

Center for the Study of World Religions

Harvard Divinity School



CSWR Newsletter § December 2011

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Frank Clooney, CSWR Director

Dear Friends of CSWR,

As the fall semester ends and winter slowly comes upon New England, it is time for another update on the life and activities of the Center. The Center had a busy fall, to be sure, and I am happy to share the news with you. And, in this festive season, I wish you and your families best wishes of peace and joy.

Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Director

Giving to CSWR

CSWR is blessed with long-standing endowments that enable us to support the many activities of the Center, but we are not in a strong position to engage some of the most interesting possibilities before us. It would be very helpful for instance if we could reduce the rent on the apartments by 25% or more, so that more students interested in the Center and its communal mission would think of applying to live here. A good model for the support we envision are the fellowships named for John and Ineke Carman, given each year to two residents (MTS or MDiv) who exemplify the ideals of John's long directorship. Any support would be welcome, but we are happy to explore all possible avenues, including endowing individual apartments. If you are in a position to help us, please be in touch.

Other needs include funds to support visiting scholars, and to underwrite the rather expensive renovation of our third floor space (and access to it) so that it can once more be a Meditation Room, a flexible multi-use space for lectures, colloquia, or a gathering place for CSWR residents.



Mandala with 13 scenes from the life of Krishna, by an anonymous Indian folk artist

Recent CSWR Events

The semester began with our usual round of orientation events, most notably our panel on "Study: How We Understand the Work We Do." Susan Abraham (CSWR Associate Director), Ann Braude (Director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program), Sutopa Dasgupta (PhD student, Religion), and Dudley Rose (Associate Dean for Ministry Studies), spoke on the theme.

In early October we cosponsored – with WSRP and the Weatherhead Center – the visit to campus of the Sultan of Sokoto on October 2nd and 3rd. We sponsored a panel in advance of the Sultan's visit entitled "Islam in Nigeria" with the following experts: Hauwa Ibrahim (Visiting Lecturer on Women's Studies and Islamic Law); Benjamin Soares (University of Leiden); M. Sani

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Umar (Northwestern University); and Professor Jacob Olupona. These four scholars illuminated the primary religious issues affecting Nigerians.

One of our Junior Fellows, Funlayo Wood (PhD student, African Studies) hosted a more intimate event with Benjamin Soares the day after the panel. (More information on our Junior Fellowship program can be found below.)



Islam in Nigeria panel discussion

On September 16th and 17th the CSWR sponsored the first in a series of interfaith theological conversations including professors and doctoral students from HDS, Religion, and the Boston/Cambridge area, and three invited professors from a distance: Srilata Raman (University of Toronto), Deepak Sarma (Case Western University), and Graham Schweig (Christopher Newport University). There was a public session and a private session. There will be a follow-up on February 13th, with Chakravarthy Ram-Prasad (Lancaster

University, UK), who will be discussing with us his current book project, "God, Self and Being: Constructive Theology from Two Commentaries on the Bhagavad-Gita."

On October 19th, Kristin Beise Kiblinger (Winthrop University) gave the fourth annual comparative theology lecture, "Caputo's Ghosts, Vasubandhu's Illusions, and Comparative Hauntology."

Faculty Book Discussions

This is our second year of sponsoring conversations around new faculty books, a chance for us both to hear from the author about the genesis and motivation of her or his project, and likewise to discuss the rationale for the project.



Susan Lloyd McGarry and Donald K. Swearer

On September 6th we celebrated the release of *Ecologies of Human Flourishing*, edited by former CSWR Director Donald K. Swearer and Susan Lloyd McGarry (HDS Office of

Communications). M. David Eckel (Boston University) discussed the book at this celebratory event.

On October 5th we discussed *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion* edited by Rachel McCleary (HKS), with responses by Benjamin Friedman (Economics) and Professor Ronald Thiemann.



Leila Ahmed

A still larger crowd gathered on November 2nd for a conversation around Professor Leila Ahmed's *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* with responses by Jane Smith (Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs), Susan Abraham, and Kecia Ali (Boston University). Technical problems thwarted the taping of the discussion of Professor McCleary's book, but the video of the Ahmed discussion is already online, accessible through our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.

In the spring, we will be discussing three HDS faculty books: Daniel McKanan's

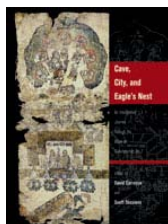
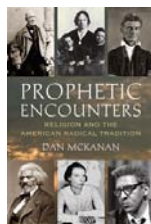
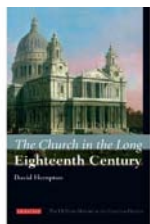
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Prophetic Encounters: Religion & the American Radical Tradition, David Hempton's *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century: The I.B. Tauris History of the Christian Church* and David Carrasco's *Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No.2*. See "Upcoming Events" for dates.



