



# American Society of Church History

## Winter Virtual Meeting 2021 February 4-5, 2021

### ASCH 2021 Schedule At A Glance (all times EST)

#### Thursday, February 4

##### 7:00pm *Opening Session*

- Presidential Greeting
- 2020 Prize Awards
- Business Meeting

##### 8:00pm *Plenary Panel*

#### Friday, February 5

9:30am -10:45am **Panel 1**

11:00am -12:15pm **Panel 2**

12:30pm - 1:30pm **Special Session**

*In Remembrance – Edith Blumhofer  
1950-2020*

1:45pm - 3:00pm **Panel 3**

3:15pm - 4:30pm **Panel 4**

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### Thursday, February 4

#### 7:00 PM *Opening Session*

Presidential Greeting

Dr. Daniel Ramirez, President

Dr. Anthea Butler, President-Elect

Dr. Paul Lim, Past-President

2020 Prize Awards

Business Meeting

#### 8:00 PM *Plenary Panel*

##### **History and Public Scholarship: Church History for the Masses**

Ever wonder about the choices that are made in documentaries? Want to be a “talking head” or learn how documentarians work with historians to bring stories to the screen? Or maybe you’re

interested in how religious items and programming work at the Smithsonian? Join us for a panel on religious history, public scholarship and the media. Our panelists include:

**Sarah Colt, Sarah Colt Productions, New York**

Sarah Colt is a New York-based documentary filmmaker whose work brings to life the figures and forces that have shaped America. Since founding Sarah Colt Productions she has directed and produced for PBS's award-winning history series, *American Experience*—including the Emmy-nominated *Walt Disney*, *Henry Ford*, *The Polio Crusade*, and *God in America*. She is currently completing production on *The Billy Graham Story*, airing on *American Experience* in March 2021.

**Veronica Stickelman, Glass Entertainment Group**

Veronica Stickelman is a Philadelphia-based producer and director. Her work can be seen on CNN, PBS, ESPN, and Oxygen. Her portfolio of work reflects an interdisciplinary approach to media with emphasis on academic research, critical thinking, as well as thought leadership in historical and contemporary storytelling. Her credits include CNN's *Pope: The Most Powerful Man in History*, and *Lincoln*, which will air on CNN in February 2021.

**Peter Manseau, Lilly Endowment Curator of American Religious History, Smithsonian Institutions**

Besides being a prolific author, Peter Manseau's work has included the Religion in Early America exhibit in 2017 and the companion text, *Objects of Devotion*. He is currently working on an exhibit on Science and Religion, and is in charge of the recently awarded \$8 million grant from the Lilly Foundation to establish a new Center for the Public Understanding of Religion in American History, and to create 3,500-square-foot gallery space focusing on the influence of religion in American history and culture.

**This panel will be moderated by Anthea Butler, ASCH President-Elect.**

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## Friday, February 5

**9:30am - 10:45am Panel 1**

***Face the Pacific: Empire and Religious Histories***

In the twentieth century, US Christians faced the Pacific to “care” for Asia and Asian America. Their agendas varied widely, from the work of conversion to humanitarianism, diplomacy, development, civilizing and more. What were the consequences of such Pacific-facing care, for building and defining religion and empire? While the transpacific turn has transformed US history over the last two decades, religious histories that face the Pacific are still nascent. Relatedly, within the history of Christianity, Asia and Asian America are still marginalized within a Eurocentric field. Addressing this gap, we present three histories of religion and empire as US Christians encountered Asia and Asian America; they center Asian and Asian American issues.

**Chair:** Alison Greene, Emory University

**Papers:**

*Saving Bodies and Saving Souls*

Melissa Borja, University of Michigan

*War, Race and US Evangelicalism*

Helen Jin Kim, Emory University

*In Defense of Japanese Immigrants and Japanese Empire*

Chris Suh, Emory University

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**11:00am - 12:15pm Panel 2**

***Situating Religious Diversity in the US History Curriculum***

This roundtable seeks to address methods and content that scholars can use to integrate the concept of religious diversity in US history curriculum. The broader American historical academy has prioritized diversity of experiences and expressions in recent decades, and the nation's religious past is perhaps the best embodiment of that dynamic. Not only was religion central to the country's cultural, political, and social development, but the varieties of religious traditions highlights how diversity has always been the core of the American experiment. Each of these presenters will draw from their chapters in the recently released volume the Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to American Religious History*.

