

Religion in the Age of Development

7-8 June 2018

Organized by the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, with support from the Henry Luce Foundation for the project on 'Religion and NGOs in Asia'.

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Religion has been profoundly reconfigured in the age of development. The past half-century has witnessed broad transformations in the understandings and experiences of 'religion' across traditions in communities in many parts of the world. This interdisciplinary conference will explore contemporary entanglements of religion and development with particular attention to their relevance for social, political and economic reconfigurations of ideas and institutions at both the regional and global levels. The conversations at the event will explore some these transformations along the course of deepening entanglements of religious ideas and institutions with the sphere of 'development'. Papers will pursue case studies and critical conceptual reflections from diverse religious traditions across Asia and beyond. We aim to examine the specific ways in which 'religion' and 'development' interact and mutually inform each other. We will also use the opportunity of this event to push beyond established instrumentalist approaches toward a more conceptual level of interpretation that facilitates better understanding of the implications of contemporary entanglements across diverse discourses and experiences of religion and development.

This conference will be the capstone event for our work at ARI on Religion and Development over the past decade – bringing together present and past members of our team in conversation with some of the world's leading scholars in the field to both take stock of the work done to date, and to chart new ways forward for understanding contemporary entanglements of religion and development.

Convenors

R. Michael Feener

Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Faculty of History, University of Oxford, UK
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Philip Fountain

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7 JUNE 2018 (THURSDAY)	
09:15 – 09:30	REGISTRATION
09:30 – 11:00	WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
09:30	Religion in the Age of Development R. Michael Feener University of Oxford, UK Philip Fountain Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
10:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
11:00 – 11:30	TEA BREAK
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 1
	<i>Chairperson</i> Amelia Fauzia National University of Singapore
11:30	Orphans in Islamic Teaching and the Care of Vulnerable Children Jonathan Benthall University College London, and Royal Anthropological Institute, UK
11:50	From Religious Giving to Corporate Social Responsibility: Charity, Philanthropy and Development in South Asia Filippo Osella School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, UK
12:10	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 2
	<i>Chairperson</i> Giuseppe Bolotta University College Dublin, Ireland
14:00	Dying to Give: Modern Buddhism and Donation to Medical Science in Taiwan C. Julia Huang City Colleges of Chicago, USA
14:20	Becoming Secular, Yet Remaining Religious: The Gülen Movement and the Development of the Golden Generation David Tittensor Deakin University, Australia
14:40	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK
16:00 – 17:30	PANEL 3
	<i>Chairperson</i> Gustav Brown National University of Singapore
16:00	‘Hinduism under Veil’: Youth For Seva and Community Building in Bangalore Malini Bhattacharjee Azim Premji University, India
16:20	Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: Understanding the Islamic Defenders Front’s (FPI) Role in Humanitarian Assistance and Community Development in Contemporary Indonesia Fahlesa Munabari International Relations, Universitas Budi Luhur, Indonesia
16:40	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
17:30	END OF DAY 1
18:00 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests)

8 JUNE 2018 (FRIDAY)**09:45 – 10:00 REGISTRATION****10:00 – 11:30 PANEL 4***Chairperson* | [May Ngo](#) | National University of Singapore

10:00

How Fungible is Human Life?[Peter Redfield](#) | University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, USA

10:20

Muhammadiyah Aid: A New Type of Donor for a New World Order[Robin Bush](#) | RTI International - Asia Regional Office

10:40

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**11:30 – 12:30 LUNCH****12:30 – 14:00 PANEL 5***Chairperson* | [Philip Fountain](#) | Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

12:30

Missionaries of Multilingual Education: Christian Experts, UNESCO Guidelines and Cambodian Policies[Catherine Scheer](#) | Heidelberg University, Germany

12:50

Beyond the Anti-politics Machine: “Development Missionaries” in the Slums of Bangkok[Giuseppe Bolotta](#) | University College Dublin, Ireland

13:10

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**14:00 – 14:30 TEA BREAK****14:30 – 16:00 PANEL 6***Chairperson* | [Catherine Scheer](#) | Heidelberg University, Germany

