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Alumnus Colin Brown travels to Haiti.

Studying Islam in West Africa

Grad student Dianna Bell wins fellowship for her field work in Mali.
My interest in religion in Africa began as an undergraduate student in anthropology at Brigham Young University. I made my initial trip to Oulessébougou, a town located in the West African State of Mali, for five months of fieldwork on religious life in the region as a master’s student at University of Idaho in 2007. After completing my master’s degree, I moved to Tallahassee to begin my studies as a PhD student in the History and Ethnography of Religion track under the direction of Dr. Joseph Hellweg. I returned to Oulessébougou during the summers of 2009 and 2010 for preliminary dissertation research. In 2011 I was awarded FSU’s International Dissertation Semester Research Fellowship and moved to Oulessébougou for eight months of extensive fieldwork.

My dissertation, tentatively titled, “Between Prayers: The Life of a West Africa Muslim,” presents the life history of a town elder in Oulessébougou. This man, named Amadou Diallo, works making rope near Oulessébougou’s central market, and most days I worked alongside him while recording his memories and opinions. As part of my research, I also interviewed Amadou’s family and friends as well as political and Islamic leaders in Oulessébougou. I used these semi-structured interviews to corroborate Amadou’s life experiences and hear varied perspectives on community and religious life in Oulessébougou. I conducted my
research in French and Bamanankan, the interethnic lingua franca of Mali.

The clear connection between Amadou’s everyday life and Islam came into obvious focus as he frequently recalled memories from the various jobs he held: herding cattle throughout the rural corners of West Africa, mining gold in Guinea, farming in Côte d’Ivoire, and trading throughout Mali and Guinea. Amadou, like most Malians, found it difficult throughout his life to earn enough income to support his family and lived under the stress of perpetual poverty. Amadou said that he never had the chance to earn a lot of money, but he consoled himself during moments of special difficulty by saying that his hard work had religious worth and had earned him baraji.

I noticed during my conversations with Amadou that he often focused on explaining how his experiences and decisions had generated baraji. The concept of baraji, which loosely translates from the vernacular as “divine reward” or “recompense,” offers a framework for understanding Islam in daily life in West Africa. Muslims in the region approached their religious lives and decisions primarily in terms of baraji, as informants continually explained that they hoped to acquire units of baraji through various religious practices and daily pursuits. For some ritual and religious practices, people in Ouélessébougou could articulate the numerical sum of baraji that the action brought, while other practices were deemed immeasurable.

Scholars researching religion in West Africa have so far paid no attention to the complex concept of baraji and the personal, cultural, and theological logics through which it is understood. By presenting the life history and personal perspectives of Amadou, my ethnography shows how Muslims in West Africa use baraji to find religious relevance, significance, and comfort in daily life by exploring the events, experiences, and human feelings that have driven Amadou’s lifelong pursuit to acquire the unspecified amount of baraji that God requires for a person to enter paradise in the afterlife.

I plan to defend my dissertation during the 2013 spring semester, and hope to begin applying for assistant professor positions in departments of religion and anthropology later this year. I hope to return frequently to Mali throughout my professional life in order to advance understanding and to build scholarly connections and research collaborations between the United States and West Africa.
This summer marks the tenth year retired faculty Walter Moore, Leo Sandon, Bob Spivey, and Bill Swain have been getting together for a weekly breakfast. The four were among the founders of the department, with Spivey arriving in 1964 and becoming the department’s first chair in 1965, Swain coming in 1965, followed by Moore in 1967 and Sandon in 1969. The group was organized in the summer of 2002 by John Carey, who came to FSU in 1960 and joined the newly established Religion Department in 1965. John now lives with his family in Anchorage, Alaska. We look forward to catching up with him and retired faculty Richard Rubenstein and Bill Jones in our next newsletter.