Colloquia

Following on the Center's invitation to HDS and Religion faculty to consider convening seminars or reading groups here at CSWR, there are currently two new colloquia: Dan McKanan is leading a series of faculty discussions on pedagogical approaches to diversity and oppression, while Professor Anne Monius is convening a reading group on the works of Paul Ricoeur. "The In/Visible Bodies of Deities Colloquium," led by Professor Laura Nasrallah, met for a final time, with an October 24th presentation by Professor Kimberley Patton. Due to faculty leaves, the Comparative Studies colloquium is on hold, but it may

pick up again in 2012-13. We are also planning a colloquium on translation to begin in the fall of 2012.

Religion in Korea

Due to the generosity of the Ahnkook Fund for Korean Buddhism, we are beginning a series of events related to religion in Korea, and especially Korean Buddhism. The Ahnkook Fund is a result of the gift of the Venerable SooBoo of the Ahnkook Zen Center in memory of the Venerable Bupjang.

In cooperation with the Korea Institute and Asia Center, on November 7th, we hosted Judith Berling (Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley) and Sophia Park (Holy Names University) who spoke on "[Class, Gender, and Culture: Complex Issues of Religious Identity in Contemporary Korea](#)." We are already in conversation with the Korea Institute about cosponsoring an event in the spring, and will plan more for next year.



Judith Berling and Sophia Park

Meditation Room Series

Last spring James Robson (East Asian Languages) inaugurated our series on "Intellectual Worlds of Meditation" and on November 10th, Roger Haight, S.J. (Union Theological Seminary) offered a lecture, "[Christian Meditation for Seekers](#)," as part of the same series. We look forward to the next presentation in the series, "From the Unreal to the Real: Reflections on Vedantic Meditation," by Swami Tyagananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston, on February 14th, 2012.

Faculty Lunches

These lunches feature faculty colleagues' current research or reflections on conferences or notable events in the study of religion and theology.

CSWR hosted two faculty lunches this semester: Professors Ann Braude and Jacob Olupona presented on the visit of his Excellency, the Sultan of Sokoto. At the second luncheon, Professor Ahmed Ragab presented on "Contemporary Islam and Its Studies: Between Linguistic Hegemonies and the Politics of Relevance."

Student Events

We have continued to facilitate events specifically for the student

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population. Our MTS/MDiv lunch series has allowed for robust conversations around a multitude of topics of students' choosing, including religion and sexuality, religious peacemaking, and belief and pluralism. We have also succeeding in cultivating an informal environment for doctoral students to discuss issues of interest to them through our monthly Academic Casual series, planned and led by these students.

Harvard Chaplains Meeting

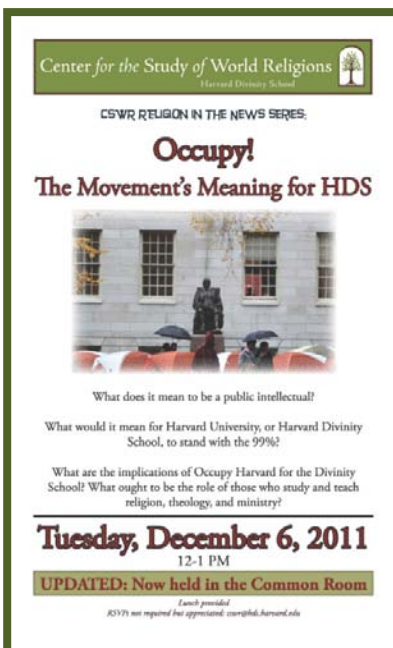
For the second year, we hosted at the Center a meeting of the Harvard Chaplains, the interfaith community of ministers from all religions who work with the Harvard community. In addition to welcoming them and giving them space for their meeting, we also engaged in a discussion of the "interfaith" in interfaith ministry. Our field education student this year, Lucia Hulsether (MDiv '14), has already been involved in interfaith work in the Yard, and finds the Chaplains a valuable group to know and with whom to work.

Religion and Politics

The Center has also addressed current events through a new series, Religion and Politics, led by Susan Abraham and ThD student and Junior Fellow Kate DeConinck. This semester they

held three interesting lunchtime discussions on a wide variety of issues. They will continue this work through the spring.

The Religion and Politics Colloquium will sponsor two public events in the spring semester in light of the election year. Eminent scholars and alumni will be featured speakers at these events which we also hope to be interactive with roundtable discussions.



