

CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN RELIGION & SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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The Revival of Indigenous Religions in Russia

Megan Swift
Faculty Fellow

Taken altogether, Siberia and Russia's Far North and Far East have over 40 different indigenous groups. Although each has their own language and cultural traditions, a significant common factor is the practice of shamanism. According to the most recent census data, indigenous religions account for 1.2 percent of Russia's faith map – but the lands where those faiths are practiced make up 60% of the territory of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, indigenous festivals and shamanistic ceremonies are resurging in popularity, not just within indigenous populations themselves, but among Russians who live nearby and, until the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, tourists. Tuimaada Yhyakh, the spring festival of the Sakha people, attracted 180,000 participants in 2013, a remarkable number for a minority pagan religion which has been historically suppressed and banned.

Shamanism was virtually wiped out during the Soviet period, but it experienced a revival in the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union. The collapse of state socialism and state atheism led to a resurgence in ethnic nationalism, a revival of interest in indigenous languages and a new popularity for the traditional



Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related disasters, such as the 2021 Lytton Creek fire that destroyed 90 percent of the buildings in Lytton, Canada. Image: Climate Disaster Project/Phil McLachlan.

festivals. My research project monitors the potential for tensions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the minority religions of the Russian Federation. Orthodoxy is the majority religion in Russia's west, but it is very much the minority in Siberia, the Far North and the Far East. In the early years of the Putin presidencies, Orthodoxy's minority status in Russia's east was not a concern, however this project seeks to identify the "tipping point" where religious resurgence and ethnic

nationalism are perceived as a threaten to the hegemony or the agenda of church and state.

From Catastrophe to Community: A People's History of Climate Change

A New CSRS Partnership

Fires rage, floods devastate, storms surge: every day we hear about the impacts of climate change, with ever-increasing casualty counts and infrastructure damage tipping into the billions. But all too often, climate politics and media reporting favour the voices of experts over victims, resulting in a lost opportunity to act on the first-person experiences of climate-change survivors.

Now, a new collaboration with the CSRS and the University of Victoria will close that critical gap in narrative and knowledge, thanks to a six-year \$2.5-million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Grant. *From Catastrophe to Community: A People's History of Climate Change* will train 500 post-secondary students and professional journalists to document the experiences of 1,000 survivors around the world and share their wisdom.

"Climate change isn't a threat tomorrow. It's a trauma today," says University of Victoria writing professor Sean Holman, the director



Yhyakh dancers in Sakha Republic, Russian Federation, 2021. Tenebroid, CC BY-SA 4.0 license, via Wikimedia Commons.

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CSRS UPDATES



Message from the Director

Rachel Brown

As I look out my window, I realize how my view has shifted just slightly this year as I stepped from the Program and Research Coordinator's office next door into the Director's office. The trees look just a little bit different from this vantage point. The sounds from the kitchen come from five feet farther away. The sun comes through the windows at a slightly different angle. It all seems completely familiar and yet, at the same time, totally different. This is a good metaphor for my transition into the Director's role this year.

I had the privilege of serving as the Program and Research Coordinator (PRC) at the Centre for the past six years before being hired as your new Director. During my time at the Centre, as PRC yes, but also as an associate fellow, religious studies teaching fellow, research assistant, and visiting graduate student fellow, I witnessed the magic of this place repeatedly. I have seen how our fellows' research and lives have changed; how community has been built between people of all ages and stages of life and academic career; how new collaborations have developed; and how cutting edge research is born, grows, and goes out into the world to make its impact on people and places far beyond the halls of the CSRS. To say that it is a privilege to lead this scholarly community would be a profound understatement.

I want to take a moment to thank Paul Bramadat for what he did for the CSRS over his 17 years as Director.

Thirteen years ago when I met Paul for the first time in person (of course I knew him well already through his research on religion in Canada), it was inconceivable that I would step into this role after his term ended. Nor could I have anticipated how impactful this place would turn out to be for me. Some of you know how I came here eleven years ago thinking I would stay for about six months. After my first day in the scholarly community of care into which Paul had introduced me so warmly, I knew I needed to hang on for as long as I could. And now, here I am.

Building on the strong foundation that Harold Coward established at the Centre, Paul created a place about which academics and curious community members often dream: a scholarly community where both terms, scholarly and community, are valued deeply. I can only hope that I can continue this trajectory, with my own contributions over my five-year term.

Looking forward to the year ahead of us I am especially excited about our collaboration with Sean Holman on the SSHRC partnership grant project *From Catastrophe to Community*. Religious communities and individuals have a potentially unique vantage point on the issues that Sean and his team are exploring in this project (as you can read on pgs. 1&5 of this newsletter). The CSRS team is well situated to facilitate these conversations, and we cannot wait to kick off our contribution to this timely and essential research and to welcome members of the team into our offices in Sedgewick.

With that, I invite you to look over the pages of this newsletter and see the fascinating research that will be housed here over the next year. From exciting new collaborations such as the Teaching Religion in Canada (TriC) initiative, the Hub for Critical Muslim Studies, and the *From Catastrophe to Community* climate project, to important research on critical insider/outsider debates, spirituality and wellness, antisemitism, and food and power, to a vibrant public lecture schedule (which you can see at the back of this newsletter), there will be much to keep us busy in the coming year.

I hope you will all participate in as many of our events as you can this year and help us to kick off this new phase of Centre life.

The CSRS community welcomes Todd Klaiman as Program and Research Coordinator

Hello CSRS Community. I am your new Program and Research Coordinator, Todd Klaiman. Many of you will already know me from my time as an Ian Stewart Graduate Fellow (2019-2020) and an Associate Fellow (2021-2025) at the Centre. I have also participated regularly in CSRS activities, such as lecture series and coffee talks, over the years. I am currently working with Chinese and Malay-language historical materials to explore the diverse roles that Buddhism played in the development of cultural, political and religious relations across Asia



during the Cold War era. I look forward to discussing this and other fascinating topics with all of you over the coming years. Please feel free to drop by my office for a chat anytime.

Partnerships and Publications

Todd Klaiman

Paul Bramadat's book *Yogalands: In Search of Practice on the Mat and in the World* was published through McGill-Queens University Press in April 2025. Paul continues to follow up the publication with a number of book talks, engaging with a range of interlocutors and participants. The second phase of the yoga project proceeded with a successful workshop gathering of scholars who are also practitioners of various Asian spiritual practices in September 2024. Paul is currently editing the resulting 17 contributions for a classic CSRS edited volume, tentatively titled *We Should Know Better*, that will be submitted to McGill Queen's University Press.



Woodlands Shirt, ca. 1720-1750. Unknown artisan. Photo by museum, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

We are thrilled that volume three of the Religion and Ethnicity project, *Opening and Closing Relations: Indigenous Spirituality in Canada*, edited by Paul Bramadat, John Borrows and David Seljak, has gone through peer review and will soon be ready for release through the University of Toronto Press.

