



## **Religious Experience and Description**

**The Society for the Phenomenology  
Of Religious Experience (SOPHERE)**

**Second Regional Conference**

**October 10-12, 2019**

*Hosted by the*  
Departments of Philosophy, Psychology and Theology  
*Christopher Center for Information Resources*  
Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN USA



### **Scientific Committee for the Conference**

Jason Alvis (University of Vienna)  
Michael Barber (Saint Louis University)  
Neal DeRoo (The King's University, Canada)  
Olga Louchakova-Schwartz (University of California, Davis)  
Martin Nitsche (Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences)  
Kristóf Oltvai (The University of Chicago)

### **DAY 1 Morning, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10**

*8:00 Opening of the venue, Registration*

**8:45–9:00 Opening of the Conference**  
***Christopher Center Community Room***

*Welcome Addresses by*  
Jon Kilpinen (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Valparaiso University)  
Olga Louchakova-Schwartz (Founding President, Society for Phenomenology of Religious Experience)  
Jim Nelson (Co-Director of the Conference)

**9:00—10:30 Keynote Address**

***Christopher Center Community Room***  
Chair: Aaron Preston

*Is there Such a Thing as Religious Experience?*  
*Eine Rückfrage nach dem Ursprung der Spiritualität*  
Bruce Ellis Benson (University of St. Andrews)

**10:30—10:45 Coffee Break**

**DAY 1 Morning, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 (continued)**

**10:45—11:30 Presidential Address**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**  
Chair: Olga Louchakova-Schwartz

*Religious Experience and Descriptive Models of Transitive-Topological Phenomenology*  
Martin Nitsche, Vice-President of SOPHERE  
(Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic)

**11:45—1:00 LUNCH RECESS**

**DAY 1 Afternoon, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10**

**12:45—1:30 Plenary Session 1**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**  
Chair: Martin Schwartz

*Some quasi-mystical moments within transcendental phenomenology*  
Jim Hart (Indiana University)

**1:30—2:15 Plenary Session 2**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**

*How is a phenomenological description of the religious experience possible?*  
Veronica Cibotaru (University Paris-Sorbonne / Bergische University Wuppertal)

**2:15—2:30 Coffee Break**

**2:30—4:00 Breakout Session 1, Track A: Methodologies (1), ASB 231**  
Chair: TBA

2:30 pm: *Distinguishing four levels of the phenomenological analysis of religion*  
Neal DeRoo (The King's University)

3:00 pm: *Nietzsche's genealogical method and religious experience*  
Matt Clemons (Stony Brook University)

3:30 pm: *The fruits of the unseen:  
A Jamesian critique of explanatory reductionism in accounts of religious experience*  
Walter Scott Stepanenko (John Carroll University)

**DAY 1 Afternoon, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 (continued)**

**2:30—4:00 Breakout Session 1, Track B: Tradition and Hermeneutics, ASB 237**  
Chair: TBA

2:30 pm: *Ao-Naga religious experience and ethics: A phenomenological inquiry*  
Longchar Karilemla (Phule Pune University, India)

3:00 pm: *Going up? Metaphors of direction and identity in religious phenomenology and Buddhism*  
Gordon Bermant (University of Pennsylvania)

3:30 pm: *Gemstones as religious symbols: Revealing religious experience*  
Agnese Marianna Mikelsonsone (University of Latvia)

**2:30—4:00 Breakout Session 1, Track C: Description and Truth, ASB 236**  
Chair: TBA

2:30 pm: *Religious experience and the principle of scrutiny*  
Alex R Gillham. (St. Bonaventure University)

3:00 pm: *The normativity of the spiritual experience*  
Drew Chastain (Loyola University—New Orleans)

3:30 pm: *Reduction, tribunal, and teleology; or, How to avoid despotism in philosophy of religion*  
Scott Ferguson (University of Chicago)

**4:00—4:15 Coffee Break**

**4:15—5:45 Breakout Session 2, Track A: Methodologies (2), ASB 231**  
Chair: TBA

4:15 pm: *On receiving unexpected gifts: Reflections on first-hand accounts of spiritual experiences*  
Steen Halling (Seattle University)

4:45 pm: *On the conditions of religious conversion*  
Douglas Zimmerman (University of South Florida)

