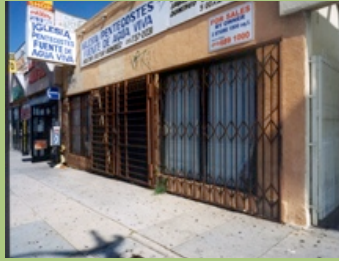


# Sociology of Religion



Newsletter of the Sociology of Religion Section of the American Sociological Association

Richard Flory, Editor

## From the Chair

This time of year is crunch time for planning our section's program in Atlanta. I have enjoyed working with Bill Mirola and Elaine Howard Ecklund as the 2010 Program Committee. At the beginning of the planning process, I made a decision to have all three of our paper sessions be open submission, two with defined topics and one open topic session. As a consequence of that strategy, we received many very fine submissions – about eighty in all. Narrowing those down to twelve session papers was difficult, but the good news is that our roundtable session will be quite strong.

This year's ASA theme is "Toward a Sociology of Citizenship." For our two pre-defined sessions, we chose topics that would link to the broad meeting theme and would also recognize our location in Atlanta, where both the King and Carter centers house the legacy of two of America's greatest advocates of civic engagement and human rights. For our session on "Religion and Citizenship," Elaine Howard Ecklund has collected a set of strong papers exploring the relationship between religion and the civic engagement and identity of religious folks. For our session on "Religion and Movements for Equality and Human Rights," Bill Mirola assembled four intriguing studies of religion and

mobilization in contemporary movements.

For the third session, listed as "open topic," four of the many remaining papers particularly stood out for breaking new ground on current important methodological and conceptual issues in the sociology of religion. I've entitled the third session "Measuring Religion." It includes a diverse set of papers that have one thing in common – they significantly advance the conversation on difficult current questions in our field.

So keep your eyes out for the preliminary program, and keep your calendars open for our section's sessions. They are sure to be interesting and provocative. And, given the strength of our roundtable session, be sure to attend that as well as sticking around for the section's business session. Granted, the business sessions are not always as scintillating as our paper sessions, but they provide a good opportunity to meet others who are active in our subfield and to get involved in the work of our section.

See you in Atlanta!

Fred Kniss, Eastern Mennonite University

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*The Sociology of Religion Section of the American Sociological Association encourages and enhances research, teaching, and other professional concerns in*

## New Developments at The ARDA

The Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)) is pleased to announce the creation of a new Research Hub and an expanded Learning Center. The Research Hub features the Best Practices Center and the ARDA Paper Series. The Best Practices Center provides resources for researchers and educators to explore the data available within the ARDA through the lenses of social science theories. Users can browse major theories within the scientific study of religion, view concepts related to those theories, and then examine specific survey items that could represent those concepts. The ARDA Paper Series includes thought-provoking Guiding Papers written by leading thinkers in the study of religion, and Working Papers featuring groundbreaking research not yet published in other venues. The redesigned and expanded Learning Center offers both Learning Activities and Learning Resources. Activities include our popular Learning Modules and Compare Yourself Survey. Under Learning Resources, students and instructors will find the Religion Dictionary and the Guide to Visiting Religious Groups, which was written by Dr. Nancy Ammerman. As with all of the resources offered by the ARDA, both the Research Hub and Learning Center are entirely free. Start exploring them today at [www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com).

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## Committee Assignments, 2009-2010

### Program Committee, 2010

Fred Kniss (Chair) [fred.kniss@emu.edu](mailto:fred.kniss@emu.edu)

Elaine Howard Ecklund, [eh@rice.edu](mailto:eh@rice.edu)

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### Distinguished Article Award Committee, 2010

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### Student Paper Award Committee, 2010

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## The Emerging “Strong Program”

Most sociologists of religion seem to agree on two things. First, that the growth of interest in religion—in academia, the media, and society at large—has been accompanied by an increasingly vigorous research agenda in the sub-discipline. And second, that the sociology of religion is currently in a period of paradigmatic reflection. While the “new paradigm” put

forward by Stephen Warner in 1993 helped awaken the field from the “dogmatic slumber” into which it was lulled by secularization theory, scholars continue to reflect on the basic conceptualization of religion and religious practice, as well as on the nature of the relationship between religious practice, institutions, and the sociology of religion itself.