The CSRS continues to foster international partnerships that result in collaborative research projects, events and publications. Alongside Paul's continuing work with Australian colleagues on Australian Spirituality and Wellness, the Centre will partner with Géraldine Mossière at the University of Montreal on a SSHRC Insight Grant funded project on the management of spiritually-framed complementary health and wellness modalities (e.g., Reiki, spiritual coaching, etc.) in Quebec and British Columbia. Paul is a co-investigator on the project, which (among other things) means the CSRS will host, and he will supervise, the graduate student researcher for the BC side of the research project. Rachel and Paul are also working with colleagues from across Canada to launch a new pedagogy initiative at the Centre on Teaching Religion in Canada. We will host a series of four hybrid coffee talk workshops this year on topics related to teaching religion for Canadian scholars and will plan a larger event for the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion in May 2026. The Hub for Food Studies that Rachel will launch at the CSRS in the coming years will be supported by her work as a member of the editorial board, alongside international colleagues, for the Bloomsbury Food Library.

Lori Beaman's Nonreligion in a Complex

Future (NCF) project has successfully concluded. CSRS's fruitful collaboration with the project closed out with the Centre hosting a well-received workshop on nonreligion and end of life care. We look forward to continuing to work with Lori and others who we met through this project on similar initiatives in the future.

The CSRS will begin our collaboration with Sean Holman and the Climate Disaster Project, which has recently received a \$2.5 million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Grant to train 500 post-secondary students and professional journalists to document the experiences of people impacted by climate change globally. We look forward to working with Sean and the Project team to support *From Catastrophe to Community: A People's History of Climate Change*, particularly as it pertains to exploring the role of religion in climate disaster experiences.

We continue to work with colleagues across campus to support the MEICON annual conference and will co-host the conference at UVic in Spring 2026. We will also be welcoming a post doctorate fellow at the Centre who will be conducting research on Antisemitism at UVic, and we will work with other colleagues on campus to support the Working Group Addressing Antisemitism. After a highly successful series of three events in 2024-2025, we look forward to continuing our work with our colleagues at the CFGS to host more *Can We Talk?* lunches. See the Centre's homepage for updates about this and other exciting publications and partnerships.

Finally, we are working with campus colleagues to offer several special events in the coming year. This Fall brings the launch of the new Critical Muslim Studies (CMS) Hub at the CSRS. The Hub will bring together activities and projects connected with MEICON, the CSRS's Distinguished Lecture in Islam, and the Middle East discussion group to enhance cross faculty collaboration and research in Muslim Studies at UVic, as well as creating opportunities for community engagement and collaboration. The CSRS will support the CMS team to work on a Connections Grant this Fall to host a workshop on CMS next Spring.

CSRS to Host New Critical Muslim Studies Hub

Zaheera Jinnah

Launching in the fall of 2025, the Critical Muslim Studies (CMS) Hub at UVic is a plural, diverse, interdisciplinary and community engaged space for scholarship. We aim to build community, hold conversations with peers, trouble and expand understanding of Muslim communities and identities, and envision Muslim studies in Canada in critical, and decolonial ways.

Over the next year we will hold community conversations, host a distinguished lecture on Islam, and host a workshop that teases out how to conceptualise CMS. Hosted by the CSRS and co-led by Zaheera Jinnah and Shemine Gulamhusein, the CMS Hub is an exciting foray into contemporary religious identities and Muslim subjectivities.



RESEARCH

Why Study Muslims in the Canadian Arctic? Introducing Bouchra Mossmann, 2025-26 CSRS Scales Family Fellow

Peter Scales

When people learn that there are mosques in Canada's far north—in Inuvik, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, and Iqaluit—they're often surprised. Yet over the past few decades, Muslim communities have grown in these northern places. Mosque congregations and faith communities are typically small but remarkably diverse—ethnically, linguistically, socially, and culturally—shaped by migration and the need to adapt religious practice to an unfamiliar environment.

Bouchra Mossmann's research asks: How do Muslims in Northern Canada live and experience their faith in such a distinct minority context? Unlike urban centers, where established infrastructures often support religious life, Arctic Muslim communities must navigate extreme environmental conditions—such as months of near-constant daylight or darkness—and a lack of institutional and communal resources. These conditions raise important questions around how prayer, fasting, and other rituals



Bouchra Mossmann

are practiced, and how religious guidance is sought and interpreted.

The Arctic context also invites broader questions of space, place, and belonging. How do Muslim communities engage with Indigenous populations, and how does the colonial history of the North inform these relationships? In turn, how does Muslim

presence shape Arctic communities—socially, culturally, spiritually, and economically?

This research addresses a significant gap in both Islamic Studies and Canadian scholarship. While urban Muslim life in Western minority contexts has received considerable attention, rural and northern experiences remain largely overlooked. Studying Islam in the Canadian North offers new insights into faith, migration, and the everyday negotiation of identity in an understudied region.

Before she started a family, Bouchra's mother worked with immigrants to Germany. She loved the cleverness, curiosity and bold courage of a Moroccan girl with whom she worked and so when she had a daughter of her own, she named her 'Bouchra' (after that girl). The word means 'good news' and is used by Arab Christians for the gospel. 'Bouchra' is also the call of surprise when Yusuf is pulled from the well in the Quran.

Bouchra's academic career has prepared her for the current work on Muslims in Canada's North. Three years of Islamic Studies in Germany, two years of language study and internships in Lebanon, then to Scotland for a masters in Middle East studies with advanced Arabic and a thesis on Christian Lebanese writer and journalist Emily Nasrallah (1931-2018). More than 80 members of Nasrallah's family emigrated to Prince Edward Island in Canada, but Nasrallah remained in Lebanon. Bouchra became interested in migration through Nasrallah's many reflections and her literary use of concepts of space and belonging; Bouchra's current research on Muslims in the North has its root in these experiences.

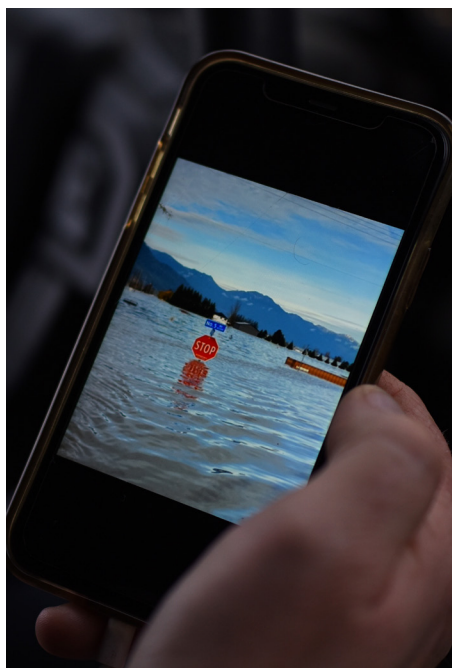
Most recently, Bouchra moved to the University of Southern Denmark at Odense to do a PhD with friend-of-the-CSRS Dietrich Jung. By the time she arrives at UVic in the late summer of 2025 she will have completed her field work. She will use her CSRS fellowship months for writing her anthological PhD, which means a PhD dissertation that's composed of several articles, and for writing her abstract, introduction and conclusion. Bouchra will make time to explain her results to the CSRS community and to Muslims at UVic, and we will all benefit.