5:15 pm: *The nature of religious experience: The role of a naturalized phenomenology*  
Donald Borrett (University of Toronto)

**4:15—5:45 Breakout Session 2, Track B: Existential Aspects of Phenomenology, ASB 237**  
Chair: TBA

4:15 pm: *Senseless pain in the phenomenology of religious experience*  
Emil Salim (Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Reformed, Indonesia)

4:45 pm: *Religious experience as the hermeneutics of desire*  
Bruno Cassara (Fordham University)

5:15 pm: *Pilgrimage of Hajj: The transformation of laws in "following" Islam*  
Hessam Dehghani (Boston College)

**DAY 1 Afternoon, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 (continued)**

**4:15—5:45 Breakout Session 2, Track C: Description and Applications, ASB 236**

Chair: Jim Nelson

4:15 pm: *Global missions, church-planting, and spiritual development:  
An interpretative phenomenological analysis of a theologically conservative evangelical pastor*  
Tanner Morrison (Wilfrid Laurier University)

4:45 pm: *The phenomenological constitution of the Holy:  
Charles Taylor, Espen Dahl and the gospels*  
Bill Powers (Independent Scholar)

5:15 pm: *Fighting infertility in Islam:  
Religious experience and reproductive health issues of Muslim spouses*  
Monika Zaviš (Comenius University, Bratislava) [Remote Presentation]

**6:00—7:00 CONFERENCE RECEPTION**  
**Christopher Center Community Room**



**DAY 2 Morning, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11**

**8:30—10:00 Keynote Address**  
**Christopher Center Community Room**

Chair: Kristóf Oltavi

*Phenomenological insights for an urban theology of nature*  
Lea Schweitz (Former director, Zygon Center for Religion and Science)

**10:00—10:15 Coffee Break**

**10:15—11:00 Plenary Session 1**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**

Chair: Neal DeRoo

*Does the object of religious experience make any difference to the experience itself?  
Schutz and Scheler on the noetic and noematic dimensions of religious experience*  
Michael Barber (Saint Louis University)

**11:00—11:45 Plenary Session 2**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**

*Comparing religious and pathological religious experience  
for the benefit of a phenomenological psycho(patho)logy and philosophy of religion*  
Patricia Feise-Mahnkopp (Alanus University)

**11:45—1:00 LUNCH RECESS**

**DAY 2 Afternoon, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11**

**1:00—2:30 Breakout Session 1, Track A: The Holy, after Husserl, ASB 231**

Chair: TBA

1:00 pm: *"I am That": Predicative judgement following the Vedantic reduction*  
Olga Louchakova-Schwartz (University of California, Davis)

1:30 pm: *Approaches of the indescribable in Advaita*  
Patrick Laude (Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service in Qatar)

2:00 pm: *From The Syntax of Time to a phenomenology of the spheres*  
Randy Dible (New School for Social Research)

**1:00—2:30 Breakout Session 1, Track B: Philosophy, Theology and Metaphysics, ASB 237**

Chair: TBA

1:00 pm: *The backlash of Maurice Blondel upon phenomenology:  
Towards a metaphysics of the bond and a phenomenology of force in religious experience*  
William L. Connelly (Catholic University of Paris)

1:30 pm: *Experiences of God, time & environment:  
Seasoning Serres, Nicholas & Eckhart with Heidegger, Hopkins & Derrida*  
Virgil Brower (Charles University, Prague)

2:00 pm: *Dallas Willard and the phenomenology of religious experience*  
Aaron Preston (Valparaiso University)

**1:00—2:30 Breakout Session 1, Track C: Descriptive Psychology, ASB 236**

Chair: Jim Nelson

1:00 pm: *Religion beyond the brain: Liberating the cognitive science of religion from its canon*  
Ryan R. Lemasters (Western Michigan University)

1:40 (note time): *The timeless interaction of object and flesh:  
The study of zanjeer in understanding religious experience*  
Sevgi Demiroglu (Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar) [Remote Presentation]

**2:30—2:45 Coffee Break**

**2:45—4:15 Breakout Session 2, Track A: Development and Transformation, ASB 231**

Chair: TBA

2:45 pm: *A phenomenology of change in religion and psychotherapy*  
Paul Whitemore (Pepperdine University)

