



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ



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Biography

Pamela Klassen (Ph.D. Drew University, M.A. Wilfrid Laurier University, B.A. McGill University)

Pamela Klassen is Professor in the Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto. She is the Director of the Religion in the Public Sphere Initiative which was recently awarded a grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada for the “Religion Diversity Youth Leadership Project”, in collaboration with the Multi Faith Centre and the Centre for Community Partnerships at U of T. She delivered the John Albert Hall Lectures at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria in January 2011, on the topic of “Testimonies of the Spirit: Christianity, Media, and the Politics of Confession. Her recent publications include:

Books:

- 2011. *Spirits of Protestantism: Medicine, Healing, and Liberal Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2012 Winner of the American Academy of Religion Award of Excellence in the Study of Religion in the Analytical-Descriptive Studies category.
- 2010. *After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement*. Co-edited with Courtney Bender. New York: Columbia University Press.

2009. *Women and Religion: Critical Concepts*. 4 volume edited collection. With Shari Golberg and Danielle Lefebvre. Routledge.

Articles:

Forthcoming. "Religion and Myths of Nationhood in Canada and Mexico in the Twenty-first Century." Concluding Essay in *The Cambridge History of Religions in America: Volume III: 1945 to the Present*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, Cambridge University Press.

Forthcoming, "Material Witnesses: Women and the Mediation of Christianity" co-authored with Kathryn Lofton, in Mia Lövhelm, ed., *Media, Religion, and Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Forthcoming "Ritual, Tradition, and the Force of Design", in *Ritualdesign. Zur kultur- und ritualwissenschaftlichen Analyse »neuer« Rituale*, 1-23. Eds. Janina Karolewski, Nadja Miczek, Christof Zotter. Bielefeld: transcript, 2012.

2012 "Saint as Cipher: Paul and the Politics of Ritual Repudiation", co-authored with John Marshall, in *History of Religions*, 51(4, May), 344-363.

2008 "Practice" in *Keywords in the Study of Media and Religion*, ed. David Morgan, New York: Routledge, 136-147.

"Ritual" *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, ed. John Corrigan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 143-161.

2007 "Radio Mind: Christian Experimentalists on the Frontiers of Healing." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 75(3, September): 651-683.

2005 "Ritual Appropriation and Appropriate Ritual: Christian Healing and Adaptations of Asian Religions" *History and Anthropology*, 16(3): 377-391.

Research Statement

My approach to the study of religion draws upon anthropology, history, and theories of modernity to ask how people and communities become "religious" subjects in purportedly secular times and places. My latest book, *Spirits of Protestantism*, focuses on how, via tropes and practices of healing, liberal Protestants in Canada went from attempting to cure the sick in a world wracked by wars and the consequences of colonialism, to eventually see the deep ironies of how their own projects of healing were complicit with a Christian and colonial triumphalism. Another recent project, *After Pluralism*, is co-edited with Courtney Bender, and brings together a range of scholars concerned with the question of how the ideal of "religious pluralism" has shaped the recognition of what counts as religious in scholarly, state, and popular contexts. One of my earlier books is also concerned with questions of

religious diversity in unconventional settings: *Blessed Events: Religion and Home Birth in America* considered the ways that women from a diversity of religious affiliations—including conservative evangelicals and Catholics, Orthodox Jews, Old Order Amish, Christian Scientists, mainstream Protestants, and goddess feminists—were united in their conviction that childbirth was not a biomedical, but a “spiritual” event.

I have held Fellowships from the Fulbright Foundation and the Humboldt Foundation, the latter of which took me to the University of Tübingen for one year. At the University of Toronto, I helped to develop the Religion in the Public Sphere Initiative as a hub for faculty, students, and community partners interested in questions of religious diversity in public contexts. My graduate students have developed ethnographic research projects that include such topics as: religion within contemporary policies and practices of organ donation (Arlene Macdonald), religious identity among feminist, political activists (Laurel Zwissler), contemporary interpretation of religious texts by Muslim and Jewish women (Shari Golberg), the phenomenon of “progressive Christianity” (Rebekka King), religious responses to homelessness in urban Canada (Amy Fisher), Coptic Christianity in Egypt and Canadian contexts (Rachel Loewen), religious diversity and food activism (Aldea Mulhern), and Reiki in transnational contexts (Justin Stein).

<http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/pklassen/>