14:30

Performing *Adab* toward the Earth: Permaculture, Islam, and Development in Malaysia[Sarah Kelman](#) | University of California, Santa Cruz, USA

14:50

We Don’t Call Ourselves Creators: Ritual Arts, Temporality, and Intellectual Property Developments in Indonesia[Lorraine V. Aragon](#) | University of North Caroline-Chapel Hill, USA

15:10

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**16:00 – 16:20 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**[R. Michael Feener](#) | University of Oxford, UK[Philip Fountain](#) | Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand**16:20 – 16:30 BREAK**

16:30 – 18:00 **BOOK LAUNCH & RECEPTION** (*Hosted by Brill Academic Publishers*)

The Mission of Development: Religion and Techno-Politics in Asia

Edited by [Catherine Scheer](#), [Philip Fountain](#) and [R. Michael Feener](#)

Theology and Mission in World Christianity, Volume: 10 (Brill, 2018)

The Mission of Development interrogates the complex relationships between Christian mission and international development in Asia from the 19th century to the new millennium. Through historically and ethnographically grounded case studies, contributors examine how missionaries have adapted to and shaped the age of development and processes of 'technocratisation', as well as how mission and development have sometimes come to be cast in opposition. The volume takes up an increasingly prominent strand in contemporary research that reverses the prior occlusion of the entanglements between religion and development. It breaks new ground through its analysis of the techno-politics of both development and mission, and by focusing on the importance of engagements and encounters in the field in Asia.

Discussant | [Gustav Brown](#) | Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

18:00 **END OF WORKSHOP**

Religion in the Age of Development

R. Michael Feener

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Religion has been profoundly reconfigured in the age of development. The past half-century has witnessed broad transformations in the understandings and experiences of 'religion' across traditions in communities in many parts of the world. In this paper, we explore some of these transformations along the course of deepening entanglements of religious ideas and institutions with the sphere of 'development'. This is pursued through case studies from the trans-regional traditions of Buddhism and Islam - with particular attention to new forms of socially engaged practice among 'development monks' and lay Buddhist organizations in Thailand, and the implementation of Islamic law within dramatic contexts of interventionist reconstruction in post-conflict/post-disaster Aceh, Indonesia. Both of these cases reveal marked commitments to the establishment of a new, reformed social order. Over the course of these projects, the very idea of religion comes to be re-thought by diverse parties who draw selectively on and dynamically interpret canonical texts and traditions as they engage with a host of other ideas and influences that manifest themselves through contemporary humanitarian and development encounters. Through these two case studies of entanglements, we examine specific ways in which 'religion' and 'development' interact and mutually inform each other. Our work thus attempts to push beyond the established academic approaches of both genealogy and instrumentalism toward a more conceptual level of interpretation that facilitates better understanding of the implications of contemporary entanglements across diverse discourses and experiences of religion and development.

R. Michael Feener is the Sultan of Oman Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, and Islamic Centre Lecturer in the History Faculty at the University of Oxford. He was formerly Research Leader of the Religion and Globalisation Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, and Associate Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. He has also taught at Reed College and the University of California, Riverside, and held visiting professor positions and research fellowships at Harvard, Kyoto University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Copenhagen, The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (Honolulu), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands. He has published extensively in the fields of Islamic studies and Southeast Asian history, as well as on post-disaster reconstruction, religion and development. His current research focuses on the archaeology and history of the Maldives.

Philip Fountain is a Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. He was formerly a Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Asia Research Institute and was part of the team that researched Religion and NGOs in Asia with support from the Henry Luce Foundation (2015-2018). His main research focus is on the entanglements between religion and international development, including the ways in which religion interacts with humanitarianism and disaster relief, community development, charity, peacebuilding and nation-building. An anthropologist, he has conducted long-term ethnographic fieldwork on the Mennonite Central Committee, a North American Christian NGO, as it carried out its work in Indonesia. His books include *Religion and the Politics of Development* (edited with Robin Bush and R. Michael Feener), *The Mission of Development: Religion and Technopolitics in Asia* (edited with Catherine Scheer and R. Michael Feener), and *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand* (edited with Geoffrey Troughton).