Walter Moore reports that since his retirement in 1999, most of his energy has gone to volunteer activities with university, community, and church. He has served on the board of the FSU Association of Retired Faculty and on the planning team for the FSU Faculty Luncheon Series. He has been an active board member and also a chair of the Tallahassee Citizens Against the Death Penalty and of Tallahassee Equality Action Ministry (TEAM), an organization through which local religious congregations worked together for social justice. At First Presbyterian Church he continues to teach a Sunday School Class, provides leadership in the church’s social justice ministry and sings in the choir. He has written an informal biography for family and friends of
The Department of Religion received an FSU Technology Grant for $29,500.00 to establish a Religion Research Lab. The lab, located on the “M” floor of Dodd Hall, provides students of religion, both graduate and undergraduate, as well as students from other departments at FSU, the technology they need to do, discuss, and write up their research: six computers, a smartboard, digital video and still cameras and audio recorders, scanners, and a color printer, as well as computer programs for processing digital data and field notes—all in a comfortable environment. The lab attracts daily use, sometimes till the wee morning hours, as students write and complete their work for courses, conference talks, and defenses.

New Research Lab

The Department of Religion received an FSU Technology Grant for $29,500.00 to establish a Religion Research Lab. The lab, located on the “M” floor of Dodd Hall, provides students of religion, both graduate and undergraduate, as well as students from other departments at FSU, the technology they need to do, discuss, and write up their research: six computers, a smartboard, digital video and still cameras and audio recorders, scanners, and a color printer, as well as computer programs for processing digital data and field notes—all in a comfortable environment. The lab attracts daily use, sometimes till the wee morning hours, as students write and complete their work for courses, conference talks, and defenses.
Selected Faculty Publications

John Corrigan
- “From Unity to Locality,” Church History 80 (2011).
- “The Spatial Humanities,” lead author with D. Bodenhamer and T.M. Harris, National Science Foundation White paper

Bryan Cuevas
- Paperback editions of Travels in the Netherworld (Oxford 2011) and The Buddhist Dead (University of Hawai’i Press, 2011).

Kathleen Erndl

Adam Gaiser

Matthew Goff
- “Being Fleshy or Spiritual: Anthropological Reflection and Exegesis of Genesis 1-3 in 4QInstruction and 1 Corinthians,” in Christian Body, Christian Self: Concepts of

Recent Faculty Books

Joseph Hellweg
• Hunting the Ethical State: The Benkadi Movement of Côte d’Ivoire (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Aline Kalbian
• “Considering the Risks to Economically Disadvantaged Egg Donors,” American Journal of Bioethics 11.7 (September 2011).

Martin Kavka
• “Should Levinasians Also be Hegelians?: On Wyschogrod’s Levinasianism,” Philosophy Today 55 (2011).
• “The Ends of Anxiety in Merton and Heschel,” Merton Annual 23 (2010).

Nicole Kelley

John Kelsay
• “The Limits of the Arab Spring,” Dissent (June 13, 2011).

David Levenson

Amy Koehlinger
• “Religion and Sport” in Oxford Handbook of Sport History (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Amanda Porterfield

Sumner B. Twiss

Jimmy Yu
Oct. 4, 2011
Elaine Howard Ecklund, Rice University, “Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think.”

Nov. 15, 2011

Oct. 10, 2011
Kelly J. Baker, University of Tennessee, “‘There’s us and the dead’: The Zombie Apocalypse in American Culture.”

Jan. 26, 2012
John F. Priest Lecture: David Brakke, University of Indiana-Bloomington, “Why the Church Did Not Reject Gnosticism.”
April 2, 2012

François Dupuigrenet Desroussilles, “The God of Books and the Body of Christ: Printing and Reading the Bible in Renaissance England (1535-1640),” lecture given in conjunction with the Strozier exhibit he curated, “Book of Kings, King of Books: Early Printed Bibles from the Carothers Collection.” (Online version at http://strozierbiblesexhibit.omeka.net/)

April 11, 2012

Kevin Pittle, Biola University, “Theological Transvestites, Duplicitous Imposters, or Just a Bunch of Wannabees? Messianic Judaism’s Ambivalent Relationships with Mainstream Jewry and Evangelicalism.”

April 5, 2012

Tessa J. Bartholomeusz
Lecture: Liz Wilson, Miami University, “The Buddha’s Mother as Feminist Conundrum: Exploring the Death of Gautami.”