Religion in the News

We have long had the feeling that the methodical planning of events is great for most things, but we end up lagging behind when more urgent or timely events occur. This semester we have had two well-attended and lively lunchtime

events as part of a new series, Religion in the News: "The Release of Gilad Shalit" and "Occupy!: The Movement's Meaning for HDS."

We are looking forward to many more such events in 2012, keeping alert to what's really going on around us interreligiously.

Faculty and Student Grants

Undergraduate Religion concentrator, Analiese Palmer (College '12) is writing her senior thesis on the aesthetics and spirituality of monastic life. It draws on her two months in India (visiting Buddhist monasteries) and Ireland (living with a community of cloistered Benedictine nuns), a trip funded by CSWR's undergraduate summer research grant.

In continuing our grants program for faculty research, we are now giving preference to grants for junior faculty, and allocating a portion of the available funding for a spring conference each year or every other year. Plans are at a very early stage for a first such conference in the spring of 2013 on the Song of Songs considered from multiple disciplinary and comparative angles.

Greeley Fellowships

Each year the Center is able to give two fellowships to students

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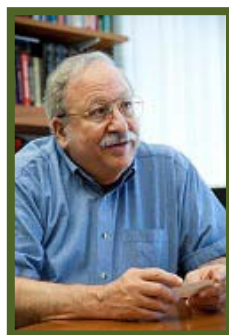


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wishing to do interfaith work abroad in the summer, thanks in part to a gift from the former Greeley Foundation.

This past summer, Sierra Fleenor (MDiv '12) worked with the East of England Faiths Council in Cambridge, England, while Emily Clawson (MDiv '13) traveled to Hyderabad, India to work with the Henry Martyn Institute, International Center for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation. In November, they reported on their work at lunch attended by many students who themselves are considering applying for a fellowship for the summer of 2012.

This year's Greeley lecture is scheduled for March 28th, 2012, featuring Professor Marshall Ganz of the Kennedy School. Please stay tuned during the second semester as his lecture topic is announced.



Marshall Ganz

Religious Literacy Project



Diane Moore

The Center's Senior Fellow, Professor Diane Moore reports, "I've focused my efforts this term on working with a web design firm to create the infrastructure for the Religious Literacy Project. I am also teaching a new course entitled Religion, Ecology, and Human Rights, and I am in correspondence with scholars here in the United States and in Europe who are also addressing issues related to the intersection of religion, education, and human rights in local and global contexts. The Center is the ideal location for this work here at Harvard and I'm delighted to be part of this community."

Visiting Fellows

Our Visiting Fellows this year include in the fall Paula Richman (Professor of Religion and South Asian Studies at Oberlin College) and Norbert Hintersteiner (Lecturer in World Christianity and Interfaith Studies at the Irish School of Ecumenics, and

Director of Research at the School of Religions, Theology, and Ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin). In the spring, Dietmar Winkler (University of Salzburg) will be with us.

Junior Fellows

Our new program of offering junior fellowships to as many as four Center residents is off to a great start. Here is a brief summary of their projects (more can be found on our [website](#)):

Kate DeConinck is a doctoral student at Harvard Divinity School with a focus on Religion and Society. Her junior fellowship project, entitled "Aftermaths: Religion, Ritual, and Remembrance in a Multireligious World," consists of two components: first, a series of lunchtime discussions with faculty concerning their research on themes of ritual and remembrance; second, events coordinated in conjunction with the newly-formed Religion and Politics Colloquium.



Late fall in the CSWR courtyard

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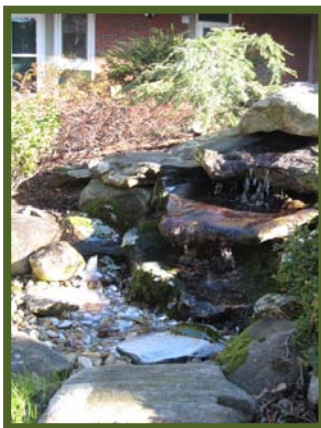
CSWR summer picnic

Chan Sok Park is a doctoral student in New Testament and Early Christian studies. He is hosting a series of reading group meetings of doctoral students on the topic of the place of reading practice in the study of religion. The group is organized around two particular questions: First, how do we understand our own reading practice of religious texts in its academic, study-of-religion form, institutionalized in a modern University setting? Second, what are the contemporary methodological tools for the study of religious texts in interreligious and interdisciplinary contexts?

Axel Takács is a first-year ThD candidate with a focus on comparative theology between his home tradition of Roman Catholicism and Islam. He plans on bringing comparative theology into dialogue with the broader CSWR and Harvard community through a series of lectures given by various comparative theologians. These lectures will also help to the broader study of

religion community just how theology can be done interreligiously within the academic framework.