Orphans in Islamic Teaching and the Care of Vulnerable Children

Jonathan Benthall

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“Have you considered him who calls the Judgment a lie? That is the one who treats the orphan with harshness” (Qur’an 107: 1–2). The moral rights of orphans, already emphasized in the Hebrew Bible, were amplified in the Qur’an, no doubt in part because the Prophet Muhammad was himself an orphan. The outcome today is that almost every Islamic charity runs a programme of some kind for orphaned children – defined in the tradition as those who have lost their fathers, though the term may also be used euphemistically to include children rejected by their families. Because until recently the sphere of Islamic philanthropy had only limited connections with the Judaeo-Christian and post-Christian mainstream, Islamic programmes for orphans were little influenced by often painful international debates concerning children’s rights, child protection, the representation of children in fundraising, and the specially contentious question of child sponsorship. In recent years, however, NGOs such as Islamic Relief Worldwide have paid close attention to these debates and adapted their policies accordingly. Recent scandals involving well-known secular international aid agencies that work with children and young people, and the demeaning use of imagery of malnourished babies, must discredit any assumption that “Western” humanitarianism is necessarily superior to other variants. But a body of academic (including historical) research and practical experience has been built up, which should enrich efforts to bring assistance to vulnerable children without stigmatizing them, and to use their drawing power in fundraising as an effective means towards local poverty alleviation.

Jonathan Benthall is an honorary research associate in the Department of Anthropology, University College London, and Director Emeritus of the Royal Anthropological Institute. His recent publications include *Islamic Charities and Islamic Humanism in Troubled Times* (Manchester University Press) and the entry on Charity in the new open-access Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology <http://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/charity>

From Religious Giving to Corporate Social Responsibility: Charity, Philanthropy and Development in South Asia

Filippo Osella

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Whether routed in different religious traditions or inspired by secular concerns, charitable and philanthropic activity permeates all levels of society in South Asia, but relatively little has been written about the politics of charitable acts and philanthropic individuals outside the Western world, South Asia included. This might not come as a surprise in that considerable literature links philanthropy to the rise of modernity and capitalism in the West, and therefore contrasts modern philanthropy with more traditional forms of religious giving. Existing research on the politics of giving in South Asia has tended to reinforce this perspective, implicitly juxtaposing the embeddedness of South Asian giving in religious morality with the apparent universalist humanitarianism of modern philanthropy. This paper examines the interconnections and influences of different modalities of religious giving, and the transformation of the latter into means to foster development for communities and nations. Based on comparative research amongst Muslim communities in Kerala and Sri Lanka, the paper explores the everyday working of economies of morality in which profit and piety might coalesce or appear antithetical with equal ease, arguing that altruism and self-interest might not be necessarily at odds with each other.

Filippo Osella is Professor of Anthropology and South Asian studies at the University of Sussex. He has conducted research in Kerala, south India, since 1989 and published two joint monographs (with Caroline Osella): one on issues of stratification, identity and social mobility amongst an 'ex-untouchable' community (*Social Mobility in Kerala*, 2000, Pluto Press), and another on masculinities (*Men and Masculinity in South India*, 2007, Anthem Press). His recent research examines contemporary transformations of south Indian Muslims communities, with fieldwork in Kozhikode (Calicut) and a number of Gulf countries. He has co-edited a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* on 'Islamic Reform movements in South Asia' (with C. Osella), a special issue of *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* on "The Politics of Food in South Asia" (with C. Osella) and a special issue of *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* on "Islam, Politics and Modernity" (with B. Soares). He has recently concluded a research project on charity, philanthropy and development in Colombo, Sri Lanka. His most recent publications include a co-edited volume on *Religion and the Morality of the Market* (with Daromir Rudnycky) and a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* on traditions and practices of charity and philanthropy in South Asia (with Sumathi Ramaswamy).