Bouchra Mossmann is the second recipient of the Scales Family Fellowship at CSRS. The SFF supports research in topics related to religion and spirituality in BC/Canada.



Mosque. Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada.

[CONTINUED FROM P.1]



Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related disasters, such as the 2021 Southern British Columbia floods. Image: Climate Disaster Project/ Phil McLachlan.

of *From Catastrophe to Community*. "And when someone lives through that kind of trauma, they need a different climate story where they feel seen in their experiences and know the harm caused to them will be repaired — both now and in the future."

The project will result in the creation of documentaries with APTN Investigates, news features, an anthology and a travelling museum exhibition that will launch at Winnipeg's Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Museum of Vancouver. In the process, the *From Catastrophe to Community* team will develop new trauma-informed, human-rights-based storytelling practices that can support the recovery of communities, including religious communities, impacted by climate change and other humanitarian crises.

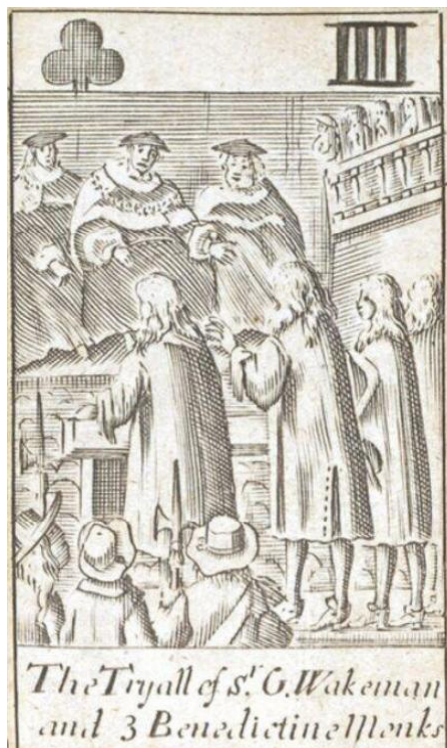
"Each part of our society needs to work together to confront the traumatic impacts of our warming world," says Holman. "And that's exactly what *From Catastrophe to Community* is doing: bringing museums, news outlets, theatre companies, post-secondary institutions, research agencies, and survivors together to help us to realize a more just and equitable future that honours the human dignity of disaster communities."

Anti-Populist Conspiracy Theories during the Popish Plot Crisis

Sarah Madsen

Graduate Student Fellow

England has a long history of religious struggle and suspicion between Protestants and Catholics. In the late 17th century, anti-Catholic sentiment reached a high point when a fictitious conspiracy theory (the so-called "Popish Plot") against King Charles II, Parliament, and the Anglican Church gained public attention. Traditional accounts of this history treat the events as an episode of anti-Catholic hysteria used by opportunistic Protestant political figures in their attempt to suppress Catholic monarchy and institutions. The perceived Catholic threat led to bills in Parliament that attempted to bar the king's Catholic brother from ascending to the throne (a political struggle that came to be known as the "Exclusion Crisis"). The controversy and resulting division in parliament is also widely credited with giving rise to the first political parties—the Whigs (who supported excluding Catholic monarchs) and the



The Popish Plot Playing Card Pack (1679) Francis Barlow. Victoria and Albert Museum.

Tories (who favored inclusion, because they believed the right to rule passed by birth).

While past scholarship focused on how conspiracy beliefs that equated Catholicism with arbitrary abuse of power benefited the Whig opposition, my research project will address the neglected topic of how conservative Tory judges viewed populism as equally tyrannical and corrosive to the social order. I will examine how judges justified their beliefs, such as by comparing populism and Catholicism, and invoking the dangers of mob rule. The study of the ways in which both Tories and Whigs tapped into and capitalized on fears of tyranny, populism, and of social others in Parliament, the courts, and in the burgeoning partisan press offers striking parallels with challenges faced in modern liberal democracies.

The Enlightenment: Cause or Cure for the Post-Truth Crisis?

John Thatamanil

Visiting Research Fellow

That we are in a post-truth crisis is common knowledge—at least since 2016 when Oxford Dictionaries made "post-truth" the word of the year. Oxford lexicographers could not have imagined the torrent of falsehood that has inundated us since. Truth is under frontal assault. But what is the solution? In the cottage industry of post-truth books, a consensus reigns: we have fallen away from Enlightenment values. Postmoderns, particularly within the academy, are responsible for truth's misfortunes. We must teach logic, data analysis, social media literacy, and science education, focusing on the scientific process, not just scientific conclusions.

But what if the Enlightenment is the problem, not the solution? In his late work, Michel Foucault argued that the Cartesian moment is when the West came to believe that we could know the truth simply by opening our eyes. I argue Foucault is right; you cannot see the truth if you do not want to. Truth is not out there, ready-made and available to any rational inquirer in clear and distinct ideas. Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian traditions insist that to know the truth, you must become otherwise. They insist that we see the world not as it is, but as we are. Hence, no transformation, no truth. And, the key to such transformation is cultivating an ardent and insistent love for the truth.

RESEARCH



Image From Pinterest page of @salomeoblivill111.

Un-silencing Voices of Religious Trauma

Jessica Fichtner-Nolin
Graduate Student Fellow

Religion is a powerful institution with the capacity to influence one's social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical reality; for many, it is a resource for acceptance, help and healing. But what if religion instead becomes a destructive force in one's life?

Religious trauma is a deeply impactful and increasingly recognized form of psychological distress that arises from overwhelmingly harmful experiences within or related to a religious context. These experiences—ranging from various abuses of authority by leaders, to identity-based discrimination, to the indoctrination and enforcement of limiting ideologies—can cause both acute and cumulative damage, leaving lasting scars on a person's sense of self, others, and the world. Survivors of religious trauma often struggle with symptoms similar to complex PTSD such as anxiety, depression and dissociation, as well as physical and relational difficulties. Women, children, and other socially vulnerable populations may be at higher risk for exposure; my study will focus on the experiences of women.

Despite its prevalence in all major religious groups, religious trauma is not broadly understood and many survivors face silencing, blame, or disbelief when they try

to speak about their experiences. Moreover, many mental health professionals lack the training to recognize and address the unique dimensions of this form of harm.