David Smilde, [Posting on The Immanent Frame](#)

## Responses to the “Strong Program”

### Michele Dillon

Although the sociology of religion is in a relatively good state, it still seems that there is continuing intellectual insecurity and uncertainty among sociologists who study religion. ... American sociologists embrace, to varying degrees, the scientific status of sociology, and our professional training, associations (e.g., ASA, SSSR), and allegiances (with NSF, NIMH, NIJ, etc.) reinforce commitment to a scientific methodology. Yet, within this framework, the prevalence of positive socio-evaluative findings in sociological studies of religion is seen as suggestive of a pro-religion bias in the research program, rather than a “true” finding. Does any other sociological sub-field produce meta-narratives about their area’s findings, or engage in the crisis-assessment conversations that sociologists of religion seem compelled to have? ([More](#))

### Penny Edgell

Regardless of their stance on secularization, both classical and market-based positions take *modernity* for granted as the

starting point for meaningful theorizing about religion. Both perspectives largely agree on modernity’s core features, and both are dominated by a substantive, neo-Weberian approach to religion as an object of study, focusing on self-identified religious groups and institutions. In this approach, religion provides coherent and bounded belief systems to which individuals commit through a process of rational assent, and which they find appealing for reasons of elective affinity with a religion’s capacity to make sense of the contemporary social environment and to orient behavior in effective ways to achieve desired ends.

From this perspective, the religion that thrives in the modern world, to borrow (and perhaps misuse) a metaphor from Mary Douglas, is a pig that has learned to chew its cud, an ill-fitting social form transformed into something that fits, albeit precariously, in the modern order. ([More](#))

### Bryan S. Turner

Whenever there is talk about an ‘emerging strong program’ and ‘a new sociology of religion,’ we

need to keep in mind not only where we might be going, but where we have come from. Given the apparent centrality of religion to much of the modern world, and what now appear to be the limitations of the secularization thesis, we should welcome any sign of a revival of the fortunes of the sociology of religion. However, I have serious doubts about its annunciation. We will need more than research into which religions are figured as independent variables, or which receive some positive evaluation from social scientists, in order to herald the birth of a strong program. ([More](#))

**Editors Note:** I’m sure most, if not all Religion Section members are aware of [The Immanent Frame](#), and its many and varied discussion threads. Since the February 8, 2010 posting by David Smilde on the “emerging strong program in the sociology of religion,” there have been many comments and more formal postings in response. I have reproduced just a few snippets here, with links to the full posts, to encourage our membership not only to read the exchanges, but to fully participate in the conversation.

--RWF

## Member News

### People

**Keith A. Roberts** (Hanover College), will receive the ASA Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award at the Atlanta ASA meeting in August.

**Arnold Dashefsky** (University of Connecticut), was invested as the inaugural holder of the Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies on April 3, 2009.

**Eugene Hynes** (Kettering University) received the Donnelly Award of the American Conference for Irish Studies, for the best social science or history book published in 2008 for his book, *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth Century Ireland*.

**Christian Smith and Patricia Snell** (Notre Dame) won the Christianity Today 2010 Distinguished Book Award, Christianity & Culture category, for *Souls in Transition: The Religious Lives of Emerging Adults in America* (Oxford University Press 2009).

### Member Publications

**Wendy Cadge** (Brandeis), **Elaine Howard Ecklund** (Rice University) and **Nicholas Short**. 2009. "Constructions of Religion and Spirituality in the Daily Boundary Work of Pediatric Physicians," *Social Problems*, 56(4):702-721. (This article received coverage in *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*).

**Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund**. 2009. "Prayers in the Clinic: How do Pediatric Physicians Respond?" *Southern Medical Journal*, 102(12): 1218-1221.

**Arnold Dashefsky** (Connecticut) and Bernard Lazerwitz, [\*Charitable Choices: Philanthropic Decisions of Donors in the American Jewish Community\*](#) (Lexington Books).

**Paul R. Eberts** (Cornell University, Emeritus) and Harry W. Eberts, [\*The Early Jesus Movement and Its Parties\*](#) (YBK Publishing).

**Elaine Howard Ecklund**. [\*Science Vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think\*](#) (Oxford University Press).

**David O. Moberg**, Marquette University (Emeritus):

"Spirituality and Aging: Research and Implications," *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 20(1-2): 95-134.

"Disabilities, Spirituality, and Well-Being in Late Life: Research Foundations for Study and Practice," *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 20(4): 313-340.

"Predicaments in Researching Spirituality and Religion: A Response to Glicksman's 'Contemporary Study of Religion and Spirituality among the Elderly,'" *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 21(4): 297-309.

"Foreword," *Hidden Threads: A Christian Critique of Sociological Theory* by Russell Heddendorf and Matthew Vos (University Press of America).

Review of *Spirituality and Aging* by Robert C. Atchley (The Johns Hopkins University Press) in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 61(3): 197-198, September 2009.

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### Funding Opportunities

The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Jack Shand Research Awards supports projects in the social scientific study of religion. Applicants for grants of up to \$3,000 should email a proposal, in PDF, to John Schmalzbauer ([jschmalzbauer@missouristate.edu](mailto:jschmalzbauer@missouristate.edu)), chair of the small grants committee. Deadline for proposals is May 1, 2010.

The SSSR Student Research Awards of up to \$3,000 to assist graduate students in their research are available. Applicants should email their proposal, in MS Word to Jenny Trinitapoli, Chair of the Student Research Awards Committee by May 1, 2010.

For complete information on these awards visit the [SSSR website](#).

## **PERFORMING SOCIAL REALITIES ON CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE IN JERUSALEM**

By Vida Bajc  
Methodist University

Christians travel to the Holy Land to experience in that Land the life of Christ as narrated in the Bible. Similar to practices described in pilgrimage accounts from the early Christian centuries (Wilkinson 1999), Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem today collectively perform narratives from the Bible in particular places to be able to individually experience moments of the life of Christ. Biblical narratives performed, physical locations, as well as performative styles vary by pilgrimage groups and their particular readings of the Bible. This multiplicity of Christian pilgrimage practices in Jerusalem reflects the continuous splitting of Christianity into different denominations throughout the ages. Following the conversion of Constantine and the granting of Christianity a legal status in the Roman Empire in the early fourth century, we do see exerted efforts to create a unified Christian creed through a series of meetings. For cultural and political reasons, however, theological unification proved very difficult so that these so-called Councils actually turned out to be practices that initiated processes of separation. Theological, liturgical, and cultural differences have continued to underlie Christian pilgrimage practices, helping to explicate the distinctive pilgrimage traditions we see in Jerusalem today. Regardless of the differences, however, these traditions have

been sustained through awareness that Biblical events have actual physical locations that can be seen and desire to experience events from the Bible in these specific locales in the area called the Holy Land.

This practice seems to have always been a mixture of elements we today often ascribe to either leisure travel or religious travel (Adler 2002). Central to Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land, however, is a particular kind of experience which corroborates scripture by validating the configurations of biblical reality. It confirms the truisms of this reality by enlivening its configurations through group practice that is performative in nature. Such an experience is at once spiritual, emotional, bodily, and cognitive. While the experience is embodied and internalized individually by each particular pilgrim, situations that make this experience possible are very much social. It is this group process through which a particular reality is performed into phenomenal existence that makes the substantive topic of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land particularly theoretically interesting. What are the conditions of the possibility of such an experience? What is the actual process through which such an experience can be generated through social practice? What social forms give it shape? In what kinds of social contexts can such an experience be made possible? Alternatively, what are the contingencies that may lead to collapse or failure of such a performative process? Knowing more about these practices can contribute to our understanding of the multiplicities

of human experience, the varieties of social realities within which they are able to be generated, and the kinds of boundaries that sustain them.

