

# 2020-21 Annual Report



Centre for Studies in Religion & Society

### **DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Paul Bramadat**

It's become almost a cliché to speak of 2020 as "unprecedented." We may need to pronounce a temporary moratorium on that word after the pandemic. When we all entered the pandemic in March 2020, the CSRS immediately transitioned from a setting with the highest level of day to day, face to face interaction of its staff and fellows on the entire campus to one in which all staff and fellows worked from home.

We strove to maintain as much of the regular interaction as possible, and in retrospect (now writing in early May 2021), we can say we were quite successful. Instead of daily coffee meetings, we shifted initially to two and by September, three Zoom-based "coffee talks" per week and, in the fall, we added one in-person, safe "coffee walk" weekly discussion with fellows. The intellectual content of our activities remained the same (presentations, discussions, open debate around a pre-set theme, movie discussions, etc.); indeed, since we did not have to face any spatial or parking limitations, we regularly drew between 18-25 people to our "talks" (three times a week) and 11-18 people to our "walks" (once a week). The



"de-territorialization" of our coffee talks meant that no one had to worry about getting to the coffee pot after it was empty or sitting on the floor once the room had reached capacity.

In September 2020, we also shifted our regular Thursday public lecture series to an on-line format. Those lectures were also surprisingly successful, with audience sizes similar to or higher than what we would expect for a conventional in-person lecture series. Audiences ranged from a little over 40 (for a graduate student public lecture) to 600 (for our engagement with award-winning writer, Esi Edugyan) to well over 3000 for our lecture from, and moderated discussion with, Noam Chomsky. The success of this shift is likely the result of the fact that the CSRS is part of a very large network that stretches across Canada and around the world. With the shift to these Zoom-based lectures on Thursday afternoons, we were able to attract audience members from around the world to watch and respond to these public lectures, or to experience the research of our fellows through the recorded lectures posted on our website.

So, while we lost many things when the pandemic made regular face-to-face interactions dangerous, in fact this challenge has had some unintended constructive consequences. Extending ourselves into the digital realm has been positive in most respects, although it has also required an additional and often exhausting amount of labour from all staff. There is no question that the CSRS remains deeply embedded in the Canadian academic scene, and we all look forward to the centre returning to its pre-pandemic tradition of daily intellectual and social interactions in the Sedgewick Building. Nonetheless, this – hopefully brief – change in approaches and formats has taught us lessons and familiarized us with technologies we can use in the future. Together, these events and changes have made this year exciting, and have filled me with optimism about the future.

#### **ABOUT US**

The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) is an interdisciplinary research centre located at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia. We acknowledge, with respect, the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the CSRS stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

At the CSRS, our mission is to foster the scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both contemporary and historical.

The CSRS is regularly and deeply engaged in conversations with policy makers and civil society, in an effort to connect scholarly research on religion and society to the broader world. We also sponsor graduate student, faculty, artist in residence, visiting researcher, and sabbatical fellowships, and produce a dynamic annual program of public lectures and seminars. The CSRS is committed to pluralism and dialogue, attracting participants whose backgrounds and perspectives reflect a wide variety of religious, spiritual, and secular points of view.



A list of the FELLOWS-IN-RESIDENCE who form the heart of our community:

#### **VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWS**



Omer Aijazi (University of Toronto) Muslim Affects: Lived Religion and Social Repair in Pakistan's Northern Frontier



**Paul Arnold** (McMaster University)
Sacred Gestures in the Roman Catholic Liturgy



**Daniel Boyarin** (University of California at Berkeley) Why the Jews Are Not a Religion



**David Eagle**(Duke University)
From Seminary to Early Ministry: How an Elite
Divinity School Shapes Religious Leaders



**Bob Gibbs** (University of Toronto) Study and Dialogue: Buber and Rosenzweig



**Chris Goto-Jones** (University of Victoria) *Archetypes of Mindfulness* 



**Behnaz Hosseini** (University of Vienna) *Religious Minorities in Iran and Diaspora* 



Jingjing Li — Katherine Young Award Recipient (Leiden University)
Discourses of Authenticity: Fabricated Texts as Lived Objects