**Dying to Give:
Modern Buddhism and Donation to Medical Science in Taiwan**

C. Julia Huang

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This paper will focus on a cadaver donation movement led by the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation – a phenomenon once made front page on the *Wall Street Journal* as “a surge of cadavers.” In contrast to the process of corpse donation in North America, the Buddhist Tzu Chi medical school in Taiwan formally forges ties between the donor’s family and the medical students who dissect his/her corpse and bestows the title of “silent mentors” on each cadaver used for the gross anatomy course and surgery simulation workshops. I posit the cadaver donation movement as a Buddhism-inspired effort for the personalization of dead bodies within modern medical science: the human body concerned in medical practice is not *any body* but *some body*. Drawing from my ethnography in Taiwan, I will describe the medical humanity movement as two overlapping levels of “dying to give”: first, as a process of “giving” one’s dead body which can take various length of time ranging from a few months to six years; and, second, the personal and social conditions for, and the nature of the paramount commitment by both the donor and his or her family. I will analyze how the three discourses -- the Chinese, the Buddhist, and the medical – compete and complement to address their authority on the dead body. I will argue that the configuration of the three discourses as a silent mentor movement in a particular timing of development unfolds into an economy of death in a late-capitalist and democratic society in East Asia.

C. Julia Huang’s specialty includes religion, globalization, and gender. She has done extensive fieldwork in Taiwan, Malaysia, the United States, and shorter periods of research in Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, and China. Her first book, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2009) focuses on a lay Buddhist humanitarian movement that began as a tiny group in Taiwan and grew into a modern organization with millions of members worldwide. Her most recent publication is a co-authored book with Weller and Wu, *Religion and Charity: The Social Life of Goodness in Chinese Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). The book examines religious contributions to social welfare in China, Taiwan, and Malaysia. Huang has published articles in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Ethnology*, *Positions*, *Nova Religio*, *the Eastern Buddhist*, and *the European Journal for East Asian Studies*, and many book chapters. Until February 2018, Huang was a Professor of Anthropology at National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. Currently, Huang teaches at City Colleges of Chicago and works on a book manuscript, “Dying to Give: Dead Bodies, Medical Science, and Chinese Buddhism.”

Becoming Secular, Yet Remaining Religious: The Gülen Movement and the Development of the Golden Generation

David Tittensor

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In the 1990s the Gülen Movement (GM), a Turkish Islamic education based activist group, prompted by the collapse of the Soviet Union expanded into the newly formed post-Soviet Central Asian Republics to establish 'secular' schools. The aim of the schools in Turkey was to combine secular education (e.g. physics, chemistry etc.) with religious education through moral guidance (*irşad*) to create educated but religious change agents called the 'golden generation' (*altın nesil*) that could integrate and then reshape modern society. As part of the international expansion the GM, not unlike World Vision and Islamic Relief Worldwide, shifted their language from talk of religious values to 'universal values' (*evrensel değerler*) to create a more palatable secularised image. However, while the schools are ostensibly secular in that they typically do not formally teach religion, the aim of creating the 'golden generation' remains through the teaching of religious values via an informal curriculum, and this practice has since been exported to around 160 countries. Coinciding with the GMs international expansion there was a religious turn in the development sector led by the World Bank under the stewardship of President Wolfensohn (1995-2005). Following this activism the US in 2004 removed its longstanding ban on providing funds to NGOs that engaged in proselytization. Similarly, the United Kingdom, around the same time, through the Department for International Development (DFID) established a research program on the role of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), while Norway had set aside around 20 percent of its aid budget for FBOs by 2006. Yet, despite this opening, the GM has not been emboldened to become more overtly Islamic. Rather, it has sought to maintain the outwardly secular appearance of its schools through continuing its missionary work via its informal curriculum that largely takes place outside of regular school hours. The simple reason for this, as this paper will argue, drawing in particular on the US experience, are ever-present political considerations.

David Tittensor is a Lecturer in Studies of Religion in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education, at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. His research interests are Muslim movements, Turkish politics and society, and religion and development with a focus on Islam. He is the author of *The House of Service: The Gülen Movement and Islam's Third Way* (Oxford University Press, 2014), co-editor (with Matthew Clarke) of *Islam and Development: Exploring the Invisible Aid Economy* (Ashgate 2014/Routledge, 2016), and is a Series Editor for *Muslims in Global Societies* (Springer).