**Chair:** Benjamin E. Park, Sam Houston State University

**Papers and Participants:**

*Exceptionalism No More: Religious Diversity in Colonial New England*

Richard Boles, Oklahoma State University

*A View from the Philadelphia Barracks: Religion in the Colonial Mid-Atlantic*

Rachel M. Wheeler, Indiana University-Purdue University

*Black Christianity After Emancipation*

Nicole Myers Turner, Yale University

*"For the Good of Mankind": Atomic Exceptionalism, Religion, and United States Empire in the Postwar Pacific*

Carleigh Beriont, Harvard University

*"From Buddhist Nuns to Religious "Nones": Immigration and Religion Among Chinese Americans in Post-War United States*

Melissa Borja, University of Michigan

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**12:30pm - 1:30pm Special Session**  
***In Remembrance – Edith Blumhofer 1950-2020***

**Chair:** Grant Wacker, Duke University

**Participants:**

Larry Eskridge, ISAE and Wheaton College  
Amy Artman, Missouri State University  
Mark Hutchinson, Alphacrucis College  
Margaret Bendroth, Congregational Library and Archives

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**1:45pm - 3:00pm Panel 3**  
***Nature: Key Terms across Christianity (ASCH/ACHA Joint Session)***

“It is fair to say,” writes Catherine Albanese in *Nature Religion in America*, “that the sense of nature as a collective physical whole ... is the product of the European heritage.” Once “filtered through the lens of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment ... this understanding of nature grew more systemic and more mechanistic, providing an overarching frame within which humans could comprehend themselves and their cultural pursuits and activities.” True enough. And yet the participants of this proposed session contend that we, as a body of scholars, haven’t plumbed the depth and breadth of Albanese’s characterization of white Christian notions of nature to a degree that is satisfactory given our current climate crisis. Our panel proposes that we think more closely and reflectively about the idea of “nature” in American religious history. How does our study of religion and the environment help us consider the concept of nature in the context of religion? How have scholars, up to this point, interpreted the role of religion in shaping human understandings of and relationships with nature? What are some blind spots in our understanding of the connections (or disconnections) between religion and nature in American history and culture? How do our narratives of American religions change when we situate people in natural and built environments? These are just a few ways that we aim to address the topic of nature and speak to an audience interested in both American Catholic history and American church history. Each panelist will provide a working definition of “nature” in the attempt to prompt a productive (or provocative) conversation.

**Chair:** Peter Thuesen, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

**Participants:**

Richard Callahan, Gonzaga University  
Brett Grainger, Villanova University  
Danae Jacobson, Colby College  
Michael Pasquier, Louisiana State University  
Amy Koehlinger, Oregon State University

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**3:15pm - 4:30pm    Panel 4**

***African American Missions History: Research and Teaching Methods***

Our panel analyzes the significance and the legacies of African American mission work by explaining how more recent developments in this field influence our curriculum and our research agendas.

**Chair:** Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Washington University in St. Louis

**Participants:**

**Wendy Urban-Mead, Bard College** describes three versions of her “Schooling in Colonial Africa” course, explaining why European governments and educators referred to black southerners in the development of these schooling systems. She also shares how the course themes motivated certain students to analyze the work of African American missionaries.

**Carol Ann Vaughn Cross, Samford University**, uses concepts from Memory Studies and deconstructs missions mythologies in the transmission of Christianity and “American” culture to teach the scholarship of “Re-Membering Missions.” She will explain how the shifting dynamics of black missionaries’ sense of ancestral identification with Africa are critical to history, curricula, and classroom teaching.

**Kimberly Hill, University of Texas at Dallas.** Hill’s presentation addresses the implications of African theology and black Christian education for United States History courses at a public state university. She will reflect on her experience applying the communal perspectives of African traditional religion and racial uplift ideology to lessons about imperialism.

**Christina Davidson, University of Southern California** fills a gap in African Diaspora historiography by applying Latin American and Caribbean race studies to her analysis of African Methodist Episcopal ministry in the Americas.

**Dave Datema, Fuller Theological Seminary** explains how his forthcoming dissertation on United Brethren missionary Joseph Gomer complicates the theological roots of black nationalism