

## **THE GEOGRAPHY OF WORSHIP**

Mark D. Bjelland and Jason E. VanHorn

Geography has been a neglected partner in the study of Christian worship. Nonetheless, it has much to contribute to the study of worship because thinking geographically offers insights into the ways that values, beliefs, and practices are embodied in places, landscapes, spatial patterns, buildings, and human/environment interactions. The first section of this research guide offers a short introduction to the field of human geography, emphasizing the diversity of this academic tradition. The second section summarizes key movements in geographic research on religious life. The third section highlights the most important conceptual and methodological contributions of geographic scholarship and explores their contributions to the study of worship. The fourth and fifth sections offer annotated bibliographies of key works in both geography and the geography of worship. The sixth section outlines what we believe to be exciting and fruitful future research directions in the geography of worship.

### **I. Human Geography**

The presence of maps in Bibles is a testament to the importance of geography. Geography is of great popular interest, as evidenced by the enduring appeal of travel and the National Geographic Society's publications. Geography, a Greek term literally meaning "to describe the earth," is the study of the earth's surface and how it has been molded by diverse cultures into the human habitat. Formal instruction in geography is, unlike in the rest of the developed world, unfortunately neglected in the United States, especially at smaller private institutions, including most Christian colleges (Bjelland 2003; Bjelland 2004). Thus, while geographic inquiry offers important insights into the diversity of cultural life across the face of the earth, many potential applications to the study of Christian worship remain unexplored.

Formal geographical study dates to the ancient Greeks, who developed our system of latitude and longitude and estimated Earth's dimensions with surprising accuracy. Both the ancient Greeks and Romans wrote voluminous geographies that described the lands, climates, resources, and peoples of the known world. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, much geographical knowledge was lost, preserved in part by Muslim geographers for whom geographical knowledge was a key to trade, pilgrimages, and prayer facing the holy city of Mecca. Not content to simply face east when praying, Muslims calculate qiblah—the precise

angular direction toward Mecca along a great circle route from a particular location. After the Protestant Reformation, Lutheran and Anglican geographers revived geographical inquiry, now informed by theological concerns such as mapping the spread of Christianity and other religions, charting holy places, and developing a natural theology that emphasized the intricate divine design and the fittingness of the earth's environments, climates, and biomes for human habitation.

Darwin's theory of evolution severed geography's close links with theology and initiated a search for new theoretical frameworks (Livingstone 1992). The quest for a scientifically-grounded geographical theory that would encompass both cultures and biophysical environments has been elusive. Attempts to explain cultural evolution in terms of the influence of physical environments—environmental determinism—has attracted thinkers since the ancient Greeks. Hippocrates attributed the traits of different people groups to the climate, elevation, and topography of their homeland. In the eighteenth century, Montesquieu's influential political writings explained the spirit of different culture groups in terms of geographic variables. A variant of the theory of evolution that thought acquired characteristics were heritable prompted a revival of environmental determinism, which came to dominate academic geography in the United States in the early twentieth century. To the environmental determinist, temperate climates were invigorating and fostered industrious civilizations, while hot tropical climates promoted indolence and were thought to foster backward cultures. In this era, Islam was described as the stern religion of the austere Arabian desert. It should go without saying that environmental determinism was deeply racist and highly selective in its use of evidence. Environmental determinism justified imperialism abroad and eugenics at home.

Though thoroughly discredited, environmental determinism regularly resurfaces, usually outside geography departments. Notions of “geography as destiny” or popular discussions of warm-climate cultures versus cold-climate cultures contain elements of environmental determinism. Certainly environmental factors matter, but not in the sense of determining cultures. Instead, geographic conditions create a range of possibilities to which cultures must adapt.

The blind alley of environmental determinism spawned a retreat into less theoretical approaches. One approach was to focus on regional geography. Regional geographers inventoried climate, soils, landforms, natural resources, economic development, and settlement patterns to create integrated portraits of regions. A second approach associated with cultural geographer Carl Sauer and the University of California, Berkeley emphasized

that over time, cultures transformed the natural environment into a myriad of cultural landscapes (Sauer 1925).

In the mid-twentieth century, a quantitative spatial-analytical revolution pushed theory and models to the foreground. Geography's quantitative revolution in the 1950s and 1960s produced many of the concepts and algorithms that underlie today's digital geospatial techniques, including satellite imaging, global positioning systems, Google maps, navigational software, and location-based smartphone applications. The quantitative revolution produced a wealth of geographic concepts and theories, many of which are discussed below. Geography's quantitative revolution also spawned a critical reaction, protesting that "statistics don't bleed" (Livingstone 1992). Reactions against the quantitative revolution highlighted humanistic, behavioral, Marxist, feminist, queer, post-colonial, post-structuralist, and even Christian perspectives (Agnew, Livingstone, and Rogers 1996). More recently, the critical turn in literary criticism has been mirrored in approaches to cultural geography that emphasize power relations and treat the landscape as a text to be read.