February 17, 2012

Manuel Vásquez, University of Florida, “Beyond the Fetishism of Commodities? Hyper-Animism and Materiality in the Present Age,” keynote address at 2012 Grad Symposium.

Jimmy Yu, Kathleen Erndl, Liz Wilson, and Bryan Cuevas
The Tenth Annual FSU Department of Religion Graduate Symposium, “Discourses of Ritual and Power,” was held Feb. 18-20, 2011. Emily Clark, PhD student in American Religious History, directed the symposium with the assistance of MA and PhD students from all department areas. Jimmy Yu served as FSU faculty liaison. Graduate students representing 26 institutions in the United States, India, and China participated. Faculty respondents to student papers included Professors Gaiser, Corrigan, Kelley, Erndl, Porterfield, Koehlinger, Yu, and Kelsay from FSU, Kathryn Lofton from Yale University, and Elizabeth Barre from Marymount Manhattan College.

Saturday’s roundtable discussion on “What the Foucault Do We Do Now?: the Power of Authority in Religious Studies,” featured Professors Matthew Day from FSU, Sylvester Johnson (Indiana University–Bloomington), Matthew Kapstein (University of Chicago), and Kathryn Lofton (Yale University). On Sunday, recent FSU PhDs Kelly Baker (University of Tennessee), Elizabeth Barre (Marymount Manhattan College), Arthur Remillard (St. Francis University), Howell Williams (Learning House), and Joseph Williams (Rutgers) led a panel on “Life After Grad School: Post-Grad Prospects.”

Professor Matthew Kapstein, University of Chicago and Ecole pratique des hautes études, delivered the keynote address and the Tessa J. Batholomeusz Lecture, “‘Spiritual Exercise’ and the Interpretation of Buddhist Philosophy in India.”

This spring’s symposium with the title, “Beyond Borders: Constructing, Deconstructing, and Transgressing Boundaries,” took place February 17-19, 2012. Religions of Western Antiquity PhD student Seth Bledsoe served as director and Joseph Hellweg as faculty liaison. Participants included students from UNC-Chapel Hill, Arizona State, University of California–Riverside, Boston College, Ohio State, Emory, Duquesne, Methodist Theological School, University of Missouri, UNC-Charlotte, Georgia State, Rice, Princeton, Indiana-Bloomington, Mississippi, UF, USF, UCF, and FSU.

Serving as faculty respondents to student papers were Elijah Siegler and Katie Hladky (College of Charleston), Kathryn Lofton (Yale), Trevor Luke (FSU Classics Department), and FSU Religion Department faculty Porterfield, Corrigan, Hellweg, Gaiser, Dupuigrenet-Desroussilles, Kavka, Cuevas, Koehlinger and Goff.

Friday evening’s keynote address was given by Professor Manuel Vásquez of the University of Florida on “Beyond the Fetishism of Commodities? Hyper-Animism and Materiality in the Present Age,” and was followed by the presentation of the Leo Sandon Best Paper Award to Zachary Johnson, FSU MA student in American Religious History, for his paper, “Heathen Chinese: Protestant American Narratives of Chinese Religiosity in the 19th Century.”

From top: Shawntel Ensmenger and Lauren Gray; Manuel Vásquez talking with students; Aaron Ellis, Kirk Essary, and Tamara Marks; Joseph Hellweg with 2011 Director Emily Clark, 2012 Director Seth Bledsoe, and 2012 Co-Director Tara Baldrick-Morrone; Jenny Collins-Elliott presiding at panel with David Woodington, Thomas Whitley, Daniel Wise, and Matthew Goff (faculty respondent); Joseph Hellweg talking with Sandon Award winner Zachary Johnson.
Graduate Student News

RECENT GRADUATES

Spring 2011

Harold Short, MA
Kristen Muldowney, MA

Summer 2011

Kathleen Mahoney Hladky, PhD
“Chasing the American Dream: Trinity Broadcasting Network and the Faith Movement” (directed by John Corrigan)

Barton Edward Price, PhD
“Evangelical Periodicals and the Making of America’s Heartland, 1789-1900” (directed by John Corrigan)