The challenge is to articulate the dynamics through which a social form comes to be configured through practice and to explicate under what conditions such configurations may become relatively durable. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) makes a strong case that to understand social formations it is necessary to study life-in-practice, social life as it is actually lived in a particular place and through a period of time. The irreversibility of social activity through time suggests that living is practiced in contexts and is contingent upon a multiplicity of factors that bear on the outcome of practice. Bourdieu's empirical focus on the mundane social activity, however, does not take him far enough toward an understanding of practice as a dynamic process and his emphasis on structural constraints of sociality help us little in the way of conceptualizing the dynamics of emergent practice. To emphasize dynamics of practice is to acknowledge that processes of social formation are emergent and that uncertainty is an integral part of any such process. To understand how it is that social practice emerges in sometimes more and other times less predictable ways, I focus on the kinds of group activities where it is possible to see how, whatever the group is performing, is being done under highly dynamic conditions. I refer to this dynamic as

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Please see *Performing Social Realities*, p. 8

## Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review

As of January 1, 2010, Sociology of Religion has a new editor:

Editor Elect, **Scott Schieman** is a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto, Canada.

Book Review Editor Elect, **Gerardo Marti**, Department of Sociology, Davidson College

New Deputy Editors are **Chris Ellison** (University of Texas-Austin) and **John Bartkowski** (University of Texas -San Antonio)

The editorial board includes some members from David Yamane's term and new members invited to serve by Scott Schieman (\* denotes a new member):

Orit Avishai (Fordam University)  
 \* Jennifer Barrett (Loyola University-Chicago)  
 \* Alex Bierman (University of Calgary)  
 \* Amy Burdette (Mississippi State University)  
 Wendy Cadge (Brandeis University)  
 Kevin Dougherty (Baylor University)  
 \* Michael Emerson (Rice University)  
 \* Sally Gallagher (Oregon State University)  
 \* Mathew Guest (Durham University)  
 Terrence Hill (University of Miami)  
 Kathleen Jenkins (College of William and Mary)  
 \* Pamela Klassen (University of Toronto)  
 Len Kuhle (University of Aarhus)  
 Matthew Loveland (Le Moyne College)  
 Robert Mackin (Texas A&M University)  
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 \* Christel Manning (Sacred Heart University)  
 \* Jerry Park (Baylor University)  
 Philip Schwadel (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)  
 Brian Steensland (Indiana University)  
 \* James Wellman (University of Washington)  
 Genevieve Zubrzycki (University of Michigan)

Please note that David Yamane has made all of the editorial decisions on the issues forthcoming in 2010. Scott Schieman is responsible for all new manuscript submissions, which began on Jan 1, 2010.

Please submit manuscripts to SOR through the Manuscript Central system: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com:80/socrel>

## Postdoctoral Fellowships at CUNY Graduate Center

The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, the Ph.D.-granting institution of CUNY, announces postdoctoral fellowships for the academic year 2010-2011 in three new interdisciplinary Committees in the following areas of inquiry: Science Studies, The Study of Religion, The Study of Globalization and Social Change. Positions will begin on September 1, 2010 and will be renewable for a second year. The Graduate Center is devoted to advancing original research and training graduate students in over 30 fields in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

Candidates must have a Ph.D. in one of the disciplines in the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Candidates who have received the Ph.D. in 2007 at the earliest, or who have completed the requirements for the Ph.D. by the application deadline of April 12, 2010 are eligible.