My research helps to fill this gap by centering the voices of survivors as we explore what healing looks like in the aftermath of religious harm. Specifically, my project focuses on recovery from trauma sustained within a Christian context, as this remains the dominant religious group in Canada and much of the West. Understanding these recovery journeys is essential for creating safer, more inclusive religious communities as well as adequate, connective helping professionals. By listening to those who have been wounded by their experiences, we can begin to create spaces where healing, dignity, and spiritual integrity are truly upheld

Muslims in North American Popular Culture

Matt Sheedy
Visiting Research Fellow

Edward Said's ground-breaking 1978 book, *Orientalism*, paved the way for generations of scholars to think critically about how 'Islam' and 'Muslims' have been constructed in Euro-American cultures. Ongoing geo-political events continue to shape that construction. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, ushered in a new wave of anti-Muslim

sentiment and marked those growing up in its wake as what Canadian sociologist Jasmin Zine calls 'the 9/11 generation.' The ongoing war in Gaza and aggression toward Iran have issued in a renewed round of Islamophobic rhetoric and policies, especially coming out of the Trump administration in the United States. Zorhan Mamdani, Democratic mayoral candidate for New York City, recently made waves as the first Muslim nominated to run America's largest city, sparking both enthusiasm and bigotry.

Amidst the many ebbs and flows in global politics since 2001, scholars have paid close attention to the ways in which Muslims/Islam are portrayed in popular culture. My project highlights important changes in the depiction of Muslims in the post-9/11 period, with an emphasis on Canadian and American examples. I draw extensively on media and communications theory in order to help explain why certain types of ideas and information about Muslims are more likely to 'stick' in the Western imagination—rather than the countless other cultures, beliefs, and practices related to Islam. I also introduce a novel methodological approach, comparing the representation of Islam and Muslims in popular culture with the topics most emphasized in the scholarly literature of Religious and Islamic Studies. Attending to these gaps can help us better understand why we imagine religions in particular ways, and points to work that still needs to be done to bridge these conceptual worlds.



New York City mayoral candidate Zorhan Mamdani speaking at a Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) 101 Meeting at the Church of the Village in NYC. By Bingjiefu He - Own work, Wikimedia Commons.

The Campesino Movement in Iximulew and the Law

Mélanie Séguin

Graduate Fellow

Throughout history, the successive governments of Iximulew (Guatemala) have implemented laws and policies that restrict Indigenous Campesino communities' access to land while simultaneously seeking to exploit their territories and labour. Indigenous Campesino organizations have

at the intersection of differing normative systems and epistemologies.

In my research in collaboration with the Comité Campesino del Altiplano (CCDA), I seek to understand the complexities of the interaction between this prominent Maya peasant organization and the law, including the Guatemalan state law, international law and Maya Indigenous legal orders. Indeed, as the CCDA's work is grounded in Mayan cosmologies and governance systems, which often rely on a relational understanding of the territory, their vision conflicts with

just a small conceptual step away. While AI developers are not particularly clear about the necessary and sufficient conditions of consciousness, they do seem to agree that the unwise development of self-reflexive AGI could pose an existential threat to humanity.

My present research examines whether, from a Theravāda Buddhist theoretical perspective, such worries might be warranted. It examines the philosophical and ethical resources that Buddhism can bring to the table in developing AI systems that are safe, manageable, and broadly speaking, ethical. How might Buddhist resources aid AI researchers in clarifying the nature of the conceptual terrain, sharpening the explanatory discourse, and conceivably providing a Buddhist moral inflection to the development of machine intelligence.

Buddhist theorizing always takes place in the context of an overarching concern for liberation, wherein philosophical questions remain subsidiary to practical concerns, and action is always understood in terms of the moral valence of the underlying volition. Thus, in bringing Buddhist



Photo by the Comité Campesino del Altiplano (CCDA). The array represents the Mayan cross, which symbolizes the elements and energies of the universe, along with the staffs of two Indigenous authorities over a CCDA flag. At the beginning of every gathering, Indigenous members of the CCDA lead a prayer and light candles on the cross.

emerged to fight the historical and ongoing dispossession that communities have faced since colonization. They tailor their strategies according to the communities' situations and needs and the institutional political spaces in which they participate. Indigenous knowledge, cosmologies and legal traditions are crucial to the movement's way of resisting land dispossession. Its members have also found, in the human rights regime and the mechanisms of the United Nations and the State, tactics and spaces for protecting their rights, lands and cultures. The use of state and international law in these struggles arguably has been forced upon Indigenous Campesino communities through colonial mechanisms that aim to delegitimize their knowledge and ways of understanding the world—exemplifying that, in practice, struggles against land dispossession occur

the State's understanding of the land as a resource to exploit.

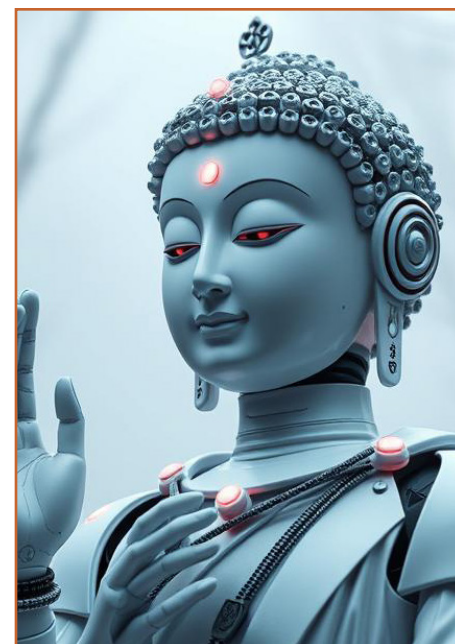
Buddhism, Consciousness, and the Problem of AI Agency

Martin Adam

Faculty Fellow

Since the dramatic release of ChatGPT 4 in March 2023, academics, politicians, and the public at large appear to have suddenly woken up to the prospect of an Artificial General Intelligence that not only vastly surpasses human information processing capabilities, but which might also be deemed to possess *consciousness*. If such a status were to be accepted, the attribution of personhood and moral agency would be

thought into conversation with AI research important points of conceptual clarification, methodology, and direction emerge. With an eye towards the dangers posed by a hasty embrace of AI technology, this project aims to provide a Buddhism-based critical reflection on the development of AI consciousness.



RESEARCH



Approaching Walker Glacier on the Tatshenshini River.

Physica Slip: Rewilding the Sacred

Melanie Siebert

Artist-in-Residence

Years ago, I guided a raft trip down the Tatshenshini River, with E.C. Pielou as the guest of honour. From the Yukon uplands, the silt-laden river courses through mountains adorned with hanging glaciers as it rushes to the Gulf of Alaska. Pielou, 81, looked impossibly tiny, bundled in layers, topped with a yellow raincoat, but she was game for the coastal weather.

As we floated downstream, she answered my questions about the geologic forces that had thrust up these ranges and the workings of ice and water over millennia whisking rock back to the sea. Often we drifted in silence, simply absorbing the shimmer of the current.