Naheed Artoul Zehr, PhD
”Responding to the Call: Just War and Jihad in the War Against Al-Qaeda” (directed by John Kelsay)

Fall 2011

Matthew Ray Hagele, PhD
“Rethinking Liberal Political Thought: John Locke, Religious Forms of Reasoning, and Institutional Participation in Democratic Discourse” (directed by John Kelsay)

Brooke Elizabeth Sherrard, PhD
“American Biblical Archaeologists and Zionism: The Politics of Historical Ethnography” (directed by Amanda Porterfield)

Timothy Frederick Simpson, PhD
“Not “Who Is on the Lord’s Side?” but “Whose Side Is the Lord on?”: Contesting Claims and Divine Inscrutability in 2 Samuel 16:5-14” (directed by Matthew Goff)

Michael Graziano, MA
“The ‘Peculiar Children’ of the Nation: American Civil Religion at Antebellum West Point” (directed by Amanda Porterfield)

Patrick Ley M.A.

GRADUATE STUDENT PLACEMENTS 2012

Shannon Dunn, Assistant Professor, Gonzaga University; J. Baron Price, Visiting Assistant Professor, Grand Valley State College; Naheed Zehr, Assistant Professor, Western Kentucky University; James Broucek, Assistant Professor, Iowa State University; Michael Gueno, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; Molly Reed, Lecturer, Louisiana State University

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

Shannon Dunn. Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for 2011-2012; Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2011-2012 from the American Association of University Women (had to decline because she won the Newcombe Fellowship); Mary Jo Small Travel Fellowship 2011.

Joshua Fleer. Christian Scholarship Foundation for 2012-2013 academic year; Hamilton College Library Special Collections Research Fellowship for research on the House of David and Mary’s City of David; Gerd von der Lippe Young Scholar Grant to present paper at the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport held in Frankfurt, Germany; named Associate Editor of Communal Societies.


Tammy Heise. Ermine M. Owenby, Jr. Fund travel award.

Rosemary Kellison. Ermine M. Owenby, Jr. Fund travel award.

Cara Burnidge. White House Historical Society Research Grant; Koniag Education Foundation Scholarship for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years.

Christopher Blythe. Wildermuth Scholarly Paper Award, for “The Twelve Have Swallowed Thirty Eight”: Minority Views of the Council of Fifty,” awarded by John Whitmer Historical Association; Lester E. Bush Best Master’s Thesis Award from the Mormon Historical Association, 2012.


Zachary Johnson, Leo Sandon Best Paper Award at 2012 FSU Graduate Symposium, for “Heathen Chinese: Protestant American Narratives of Chinese Religiosity in the 19th Century.”
GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

John Crow

Rosemary Kellison

Tamara Monet Marks

Daniel Dillard


Adam Park
GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Society of Biblical Literature 2011 Annual Meeting


Seth Bledsoe, “Magic vs. Miracle in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter.”

Jennifer Collins-Elliott, “Jesus is Jealous: The Use of Dinah in the Instruction of Virgins in Early Christian Literature.”

Shem Miller, “The Poetic Structure of Stichographic Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls.”

American Academy of Religion 2011 Annual Meeting

Rosemary Blackburn-Smith Kellison, “Feminism and Imperialism as Just Causes for War?: Assessing the Justice of the War in Afghanistan.”


Adam Ware, “In the Air There’s a Feeling of Christmas: On the Discursive Deafness of Body Studies.”

American Society of Church History 2012 Meeting

Cara Burnidge, “Champions of Mankind: Woodrow Wilson, World War I and the Protestant Establishment.”

American Historical Association 2012 Annual Meeting

Andrew Polk, “Faith Battling Fear: Military Chaplains and the Regulation of Fear during World War II.”

American Culture Association 2011 Annual Meeting

Andrew Polk, “The Demarcation of an Imagined Place: The Search for the Elusive Bible Belt.”

Southwestern Historical Association 2011 Meeting

Andrew Polk, “Where Those People Live: The Bible Belt as Cultural Myth.”