The successful candidates will be housed in one of the Graduate Center's three new Committees and will be expected to pursue their own research related to one of the above fields; to teach one doctoral seminar in an area of their expertise in the fall; and to convene and lead one research seminar in the spring. Fellows will also be expected to participate more generally in the administration and programming of the Committee of their appointment.

To apply, please send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, one sample publication or dissertation chapter, and the names and contact information for at least three references to: Postdoctoral Search Committee, Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016. The positions will remain open until filled. Review of applications will begin on April 12, 2010.

## Call For Papers

The 7th Annual Conference of the Social Scientific Study of Religion in China

Theme: "The Present and Future of Religion in China"

July 26-27, 2010

Renmin University of China, Beijing

We invite proposals for presentation (abstract) in the social scientific study of religion, such as,

- Empirical studies of religion in Chinese societies or among the Chinese diasporas;
- Religious regulations and the rule of law in Chinese societies and/or other societies;
- New developments in academic research on religion;
- Other topics of your choice in the social scientific study of religion.

Papers and presentations may be either in Chinese or in English.

### Important dates:

- April 30: deadline for submitting abstracts.
- May 30: notification of acceptance for presentation.
- June 20: due date of the full paper.

To propose a paper presentation, please send your abstract and a short bio-sketch to: [crcs@purdue.edu](mailto:crcs@purdue.edu). The abstract should be about 250 English words, and the short bio (or short vita) should include information of full name, title, affiliation, position, research interests and major publications, email address, telephone number(s), and mailing address.

Scholars living outside mainland China: Each scholar pays a conference fee of US \$100 or RMB680 (in cash) upon registration on site. This fee covers conference materials and some meals. If your paper is accepted for presentation, we will assist you in making hotel reservations at Beijing Yanshan Hotel (<http://www.yanshanhotel.com/en/hotel-info.html>), which is across the main gate of Renmin University of China. The conference rates start from RMB400 (approximately US \$59) per night.

The Seventh Annual Conference is sponsored by  
The Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University (USA)  
and

The Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Religious Theories at Renmin University of China in Beijing.

For all inquiries, please contact: Dr. Lily Szeto, email: [crcs@purdue.edu](mailto:crcs@purdue.edu), phone: +1-765-494-5801.

**Watch the ASA website  
for the online call for  
papers: [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)**



105th Annual Meeting  
August 14 - 17, 2010  
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Atlanta, Georgia



*Performing Social Realities*

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uncertainty, that is, conditions where there is simultaneity of multiple factors that could, potentially, come into play during such activity and influence its course in unknown ways. From the number of performative practices I study through my on-going fieldwork in Jerusalem, let me demonstrate three that make these dynamics most visible in comparative terms: the battle of David and Goliath, the Passion of Christ, and the Easter Miracle of the Holy Fire.

The Old Testament story of the battle between David and Goliath is performed in an open space in a remote stretch of a valley southwest of Jerusalem where no Israeli or Palestinian towns are in sight (Bajc 2007). As described in the Bible, the battle took place in the Valley of Elah, between the hills of Socoh and Azekah, behind the camps of the two fighting tribes, the Philistines and the Israelites. This narrative tends to be favored by the Evangelical Protestants. It is written in such a way that it lends itself easily to a spontaneous performance. The tour guide sets the plot by pointing out different geographical features of the valley and explains the relationship between the two tribes. The pastor then calls for the pilgrims to open up their Bibles, assigns the roles in the story to individual pilgrims, and encourages them to immerse themselves into their roles in that place. To be able to create conditions through which it becomes possible to experience Biblical events requires a story, a physical place which resembles the topographic descriptions of that story, and a performative enactment through which the story comes to life in that specific locale. These factors need to interact in a dynamic way, so the pastor encourages high interactivity between the aesthetics of that topography, the narrative of the past in that place, the roles attached to individual pilgrims, as well as pilgrims' personalities. With this, the pastor hopes to join the pilgrims together and bring them into a total emersion in the moment of the drama. It is through the impetus of the totality of this emersion of the pilgrims actually enacting the battle that it may become possible for some of the pilgrims to have a testimonial experience. Through this momentum, generated through the interaction of human and non-human factors, the performative practice is able to take on a dynamic of its own. This kind of uncertainty in the process is crucial for it is