Pielou had transformed ecology by showing how mathematics could reveal hidden patterns in plant communities—work that made her one of the most influential ecologists of her time.

Her writing transformed me too. Growing up in a small Mennonite community, I was taught all of creation was evidence of God's greatness, but it was not our home. It was more of a postcard, or a monument. Beautiful but static.

Reading Pielou as I guided on rivers across

the North, I began to see Earth's deep time: ancient seabeds jutting into the sky, corals ribboning cliff walls, stutter marks and eskers left by the continental ice sheets of the last ice age. All of human history seemed like a brief eddy in the flow of time.

But on those same rivers, change felt too fast, too wrong—glaciers retreating, migrations out of sync, species disappearing. This wasn't



E.C. Pielou and travelling companions (bottom right) hiking below the seracs of Walker Glacier.

the eccentricity of Earth's orbit; it was human-caused. As I witnessed the climate crisis, undercurrents of grief and anxiety were building.

I remember Pielou once imagining a future species puzzling over the disappearance of *Homo sapiens*. Her equanimity—spacious enough to hold both loss and awe—stayed with me.

That became the seed of *Physica Slip*, my poetry project, which rewilds my spiritual inheritance. In these poems, I gather a circle of unruly women—scientists, mystics, artists and exiles—to help me tend a sacred kinship with the more-than-human world.

Imitation and Scapegoat in Indigenous Myth

Peter Evans

Community Sabbaticant

I am an applied anthropologist and historical geographer. I studied Classics and Contemporary Studies at the University of King's College in the mid 1990s, and then took a very sharp *cultural* turn after living in a small community in what was then called Northern Labrador. I did my MPhil and PhDs at the Scott Polar Research Institute at the University of Cambridge, and wrote about the encounter between Moravians and Inuit, and Inuit and the Canadian State, over the course of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. I established an anthropological, ethnohistorical, and software consulting company with some very dear friends, and that's what I've been doing for almost two decades. About 10 years ago I was driving in the north at night and I tuned into David Cayley mid-interview with a Frenchman named Rene Girard. Cayley was guiding him through a rich discussion of Girard's ideas about the role of imitation in human life, and violence in the founding of the sacred in early human societies. He kept using the word *scapegoat* over and over again. My attention tuned onto Girard's words in a way it had rarely tuned into an idea before. I felt suddenly awake.

I'm very pleased to have been accepted into the community fellowship program to begin a study of the sacred in Indigenous myth, which brings together my passion for Girard's ideas with some of the materials I have encountered in the last two decades of work with Indigenous communities.

Buddhism(s) and the Shaping of Modern Identities

Todd Klaiman

Program and Research Coordinator

When I first arrived in Taiwan from Canada in early 2001, I was met with an unexpected revelation: Buddhism, far from being a monolithic tradition, is a constellation of distinct practices, beliefs, and expressions. The temple-based rituals and vibrant lay communities of Taiwanese Buddhism looked little like the introspective, Meiji-era-influenced Zen and Beat Generation-infused 'Western Buddhism' I had grown up with. That moment of cultural and spiritual dissonance sparked a career-long inquiry into how Buddhism has been adapted, reinterpreted, and mobilized across different times, geographies, and political regimes. My research explores the intricate interplay of commerce, politics, and religion in the regional and global dissemination of Chinese Buddhism throughout the late-modern era. My work sheds light on how shifting cultural contexts reshape not only the way Buddhism is practiced, but also how it is used to construct identity and advance political agendas. Buddhism has often been enlisted in the service of broader historical forces, from imperialism and anti-colonial movements to diasporic identities and Cold War diplomacy.

In my latest research, I examine how, during the Cold War era, the Republic of China (Taiwan) strategically employed Buddhism to position itself as the custodian of traditional Chinese culture and religion—an implicit rebuke to the perceived iconoclasm of the People's Republic of China. I draw on monastic diaries, personal correspondence, and state-run print and television media from the era to trace the ways in which religious identity was deployed as a tool of soft power in the ideological battle between 'the two Chinas'.

Muslim Men in Quebec: Reflections

Youssef Benzouine

Graduate Student Fellow

In Quebec over the past 20 years, several events (e.g., the Quebec Charter of Values) have highlighted the existence of negative sentiments towards Islam and Muslims.



Thai Buddhist representatives visiting the People's Republic of China in 1963 to meet with government and Buddhist leaders. Image: United Daily News.

Media and political attention has focused on Muslim women, particularly those wearing the hijab. At the same time, numerous academic works have documented and examined their experiences of Islamophobia.

This focus on Muslim women overshadowed the fact that Muslim men also experience Islamophobia. Indeed, there are also negative images of Muslim men circulating, both in the media and in private spaces. They are portrayed as violent, aggressive and/or conservative. Their masculinity raises concerns because of Islam. This portrayal is questionable, especially as it erases the fact that there are multiple ways of being a Muslim man. It begs the question, what are

Muslim men's masculinities made of?

My research will attempt to dissect and understand the masculinities of Muslim men. In relation to the latter, it will also seek to see whether Islam plays a role. To do so, data will be collected through interviews, observations and focus groups. My main argument is that Islam plays a role in shaping identity, influencing the masculinities of Muslim men. Furthermore, I also think that there are many ways of being a man and Muslim - far from this monolithic image of the "Muslim Man" who has problematic behaviors and attitudes. Thus, this research might be relevant for highlighting the diverse and plural nature of the Muslim population.



Sufi Dervishes.

RESEARCH

Voices in the Grass: The Roadtrip as Pilgrimage

Neil Griffin

CSRS Artist-in-Residence

We rise early, in the dark silent hour before the morning birds, when the roads are host only to graveyard workers slouching softly home. Our bags, packed carefully the days and nights before, wait beside the door. The dog whines, anxious that she will not be forgotten. It could be any time, any morning, in the thousands of years of human wandering. We could be heading for Canterbury or Lourdes, Lumbini or Sarnath, Bodh Ghaya or Graceland. We are pilgrims—though we've swapped the customary mule for a 2002 Honda CRV, on account of the better mileage.

Road trips are a form of secular pilgrimage: journeys of deliberate arduousness, where the path is just as important as the destination, and the hope—although sometimes examined—is always transformation in some physical, intellectual, or spiritual way. Both road trips and pilgrimages are acts of faith. They rely on serendipity, fortitude, and a belief in the fellowship of the road.

For more than thirty years I have road tripped back and forth across the highways of North America's Great Plains. From the earliest trips taken in my parents Buick Skylark, with my kid sister—sans car seat—sandwiched between them on a bench seat; to the solo wanderings of my twenties when I drove to escape, or understand, grief and sorrow; to trips I take today with my partner, and our unborn daughter: trips of hope and imagining.



Photo credit: Rebecca Rogerson.

Voices in the Grass is a road trip through memory, ecology and the sacred spaces of the prairies, written as mingled memoir, criticism, and natural history. As a writer, I'm interested in relationships, especially in the ways in which memories of particular landscapes shape language, thoughts, and an understanding of self.