American Society for Bioethics and Humanities 2011 Meeting

Shannon Dunn, “Adoption and Kinship in Contemporary Western Muslim Thought.”

Society for the Study of Muslim Ethics 2012 Meeting

Rosemary Kellison, “Tradition, Authority, and Immanent Critique in Comparative Studies of Muslim Ethics of War.”

Nineteenth Century Studies Association 2012 Meeting

Tammy Heise, “Prophetic Visions and Political Compromises: The Intersection of Native American, Mormon and Evangelical Protestant Religions in the Mid-Nineteenth Century American West.”

American Studies Association 2011 National Meeting

Emily Clark, “Use the Moorish Treatments and Get Well: Moorish Science Temple Teas and Tonics.”

Conference on Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses of 1847, University of Sheffield, 2011

Tamara Monet Marks, “Tremble, Because You are Immortal.”
Undergraduate News

RECENT GRADUATES

Spring 2011

Samantha Aupperlee
Emily Austin
Lauren Bedford
Crystal Betts-Green
Gregory Buchanan
William Burke
Christopher Capaldo
Adam Cushing
Roy Daniel
Kelsey Griner
Scott Harvey
William Humphrey
Zachary Hutchinson
Matthew Lewis
Nicole Looney
Charlsye Lyle
Logan Miles
Isabel Morgan
Patrick Perez
Meredith Ross
Amber Senna
Tanya Skura
James Smith
Nicole Strevens
Tiffany Summers
Fallon Upton
Leah Wise

Summer 2011

Andrew Arias
Daniel Brenner
Roberto De La Noval
Jordan Depratter
Nicholas Detrio
Barry Epperson
Maribel Esperanza
Brendan Kirley
Kyle Leaman
Aaron Ley
Angela McFarland
Christopher Roberts

September Sweet
Brogan Wikarek

Fall 2011

Milan Alley
Gardy Arisme
Travis Benton
Annie Davis
Benjamin Gurrentz
Matthew Lombardi
Jenny Penland
Susan Shore
Ian Thomas
Sergio Torres
Laura Zimmerman

GRADUATION HONORS

Summa Cum Laude

Lauren Bedford
Benjamin Gurrentz
Logan Miles
Meredith Ross
Leah Wise

Magna Cum Laude

Emily Austin
Adam Cushing
Roberto De La Noval
Jordan Depratter
Zachary Hutchinson
Laura Zimmerman

Cum Laude

William Burke
Barry Epperson
Scott Harvey
Ian Thomas

2011 BETTY PHIFER AWARDS

Adam Cushing and Leah Wise

2011 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Rob De La Noval, Lauren Bedford, Meredith Ross

Adam Cushing, Betty Phifer Award winner, with his parents.

Leah Wise receives Betty Phifer Award from Matthew Goff.

Rob De La Noval receives Academic Excellence Award from Matthew Goff.
beneath the surface to figure out how and why things worked as they did. I had a great respect for, and ability to communicate with, people of disparate backgrounds – something that served me well both in my management of people and in building customer relationships. While I found myself wishing at times that I had studied engineering instead, I found that my Religion degree served me well in this job.

In late 2008, I received a call from a large, Swiss-owned company interested in buying mine. We were able to come to terms, and we closed the deal in early 2009. I was to stay on for three years to continue managing my location, but the stress of ownership was off. My wife, Christie,
Alumni News

Laura Richards Johnson (BA 2007). I graduated from Duke Divinity School in 2011 with an MDiv. I am currently serving as the Associate Pastor at Union Grove United Methodist Church in Hillsborough, NC. I live in Durham, NC with my husband, Kevin, whom I married in August 2010.

Heather McMurray (MA 1999). I am living in Nashville where I am the reference editor at Thomas Nelson. I recently had the great pleasure of editing Jessica Tinklenberg deVega’s new book (see below).

Kendall Green (BA 2010). I am in my 2nd year of graduate school at the University of Central Florida, working towards an Ed.S. in School Psychology and have accepted an internship with Lake County Schools as a school psychologist intern for the upcoming school year.

Ashley Douglas (BA 2010). After graduation I moved to Thessaloniki, Greece, to work at Perrotis College. I started my MDiv at Duke Divinity School in Fall 2011.