**Catherine Nutting**(University of Lethbridge)
Rubens and the Stoic Baroque: Classical Philosophy
in Seventeenth-Century Style



Edmund Pries
(Wilfred Laurier University)
Abelard and Heloise: An Exploration of a Peaceable,
Love-Based Approach to Atonement Doctrine



John Thatamanil (Union Seminary) The Quest for Interreligious Wisdom: Religious Diversity and Theological Method



**Shuangyang Wang** (Zhejiang Gongshang University) Inter-Religious Dialogue through Music and Painting: Another Way to Understand Zen



**Edda Wolff**(Durham University, Liturgical Studies)
Religious Imagery in the Reconciliation Process of the
Anglican Diocese of BC and Indigenous Communities



**Deepali Yadav** (Banaras Hindu University), *Paradox of Ghandi's Saintliness* 

#### WINNIFRED LONSDALE GRADUATE FELLOW



Katey Flechl
(MA Candidate, UVic History),
Female Education and Enlightenment Discourse in Post-Revolutionary America

#### IAN H. STEWART GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



**Drexler Ortiz** (PhD Candidate, Psychology), Religious Experiences Among Sexual Minority vs. Heterosexual Filipinx Immigrant Youth

#### **CSRS GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS**



Randa El Khatib
(PhD Candidate, English)
Paradise Lost and Early Modern Biblical
Cartography



**Eliza McClenagan** (MA Candidate, German and Slavic Studies) *German Christians and the De-Judaization of Protestant Theological Texts in Nazi Germany* 

### HEATHER J. LINDSTEDT AND BRIAN A. POLLICK GRADUATE FELLOW



**Françoise Keating** (PhD Candidate, UVic Art History and Visual Studies) Fifteenth-Century Heart Spirituality: René d'Anjou and Religious Rebirth

#### VISITING GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS



**Zachary Buck** (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) The Phenomenology of Healing in the Cult of Asklepios

#### **UVIC FACULTY FELLOWSHIPS**



**Kathryn Chan** (Faculty of Law) *The Adjudication of Religious Refugee Claims* 



Maggie Jones (Department of Economics) The Economic Legacy of Christian Missions among Indigenous Communities

#### **CSRS ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE**



**Meharoona Ghani** *Letters to Rumi* 



**Terry Marner** Searching for Home - Finding Fingerposts in Neuroscience

#### COMMUNITY SABBATICANT FELLOWS



**Vidar Steffensen** The Use of Buddhist Practices in Secular Therapy with Multi-Cultural Clients

## **Associate Fellows**

#### **Angela Andersen**

Islamic Architectures: Muslim Spaces of Prayer, Ceremony and Learning Beyond the Mosque

#### **Russ Callaghan**

Mindfulness in the Buddhist Tradition and Medical/Psychological Interventions

#### **Harold Coward**

Word, Chant and Song in the Major Religions: Spiritual Transformation

#### **Michel Desjardins**

Food: Connector to People's Spiritual Worlds

#### **Erica Dodd**

Treasures of the Early Christian Church

#### **Scott Dolff**

Evangelicals and the Environment

#### **Robert Florida**

Ethical Issues in Modern Buddhism

#### **Christopher Gillespie**

When Church and State Collide: Secularism in Early 21st Century North America

#### **Nicola Hayward**

The Use of Funerary Art for Commemorating Social Identity and Memory: The Case of the Via Latina's Samaritan Woman

#### **Victor Hori**

The Modernization of Buddhism in Global Perspective

#### **Chelsea Horton**

Living Histories of Religion, Irreligion and Settler Colonialism in the Pacific Northwest

#### **Graham Jensen**

Unorthodox Modernisms: Varieties of Personal Religion in Twentieth-Century Canadian Poetry