Funlayo E. Wood is a doctoral student in African Studies with a concentration in Religion. She is developing a project entitled “African, Diasporic and Indigenous Religions in Conversation,” so as to increase the visibility of and engagement with Indigenous religions at the Center and the University at large. To implement this, she is organizing a series of discussions, film screenings, and a day-long symposium entitled “Sacred Healing & Wholeness in Africa & the Americas” in the spring.



CSWR courtyard fountain

The Residential Community

The Residential community is particularly diverse this year and includes: ThD and PhD students, including one in African Studies; two WSRP Fellows; MTS and

MDiv students; a PhD student in Philosophy; and an Emerson College graduate student. Visiting Fellows Paula Richman and Dietmar Winkler and his family are living at the Center, respectively in the fall and spring semesters.



CSWR's 2011-2012 residents

Residents participate in a number of academic and social events, including weekly “cafés” to discuss research interests and casual monthly suppers.

In October they turned out for our annual pumpkin carving, the oldest continuing tradition of CSWR. Feel free to visit our Facebook page for some [great photos](#) of this event.



Results of the 2011 CSWR pumpkin carving

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CSWR Archives and Library

We are reorganizing our library: many older materials have been archived, and the Andover Library is helping us catalogue our older audio and video materials. With help from HDS community members with longer institutional memories (including Dean William Graham, Dean Jane Smith, former Center Director John Carman, Professor Anne Monius, and Kit Dodgson, Director of Communications), we are going through albums of old photos, to identify as many people as possible.

This year we are also finishing up the cataloguing of books in the second floor library, giving new prominence to dissertations by Center residents from the early years. We are also highlighting books donated by former fellows and arising from their research. For example, we have recently been pleased to add to our collection two books sent to us by former residents/fellows of the Center: Abudullah Al-Ansari Ghazi's *Raja Rammohun Roy: An Encounter with Islam and Christianity and the Articulation of Hindu Self-Consciousness*, and Nancy Lusignan Schultz's *Mrs. Mattingly's Miracle: The Prince, the Widow, and the Cure that Shocked Washington City*. If you lived at the Center or were a

fellow here, think of sending us your new book when it appears.

Upcoming Events

See below for our current public events calendar for spring 2012.

On February 9th and 10th CSWR is co-sponsoring with the HDS Office of Ministry Studies a Ministry Consultation on the multireligious MDiv. Invited are a handful of faculty and administrators from institutions around the country which have interfaith ministry programs. This one-day consultation includes a public session on the afternoon of the 9th, and a closed session on the 10th.

On February 14th, Swami Tyagananda will speak on the Hindu worldview of meditation, "From the Unreal to the Real: Reflections on Vedantic Meditation."

On March 6th, 2012 we are excited to cosponsor a panel with the Women's Studies in Religion Program featuring its visiting research associates Julia Belser and Michelle Wolfe. The panel is entitled, "Gendering Disability: Rabbinic and Reformation Perspectives" and will surely raise some fascinating questions and conversations.

As mentioned above, we will host three book events, each with the author and two or three respondents on the book. The featured authors are Dan McKanan (March 5th), David Hempton (March 26th), and David Carrasco (April 9th).

Staff News

We welcome two new staff members.



Alexis Gewertz, Coordinator of Educational Programming

Alexis Gewertz became our Coordinator of Educational Programming on July 1st, replacing Rebecca Esterston, who began the doctoral program in religion at Boston University. Lexi received her master of theological studies degree from HDS in 2008; she was also a graduate of the Program in Religious Studies and Education. After graduating, Lexi worked at Combined Jewish Philanthropies, where she ran programs to engage young adults in the local Jewish

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community, until coming to the Center.

Also new is our staff assistant Jane Anna Chapman, who joined the CSWR staff in September 2011. Jane Anna can be found at the Center's front desk from 9 to 2 every day. Previously she worked at HDS as the staff assistant in the Finance Office from 2008 to 2011. She received her master of theological studies from HDS in 1998. When she is not at work Jane Anna chases after her two young sons and is writing her thesis for a master of public administration degree.



Jane Anna Chapman, Staff Assistant

Staff Spotlight: Charles Anderson

Charles Anderson was born in New York City, and raised in upstate New York. A graduate of The Albany Academy, Siena College, and the University of Southern California, Charles' interests lie in strategic planning, financial management, ideation, architectural design, and

development and donor stewardship.