Heather Kantrowitz (BA 2009). After getting a Masters from Brandeis in teaching Hebrew Bible, I have been working as a Youth Director for Beth Jacob Congregation in St. Paul, MN.

Heather McVoy (MA 1985 PhD 1992). After a long career in social services, I am currently taking some time off to renew contact with old friends, do lots of reading and be open to what may come next.

Anna Masi (BA 2010). I’ll start my third year of an MDiv at Duke Divinity School in Fall 2012. For my MDiv thesis in the program on Gender, Theology, and Ministry, I’m studying disabled bodies in the sacramental life of the church. After my MDiv, I plan to pursue a PhD in religion.

Dawn Betts-Green (BA 2011). Since graduation, I’ve been working for Scholastic Book Fairs, and I’ve had an essay accepted for publication in the anthology *It’s All in Her Head: Women Making Peace with Troubled Minds*, due out in Spring of 2013 from Seal Press.

Betsy Barre (MA 2004; PhD 2009). After receiving my PhD, I was hired as the ACM-Mellon Post Doctoral Fellow in Islamic Studies at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois. In the summer of 2010, I moved to the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where I am currently working as an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Marymount Manhattan College.

Jessica Carr (BA 2005; MA 2007). I’m a PhD student in the Religion Department at Indiana University. My dissertation traces representations of Palestine in Jewish-American public and material culture in the first half of the 20th century. Last summer I had the opportunity to study Yiddish at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute in Lithuania.

Tammy Jaycox (BA 1995; MA 1997). I’ve just had my third daughter to join my other two who are just finishing kindergarten and second grade. I’ve been working as an elementary reading specialist, and am on the SAC and PTA boards at my daughters’ school. I’m also working with our school board to write more STEM-based curriculum, which is the focus of their magnet school.

Shannon Zellars-Strohl (BA 2006; MA 2007). I’m working on my PhD in Victorian literature at Indiana University, writing a dissertation on the relationship between Darwin and the Victorian ‘crisis of faith’ in late-Victorian supernaturalism. This spring I presented a paper on “Spirisexual Selection in the work of Charles Kingsley” at the Nineteenth-Century Studies Association conference. I also spend alot of time teaching variations on freshman composition here, and I am a contributor to the *Victorian Bibliography*, which is produced annually by the journal Victorian Studies.

Raphael Camilo (BA 2009). I am currently pursuing my MDiv at Asbury Theological Seminary and am serving as a student pastor for the United Methodist Church in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Lindsay Hirsch (Newman) (BA 2004). I am currently the Director of Academic and Jewish Affairs for the Consulate General of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico. As the Department Director and official liaison between the State of Israel and all academic and Jewish institutions throughout Florida and Puerto Rico, I provide educational resources and materials in the areas of politics, culture, travel, religion, advanced technology, and law.

Glen Torbert (BA 1994; MA 2000). When I’m not working on insurance claims, I am seeking enlightenment in northern California.

Rob De La Noval (BA 2011). I’m currently interning full-time with the Anglican College Ministry of St. Peter’s Anglican Church in Tallahassee, FL. I’m leading Bible studies (using skills and resources I learned in the religion department), and promoting the ministry on FSU’s campus. This summer I’m moving to South Bend to start a master’s program in Early Christian Studies at Notre Dame.

Christopher Bell (BA 2003; MA 2006). I am currently working on a PhD in Tibetan Studies at the University of Virginia, and I have been in Lhasa, Tibet, conducting my dissertation research. I have recently submitted an article on Tibetan Prophecy for publication in a book on prophecies in world traditions.
Jessica Tinklenberg DeVega (PhD 2006). I am in my fifth year as Assistant Professor in the Religious Studies department at Morningside College in Sioux City, IA. In 2009 I won the Sharon Walker Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, and have recently co-authored a world religions reference work for teens and young adults, entitled *All You Want to Know But Didn’t Think You Could Ask: Religions, Cults, and Popular Beliefs* (Thomas Nelson, 2012).