#### **Lesley Jessop**

Students or Tailors? A Re-evaluation of the Sculptures on the South Transept of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris

#### **Francis Landy**

The Book of Isaiah

#### **Lytton McDonnell**

Tuneful Trances: Music, Mysticism, and Re-enchantment in Modern America

#### **Graham McDonough**

How Catholic Schools can be Thought of as Sites of Inter-Religious and Ecumenical Dialogue

#### **Brendon Neilson**

Post-Christian Diaspora: How Millennials are Making Meaning after Leaving the Church

#### **Brian Pollick**

The Merchant Moral Eye Model in Late Medieval European Art

#### **Jordan Paper**

Theology Throughout Most of the Human Past: The Spiritual Life and Understanding of Gathering-Hunting Peoples

#### **Jarrad Reddekop**

Relating to the Forest in Amazonian Quichua Philosophy; Relational Ontology, Selfhood, Ethics, and Aesthetics

#### **Paige Thombs**

Religion and Lawyers: Strange Bedfellows or Intimate Partners?

#### **Lycia Trouton**

Post-Conflict, Plural Society of the Island of Ireland and Communities of the Irish/Ulster Scots Diaspora

#### **Carolyn Whitney-Brown**

Henri Nouwen's Unfinished Last Manuscript: The Flying Trapeze

#### **Grace Wong Sneddon**

Chinese Canadian Spirituality in the 21st Century

#### **Katherine Young**

The Divyaprabandham, Canonization, and Śrīvaisnava Formation: Musical Tropes and Identity Negotiations



From September 2020 to April 2021, we hosted **24 public lectures** via Zoom, which were viewed by more than 10,000 people, either live or recorded. Lectures with an asterisk (\*) denote lectures in the John Albert Hall Lecture Series.

Sept. 17, 2020	Gary Kuchar	Literature, Religion and the Senses of Place in the English Civil War
Sept. 24, 2020	Nikki Sanchez	Exploring Emergent Media for Indigenous Sovereignty and Resurgence
Oct.1, 2020	Sheryl Reimer-Kirkham, Sonya Sharma, Rachel Brown, and Melania Calestani	Prayer as Transgression? The Social Relations of Prayer in Healthcare Settings
Oct. 8, 2020	Erica Greenup	Leaving Catholicism: Secularization among Women on Vancouver Island since the 1960s
Oct. 15, 2020	Tamsin Jones, Victor Hori, and Russell McCutcheon	Should 'Religious Insiders' Teach Religious Studies?
Oct.22, 2020	Drexler Ortiz	The Role of the Congregation: Religious Identity Among Filipinx Sexual Minorities
Oct. 29, 2020	Chris Goto-Jones	Archetypes of Mindfulness
Nov. 5, 2020	Merinda Simmons and John Thatamanil	What Just Happened? Religion and Politics in the US
Nov. 19, 2020	Jingjing Li	Buddhist Texts as Lived Objects
Nov. 26, 2020	Tim Gosley	The Heart Coffer: Spiritual Explorations through Puppetry
Dec.3, 2020*	Esi Edugyan with Tim Lilburn	Writing and the Great Change Upon Us
Jan. 7, 2021*	Miroslav Volf	At Home in the World?
Jan. 14, 2021	Françoise Keating	Creating a Civil Society: René d'Anjou and Religious Rebirth
Jan. 21, 2021	Daniel Boyarin	What's Wrong with 'Religion'?
Jan. 28, 2021	Randa El Khatib	Early Modern Biblical Cartography in John Milton's Paradise Lost
Feb. 2, 2021*	Noam Chomsky	Confluence of Challenges: The Fate of the Human Experiment
Feb. 11, 2021	Maggie Jones	The Economic Legacy of Christian Missions among Indigenous Communities
Feb 25, 2021	Manvinder Gill	Tense Misalignments: Exploring Sikh Canadians' Relationship with Alcohol
March 2, 2021*	Thomas Homer-Dixon	Commanding Hope
March 4, 2021*	Linda Woodhead	Values Are the New Religion
March 11, 2021	Kathryn Chan	The Adjudication of Religious Refugee Claims
March 16, 2021*	Noam Chomsky, Esi Edugyan, Thomas Homer-Dixon, Miroslav Volf, and Linda Woodhead	Values for a New World: Panel Discussion
March 25, 2021	Meharoona Ghani	Letters to Rumi
April 1, 2021	Eliza McClenagan	Purifying Protestantism: Anti-Jewish Theology and the Holocaust