through this interactive dynamic that the performance takes on a form which provides the potential for a spiritual experience. Without the possibility of such transformation, the performance would be reduced to a theatrical action, diminishing the work of God to the level of a mere reenactment. What I have named situational uncertainty is an integral part of such an emergent social formation and also a necessary element in the process of spiritual transformation facilitated by such social forms.

While the Old Testament features prominently in the way the Evangelical Protestants practice their belief through pilgrimage, the New Testament is central to Christians of all denominations. Here events surrounding the death of Christ take center stage. The narrative of the Passion of Christ is performed along the Way of the Cross, the route that Catholics as well as mainline Protestants have walked for centuries to be able to experience the last moments of Christ's life (Bajc 2006). The Bible describes how Christ started his Passion on Olivet, walked down to Jerusalem, and carried his cross through the city and its hostile crowd to Golgotha. Today, this is a path of about a mile, which begins on the Mount of Olives, leads through bustling, narrow streets of the densely populated Palestinian part of the Old City of Jerusalem, and ends in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In contrast to the activity in the unpopulated stretch of the valley where the group performance is not likely to be interrupted by external factors, the social space of the crowded Old City could potentially become disturbing to the practice of pilgrimage, turning this walk along the Way of the Cross into a disorienting and stressful rush from site to site. This example makes it clear that it is necessary to distinguish analytically between situational uncertainty generated by the group's interaction and external uncertainty where the source of the dynamics is external to the group. To create conditions for possible spiritual transformation in such a context, the group leaders must be able to channel situational uncertainty and, at the same time, maintain the separation from external uncertainty. To minimize external uncertainty, the group consciously separates itself

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Please see *Performing Social Realities*, p. 9



from its surroundings. This separation is achieved in multiple ways: socially, through clothing that marks the pilgrims as a group and differentiates them from others in the city; physically, through close bodily proximity between group members; and cognitively, through meta-framing by the group leaders. In Gregory Bateson's (1972) terms, framing is a meta-communicative process which is essential to the emergent social practice. The meta-frame, communication about communication, defines the context and in this way also controls uncertainty. Frame is a medium through which the group leaders are able to direct pilgrims' attention and also control how the group relates to the external world.

The sites associated with Christ's death are housed in a structure called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. During the Orthodox Easter week, this church becomes the center of activity for thousands from all Orthodox denominations awaiting the Miracle of the Holy Fire. Dating back to at least the 13th century, this ritual creates for the believers what William Egginton (1992) calls the phenomenological presence, in this case, the presence of the Resurrected Christ. The performance of this ritual is therefore designed for the explicit purpose of testimonial experience. The presence of Christ is experienced as light which descends from heaven onto the Tomb and spreads from candle to candle, from pilgrim to pilgrim throughout the entire Church. The sanctuary in which this ritual is performed is a highly contested space, divided between six different denominations that have a long history of struggle for its custodianship. Despite their differences and disagreements, the Greek, the Coptic, and the Syrian Orthodox, the Armenian Apostolic, and to some degree also the Ethiopian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic clergy must perform this ritual together for the purpose of spiritual transformation of thousands of participating believers. To a large degree, the external uncertainty is controlled through the architecture of the Church where the walls of the building serve as a physical boundary between the believers and the outside world. Control of relational uncertainty is a part of the design of this ritual. The believers enter the Church with members of their own denomination and by following an exactly specified order. Inside the Church, they are channeled to areas that are

specifically designated for their denomination. This separation between different denominations is physically reinforced by placing metal railings along the dividing lines between the spaces and strictly maintained by employing the police. Overt conflict and its management, as much as the spiritual transformation, are therefore a part of the design of this ritual and integral to its performance. Through this internal spatial and social ordering, the Easter Miracle re-creates the inter-denominational divisions between the different versions of Christianity while still enabling individual participants to have spiritual transformation, a testimonial experience corroborating scripture.