**'Hinduism under Veil':
Youth For Seva and Community Building in Bangalore**

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While the state in India has been regarded as the primary driver of development since Independence, the past few decades have seen a plethora of non-state actors who actively partake in development, either on their own or in partnership with the state. What is interesting to note here is that there is an increasing rise in the number of Hindu and Hindutva affiliated groups which actively partake in providing service or welfare activities. While many of these organizations prefer to identify themselves as 'secular' NGOs, they claim to be deeply inspired by ancient Hindu philanthropic traditions and values such as *dana* and *seva*. This paper undertakes a study of one such organization named *Youth For Seva* (YFS), founded in Bangalore in 2007, which promotes volunteerism amongst the youth to contribute to community development. While YFS is founded on Hindu values such as *yajna* (to please) and *runa* (debt), it consciously abstains from calling itself a Hindu organization. The paper dedicates itself towards unravelling the potential implications and advantages of refraining from the 'Hindu' tag and more importantly analyzing how the category of religion (which is sometimes intangible) needs to be perceived more expansively. In this regard, it advocates for newer categories such as the 'sacred' instead of the 'religious' to reflect upon the myth of secularization and understanding the influence of religion in development.

Malini Bhattacharjee works as Assistant Professor at Azim Premji University in Bangalore where she teaches courses on Indian Politics, Governance and Religion and Development. Her research interests revolve around issues of religious identity and ethnicity, the politics of humanitarianism and the relationship between religion and development. She is particularly interested in the politics of Hindu nationalism and the political dimension of its *seva* (service) activities. She also has an interest in elementary educational policy in India and has spent a fair amount of time in researching on the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in Karnataka. Malini has her doctorate, M.Phil and M.A degrees in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. She is currently working on understanding the emergence and consolidation of Hindutva in the state of Karnataka, India, with a particular focus on the ways in which it has negotiated regional specificities in the region while subscribing to its core ideology of building a strong organic 'Hindu Rashtra'.

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: Understanding the Islamic Defenders Front's (FPI) Role in Humanitarian Assistance and Community Development in Contemporary Indonesia

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Since the collapse of the authoritarian Suharto regime in 1998, Indonesia has witnessed an escalation of activism among Islamic revivalist movements whose goals revolve around the enactment of *sharia* (Islamic law). In an effort to achieve their political ends, these movements have routinely challenged Indonesian authorities and elites through various forms of collective action including mass protest, public gathering, and press statement. Most scholarship on contemporary Indonesian Islamic revivalist movements heavily are focused on the political activities of these movements. To date, there has been little research examining programs of humanitarian assistance and community development activities conducted by radical Muslim groups in Indonesia. Despite being labelled by many observers as radical and violent, FPI (Front Pembela Islam or Islamic Defenders Front) has also demonstrated its readiness to address the limited capacity of the state's welfare provision in response to the devastating impacts of natural disasters that have inflicted enormous suffering and damage across Indonesia over the last decade. This study seeks to investigate the patterns and motivations of the humanitarian assistance and community development programs of FPI through a critical exploration of its understanding of the Qur'anic injunction of "Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil". The study will show that FPI's role in humanitarian assistance and community development is in fact part and parcel of its political platform as a mass organisation with a view to reaching out to people at the grassroots level. The movement plays this role in tandem with its more well-known campaigns for the eradication of vice.

Fahlesa Munabari is a lecturer in International Relations, the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Budi Luhur in Jakarta. He received his PhD in Southeast Asian Studies from the University of New South Wales, Australia funded by the Australian Government's Endeavour Postgraduate Award. He received his M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan and his B.A. in Sociology from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. His research interests revolve around political Islam, Islamic activism, and the intersection of religion and politics in Indonesia.

How Fungible is Human Life?

