

Religion and Society

Informing public debate and advancing understanding



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



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The **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)** is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. It supports independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector. The ESRC's total budget for 2012/13 is £205 million. At any one time the ESRC supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes. More at: www.esrc.ac.uk

The Religion and Society Programme has been the largest strategic research initiative supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AHRC and Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) jointly invested £12 million in the Programme. It started in January 2007 and officially ends June 2013. Through the Programme, the Research Councils have funded a total of 75 projects and dissemination and impact activities in three phases at UK universities. The research and activities have spanned the global as well as the local, the past as well as the present.



“The Religion and Society Programme set out to revitalise the study of religion in the UK. Thanks to the foresight and generosity of the research councils it has been able to do just that. It has produced a huge body of new research on religion, and its findings have already started to shift our understanding and practical action in a number of areas. It has trained a new generation of skilled researchers. It has fostered new collaborations between many disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. And it has pioneered new ways of engaging research with public and private debate, including the Westminster Faith Debates, which will be funded beyond the life of the Programme. Religion, for a long time a neglected subject in the academy, has become a serious topic of investigation and discussion once more.”

PROFESSOR LINDA WOODHEAD
Director of the Religion and Society Programme



“The Religion and Society programme has achieved all it set out to do, and much more. It has forged new collaboration across disciplines, contributed a significant body of research to questions of central importance to our society and it has given substantial opportunities to young researchers. Above all, it has changed the nature of the debate about the role of faith in our society and brought research to the heart of that debate and given it public presence. These are considerable achievements and we owe a debt of gratitude to all concerned.”

PROFESSOR RICK RYLANCE
Chief Executive of the AHRC



“We at the ESRC have always recognised the importance of the study of Religion within the social sciences. Religion plays a significant role in people’s identities, their understanding of themselves and, as a result, social cohesion and civil society more broadly. Our collaboration with the AHRC has helped create, along with its outstanding Director Professor Linda Woodhead, a programme that will be able to demonstrate real impact, and this booklet is just one expression of this.”

PROFESSOR PAUL BOYLE
Chief Executive of the ESRC

How did it come about?

Consultations with both the AHRC and ESRC's communities during 2004 and 2005 highlighted the importance and timeliness of research focusing on religion and society, both because of the significance of this area for contemporary society and the readiness of the academic community to respond to the interdisciplinary challenges posed. In recognition of their shared priorities, the AHRC and ESRC agreed to support this area through the co-funding of the Religion and Society Programme, jointly investing £8 million initially. An extra £4 million was then added to commission a cluster of projects focused upon youth specifically, as this was deemed an area in need of urgent investment.

Who has it been for?

The Programme has reached out to and had outcomes of significance within and beyond the academy, for publics, religious groups, policy makers, charities, creative and cultural sectors and others, engaging them in dialogue about the role of religion in society.

What has the Programme achieved?

The Religion and Society Programme has shifted perception of religion in the academy and wider climate of opinion. Religion is now understood as multifaceted and significant for understanding societies past and present. The Programme has turned the study of religion into a truly multidisciplinary story, points demonstrated by the projects highlighted in this brochure.

The examples of research presented here illustrate how religion interrelates with other aspects of life: law (as in the project led by Gillian Douglas), literature (Ewan Fernie),

ethnicity (seen in John Mack's project), youth work (Naomi Stanton and Jasjit Singh's PhDs), new social media (Liesbet van Zoonen), violence (Miri Rubin's research network), equality (Paul Weller), architecture (Ralf Brand), fashion (Reina Lewis), and education. It cannot be analysed in isolation and no single discipline has all the answers. Hence social scientists and legal scholars collaborated in order to investigate religious courts in the UK. Poets, theologians and literary critics came together to re-evaluate the late sixteenth century poem *The Faerie Queene* for contemporary society. Professor Reina Lewis and Dr Jane Cameron from the London College of Fashion worked with anthropologist Dr Emma Tarlo to explore the booming online market of modest clothing for women.