### **2021 SUMMER LECTURE SERIES**

The 2021 Summer Lecture Series features research fellows visiting from institutions in Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States. The issues are contemporary and show the importance of religion as a lens through which we may engage areas of deep social concern, as well as the broad, interdisciplinary nature of the CSRS community.

May 27, 2021	David Eagle	How Anti-Racism Policies Fail: Barriers for Black Pastors
June 3, 2021	Edda Wolff	Why Gaps Matter: Negative Space in the Reconciliation Process
June 17, 2021	Timothy Stacey	Animist Imaginaries and Environmental Activism
June 24, 2021	Paul Arnold	Pointing to Things Unseen: A Gestural Approach to Religious Signs

### 2020-2021 JOHN ALBERT HALL PUBLIC LECTURES Values for a New World



When the pandemic struck last March, the first reaction of the John Albert Hall Lectures steering committee was to abandon any hope of mounting a series for the coming year. But then we realized that COVID presented us with a unique opportunity. Without the need for expenditures on travel, accommodation and

hospitality, we could afford to invite more lecturers than usual, and present them to wider audiences.

COVID also suggested a timely theme. The "perfect storm" of global pandemic, systemic racism, economic inequity and environmental collapse has led many to conclude that humanity faces the chance, the challenge, and the necessity of creating something entirely new.

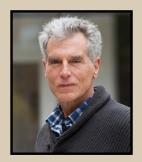
If there is to be a new world, must it be founded on



fundamentally new and different shared values and assumptions? If so, what might those be? What role, if any, do conventional religions and emergent spiritualities have in helping to inform this conversation? These were the kinds of questions we posed in the "Values for a New World" series. Fortunately, some distinguished thinkers responded generously, thoughtfully and creatively with their answers. The series ran from December 2020 through March 2021.

Novelist **Esi Edugyan**, in conversation with poet and essayist **Tim Lilburn**, discussed "Writing and the Great Change Upon Us." **Miroslav Volf**, Director of the Centre for Faith and Culture at Yale, posed the provocative question: "At Home in the World?"

Linguist, social critic and MIT emeritus professor **Noam Chomsky** spoke of a



"Confluence of Challenges: The Fate of the Human Experiment." **Thomas Homer-Dixon**, Director of the Cascade Institute at Royal Roads, advocated for "Commanding Hope." And **Linda Woodhead**, Distinguished Professor of Religion at Lancaster University, UK, argued that "Values are the New Religion." To conclude the series, we convened

all the speakers for a lively panel discussion.

At press time, over 8,500 "devices" had logged in to view at least one of the lectures, live or recorded – twenty or more times the number of people who would attend a live JAH event during a typical year.

-lan Alexander, JAH co-chair





### **Academic Collaborations and Initiatives**

In the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021 we ran our first competitions for the **Indigenous Arts and Research Fellowship (IARF)** program. This new program is a collaboration between the CSRS and a donor who is a local Indigenous Artist and past CSRS fellow. We are excited to welcome our new Indigenous Fellows to the CSRS community in September 2021.

This year we continued to be involved as collaborators on Lori Beaman's SSHRC-funded "Nonreligion in a Complex Future" project. We attended team meetings, and the virtual conference and we will be welcoming our first visiting graduate fellow from the team in the Fall of 2021.