3:15 pm: *Profound transformation wrought by transcendental encounters*  
Kelly Wadsworth (Alki UCC Church and Seattle University)

3:45 pm: *Toward a phenomenological psychology of adolescent religious experience*  
William Stanford (University of Georgia) and Griffin Klemick (University of Toronto)

**DAY 2 Afternoon, FRIDAY, October 11 (continued)**

**2:45—4:15 Breakout Session 2, Track B: Scripture, Liturgy and Contemplation, ASB 237**  
Chair: TBA

2:45 pm: *The phenomenology of Scripture and the Word of God*  
Steven Nemes (Fuller Theological Seminary)

3:15 pm: *The eucharist in Marion and in the liturgy*  
Chungsoo J. Lee (Loyola University Chicago)

3:45 pm: *Utilizing Michel Henry's radical phenomenology  
to analyze the Hesychastic meditative experience*  
Sally Stocksdales (Towson University)

**2:45—4:15 Breakout Session 2, Track C: Art and Religious Experience, ASB 236**  
Chair: TBA

2:45 pm: *Heidegger on art and religious experience*  
Xiaochen Zhao (Columbia University)

3:15 pm: *On the musical description of religious experience:  
Understanding the temporal structure of transcendence through  
Augustine's analysis of Deus, creator omnium in Confessions and De musica*  
Jessica Wiskus (Duquesne University)

3:45 pm: *Text, Sound or Image?  
Where should phenomenological description of religious experience begin?*  
Discussion, chair TBA

**6:30—8:30 CONFERENCE DINNER**

Don Quixote Restaurante, 119 Lincolnway, Valparaiso, Indiana



**DAY 3 Morning, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12**

**8:30—10:00 Keynote Address**  
**Christopher Center Community Room**  
Chair: Olga Louchakova-Schwartz

*Imagining the source—Jesus as a phenomenon of self-forgetfulness*  
Peter Costello (Providence College)

**10:00—10:15 Coffee Break**

**DAY 3 Morning, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 (continued)**

**10:15—11:00 Plenary Session 1**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**  
Chair: Michael Barber

*Zoroaster: Visionary religious experience crafted into poetic structures*  
Martin Schwartz (University of California, Berkeley)

**11:00—11:45 Plenary Session 2**  
**Christopher Center Lecture Hall Room 205**

*Conscientious objectivity:  
Intellectual freedom and the problem of description in the early Luther's critique of metaphysics*  
Kristóf Oltvai (University of Chicago Divinity School)

**11:45—1:00 LUNCH RECESS**

**1:00—2:30 Breakout Session 1, Track A: Theology, Texts and Experience (1), ASB 231**  
Chair: TBA

1:00 pm: *"Let me know your ways:" Givenness and revelation in the book of Exodus*  
Michaela Podolny (University of Chicago)

1:30 pm: *Satan's fall: Intentionality, temporality, and impatience*  
Thomas Ryba (Purdue University)

2:00 pm: *Phenomenological description and textual hermeneutics*  
Discussion, Chair TBA

**1:00—2:30 Breakout Session 1, Track B: Theology, Texts and Experience (2), ASB 237**  
Chair: Jim Nelson

1:00 pm: *Heidegger on reading St. Paul: Phenomenology and the use of religious descriptions*  
Jonathan O'Rourke (National University of Ireland, Galway)

1:40 pm: *Ontological argument reconsidered as a religious thought experiment*  
C Peter Hertogh (Free University Brussels) [Remote Presentation]

**1:00—2:40 Breakout Session 1, Track C: Phenomenology and Faith, ASB 236**  
Chair: Aaron Preston

1:00 pm: *Religious experience and faith:  
How religious experience can bridge the gap between faith and belief*  
Liz Jackson (Australian National University)

1:35 pm: *Kierkegaard: The true nature of God and faith*  
Siobhan Doyle (University College, Dublin) [Remote Presentation]

2:10 pm: *Being and time-less faith: Juxtaposing Heideggerian anxiety and religious experience*  
Jonathan Lyonhart (University of Cambridge Divinity School) [Remote Presentation]

**2:45—3:00 CONFERENCE CLOSING CEREMONY**