The varied and exciting findings from funded research have been communicated to academic audiences through conferences, articles, chapters and books. Researchers have also engaged different groups through exhibitions, videos, school events, media stories, and even medieval re-enactments. The Programme website showcasing this research receives at least 300 unique visits a day.

The Westminster Faith Debates also featured in this brochure were organised by the Programme



Right: A multi-faith space in Triemli Hospital, Zurich



Gold Buddha statue in the Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park, London

in co-operation with the Rt Hon Charles Clarke to showcase research findings and bring them into public debate. They have already generated over 100 news stories, in national and international print media, broadcast and online outlets. The coverage has helped to enhance public discussion of religion in the UK. Religion has become a regular and serious part of national conversation, better informed by Religion and Society research.

Following on from the debates, Linda Woodhead and Charles Clarke are preparing policy pamphlets to make specific and workable recommendations in areas of current concern and importance, such as Religious Education. Other work within the Programme is also feeding into policy. For example, Professor Jeremy Carrette has been invited to report to the United Nations on his project looking at how religious NGOs operate with them.



Borana spirit possession, Marsabit, northern Kenya

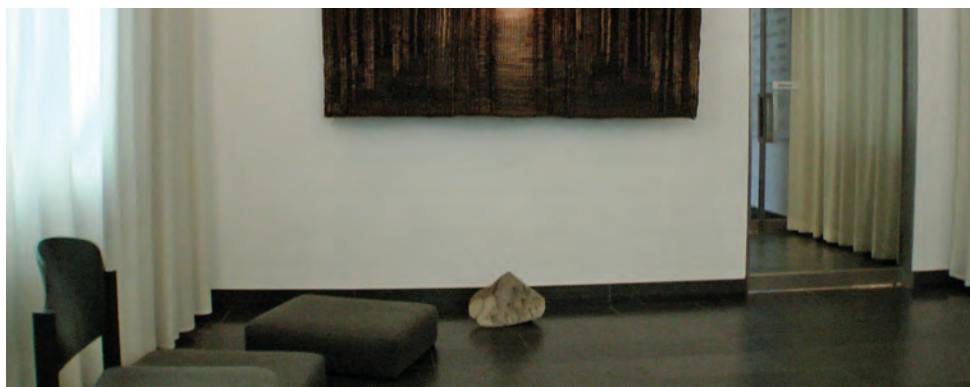
What next?

After the Programme ends in 2013, funding (from Lancaster University, the AHRC and ESRC) and strategy is already in place to continue the work of the Programme in the area of public engagement. The Westminster Faith Debates, Faith Interviews, educational initiatives and outreach to faith groups will continue for three more years.

The AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme book series published by Ashgate will continue its academic legacy, as will the future work of the 265 researchers who have been part of this unique Programme.

For further information

Please go to: www.religionandsociety.org.uk



Top: UMC Hospital Utrecht. **Bottom:** Brandenburger Tor Raum der Stille, Berlin.

Multi-faith spaces – Symptoms and agents of religious and social change

Dr Ralf Brand
University of Manchester

The Multi-Faith Spaces team – drawn from architecture, planning, sociology and theology – has discovered a mushrooming of multi-faith facilities over the past ten years in airports, universities, hospitals, businesses, shopping centres and even football stadia, estimating that there now are at least 1,500 in the UK. With the quality of these varying enormously, members of the team have advised on the construction of new multi-faith spaces, and are now suggesting how spaces might be designed and managed to enhance interaction between groups. Key results are available as a touring exhibition free to the public.



“The spaces in which we encounter one another significantly shape the nature of our relationships. If we are to envision shared societies in which people reflecting the great diversity of human experience live peacefully, we must create shared spaces that encourage cooperative interactions. Through the presentation and analysis of spaces which seek to achieve this goal, the Multi-faith Spaces Project offers vision and hope for a world struggling with discord and division.”