Peter Redfield

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The seamless magic of money, its essential power to measure and circulate, depends in large part on not worrying about internal equivalences. The capacity of one unit to substitute for another — without concern for specificity — permits interchange without friction or problems of translation. In this paper I will consider this attribute of fungibility relative to humanitarianism and global health, and ethically and politically charged efforts to “save lives”. To what extent, can human life serve as a fungible currency? The question is far from abstract, as measures of life play an increasingly central role in international moral discourse and justification for an impressive array of actions. Key metrics in global health, like the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY), rest squarely on assumed equivalences. NGO fundraising brochures, along with extensions of consequentialist ethics, suggest easy conversions between money and lives, and that more of the latter is always better (most strikingly in the movement for effective altruism). On the other hand, in both personal experience and most forms of cultural life, human existence is inherently biographical and associated with particular qualities, and thus not exchangeable at all. A sister is not the same as a second cousin, nor an ancestor nor a neighbor, let alone a stranger. Even if all might represent abstract unit of living, they remain distinct in relational position, emotional and psychological import. If anthropology’s early obsession with kinship tells us anything, it would be that many peoples have defined their essential being through highly specific relations. Non-consequentialist ethical systems, not to mention most religious traditions, remain attached to such specific qualities of being that resist easy liquidity or substitution. A logic of fungible humanity may thus not always translate smoothly in practice once beyond citadels of secular reason. Nor, I suggest, are they necessarily applied equally, given that life prospects, and ethical valuation, vary greatly across social stratification. A more revealing phrasing, then, might be to ask under what circumstances are lives treated as equivalent? And whose lives are designated as being interchangeable and whose are not?

Peter Redfield is Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Trained as a cultural anthropologist sympathetic to history, he concentrates on circulations of science, technology and medicine in colonial and postcolonial contexts. The author of *Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders* (University of California Press 2013) and *Space in the Tropics: From Convicts to Rockets in French Guiana* (University of California Press 2000), he is also coeditor of *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism between Ethics and Politics* (SAR Press 2011), and an issue of the journal *Limn* (2018) on the theme of “Little Development Devices and Humanitarian Goods.” He has held fellowships at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe and the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, and currently serves as President of the Society for Cultural Anthropology.

Muhammadiyah Aid: A New Type of Donor for a New World Order

Robin Bush

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Scholars and practitioners alike have noted that “traditional development” is a relic of an old-world order, where a rich white north bestowed largess upon a poor south. That reality is undergoing rapid transformation, and recent data shows pockets of poverty in the US deeper than in parts of Asia and Africa (Alston 2017). New development actors and new donors, often Asian governments, foundations, and NGOs, are emerging. Scholars of religion and development have noted that in many cases these emerging actors are religious NGOs, filling the gaps left by international donors or implementing development programs funded by international donors (Clark 2013; Fountain 2013; Tomalin 2015). Muhammadiyah is the second largest Muslim organization in Indonesia and perhaps the world, claiming a membership of 25 million people. Founded in 1912, it was born with a service mission, and conducted “charity” work especially in health and education. In Indonesia right now, Muhammadiyah boasts a network of 150 hospitals and clinics and nearly 10,000 schools and universities. In 2007, Muhammadiyah established the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), which in 2016 broadened its scope and was renamed Muhammadiyah Aid. As such Muhammadiyah is in the company of many other faith-based organizations studied by scholars of religion and development, which draw upon tenets of their faith as a basis for engaging in ‘development’ (see cases presented in Fountain, Bush, Feener 2015). Some of these organizations provide assistance largely to members of their own faith, others cross faith lines to provide services anyone in need, and still others reach across national borders with their ‘development’ programming (Feener and Fountain 21 Jan 2018). This paper will examine recent developments in which Muhammadiyah in two instances has ‘gone international’ by providing assistance to non-Indonesians. In the first case, Muhammadiyah sent a delegation to provide medical and other services to the Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh as part of a larger alliance of Islamic NGOs (Fauzia, 31 Jan 2018). In the second case, Muhammadiyah has provided assistance to a refugee learning center in Jakarta which provides health and education services to refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. This paper will seek to contribute to our understanding of faith-based organizations who reach across national borders, by exploring the motivations for this activity on the part of Muhammadiyah. The paper will explore to what extent shared religious identity was a factor in these two cases, and whether or not the dilemma of refugees has particular resonance for Muhammadiyah.