Charles joined the staff team at CSWR in August 2005, having worked previously in Harvard's central administration and the Kennedy School. He is the Center's Financial and Operations Officer. In his first year he led the renovation project for ten of the residential apartments in the Center complex, and a key priority is the maintenance and enhancement of the Center's historical Jose Luis Sert building. For this purpose, he is currently imagining a multifunctional design for the underutilized third floor penthouse space. Charles hopes that through Harvard's 375th Anniversary Campaign critical funding will be obtained for this important project.

Charles enjoys discovering and engaging in disparate cultures, and is looking forward to a winter trip to Switzerland, Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. He also volunteers his time teaching English as a Foreign Language to visiting scholars.



Charles Anderson, Assistant Director for Finance and Operations

Keeping in Touch

As part of HDS's overall project of updating web resources, our website will undergo some rearranging and streamlining in the spring. Stayed tuned for the brightening of our site!

The Center is now on Facebook! Please become a fan by visiting and clicking "Like" on our page. Our Facebook page will be a great resource to keep in touch with the Center, as well as former residents and students. All event information will be available on [our Facebook page](#) along with pertinent news articles and non-CSWR events that we think would interest our fans. Support the Center by becoming a fan!

And finally, a reminder that we are shifting to an all-electronic newsletter, so please make sure we have your updated email address: cswr@hds.harvard.edu

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SPRING 2012 PUBLIC EVENTS AT THE CSWR

Events are held in the CSWR Common Room, 42 Francis Avenue, Cambridge unless otherwise noted. All events are free and wheelchair accessible. For more information and additional event listings visit the CSWR website at www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr/

You can also “like” us on Facebook for event info, updates and articles: www.facebook.com/harvardcswr

Friday January 27th | 4-5 PM | CSWR Common Room

Society for Comparative Theology Event

The Society for Comparative Theology presents this lecture by Robert Neville, Dean of Marsh Chapel and Professor of Philosophy, Religion, and Theology at Boston University.

Thursday February 9th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room or the Sperry Room (check website as date approaches)

The Multireligious MDiv: A Conversation

A panel conversation on the topic of multireligious theological education. Check the website for more details as the event date approaches.

Tuesday February 14th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room

From the Unreal to the Real: Reflections on Vedantic Meditation

Swami Tyagananda, Hindu monk (sannyasi) of the Ramakrishna Order and head of the Order's branch in Boston, will present his lecture as part of the CSWR's series, *The Intellectual Worlds of Meditation*.

Monday March 5th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room

Prophetic Encounters: Religion and the American Radical Tradition

A presentation on the recent publication by Dan McKanan, Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Association Senior Lecturer in Divinity at Harvard Divinity School. Discussants of the book will be Timothy P. McCarthy, Adjunct Lecturer on Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and program director at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy; and Diane L. Moore, Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies and Education at HDS and Senior Fellow at the CSWR.

Tuesday March 6th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room or Sperry Room (check website as date approaches)

Gendering Disability: Rabbinic and Reformation Perspectives

Please come for a fascinating presentation by two visiting research associates at the Women's Studies in Religion Program at HDS: Julia Watts Belser, Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and Jewish Ethics, and Michelle L. Wolfe, Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and the History of Christianity. After a presentation from each scholar there will be ample time for questions and discussion on the topic of religion and disability, giving particular focus to rabbinic traditions and Reformation history.

Friday March 23rd | 4-5 PM | CSWR Common Room

Society for Comparative Theology Event

Please check the website for information on the speaker and lecture title as the event date approaches.

Monday March 26th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room

The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century: The I.B. Tauris History of the Christian Church

A discussion of the recent publication by David N. Hempton, Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor of Evangelical Theological Studies at Harvard Divinity School. Discussants of the book will be Heather D. Curtis, Assistant Professor of Religion at Tufts University and Mark U. Edwards, Jr., Advisory Member of the Faculty of Divinity and senior adviser to the Dean at HDS.

Wednesday March 28th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room

Annual Dana McLean Greeley Lecture for Peace and Social Justice

The third annual Dana McLean Greeley Lecture for Peace and Social Justice will feature Marshall Ganz, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard Kennedy School.

Monday April 9th | 5:15-7 PM | CSWR Common Room

Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2

A discussion of the recent publication by David Carrasco, Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America, with a joint appointment with the Department of Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Discussants of the book will be Ben Leeming, doctoral candidate at Harvard and History Department Chair at the Rivers School in Weston, MA; Jose Rabasa, Visiting Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard; and Diana Sorensen, James F. Rothenberg Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures & Divisional Dean of the Arts and Humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard.

Friday April 20th | 4-5 PM | CSWR Common Room

Society for Comparative Theology Event

Please check the website for information on the speaker and lecture title as the event date approaches.