A Conversation with Sarah Lynne Roberts

Brian A. Pollick

Associate Fellow

Sarah Lynne Roberts is the 2025-26 Rev. Heather J. Lindstedt and Dr. Brian A. Pollick Graduate Student Fellow.

Sarah, please tell us a bit about yourself—where you're from, what you've studied, and what you're working on now.

I'm from the UK, and currently I'm pursuing my PhD in Art History and Visual Studies. I completed my master's at UVic, focusing on surrealism and Mexican film. I analysed a lesser-known film by Luis Buñuel, from the 50s, *Susana*, and applied a feminist lens. For my PhD, I'm again looking at Mexican cinema, but this time from the 1970s. I'm researching the British surrealist, Leonora Carrington who collaborated with Mexican director, Juan López-Moctezuma on the film *The Mansion of Madness*. She contributed costumes and set design, and I'm fascinated by how her personal style and surrealist symbolism is woven into the work.

How does religion and its impacts on society factor into your work?

Mexico is a predominantly Catholic country, and religion was a huge factor in my master's research on Luis Buñuel's films, as he often criticized the church. You have films like *Simon of the Desert*, which ridicules religious devotion and the story of Saint Simeon.

In his film *Susana*, there are a lot of religious allusions. There's reference to the story, "Susannah and the Elders" from the Book of Daniel, where the main character is accused of exposing herself and tried for adultery. The protagonist, Susana shares this name. The mother character in this film also embodies Catholic archetypes of the Virgin mother, perhaps even Mexico's patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe – but her character leans toward caricature. Buñuel appears to be mocking the rigidity and moralism of Catholic tradition.

Why do you think Buñuel inverted the traditional Biblical role of Susana as a chaste heroine to that of a wanton Jezebel-like figure?

I think Buñuel uses the *Susana* story as a parody. There are these times when the camera will look through the eyes of the father character, but his gaze is voyeuristic, looking up and down Susana's legs. I think Buñuel is "winking at us", using those moments to highlight the family's hypocrisy.

Soap operas enjoy huge popularity in Mexican popular culture. Is there a soap opera approach to Buñuel's films?

Yes indeed. *Susana* really leans into the melodrama, which is very much part of soap opera. There's a focus on family or emotional tension; the mother is trying to hold her family together, the son is pulling away, wanting to leave for the city. These heightened emotions are at the centre of the film. In Mexican cinema at the time, melodrama is everywhere—some even suggest classical Mexican cinema is synonymous with the genre.



Brian and Sarah

Please say more about your PhD topic and how it relates to religion or spirituality.

For my PhD, I focus on the British-raised Carrington, who later settled permanently in Mexico. Her work draws on multiple global religions and traditions including Gaelic, Celtic mythology, and Mayan traditions. Carrington identified as a witch, so her work connected to esotericism and spirituality, but she wasn't aligned with a single faith.

Across her work, which included every type of media – painting, tapestry, sculpture, poetry, and autobiography – I feel that Carrington employs a form of unconscious spirituality. Despite emerging from the surrealist circle, she pushed back against the surrealist idea that women can be “muses” for male artists to access their psyche. Rather, she taps into her feminine spirituality and uses it as an independent power, which I find compelling.

The Mansion of Madness depicts an asylum where patients seize control, engaging in debauchery and chaos. The film embraces excess, surrealism, and grotesquerie as a parody of government suppression and Catholic morality, subverting binaries of rationality and insanity.

When psychoanalysis emerged in Western

science, the female mind was scrutinized and pathologized. We even know that hysteria comes from the Greek word for uterus, *hystera*. Women's “madness” was deeply connected to their sexual identity. These ideas stem from centuries of religious thought linking femininity to temptation, guilt, and witchcraft.

Carrington was sent to a mental institution during the war, so there's a personal resonance for her. I argue she used conventions of horror cinema to critique authoritarianism and institutions like the church.

How did Carrington express her identity as a self-proclaimed witch?

She was very close friends with the artists Remedios Varo and Kati Horna, who also identified as witches, and they formed a creative circle. The relationship expresses itself, among other ways, in cooking; there's an evocative link between stirring, pots, and the idea of mixing potions in a cauldron. Images of kitchens emerge in their paintings, as a kind of ritualistic space.

Carrington and Varo wrote a stage play together, called *The Holy Oily Body*. It was about a magic elixir and featured a priest character—it's a satirical piece that plays

film also really reverses power dynamics; the patients have taken control and are treating the doctors like their playthings. It directly challenges authority and our concept of rationality.

There's also a broader commentary on Mexico's politics. Mexico has a strong patriarchal tradition, shaped in part by its Catholic heritage and periods of authoritarian governance. The work addresses both personal and the political traumas, in addition to the social stigma around madness. These issues still resonate today.

What are you looking forward to as a fellow, and how do you think that your time here will help you with your research?

I'm really looking forward to the conversations. Sometimes you pick up threads of ideas from a chat that might seem unrelated to your work, but they end up being important. So, I'm really excited about the coffee chats, firstly because I love coffee, and secondly because I love talking.

I'm also looking forward to learning from everyone here about spirituality. We often think of ourselves as a secular society, but I think that's completely wrong. Spirituality and religion inform everything we do,



Adieu Amenhotep. Leonora Carrington, Oil on Canvas. 1955, Museo de Arte Moderno, México City, México. 35x45cm. Image source: DIDO. <https://dido.finearts.uvic.ca/media/get/49445/r-4389635/49445/011275/?inline>.

with religious themes. I don't think it was ever performed, but it highlights their shared interests in spirituality, and their playfulness.

What are the broader societal themes your research will address?

In *The Mansion of Madness* there's a powerful critique of the way institutions, churches, and the state have approached mental health. The

for better or worse. They've informed our laws, our governance, and even our moral frameworks, and ideas of right and wrong. I'm really interested in exploring that on a global scale and hearing everyone's perspectives.

Also, I love yoga, so I'm fascinated to hear about the yoga research here and how that might better inform my own understanding and practice.