These pilgrimage practices are some of the contemporary examples of a long history of emplacement of the Bible in the Holy Land through collective performance (see Halbwachs 1992, Smith 1992). The choice of a biblical narrative binds a group into a specific place. The pilgrims perform the battle of David and Goliath in an isolated valley just as the narrative describes. The Passion emerges in an urban environment surrounded by potentially hostile people just as the narrative locates Jesus of the Cross in a hostile urban environment. The resurrection of Christ is performed in darkness and silence at a tomb with a rolling stone just as the Bible describes Christ ascending to heaven as the guards sleep next to an open tomb. A place, Edward Casey (1987) suggests, is where time and topography intersect. Narrative and place are conjoined through performance, the actual doing of an activity described in the Bible. These performances are recursive practices in that they perform something which is said to have happened before. The recursive aspect is crucial to the emergence and the forming of reality. Some types of performances have a form which is highly emergent in that it transpires through the negotiated interactivity of the people involved. Other types follow a form which is relatively fixed and allows for little invention and flexibility. Uncertainty is integral to the emergent process of all of these practices and we see that in all cases, though in different ways and to a different degree, there is an effort to control the processuality of emergence. These cases allow us to theorize how a form emerges from

performative practice in highly dynamic conditions and lead us to a broader theoretical agenda concerned with how social order is configured through emergent group practice under uncertain conditions in the Christian culture (Bajc 2011, forthcoming).

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**Vida Bajc** is Assistant Professor at Methodist University. She completed her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania in May 2008 and subsequently a Postdoctoral Fellowship at The Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University, Canada. Her research connects ritual, framing theory, surveillance and security, Christianity, globalization, and culture. Her book manuscript, *Christian Pilgrimage in Jerusalem: Performing Social Realities*, forthcoming with the University of Chicago Press, is based on years of on-going ethnographic fieldwork in Jerusalem. She is currently working on a new research project on framing processes and boundary formation among the Christian denominations in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where, since the early Christian centuries, conflict has continued to be a permanent feature of inter-denominational relations. Her edited book (with Willem de Lint) *Security and Everyday Life* is forthcoming with Routledge. She is editor of three journal special issues: "Watching Out: Surveillance, Security, and Mobility" (with John Torpey) for the *American Behavioral Scientist* (2007); "(Dis)Placing the Center: Pilgrimage in a Mobile World" (with Simon Coleman and John Eade) for *Mobilities* (2007); and "Collective Memory and Tourism" for *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing* (2006). She is currently editing a book on surveillance and security in the Olympic Games.

## In Memoriam: Joe Tamney, 1933-2009

Joe Tamney was born in Queens, New York City on January 8, 1933. He received a B.A. (Cum Laude) in 1954 from Fordham University. After graduation, he served two years as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army based in Germany. He then returned to Fordham and completed an M.A. in 1957. He then went on to Cornell University where he received his Ph.D. in Sociology in 1962. After Cornell, Joe was on the sociology faculty at Notre Dame, Marquette (where he was also Chair of the department), and the University of Singapore from 1962 to 1971. He joined the Sociology Department at Ball State University in 1971 and reached the level of Full Professor in 1975. He was Chair of that department from 1977 to 1983 and retired from Ball State University as a Professor Emeritus of Sociology in 2002.

Joe was a vibrant and active member of the academic community. He published seventy-seven articles in scientific research journals and nine books on topics including religion, politics, and community. He served as Editor of *Sociology of Religion* (1994-2000), President of the Association for the Sociology of Religion (2003-4), member of the North Central Sociological Association Executive Council (1985-88), and Editor of the sociology of

religion section newsletter for the American Sociological Association (2000-2002).