VICTOR KAZANJIAN Dean of Intercultural Education & Religious and Spiritual Life, Wellesley College, Massachusetts, US

Further information
www.multi-faith-spaces.org



Compositional Planning, Musical Grammar and Theology in Old Hispanic Chant

Dr Emma Hornby
University of Bristol

This project enriched our understanding of the repertoire of early medieval Iberian chant, despite its lack of pitch-readable notation. Dr Emma Hornby (Bristol University) and Professor Rebecca Maloy (University of Colorado) explored the musical treatment of liturgical text in the context of early medieval theology, gaining a sense of the chants' aesthetic. As well as resulting in several pioneering publications, the project underpinned Dr Hornby's successful application for a European Research Council Starting Grant.

*Schola Cantorum, Bristol University's all-female choir.
Image: Valerie James, Institute for Musical Research, London*

“I want to let you know how beautiful I thought the service on Saturday night was. I found it a deeply spiritual and moving experience. It is proof that the fruit of your research can have a profound effect on people today, 1000+ years on, and what better reason to pursue it can there be?”

ROBIN DOWNES workshop participant

Dr Hornby directed Schola Cantorum, Bristol University's all-female choir in performances of transcribable Old Hispanic chants with workshop participants, in illustrated lectures and in concerts, bringing this material to new audiences – and even to YouTube.

Modest Dressing: faith-based fashion and internet retail

Professor Reina Lewis
University of the Arts London

The last two decades has seen the development of a rapidly expanding and diversifying market for modest fashion, arising initially from and serving the needs of Christian, Jewish and Muslim women, who are motivated to dress modestly for religious reasons. This market is also sustained by secular women whose 'look' may share many elements of modest styling. For both groups the internet has been central to the rapid growth of the modest fashion sector, fostering the development of a niche market through e-commerce, and providing virtual platforms for debates on modesty and fashion on websites, blogs, and discussion fora.

Further information
www.fashion.arts.ac.uk/research/projects-collaborations/modest-dressing/



“A fascinating mix of presentations – especially interesting to learn the different ways that modesty is defined, and the varying degrees different faith communities engage with western mainstream fashion. And that despite an inherent separateness there is appropriation and interaction.”

JACQUELINE NICHOLLS artist



The Royal Shakespeare Company in Coventry Cathedral

The Faerie Queene Now: remaking religious poetry for today's world

Professor Ewan Fernie
University of Birmingham

Ewan Fernie and his team set out on a quest to 'remake' Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* for today's 'secular' society. This involved developing a new 'Redcrosse' liturgy for St George's Day with contributions from major contemporary poets Jo Shapcott, Michael Symmons Roberts and Andrew

Motion. The Booth Centre for the Homeless, based at Manchester Cathedral, built two Catalan-style 'gegants' (giant puppet figures) of St George and the dragon for performance of the liturgy, and secondary schools pupils in deprived areas worked with Oxford University drama students to develop a play from the poem. This project has shown how poetry and religion can still speak to topical and difficult issues. The Royal Shakespeare Company performed Redcrosse in Coventry Cathedral in November 2012.

Further information
www.rhul.ac.uk/English/faeriequeene/



“How do we think about identity in ways that don't reflect anxiety, fear of the other, uncritical adulation of our past and all the other pitfalls that surround this subject? The Redcrosse project manages to negotiate these difficulties with immense imaginative energy and honesty: no sour notes, no attempt to overcompensate by desperately

overapologetic rhetoric, simply a recovery of deep roots and generous vision. As much as it takes its cue from Spenser, it's a contemporary working out of some of the great and inexhaustible legacy of Blake, a unique contribution to what is often a pretty sterile discussion of who we are in these islands.”

THE RT REVD AND RT HON DR ROWAN WILLIAMS
Lord Williams of Oystermouth

Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality in England and Wales: Theory, Policy and Practice

Professor Paul Weller
University of Derby

The project builds on the 1999–2001 “Religious Discrimination in England and Wales” research the Home Office commissioned the University of Derby to undertake. Interim findings indicate that substantial reporting of unfair treatment – particularly of Muslims, Pagans and New Religious Movements – continues, especially in employment, education and the media, albeit with reductions in relation to employment and, especially, criminal justice. New issues being cited by Christians include issues round Sunday working, while project focus groups have highlighted the degree to which “non-religious” people feel that Christianity is privileged, resulting in unfair treatment for others, especially in education and in governance.

