

The Morality of Millenarianism: A One Day Workshop at Queen's University Belfast

930am-5pm

Friday 28th August 2015

Senate Room, Lanyon Building, QUB

All welcome. Free to attend. To register, email Joseph Webster at j.webster@qub.ac.uk

THEME

The study of millenarianism and millennial movements has long been a key interest of scholars working in Anthropology, History, Geography, Religious Studies, and Theology. Under what condition and with what effects do religious groups predict the end of the world? What happens when their prophecies fail? As important as such questions have been, beyond the foundational case studies that inform them lies a growing body of historical and anthropological literature that is beginning to ask rather different questions.

These new questions are focused less upon the chronology of date setting and 'failed prophecy' and more upon understanding the politics and ethics of millenarianism as expressed in multiple temporalities. How does the near future (Guyer 2007) relate to the distant past and distant future? How do these temporalities find moral expressions in the present? What does 'the good' look like for those who live out the apocalypse in their everyday lives in the here-and-now (Robbins 2004, 2012)? How do apocalyptic histories inform contemporary debates about freedom, responsibility and virtue (Laidlaw 2014)? How do the social processes of 'othering' take shape within apocalyptic cultures? It is questions such as these that this workshop will explore.

For over a decade, scholars have been pointing to how – in our 'post-9/11 world' – the 'return of religion' has continually spilled over into domains of human experience that have come to be thought of as thoroughly secular. Thus, ancient biblical myths of a global flood find themselves replayed in environmentalist concerns about apocalyptic climate change. Apocalyptic outbreaks of plague during the Reformation period find contemporary eschatological resonance in the salvationist governmentality of international NGOs driven by bio-anxieties about new global pandemics. Asking questions about these emerging issues in the history and anthropology of apocalypse need not be focused on religion *per se*, but might still be helpfully framed in terms of morality. How do expectations of radical change intensify, suspend and otherwise transform the moral understandings by which people usually live? What, in short, is the *morality of millenarianism*?

SPEAKERS

Zoe Hyman (History, QUB)

"Must America be destroyed?" White Supremacists and the Battle against Integration in the United States

Crawford Gribben (History, QUB)

Theonomy and Libertarianism: Millennialism, Ethics and Christian Reconstruction

David Robertson (Religious Studies, University of Edinburgh)

Them: The Morality of the Other in Millennial Conspiracism

Joe Webster (Anthropology, QUB)

Eschatological Agency: Moral Freedom and Prophecy Fulfilment on Land and at Sea

Steve Knowles (Religious Studies, Chester)

Apocalyptic Catastrophe, and the Intensity of Information in the Mediapolis

Stefan Skrimshire (Theology and Religious Studies, Leeds)

Millenarian Ideology and Temporality in Climate Politics

Tristan Sturm (Geography, QUB)

Archaeological Past, Architectural Present, Apocalyptic Future

Jacob Hickman (Anthropology, BYU)

The Fifth Pillar of World Religions: Moral Agency over Time in Hmong Millenarianism