



University  
of Victoria

Centre for Studies in  
Religion and Society

# SCHOLARS IN THE SQUARE



Abby Day

## Who Needs a Priest When You Have a Hairstylist?: Baring Bodies, Baring Souls

This research seeks to understand the complex role of the 'body/beauty' professional as, perhaps, secular priest. Clients regularly 'bare their souls' during their interactions with the professional, whether during a manicure, haircut, tattoo or training session at the gym. They share their problems and sometimes confess misdoings in ways they conceal to even their best friends, and partners. Interviews conducted with professionals reveal how they experience such encounters and see their roles. This project explores the intimate, therapeutic relationship within a broader contemporary religion framework, considering the dynamics of place, moral authority and relationality.

**Abby Day** is Professor of Race, Faith and Culture in the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London. Her most recent book is *Why Baby Boomers Turned from Religion: Shaping Belief and Belonging, 1945-2021*.

14 September  
5:00-6:00pm

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