Further information
www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society



An online centre for British data on religion

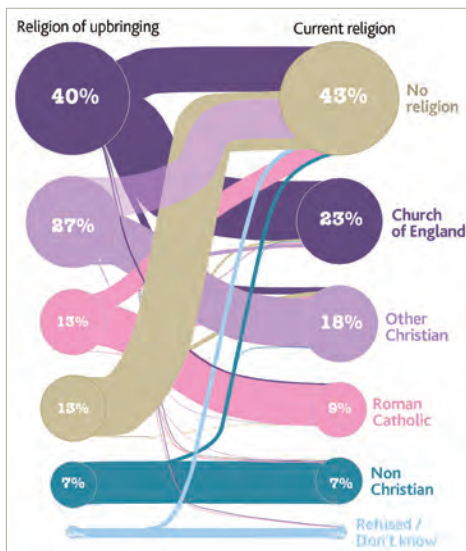
Professor David Voas
University of Manchester

British Religion in Numbers is an online centre for British data on religion. It aims to make the enormous body of religious statistics in Britain from the last four centuries accessible to ordinary researchers and research users. Religion is defined in very broad terms to include many kinds of belief and folk religion, from reincarnation to Father Christmas.

The site provides a catalogue of more than 1700 sources. Frequently requested information on affiliation, attendance and belief is presented in both tables and charts. A news blog run by Clive Field (BRIN’s co-director) brings public attention to new work.

“As someone who is working increasingly on religion or belief issues at the EHRC, I must again commend you all on the great resource that you make available for the rest of us – it makes my job so much easier.”

DAVID PERFECT Research Manager,
Equality and Human Rights Commission



Religion of upbringing and current religion in Britain

Further information
www.brin.ac.uk

Belief and Belonging: Identity and Religion in Northern Kenya

Professor John Mack
University of East Anglia

The project drew together an interdisciplinary team from the UK and Kenya to explore the effects of conversion to Christianity or Islam on questions of identity in the northern Kenya region. This has resulted in a restructuring of patterns of pilgrimage and a refocusing of ideas of belonging in spatial terms. In the town of Marsabit there are at least five established

“This research has demonstrated for the first time the impact of changing forms of religious practice on sometimes conflictual senses of ethnicity in northern Kenya. Promotion of the project has brought its findings to the different communities in the region itself and to a national audience through an exhibition mounted in Nairobi Museum which attracted some 20,000 visitors.”

DR HASSAN ARERO project member and Director of Regional Museums, Kenya

Keeping the Faith: The Transmission of Sikhism among young British Sikhs (18-30)

Professor Kim Knott and Mr Jasjit Singh
University of Leeds

This project examined the religious lives of young Sikhs, with a particular focus on understanding how Sikhism is being transmitted among British Sikhs between the ages of 18-30. Traditional methods of religious transmission, through families and religious institutions, were examined and compared with newer methods of transmission often organised by young Sikhs themselves including Sikh camps, University Sikh societies and the internet.

A collaboration between the Religion and Society programme and BECAS (the British Educational and Cultural Association of Sikhs), the project has encouraged more than 600 young Sikhs to engage with the research through an online survey.

Further information
www.leeds.ac.uk/sikhs

“Finally, someone has created a survey for modern Sikhs. I thank the University of Leeds.”

ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENT

ethnic groups. Despite conversion to ‘universalist’ religions, however, ethnic sentiment remains a powerful point of reference. Likewise, traditional spirit possession practices continue in the contexts of healing rituals even where participants are otherwise members of a church or mosque.

Further information
<http://goo.gl/otKhK>



Borana spirit possession, Marsabit, northern Kenya



“BECAS are pleased to have worked in conjunction with Leeds University to sponsor Jasjit Singh. The research and its findings will be invaluable in increasing awareness of the religious lives of young British Sikhs and in understanding how they engage with their religion and culture.”