2025-26 FELLOWS

REV. HEATHER J. LINDSTEDT & DR. BRIAN A. POLLICK GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Sarah Roberts

(University of Victoria)

Leonora Carrington and the Surreal Language of "Madness" in Mexican Exploitation Cinema

WINNIFRED LONSDALE GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW



Sarah Madsen

(University of Victoria)

"Against the Will of the City:" Anti-Populist Conspiracy Theories and the Tory Judiciary during the Popish Plot Crisis, 1678-81

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW



Daniel Orogun

(University of Pretoria)

Religion, Spirituality and Healthcare: African and North American Perspectives

SCALES FAMILY FELLOW



Bouchra Mossmann

(University of Southern Denmark)

Muslims and Subjectivity Formation in the Canadian North

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE



Neil Griffin

Voices in the Grass: The Prairie Roadtrip as Pilgrimage

IAN H. STEWART GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Suad Ahmed

(York University)

Through our Eyes: On the Social and Emotional Lives of Somali Muslim Youth



Terry Marner

Searching for Home-Finding Fingerposts in Neuroscience



Matt Sheedy

(University of Bonn)

Islam According to Google News: How Media Shape the Way We Talk About Religion



John Thatamanil

(Union Theological Seminary)

For the Love of Truth: Interreligious Wisdom for the Post-Truth Crisis



Youssef Benzouine

(University of Montreal)

The Masculinities of Migrant and Racialized Muslim Men in Quebec



Melanie Siebert

Physica Slip: Rewilding Spiritual Lineage Through Queer, Feminist and Ecological Poetics

COMMUNITY SABBATICANT FELLOWS



Kim Dawson

Unitive Experiences: Implications for the Healing of End-of-Life Distress



Jessica Fichtner-Nolin

(University of Victoria)

Women's Voiced Experiences of Healing from Religious Trauma



Martin Adam

(University of Victoria)

Buddhism, Consciousness, and the Problem of AI Control



Peter Evans

Imitation and Scapegoat in Coast Salish Myth

CSRS GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWS



Aminat Muibi

(University of Victoria)

Ritual and Meaning Creation with Audiences in Gambling Organizations



Megan Swift

(University of Victoria)

Religious Pluralism in Putin's Russia: The Resurgence of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies and Festivals

HAROLD COWARD INDIA RESEARCH FELLOW



Shubham Arora

(University of British Columbia)

An Intellectual History of Pleasure (kāma) in Sanskrit literature



Mélisande Séguin

(University of Victoria)

Indigenous Campesino Resistance to Extractivism in Guatemala

Want to join the CSRS community as a fellow?

Check out our website:

uvic.ca/csrs/fellowships

(and p.16 of this newsletter)

2025-26 FELLOWS

ASSOCIATE FELLOWS



Angela Andersen

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



Mohammad Badamchi

Surveilling Female Body: Revisiting Hijab as Patriarchal Technology in Contemporary Iran



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



Robert Florida

Ethical Issues in Modern Buddhism



Nicola Hayward

The Reception of New Testament Stories in Late Antique and Renaissance Art



Victor Hori

The Modernization of Buddhism in Global Perspective



Ambreen Hussaini

Art of Qur'anic Calligraphy and Material Culture: Investigating the Use of the Qur'anic Text in Contemporary Pakistan



Lesley Jessop

Courtyard Spaces around the Cathedral of Notre Dame in the Middle Ages



Françoise Keating

Innovative Aesthetics and "Unusual Christianity": The Re-Imagined Society of King René d'Anjou.



Todd Klaiman

Taiwanese Soft Power During the Vietnam War



Tim Knowlton

The Languages of Ritual Healing in Indigenous Mesoamerica



Francis Landy

Utopia, Catastrophe, and Poetry in Isaiah



Robin Mazumder

How the Urban Landscape influences Both Individual and Collective Psychology



Lytton McDonnell

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



Graham McDonough

Catholic Schooling and Religious Pluralism



Catherine Nutting

Rubens and the Stoic Baroque: Stoic Ethics, Rhetoric, and Natural Philosophy in Rubens's Style



Brian Pollick

Art and Moral Identity in the Global Middle Ages



Justine Semmens

Dangerous Liaisons: Sex Crimes and the Courts in Catholic Reformation France, 1500-1700



Devyani Tewari

The 'Other' in the Matrimonial Context: Women with Invisible Disabilities in India



Paige Thombs

Religious Lawyers in the Secular Practice of Canadian Law



Reeta Tremblay

Missionaries, Colonial Imageries and Modern Kashmiri Muslim Identity



Carolyn Whitney-Brown

Hopeful Actions: a Graphic and Narrative Exploration



Grace Wong Sneddon

Chinese Canadian Spirituality in the 21st Century



Katherine Young

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



Jessica Ziakin-Cook

The Romantics are Prompting: Modern Art, Craft, and Catholicism in the Saint John's Bible

EVENTS

Thursday Public Lecture Series

The CSRS lecture series features our fellows and special guests in our exciting Scholars in the Square format. They are held from 5:00-6:00pm Pacific Time on Thursdays during the academic year, with the exception of certain special lectures (see dates below with an **asterisk*** for exceptions). For further lecture details, links and registration information, visit our website at: uvic.ca/csrs/events/.

September 18, 2025	Rachel Brown	Beyond Food Fights: Religion, Food, Power and Politics
September 25, 2025	Ken Derry	Religion 101: How do we introduce students to the study of religion?
October 9, 2025	John Thatamanil	The Enlightenment: Cause or Cure for the Post-Truth Crisis?
October 16, 2025	Shemine Gulamhusein	Navigating Muslimhood in Sport and Recreational Spaces
October 23, 2025	Matt Sheedy	Muslims in North American Popular Culture
October 30, 2025	Brian Pollick	The Shape of the World: Knowledge Visualization in the Medieval Ages
November 6, 2025	Mélanie Séguin	Indigenous Campesino Resistance to Extractivism in Guatemala
November 13, 2025*	Sarah Kathleen Johnston	Understanding and Valuing Occasional Religious Practice
November 20, 2025	Sarah Roberts	Occult Visions: Surrealism, Spirituality and Resistance in Film
November 27, 2025	Martin Adam	What is Life? Buddhist Reflections on Artificial Consciousness
January 15, 2026	Todd Klaiman	Buddhist Relics and Beauty Pageant Winners in Cold War Asia
January 22, 2026	Bouchra Mossmann	North of Ordinary: Muslim Lives in the Canadian Arctic
January 29, 2026	Peter Evans	Imitation and Scapegoat in Coast Salish Myth
February 5, 2026	Youssef Benzouine	Muslim Men in Quebec: Reflections
February 12, 2026	Megan Swift	The Revival of Indigenous Religions in Russia
February 26, 2026	Suad Ahmed	Through our Eyes: The Social and Emotional Lives of Somali Muslim Youth
March 5, 2026	Jessica Fichtner-Nolin	Un-silencing Voices of Religious Trauma
March 12, 2026	Sarah Madsen	Anti-Populist Conspiracy Theories during the Popish Plot Crisis
March 19, 2026	Distinguished Lecture in Islam	TBA
March 26, 2026	Melanie Siebert and Neil Griffin	Artist-in-Residence Gala

Teaching Religion in Canada (TRiC): A New CSRS Initiative

This year the Centre will launch the Teaching Religion in Canada (TRiC) initiative. Started by Rachel Brown, Paul Bramadat, Ken Derry, and Michel Desjardins, TRiC aims to create a space where Canadian scholars of religion can come together to discuss the one topic that unites us across our various research interests: teaching religion. TRiC co-chairs Rachel and Ken led a few pedagogical sessions at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion meetings, and it became apparent that there was a real desire for these conversations among colleagues. This initiative allows scholars of religion to

continue this important dialogue and create community around a shared passion for teaching. This year we will kick things off with a series of four hybrid coffee talks that will address themes related to the teaching of religion in Canada and by Canadians. Join us on Sept 26th, Nov 19th, Jan 28th, and March 11th for these events and help us to develop this exciting new community of scholars. Ken Derry also joins us for a lecture and discussion in the Scholars in the Square series on Thursday, September 25th. Mark your calendars!