On the personal side, Joe had an easy-going personality with a great sense of humor. He was passionate about social justice for the less fortunate such as the poor and the homeless. He was a loving and supportive father of five children, including an adopted African-American daughter. There are also eight grandchildren. Joe would watch college and professional football games with his three sons. He was interested in modern art, liked listening to jazz, loved good wine and trying new foods, and was always reading a good book, and did so up to the end of his life. Joe passed away on October 25, 2009, in Reston, Virginia.

Donations in memory of Joseph Tamney can be made to the Dr. Joseph Tamney Scholarship, which provides financial assistance to students at Ball State University who show great promise in research. Please make checks payable to Ball State University Foundation and indicate the Dr. Joseph Tamney Scholarship (#8055) in the memo. Please mail donations to Ball State University Foundation, Alumni Center, Room 230, 2800 West Bethel Avenue, Muncie, IN 47304.

Steve Johnson and Rachel Kraus  
Ball State University

### Research Assistance Request

Paul Eberts, Cornell University (Emeritus), has requested some assistance from members in the religion section as he prepares for a talk to be presented to a "Christian-sponsored conference." His questions revolve around church-State relations, and the extent to which local congregations promote, or oppose (or present as informational roundtables) public/political issues (such as the recent health care bill, or other similar issues). His questions are as follows:

"Is there current research that demonstrates that local congregations are: 1) Doing anything at all in promoting public forums on social-political issues? 2) If they are, where are such "promotions" being held – e.g. only in state capitals, central places, in the suburbs, in rural areas, in the East, Mid-West, South, Far West? 3) are such "promotions" increasing or decreasing in frequency? 4) Are there other ways local churches are involved with local secular institutions in forwarding these goals? 5) Have congregations that have engaged in activities like these gained or lost members?"

I would much appreciate it if you would send me some empirical research (or references to it), and/or advice, that would help me in formulating a more adequate statement (or set of hypotheses) on these local church-political issues."

If you can assist Professor Eberts, you can contact him at: [pre1@Cornell.edu](mailto:pre1@Cornell.edu)

## From the Editor

I don't know about you, but I can't believe it's already April. And yes, this is the Winter edition of this newsletter, just a little delayed by a too busy schedule and a computer with, apparently, its own mind. That said, I am happy that I was able to include in this issue announcements of new opportunities for funding, training, data availability, and outlets for research. Be sure to check the ASA website as we get nearer to the August meetings, for updates on the program and to plan your schedule in Atlanta.

Also in this issue are several items that are of importance to the sociological study of religion. Thanks to the good people at [The Immanent Frame](#), I have included snippets of an ongoing conversation that began with David Smilde's post on the "[emerging strong program](#)" in the sociology of religion, and a companion post by Peggy Levitt, Courtney Bender, Wendy Cadge and David Smilde on what a "[new sociology of religion](#)" might look like. I encourage you not only to check out this ongoing conversation, but to participate in it, through blog comments, or by writing a more formal response. This, I think, is a great use of "new technology" to further our abilities to think about and pursue our common task in the sociological study of religion. I have also included an article by Vida Bajc, on performance, practice and place in religion, which is based on her forthcoming book, *Christian Pilgrimage in Jerusalem: Performing Social Realities* (University of Chicago Press). I re-read Vida's article after I had gone through the "strong program" discussion, which then led me to new questions about how we are to understand religion. I'll leave it to you to make your own conclusions or come up with your own questions.

The photos on the masthead of this issue are from [Martin Krieger](#), Professor of Policy, Planning and Development at USC. He has been documenting storefront religious congregations in Los Angeles over the past few years through photography, video, and sound recording.

The next newsletter will be out in July, and I'll be asking for your contributions in June.

RICHARD FLORY, University of Southern California