MR TRILOCHAN SINGH DUGGAL
President of BECAS (British Educational and Cultural Association of Sikhs)



The golden dome on the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Southall, London

Gender, Caste and the Practices of Religious Identities

Dr Tej Purewal
University of Manchester

It is often assumed that 'world religions' are separate and bounded entities with their own unique and distinctive institutions, followings, and texts. What this research in the region of Punjab (Pakistan and India) shows is that despite all this, many holy places, shrines and tombs of saints (pirs) are regularly visited by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs engaging in shared practices. The research was conducted between 2008 and 2010 by Dr Navtej Purewal, Dr Virinder Kalra and their interdisciplinary team at a number of mainstream and marginal shrine sites in Punjab, using a combination of surveys, participant observation, ethnography, interviews, and the performance of sacred music.

Further information
www.saanjhpunjab.org/index.php?id=6&nav=Home



“This project provides a unique number of insights to the region of Punjab on both sides of the border in India and Pakistan which pre-dates 1947 and offers a view of religion from the bottom up rather than from the usual top-down more recognised perspectives.”

DR. TAHIR KAMRAN
University of Cambridge/Government College, Lahore



A roadside shrine ('durgah') near Nakodar, Punjab (India)



Worshippers celebrating the death anniversary of Hazrat Mian Mir at his tomb in Lahore, Punjab (Pakistan)

A series of debates on faith was held in Spring 2012. The debates presented research from the Religion and Society Programme for public debate and discussion, featuring project members and key public figures and attracted considerable media coverage from around the world.



Organised by Professor Linda Woodhead, the Rt Hon Charles Clarke and Dr Rebecca Catto, there were seven debates on topics such as religion in public life, religious identity in 'superdiverse' societies, Faith Schools, radicalisation and religious freedom. A second series of Westminster Faith Debates on religion and personal life will be held in Spring 2013.

Further information

www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates-2012



From left to right: Professor Maleiha Malik, Professor Peter Jones, Professor Linda Woodhead, the Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Baroness Julia Neuberger, the Rt Revd Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali and Lisa Appignanesi at the 'What Limits to Religious Freedom?' debate

“ I managed to get to just three of them [the Faith Debates] but have followed up the others by looking at the resources on the website. What a wonderful initiative! All of the events were efficiently organised, thoughtfully structured and included first rate contributions. Overall, the programme was thoroughly worthwhile and I feel it has made a significant contribution to an intelligent, engaging and meaningful discussion on the place of religion in contemporary British society.”

FAITH DEBATE AUDIENCE MEMBER

“ I am writing just to tell you how mesmerized I am by the great work coming out of Religion and Society. I am currently watching the WFD video with Tony Blair and Rowan Williams and it is brilliant. I have never expected that religion can regain its prominence in the British public sphere (in the spirit of rational discourse, I mean). You are certainly doing faith a great service by providing alternative spaces for the discussion of religion in England.”

DR JAYEEL SERRANO CORNELIO
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity Göttingen, Germany



From left to right: Professor Richard Dawkins and the Rt Revd John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford at the debate, 'What's the Place of Faith in Schools?'



From left to right: The Rt Hon Tony Blair, Charles Moore and the then Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams in conversation at the 'Religion in Public Life' Westminster Faith Debate



“This has been an excellent research programme. The standing-room-only ‘Westminster Faith Debates’, which were a finale to it, were an indication if any were needed of its timeliness and ability to

engage. I attended two. Both were fascinating for their depth of engagement and diversity of opinion, illustrating once again the major theme of Philip Larkin’s wonderful agnostic poem ‘Church Going’: in a doubting but not cynical world, religious debate is one place to be serious on a human scale.”

PROFESSOR RICK RYLANCE
Chief Executive of the AHRC



“The Religion and Society Programme has been exceptionally important. Religion is very important within our society, but it is also changing significantly. The research which has

been conducted illuminates this process in a way which enables society to form better judgements and take better decisions which in turn have important implications for the life of millions of people. I hope that the results will be widely studied and absorbed, and that the work continues well into the future.”

THE RT HON CHARLES CLARKE

“Thank you so much for another splendid event last night – a sparkling finale to a riveting series of discussions and debates over the last three months... As I pedalled home last night, I reflected that it really did feel as if some kind of subtle seismic shift had taken place...”