In October 2021 the Centre will host a workshop on Health Humanities entitled "Medicine, Wellness, and Post-Institutional Spiritualities: An Interdisciplinary Workshop." Part of the 2020-2021 academic

year was devoted to re-planning re-thinking this previously postponed event, ensuring that takes the effects of the pandemic into consideration.

In May 2021 the Centre joined the Centre for Global Studies, and the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives to host a special virtual event titled "The Global State of Democracy after Biden's First 100 Days." This event was a

facilitated conversation among three invited speakers: Amarnath Amarasingam (CSRS), Chris Kilford (CFGS) and Carole Petersen (CAPI) and addressed what has been done so far in Biden's term and what challenges the Biden administration faces going forward.



### **Research and Publications**

### Research Projects

This past year was unexpected and difficult in a variety of ways and yet we were able to make progress on our research projects and publications, albeit with adjusted timelines. Our Cascadia project is nearing completion with much of 2020-2021 spent working with our colleagues at UBC Press in the review and editorial process. *Religion at the Edge: Nature, Spirituality, and Secularity in the Pacific Northwest* is now being copy-edited and should be available early in 2022. Next steps for the project will include creating the data repository for the project data, a book launch, as well as



presenting the findings at international conferences. The data repository will be housed on the Centre's website and will allow other researchers to have access to the rich data pool that we created in this project.

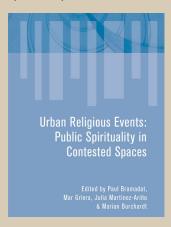
Our other major research project underway is the third volume in the Religion and Ethnicity in Canada series.

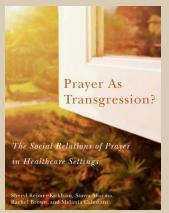


The volume, tentatively titled *Opening and Closing Relations: Indigenous Spirituality in Canada* involves scholars of Indigenous law, history, and literature, as well as sociologists, political scientists, and religious studies scholars. The editors (Paul Bramadat, John Borrows, Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark and David Seljak) met online with the contributing authors in April 2021. This was the team's second meeting and allowed time for feedback from other contributing authors and editors in the early writing stages. Draft chapters are due in June 2021 and will be followed by virtual meetings as authors and editors seek to make connections between the chapters, and, ultimately, to create a cohesive edited volume. The University of Toronto Press, our publisher, has shown tremendous enthusiasm for the project.

### **Publication Announcements**

2020-2021 was a productive year on the publications front. The CSRS saw the publication of *Urban Religious Events: Public Spirituality in Contested Spaces* (Bloomsbury 2021). This book was a direct result of a workshop that CSRS Director Paul Bramadat co-organized during his sabbatical year. Bramadat worked alongside historians, sociologists, anthropologists, political theorists, and religious studies scholars from Europe, North America, South America, and Israel to create this edited volume on how religion and spirituality survive and sometimes thrive in urban spaces.







Inthe Fall of 2020 we hosted the book launch for *Prayer as Transgression:* The Social Relations of Prayer in Healthcare Settings (McGill-Queen's University Press). CSRS Director Paul Bramadat and CSRS Program Coordinator Rachel Brown were both contributing authors to this interdisciplinary and international book project addressing the ways that religion shows up in public healthcare contexts.

### **Community of Learning**

#### **Coffee Talks**

"Coffee talk" conversations at the Centre provide an opportunity for CSRS fellows and special guests to address intellectual issues of common concern. Discussions for most of this past year took place remotely via Zoom on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In the Fall the schedule also included socially distanced "coffee walks." Coffee hour has long been the beating heart of the CSRS community, but in the midst of a pandemic year marked by much isolation, the lively interaction of these times together was especially appreciated. We hosted over 40 of these specially-themed coffee discussions on topics such as:

- "The Hospitality of Receiving: Ghandi, King and Interreligious Learning" (John Thatamanil)
- "Spiritual Colonialism in Art and Scholarship?" (Meharoona Ghani)
- "Religion and Translation: Disruptive, Inevitable, Impossible?" (Paul Arnold, Bob Gibbs, Jordan Paper, and Katherine Young)
- "Towards a Global Performance Practice Job Talk Teaching Demonstration" (Dennis Gupa)
- "Teaching Religions that Are Not Religions" (Shamma Boyarin)
- "Problematizing the Study and Teaching of Chinese Religions" (Todd Klaiman)
- "Female Potters in Indigenous Cultures: Ethno-Archaeological Study on Sri Lankan Traditional Craft Communities (Dulma Karunarathna)
- "Prayer in the BC Legislature" (Teale Bondaroff)
- "Dealing with Trauma in Late-Medieval Florence: Judgement, Compassion and Redemption" (Brian Pollick)



#### **CENTRE CINE**

Season 6: September 2020 – March 2021

Season six of the monthly Centre Cine series of Coffee Talks, facilitated by our Artist-in-Residence **Terry Marner**, explored questions of morality, culture, the search for meaning, and other themes arising from the human spiritual journey.

The selection of films this year included *Homemade* (2020), *Capernaum* (2018), *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (2019), and *The Children Act* (2020).

Centre Cine participants are sent the name of a selected film at various times in the year. All the films are available to stream on Netflix and most are available from the Greater Victoria Public Library. The participants watch the film in their own time to prepare for a group discussion. During the Coffee Talk time slot, Terry facilitates an engaging conversation about the film. We are excited to introduce incoming CSRS fellows to Centre Cine's 7th season this fall.





#### **OUR PEOPLE**

Paul Bramadat (Director)

Rachel Brown (Program Coordinator)

Scott Dolff (Research Associate)

Noriko Prezeau (Administrative Assistant)

Chad Crozier (Work Study Student)

#### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Paul Bramadat, Chair (History/Religion, Culture and Society)

Neilesh Bose (History)

Kathryn Chan (Law)

Alexandra D'Arcy (Linguistics/Assoc. Dean Humanities)

Mandeep Kaur Mucina (English)

Réal Roy (Biology)

April Nowell (Anthropology)

Coby Tschanz (Nursing)

ex officio: Cynthia Milton (Associate VP Research)

ex officio: Graham McDonough (CSRS Advisory Council)

#### **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Graham McDonough, Chair (University of Victoria)

Peter Beyer (University of Ottawa)

Michelle Brown (Cree poet, performer, homilist)

Rory Dickson (University of Winnipeg)

Victor Hori (McGill University, emeritus)

Dvora Levin (Congregation Emanu-El)

Mary Louise Meadow (Anglican Church of Canada)

Rubina Ramji (Cape Breton University)

Jo-Ann Roberts (Media/Civil Society)

Gurdeep Singh (member of local Sikh community)

Grace Wong Sneddon (University of Victoria)

### **Financial Summary**

For the fiscal period of April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Operational Revenues	\$252,476
General Endowments	\$205,530
Fellowship & Awards Endowments	\$21,860
Library Endowments	\$12,560
Province of BC	\$8,245
Lectures & Events Endowments	\$3,430
Book Royalties	\$951
Miscellaneous recoveries	\$0
Project Revenues	\$41,631
SSHRC Funding	\$16,631
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$25,000
Donations	\$10,875
Fellowships	\$2,100
CSRS Main Endowment	\$8,388
Other Donations	\$387
Total Revenues	\$304,982
Operational Expenses	\$220,692
Salaries and Benefits	\$171,866
Fellowships and Awards	\$39,355
Supplies, Equipment, Infrastructure	\$9,491
Project Expenses	\$35,899
Cascadia Research Project (Year 3)	\$358
John Albert Hall Lecture Series	\$28,355
Library Expenditures	\$5,462
Misc. Lectures, Conferences, Events	\$1724
Total Expenditures	\$256,591

The principal amount in the CSRS Endowment accounts as of March 31, 2021 is \$6,323,784.

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