John Albert Hall Lecture Series

Brendon Neilson



The John Albert Hall Lectures are a joint initiative of the CSRS and the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets of British Columbia. The lectures are made possible through generous financial support from the John Albert Hall Trust.

In the Fall 2025 (November 13-14th) the John Albert Hall Lecture Series will host Sarah Kathleen Johnson, Assistant Professor of Liturgy and Pastoral Theology and Director

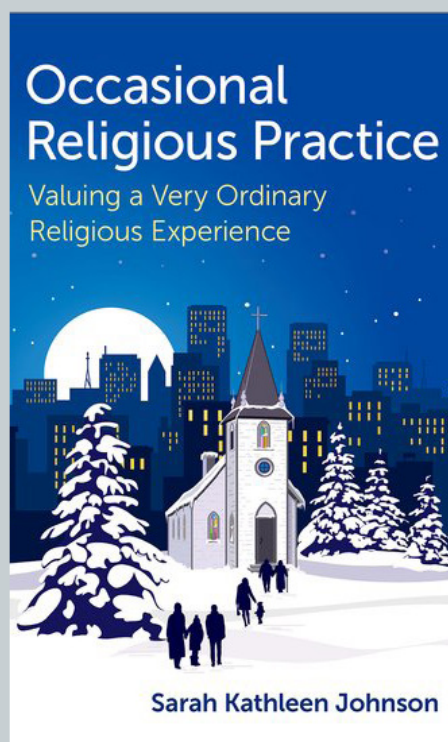


Sarah Kathleen Johnson addresses "a very ordinary religious experience" in this year's JAH lecture

of Anglican Studies at Saint Paul University (Ottawa). Sarah will lecture and offer a workshop for clergy on the topic of her recently published book *Occasional Religious Practice: Valuing a Very Ordinary Religious Experience*. Many who participate in religious communities now do so 'occasionally', rather than regularly. Sarah will help us understand this important but often overlooked set of people within our communities.

This event will also be the final John Albert Hall Lecture administered by the CSRS. The trustees of the Hall trust have discerned that moving forward the lectures will be administered by an internal committee. The diocese will still offer public events and lectures at the intersection of the church and academic interests, but with a different administrative structure. We will still be strong partners with the CSRS, and we celebrate our long partnership and the many great lectures we have been able to offer.

The Anglican Diocese and CSRS have jointly sponsored the John Albert Hall Lectures since 1996. I want to thank Paul and Rachel, as well as the many folks who have served on the JAH steering committee over the years, the previous co-chairs of the committee, and the wonderful staff at CSRS. All of the events we were able to organize together have been enriching for many audiences and many



topics, and our communities have been enriched through our careful work together. Please stay tuned for more details on the next chapter of the John Albert Hall offerings.

Special Coffeetalk: Prophecy from a Birmingham Jail

The CSRS is pleased to partner with UVic's Department of Political Science to host a special coffeetalk on September 8th with Alexander Livingston, Associate Professor of Government at Cornell University. His current book project, *Soul Force: The Prophetic Political Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, situates King's reflections on love, law, and power within the religious and political traditions of the Black freedom struggle, challenging liberal legalist theories of nonviolent resistance and democratic transformation. To participate in person or via Zoom please consult our [website](#).

Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" stands as a landmark of twentieth-century political thought. It continues to shape debates on civil disobedience and scholarship on dissent. Yet this literature often sidesteps King's religious framing, treating it as a liability rather than a resource. This paper recasts the letter as prophetic witness rather than philosophical argument. By attending to its sermon rhetoric, biblical symbolism, and intertextual echoes, it recovers the prophetic register of King's public philosophy and shows the ways it unsettles liberal assumptions about law, democracy, and religion's public role.



GOVERNANCE AND STAFF



Our People

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Todd Klaiman (Program and Research Coordinator)
Scott Dolff (Program and Comms Associate)
Noriko Prezeau (Administrative Assistant)

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Peter Scales (Chair, CSRS Advisory Council)
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Jindi Singh (Khalsa Aid Canada)
Kefen Zhou (University of Victoria)

Fellowships

The 2026-2027 fellowship deadline is **Monday, November 10, 2025**. For more info please visit: uvic.ca/csrs/fellowships. Fellows become full members of our dynamic, interdisciplinary research environment. Most fellowships include office space.

UVic Faculty Fellowships

For UVic faculty working on scholarly research projects related to some aspect of religion and society. Includes course-release.

Visiting Research Fellowships

The CSRS offers research space for scholars working on projects related to our mandate.

Graduate Student Fellowships

Includes research space and an award of \$6500.

Scales Family Fellowship

An award of \$6500 for research related to religion in British Columbia.

Rev. Heather J. Lindstedt & Dr. Brian A. Pollick Graduate Student Fellowship

An award of \$6500 given to a graduate student in Art History and Visual Studies.

Artist-in-Residence Fellowship

The Chih-Chuang and Yien-Ying Wang Hsieh Award for Art and Spirituality is valued at approximately \$7000. The deadline is **Monday, April 20, 2026**.

Community Fellowships

For members of the broader public to join our research community on a short-term basis. Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

Indigenous Arts and Research Fellowships

Fellowships include support for faculty, graduate students, and artists working on projects related to religion/spirituality and reconciliation.

Harold Coward India Research Fellowship

Support for faculty, senior doctoral and post-doctoral students at Indian universities to pursue research at the CSRS.

Associate Fellowships

For local scholars who are actively engaged in research and interested in scholarly community, but do not need office space. Applications taken on an **on-going basis**.

Giving to the CSRS

The CSRS is supported by the generosity of individuals and groups. The charitable giving of our donors helps young scholars achieve their life goals, provides a productive intellectual home for established scholars from around the world, advances public dialogue that furthers critical understanding of the role of religion in society, and assists in the creation of scholarly publications that inform public policy. Any and all contributions are appreciated. Those interested in making a donation can visit uvic.ca/csrs.

A charitable bequest to the CSRS is a tangible way to contribute to the success of the centre. Given through your will, a bequest can include gifts of cash, real estate, art work, or other property. Designating the centre as the beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF, or insurance policy can also have significant tax advantages for your estate. To discuss how you could leave a legacy for future generations, please contact Leitha Cosentino, Director of Faculty Development, at lconsentino@uvic.ca, or **250-415-8304** for a confidential conversation.

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