JAMES KIDNER
Director, the Coexist Foundation

Religious Education

Various

The Religion and Society Programme has funded a number of projects about Religious Education (RE) which have led to a consideration of policy in this area.

These projects include: *Does Religious Education Work?* led by Professor James Conroy at University of Glasgow and *Religious Reading in a Secular Society: Learning for Life in a Liberal Democracy?* led by Dr Mark Pike, University of Leeds.

Dr Alison Mawhinney, Queen's University of Belfast, led a project with the title, *Opting Out of Religious Education: The Views of Young People from Minority Belief Backgrounds* and a project which considered *Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity* was led by Professor Robert Jackson at University of Warwick.



Robert Jackson and project researcher Elisabeth Arweck also edited a journal special issue showcasing Programme research on RE arising out of a conference co-organised by the Programme and the Warwick Religious Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick.



“The ‘Opting Out of RE’ report shines a light on the use of the conscience clause with respect to Religious Education in schools in Northern Ireland, but it also succeeds in showing that the issues around the clause are hugely significant for educators across Europe in relation to questions of personal freedom, parental choice and religious influence which are so significant in current discussions around the role of religion in education.”

JAMES NELSON Stranmillis University College, Belfast and participant at ‘Opting Out of Religious Education’ end of project conference



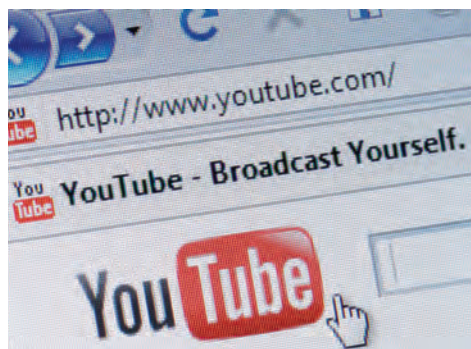
“Our UK wide mixed methods study of over 12,000 13-15 year olds’ attitudes towards religious diversity showed a clear majority view from both religious and non-religious students that RE can help them to understand people from other religions, with those belonging to a religious group showing higher interest in learning about other religions than others.”

PROFESSOR ROBERT JACKSON University of Warwick



“This innovative and important research raises serious challenges concerning the resourcing of religious education, the quality of text books and the undue influence of examinations on the development of teaching and learning. It throws up important questions about the way in which teachers and educationalists have veered away from discussion of truth in favour of chats about meaning. Despite substantial shortcomings it also charts the heroic efforts of many teachers in the face of some almost insuperable challenges.”

PROFESSOR JAMES CONROY University of Glasgow



YouTube website

Fitna, the video battle: how YouTube enables the young to perform their religious and public identities

Professor Liesbet van Zoonen
Loughborough University

The global Islam debate takes place in many public contexts, including YouTube. This project examined a particular group of videos responding to Fitna, a fierce anti-Islam propaganda film from 2008. It discovered different visual genres ranging from humorist and absurdist to analytical and persuasive. It found that especially violent or aggressive videos were rare, with the exception of Fitna itself.

On average, Muslim YouTubers displayed an open, cosmopolitan attitude that was rooted in their understanding of Islam. Posters from a 'western' background generally argued from a freedom of speech perspective. While YouTube offered a unique space for young people to express their views in their own ways, few took the opportunity to expand this into dialogue or discussion.



“Through the use of highly innovative, cybermetric methods, the research shows beautifully how there is a myriad of Muslim voices behind the extremist stereotypes of the mainstream media. Young Muslims in particular appear able to combine the

conventions of western pop culture easily with their experience of Islam.”

FADI HIRZALLA Editor of Zem Zem, quarterly for the Middle East, North Africa and Islam

From Sunday Schools to Christian Education

Professor John Wolffe and Naomi Stanton
Open University

The project has explored the peak and decline of the Sunday School movement in the twentieth century (focusing on 1900 – 1910 for the former and 1955 – 1972 for the latter) as well as young people's experiences of Christian youth work in the present day. Patterns of institutionalisation have emerged through the historical-contemporary analysis and the role of churches in their own growth and decline is emphasised (rather than them being passive victims of secularisation). The research challenges the assumption, derived from quantitative research, that young people have rejected the church. The qualitative narratives from young people demonstrate that in some cases churches have rejected them.