Chris Cochran (BA 2006). After graduating from FSU in 2006, I ended up in law school at the University of Miami, passed the Florida bar in 2010, and am practicing as an attorney out of Miami. Somewhere in there I also did some volunteer work with the ACLU of Florida on their voter disenfranchisement project.

Lindsay Rae Myers (BA 2006). After getting my MA in Theology at Villanova University, I now am working as a barista at a coffee shop in Pensacola. I also write for our local independent paper and work at Catholic Charities, coordinating parishes in their social ministries.


Christine Hutchison-Jones (BA 2001). I completed my PhD in Religion and Society at Boston University, in May 2011, writing a dissertation on “Reviling and Revering the Mormons: Defining American National Values, 1890-2008.” After 8 years as the program coordinator for the Luce Program in Scripture and the Arts at Boston University, I am currently serving as the Briefing/Administrative Coordinator for the Provost at Harvard University. My husband Chris (BA 2001; MA 2003) got his master’s in Social Work from Boston University in May 2011 and, after five 5 years in academic administration, is serving as the Program Director at a residential treatment facility in Dorchester, MA, for dual-diagnosis patients with both severe mental health and addiction diagnoses.

David Trautman (BA 2006; MA 2008). Megan (BA 2007) and I had our first child, Amanda, on August 23. Megan has one more semester left to complete her M.Div. at Trinity School for Ministry. I received my S.T.M. at Trinity School for Ministry this May, writing a thesis on “The Ideal Community in Early Judaism and Christianity: A Comparative Rhetorical Analysis of Acts 2:42-47.” I am working full-time as the Director of Communications for the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh and am also a postulant for Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in North America. God willing, I will be ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church on June 16. In the fall, I plan on applying to PhD programs.

Caroline Phillips (BA 2008). I am in the Army and have been serving as a medic for the last 4 years in the 82nd Airborne Division. Now I am in Monterey, CA, at the Defense Language Institute studying Arabic.

Heather McMurray (MA 1999), Jessica Tinklenberg DeVeiga (PhD 2006), Nicole Tilford (BA 2004; MA 2008), and Bill Lyons (PhD 2003) in background.
Allison Spingler (BA 2010). I graduated from my accelerated nursing program in December and am now an RN working at the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Cardiac Progressive Care Unit. Not what I had originally planned, but I actually love cardiac nursing! Not sure if the future holds med school or graduate school for ARNP, but taking some pre-med classes in the Fall just to see.

Valerie Keebler Paul (BA 1997). I’m married, living in Birmingham, AL, and work as an Operations Analyst with BBVA Compass. I play in the Southeastern Chamber Orchestra, sing with the Birmingham Chamber Chorus and direct 2nd-4th grade children’s choir.

Andrew Bennett (BA 2009). At the moment I am living in Siem Reap, Cambodia, where I am studying Khmer language so I can return to North America and do graduate work studying Cambodian religious history. To pay the bills I am teaching English, and will possibly start teaching applied linguistics at Build Bright University here.

Shawn Graaff (Banks) (BA 2007). I left my think-tank job in California and moved to KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa almost 3 years ago. My husband Simon and I have carried on the family tradition of innovative agriculture and bought the Koude Vlakte farm and Nature Conservancy in the rural Western Cape of South Africa. It’s a huge piece of land that’s rich in fynbos and a biodiversity hot-spot that we have turned into a completely off-the-grid experiment in sustainable farming that has been a tough journey but progressing nicely. Professionally I’m involved with tech start-ups in Southern Africa, specifically Mobile Development software and Digital Political Consulting in the greater continent of Africa.


The Department
of Religion
at The Florida State University
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2012
Editor
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Please take a moment to keep in touch and give us an update by sending us your name, grad year and degree earned, your current mailing address and/or email address, and any news (Gotten married? Taken a new job? Written a book?) so we can include it in a future newsletter. You can send your emails to dlevenson@fsu.edu or, if you prefer postal mail:

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Dodd Hall, the home of FSU’s Department of Religion, was recently recognized as one of Florida’s Top Ten Buildings by the Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Construction on the building began in 1925 and took about four years to complete.