights of women within these groups.

##### **Nicola Mooney, University of the Fraser Valley**

##### **Spirituality, Secularity, and Social Justice in Sikhism: Ideals and Realities**

The notion of the secular as differentiated from the religious is a particularly Western and modern perspective that Weber posited as a disenchantment. This paper queries the apparently necessary separation of the 'enchanted garden' of the religious from a rational secular modern via an exploration of some aspects of Sikhism: the nexus of the spiritual and the temporal, the commitment to overcoming the ego, and the practice of service demonstrate that Sikhism proposes an epistemological and ontological third space. Yet despite the ideal of ethos met with praxis, aspects of this compact go unrealized by and among contemporary Sikhs, especially around gender, caste, and inequality.

##### **Pauline McKenzie Aucoin, University of Ottawa**



### **Understanding Religious Traces in Contemporary Canadian Society**

In a recent review of contemporary approaches to the sociology of religion, Matthias Koenig (2020) notes that despite orthodox secularization theory, Durkheim's theory of the sacred has continued to be relevant to analyses of collective actions, including nationalism, human rights, and "religio-political power configurations" in contemporary society. This paper explores Durkheim's relevance to the understanding of two recent events in Canada which saw the melding and cross-over of what might traditionally have been viewed as separate religious and political domains: firstly, the arrival of a large group of asylum seekers in Toronto in 2023 who found themselves living on the streets because of inadequate government supports whereupon a local faith-based organization stepped in to provide shelter and food in its churches, and secondly, the religiosity evident at the political protests of the Trucker's Freedom Convoy that overwhelmed Ottawa's streets in the winter of 2022, where prayer gatherings alternated with protest speeches. I explore what sense we can make of this with the application of Durkheimian theory.

**Gillian McCann, Nipissing University**

### **Teaching Social Justice: Pedagogy, Politics and Decolonization**

In her monograph *Teaching Community* bell hooks argues that teaching is an activity based in hope. For academics who identify as engaged scholars there is no division between the classroom and the conversations going on in the larger world. From this point of view teaching itself is a mode for imagining a better and more just world. Currently world events impinge more and more into academia and challenge us with how to navigate them with integrity. This presentation will look at how teaching in religious studies can enter into larger conversations around decolonization, racism, Orientalism and systems of oppression.

## **ROUNDTABLES**

### **Drug-Induced Spirituality**

This roundtable will examine the history and cultures of drug-induced spirituality in Canada and throughout the world, and focus on traditional drugs like soma, peyote, ayahuasca, ibogaine, and mushrooms (aka plant-based medicines), as well as synthetic ones like LSD, MDMA and Ketamine. Panelists will discuss the current state of the field, and trends to decolonize and medicalize, promote, romanticize, monetize and legalize the use of drugs during the counter-culture movement, the "Psychedelic Renaissance," including the Burning Man Festival, and Alex Grey's Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, and culminating in the current moment which is often referred to as the "Psychedelic Enlightenment." Attention will also be given to the cultural appropriation, and commercialization of drug-induced spirituality by researchers, artists, pop psychologists, neuroscientists and pharmaceutical companies. Please note that the roundtable panelists, their universities, departments, associations, and Congress do not condone / encourage the use of psychoactive drugs.

**Discussants:** Rubina Ramji, Cape Breton University

Sharday C. Mosurinjohn, Queen's University  
Alison Marshall, Brandon University

**Respondent:** Paul Bramadat, University of Victoria

### **Holistic Practices: Contested and Enmeshed**

Alternative, complementary, and spiritually-framed approaches to well-being are now common in healthcare, corporate, and educational contexts. Many institutions offer doctors, professors, students, patients, nurses, and staff on-site yoga classes, mindfulness workshops, prayer and centering rooms, or reiki, acupuncture and massage treatments within extended benefits plans. These sites -- hospitals, universities, corporations, and the public arena -- are some of the best places to observe and analyze the complex relationships between religion, spirituality and society. What do empirical works teach us about these dynamics? How might the methods and theories of religious studies help us understand how these approaches to well-being are situated within our society? In this session, colleagues working on the sometimes-fraught and often-innovative interactions between religion and the social and institutional spaces in which it is constructed, will share their work.