“The bringing together of historical and contemporary research has allowed me to see the value of a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to academic research. The collaboration with Christian Education has maintained a focus on the usefulness of the research to the field being studied. This is a commitment that I will maintain in my future research endeavours.”

Naomi Stanton Collaborative Doctoral Award PhD Student





Saint William of Norwich

**Youth, Violence and Cult:
An Interdisciplinary Network on the case
of William of Norwich, the ritual murder
accusation and its historical legacy**

Professor Miri Rubin

Queen Mary, University of London

In 1144 the body of the boy William was found in Thorpe Wood outside Norwich. The sheriff dismissed rumours that he had been murdered by Jews, yet stories spread about his miracle-working body. Later, in around 1150 a local monk claimed that Jews had murdered William in a bizarre ritual which he described in a book.

William was venerated locally, and ritual murder entered the Christian imagination. Medieval historian Professor Miri Rubin led a research network funded by the Religion and Society Programme to investigate these events. She assembled international scholars

“This project has fed nicely into the work which the Centre of East Anglian Studies does with the Norwich Heritage and Economic Regeneration Trust on Norwich’s Jewish heritage and attracted media interest here too.”

PROFESSOR JOHN CHARMLEY *University of East Anglia*

from history, literature, art history, and liturgy, who combined information and insights to illuminate the case and its consequences.

The network has generated many academic benefits. The investigation of an event which took place almost a thousand years ago helps understand how religious minorities become subject to accusations through narratives that justify violence.

Further information

<http://jvc.history.qmul.ac.uk/index.html>



Birmingham Central Mosque

Social Cohesion and Civil Law: The Family and Religious Courts

Professor Gillian Douglas
Cardiff University

Britain's religious courts: This one-year study by a multi-disciplinary team at Cardiff University investigated how three different religious courts in the UK, the London Beth Din of the United Synagogue, the Sharia Council of the Birmingham Central Mosque and the Roman Catholic National Tribunal for Wales, deal with divorces and marriage annulments. The researchers conducted interviews with staff working in these courts, complemented by workshops, observation, and analysis of statistics. Contrary to some popular and



“We are keen to deepen public understanding of the work of the Beth Din and its role in the Jewish community. We were therefore very pleased to have had the opportunity to explain and discuss our work with the researchers and particularly welcomed the comparative dimension to their study.”

DAVID FREI Registrar of the London Beth Din

media concern, they found that none of these courts seeks to compete with or undermine the civil law and they provide a valuable service for their adherents.

Further information

www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/research/cohesion.html



“The Religion and Society Programme is a comprehensive, innovative and path breaking research initiative. The scope of the programme is unprecedented and its results will leave a lasting and invaluable legacy for future generations of researchers and policy makers. The Religion and Society Programme is a model of research excellence whose impact extends beyond the UK to the international research community.”

PROFESSOR LORI BEAMAN University of Ottawa, Director of the Religion and Diversity Project



“The Religion and Society Programme is a model of ambitious and sensitive research that draws imaginatively on the arts, humanities and social sciences. It has transformed not only academic research but also public debate about change and continuity in the forms, practices and implications of religions at all levels of society. Its impact on ways of thinking about, and investigating, religions will be welcomed and celebrated for generations to come.”

PROFESSOR JAMES A. BECKFORD University of Warwick



“The Religion and Society Programme has added immensely to our knowledge about the changing face of religion in the UK. Conversations among scholars in different disciplinary locations studying a broad range of people and places produced a wealth of data and stimulated new insights and ways of understanding not just the present but the past. The in-depth studies of specific groups cumulate in a whole that is much more than the sum of its parts.”

PROFESSOR MARY JO NEITZ University of Missouri

With special thanks to Dr Rebecca Catto for providing publication text and to Professor Linda Woodhead and Peta Ainsworth for their assistance with this publication.

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We hope you have enjoyed reading this publication. If you would like further information on anything featured here, please contact **Jessica Clark**:
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