Robin Bush directs RTI’s operations in Asia. From our regional office in Jakarta, Indonesia, she oversees our work providing advisory and technical services, institutional strengthening, business and strategy development, and program support on behalf of governments, foundations, and private-sector clients throughout the region. Before being named director, she led our research and strategic collaborations in Asia, seeking to diversify and engage our client base. She also headed the Knowledge Sector Initiative, an Australian government-funded project in Indonesia aimed at strengthening evidence-based public policy. Dr Bush’s research interests center on the intersection of religion, politics, and development. Immediately before joining RTI in 2014, she was a Senior Research Fellow in the Religion and Globalization cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (NUS). Dr Bush is currently engaged in research on South-South collaboration, and on changes in development assistance as a result of changing geopolitical relations. Her background also includes more than a decade at The Asia Foundation in Indonesia, and working in a series of strategic and research roles in Singapore and Indonesia. Having grown up and lived most of her adult life in Indonesia, she is a close observer of Indonesian politics and society, as well as Southeast Asia more broadly.

Missionaries of Multilingual Education: Christian Experts, UNESCO Guidelines and Cambodian Policies

Catherine Scheer

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Since the beginning of the new millennium, “mother tongue-based multilingual education” has become an increasingly used concept in UNESCO’s agenda, especially in linguistically-diverse Southeast Asia. While nothing explicitly religious appears in the aim of facilitating access to education for speakers of minority languages, it is a Protestant NGO which plays a key role in producing and promoting this concept, investing it with scientific legitimacy and moral values.

Based on research within a specialised working group at UNESCO Bangkok and interviews with government officials, NGO representatives, and academic experts in Cambodia, I propose to explore how advocacy for multilingual education has been connecting Christian NGO members to a diverse range of actors involved in the crafting and dissemination of related policies.

How have members of this Protestant NGO, whose past activities are not uncontested, carved out space at the regional office of UNESCO in Bangkok? How have they influenced the flow of ideas and values across borders and spheres of power by navigating a network of education specialists? By looking at multilingual education as a ‘moral economy,’ I aim to shed light on how purportedly universalistic international development aims are shaped by diverse, partly religiously-anchored values, as well as on how they are reappropriated, in sometimes conflicting ways, by those who use and further circulate them.

Catherine Scheer is lecturer at the Institute for Anthropology, Heidelberg University. She received her PhD in anthropology from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and was a post-doctoral fellow in the ‘NGOs and Religion in Asia’ project at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She has done extended field research with the Bunong in the Cambodian highlands, and more recently followed experts across international institutional settings. The intersections of Christianity, development, indigeneity, morality and policy constitute nodes of particular interest to her. She recently co-edited, with P. Fountain and M. Feener, *The Mission of Development: Religion and Techno-Politics in Asia* (Brill, 2018) and works on her book *The Reformation of the Gongs*.

Beyond the Anti-politics Machine: “Development Missionaries” in the Slums of Bangkok

Giuseppe Bolotta

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In Thailand, Catholicism represents an exceedingly small religious group within a primarily Buddhist context. Catholic engagement in the country historically includes two main settings: scholastic education and humanitarian work. I argue that the formal qualification of an institution as religious ('Catholic') makes it paradoxically more difficult for missionaries to advance proselytizing strategies in Thailand through private Catholic schools. Conversely, the officially secular framing of the NGO system allows them wider religious liberties, especially outside state contexts (such as schools) where the (Buddhist) national culture is constitutionally imperative. By formally removing their religious vestments, and by donning the caps of children's rights activists, they gain a 'purely secular' space of action that, as such, is less monitored by the Thai state, and can thus be more easily infused with counter-hegemonic religious and political elements. This paper will particularly focus on the case of a Catholic NGO working with children in the slums of Bangkok to show how religion – rather than “opium of the masses” – might serve as a re-politicizing force within the increasingly neoliberal, technical and managerial model of secular INGOs and development.