**Moderator:** Géraldine Mossière, Université de Montréal

**Discussants:** Paul Bramadat, University of Victoria  
Clara Gargon, Université Laval,  
Leah Mernaugh Bergman, University of Victoria,  
Véronique Jourdain, Université de Montréal,  
Noémi Melanson, Université de Montréal

### **Métis Spirituality and Religion Across the Homeland(s): Community-Led Collective Representations to Strengthen Our Nation**

This roundtable presents original community-led research from the SSHRC Partnership Development project, "Expressions of Métis Spirituality and Religion Across the Homeland" responding to the question, "What are Métis-specific experiences of spirituality and religion?" Our research destabilizes stereotypes about the Métis linked to racialized identity categories with culture and spirituality being stuck between cultures. This project hosted three gatherings between August-October 2023 in historic Métis communities across the Prairie Provinces (St. Laurent, Manitoba; Lebret, Saskatchewan; and St. Albert, Alberta) followed by academic symposia held at regionally-adjacent universities. Each community gathering/symposia was led by local Métis knowledge keepers, and supported by Métis scholars and our different academic units. The three academic leads will present how this research unsettles racialized stereotypes and affirms relational syncretism of Métis spiritual and religious ways. "Sacred visiting" emerges as a foundation of Métis identity linking our communities together as an Indigenous nation across the Métis Homeland(s).

**Moderator:** Paul L. Gareau, University of Alberta

**Discussants:** Paul L. Gareau, University of Alberta  
 Chantal Fiola, University of Winnipeg  
 Emily Grafton, University of Regina

### **The Kids Are Not Alright: Reflections on Teaching Religion in a Dying Field**

This roundtable aims to reflect on the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in the field of religious studies, particularly in the context of its perceived decline. The title, "The Kids are Not Alright," underscores the dual role of students and educators as both recipients and custodians of the discipline. As part of the next generation of religious studies scholars in Canada, we find ourselves at the forefront of grappling with the implications of this decline. The central question guiding our discussion is whether religious studies is worth saving. While some may argue against its relevance or in favour of its repackaging, our focus is on making a compelling case for the field's value based on the firsthand experiences of educators. Rather than approaching this question purely from a theoretical standpoint, we seek to highlight the practical impact of religious studies on our students. By examining the tangible benefits that the study of religion brings to our classrooms in very different contexts and settings (e.g., Indigenous studies, anthropology, and novel interdisciplinary programs), we aim to demonstrate the importance of preserving and revitalizing the field. Our roundtable will draw on a range of perspectives, including pedagogical insights, student feedback, and broader societal trends, to construct a nuanced argument for the continued relevance of religious studies—albeit perhaps in different formats and functions. We will also examine how the neoliberal model of universities, which prioritizes STEM education at the expense of disciplines that foster understanding across differences, has contributed to the challenges faced by religious studies. Through this exploration, we hope to engage with the broader academic community in a critical dialogue about the future of our discipline and its role in shaping the intellectual and socio-cultural landscape of our society.

**Discussants:** Rachel Brown, University of Victoria  
 Paul L. Gareau, University of Alberta  
 Rebekka King, Middle Tennessee State University  
 Joseph R. Wiebe, University of Alberta

### **Publishing your book in the CSSR Series "Critical Perspectives on Religion," DeGruyter-Brill Press**

**Discussants:**  
 Christopher Austin, Dalhousie University  
 Diana Dimitrova, Université de Montréal  
 Rubina Ramji, Cape Breton University  
 Aaron Sanborn-Overby, DeGruyter-Brill Press

This roundtable on publishing your book in the CSSR DeGruyter-Brill Series "Critical Perspectives on Religion" will discuss the publication process and will give useful tips and suggestions on how to submit a successful manuscript. The Press and the Editors will offer information on publishing your book and answer any questions attendees may have. This session is open to all students and scholars of Religion attending Congress.

## WORKSHOP

**Joel Murphy, Acadia Divinity College**

**Looking Over the Horizon: An Introduction to the Theo-Futures Foresight**

### **Approach**

The interdisciplinary field of futures research is a broad and varied social science discipline often leveraged by government or private industry to systematically and intentionally seek understanding of probable, potential, or preferred futures. With this understanding organizations can develop an understanding of how to prepare, prevent, or create these futures (Slaughter, 1999). Strategic foresight is a common practice and approach within futures research and can be understood as seeking insights into how and why the future may be different than today (Lum, 2016). Within the Christian academic context, there has been minimal engagement with the futures research field, methods, and approaches. There is a gap in the literature regarding the interdisciplinary methodological framework, which embeds futures research methods within a Christian research paradigm. This workshop will introduce the Theo-Futures Foresight Approach which represents an interdisciplinary practical theological research approach which seeks to explore the intersection of Christian beliefs, values, and practices with future scenarios and emerging trends, and using Christian praxis and theological reflection practices strives to nurture forward-thinking perspectives (future literacy).