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Performing *Adab* toward the Earth: Permaculture, Islam, and Development in Malaysia

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This paper performs an ethnographic exploration of how permaculture, a sustainable cultivation and ecological design method, enables pious Muslims to enact a vision of economic development that represents a departure from Malaysia's current capital-intensive development efforts. The rise of permaculture in Malaysia coincides with a 30-year period of intensive economic and infrastructural development that began in the 1970s, which was aimed at transforming rural-dwelling and economically marginalized Malays into a new, urbanized middle class. Known as the *Melayu baru*, or "new Malays," this cohort began a multi-generational process of rural-to-urban migration and integration into Malaysia's industrialized economy. Thus, while development in Malaysia has enabled the socio-economic mobility of Malay Muslims, it has also sustained deep financial inequalities (which often fall along ethno-religious lines) and negatively impacted the ecological health of the nation's forests, fields, and waterways as urban and suburban peripheries expand.

This paper explores how, given the undesirable byproducts of economic and infrastructural development premised on capitalist accumulation, some middle-class Malay Muslims have come to seek an alternative mode of development focused on ecological healing, sustainability, and economic justice – or, as permaculture principles put it, "earth care, people care, and fair share." I propose that these principles resonate with Malay Muslims who find Malaysia's course of economic and infrastructural development to be deeply troubling for its disregard of key Islamic values – namely, the necessity to perform respectful action (*adab*) toward the earth through the stewardship (*amanah*) of natural resources that are considered to be divinely owned and therefore inconvertible into privately-owned capital. The goal of this paper is therefore to apprehend how permaculture entails an Islamically ethical understanding of development that is not rooted in (and highly critical of) neoliberal modes of accumulation. This analytic approach posits a reconfiguration of the relationship between Islam and development, from one in which Islam is seen as unproblematically compatible with capitalism-based economic development projects, to one in which Muslim piety is mobilized to critique such development, and propose an alternative that is, as its proponents see it, non- or anti-capitalist.

Sarah Kelman is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research explores how everyday practices of Islamic finance and entrepreneurship in Malaysia have become the landscape on which pious Malay Muslims enact and articulate their understanding of Islamic ethics. Her work has been supported by the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the University of California Pacific Rim Research Program, and the Global Religion Research Initiative.

We Don't Call Ourselves Creators: Ritual Arts, Temporality, and Intellectual Property Developments in Indonesia

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Early twenty-first century economic development in Southeast Asia is shifting from cash-crop agriculture and manufacturing to Information Age and Creative Economy endeavors undergirded by globalizing intellectual property law. Yet, many practitioners of Indonesian regional arts—including shadow puppeteers, gamelan musicians, masked dancers, and textile makers from both Muslim and Christian groups—say they are not individual creators of their works, but merely followers of their ancestral community traditions. Following Alfred Gell's notion that the cultural arts repertoire serves as an "extended mind," I examine how a transgenerational sense of collaborative creation and spirited artworks inform the way Indonesian creative producers seek authority, authenticity, prestige, and ritual efficacy. Acknowledging ancestral origins for their practices, most Indonesian regional artists and artisans rebuff recent initiatives to enclose their works with copyright or other intellectual property laws. Artists' denials of authorship claims over dramatic performances and works of graphic art emanate from a sense of their position on a continuing trajectory from ancestral achievements toward future realizations. Government agents argue that traditional artists thereby throw away profitable protection for cultural property. By refusing ownership over arts knowledge and legal prohibitions on imitation, however, artists limit alienation of their local production as well as the disenchantment of their practices and industry by outsiders. Despite appearances, most Indonesian regional artists are not rejecting a modern capitalist lifestyle in pursuit of some nostalgic past. Rather, their narratives and actions reveal that they prioritize their spiritual knowledge and practices of living, breathing arts while hiding innovations beneath a venerated canon of temporal depth. Their stance works to maintain local relationships of respect and service to their familiar audiences (human and numinous) without which their collaborative idioms and local livelihoods may fall into desuetude.

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