## **II. Religious Geographies and the Geography of Religion**

The intersection of geography and religion presents a paradox. Religion is one of the most important cultural factors shaping the topics studied by geographers—population, livelihood systems, landscape evolution, and human/environment relationships—yet religion was largely peripheral to academic geography until recently. Furthermore, while religious topics were central to geography from the Reformation through the mid-nineteenth century, today they are only a minor subfield of cultural geography (Buttimer 2006; Proctor 2006a). Yi-Fu Tuan (1976, 27) described the subfield as "in disarray for lack of a coherent definition of the phenomenon it seeks to understand." Chris C. Park (1994, 1) described the study of religion as "peripheral to modern, academic geography," while Reinhard Henkel (2011) used a musical metaphor to suggest that in matters of religion, geographers can't find the tune. Within urban geography, the neglect of religion showed in a survey of eighteen textbooks that uncovered just two tangential references to religion (Zelinsky and Matthews 2011).

Those who dared to labor in the unfashionable subfield of the geography of religion in the twentieth century tended to focus on classification and on mapping spatial distributions. A major distinction drawn in the geography of religion is between religions that are local or tribal versus those whose doctrines are held to be universal truths meant to be spread globally. Producing maps of hearth regions, pathways of geographic spread, and current

spatial patterns for each world religion was a major contribution from this era of scholarship. Human/environment interactions were another theme. Sopher noted the gap between Judaism's and Christianity's Mediterranean origins and the mid-latitude and high-latitude locations where they spread. Christianity's Mediterranean origins left it lacking a fall harvest festival, a gap filled by borrowing Thanksgiving from Eastern Woodland Native American religion. It also left Christians in the southern hemisphere celebrating Easter, a festival of renewed life, in autumn.

In the twenty-first century, there has been a significant uptick in interest in the geographies of religious life. The new interest corresponds to the growth of religious extremism, international migration, religious pluralism, sacred/secular interactions, and interfaith relations. Where twentieth-century geographers created maps of religious regions showing, for example, how the South is dominated by Baptists, more recent maps have attempted to visualize religious diversity. Areas of low religious diversity in the United States include the Mormon cultural region of Utah, the Baptist-dominated South, and Catholic-dominated areas of the Northeast and Southwest. The area of highest religious diversity is the Pacific Northwest (Warf and Winsberg 2008). Where previous work focused on mere description, newer work in cultural geography attempts to interpret religious worldviews, practices, and sacred spaces. Where previous work focused on the location and design of houses of worship, more recent work has focused on political negotiations about religious uses of space and unofficial sacred spaces such as house churches and places of retreat and enchantment (Kong 2002). Geographers have added new perspectives to debates over veiling practices associated with Islam by noting how Muslim women vary their presentation depending upon their location, just as the meanings of veiling depend upon its location (Dwyer 2008). Other emerging themes in geographic scholarship on religion include the ways that worship practices and discipleship trends move across international borders (Kong 2002; Olson et al. 2013).

Despite the modest amount of work in the geography of religion, it is our contention that many of academic geography's organizing concepts and methodological approaches promise important insights into congregational worship practices. In the next section, we describe some of the key conceptual themes and approaches in geography using the broad categories of scale, spatial analysis, spatial behavior, place, landscape, and political ecology.

### III. Conceptual Themes in Human Geography and Applications to Studying Worship

Geography is strongly associated with maps, and rightly so. One of the necessary features of maps is that they depict portions of the earth at a particular scale. For the mapmaker, the term *scale* refers to the relationship between the size of objects on the map and their actual size. A map's scale determines the extent of the earth's surface that can be depicted as well as the level of detail. As we all know, when we zoom out, we see more total area but lose detail. Scale has thus proved to be one of the most powerful concepts in geographic analysis. The familiar saying "Think Globally, Act Locally" is a simple reminder of the importance of geographic scale. Geographic scales include the local and the global but also the body, the household, the neighborhood, the city, the region, and the nation. In social scientific research, it has been amply demonstrated that analytical results will depend in part on the scale of the analysis. This problem is referred to as the *modifiable areal unit problem* (Wong 2009). For this reason, geographers often conduct *multiscalar analyses*, seeking to elucidate how processes and outcomes differ as a function of scale (McMaster and Sheppard 2004). In a multiscalar analysis of racial integration within a church denomination, for example, a geographer might first examine the data at the national scale and then zoom into the congregational scale and even to the scale of small Bible study groups. Geographers also explore interactions between scales, such as when globalizing forces act on localities or when phenomena jump scales from the local to the national or international stage. A multiscalar study of corporate worship would, for example, explore practices at scales ranging from the household to the congregation to large interdenominational gatherings.

The geographer's special affinity for maps is partly aesthetic and partly because maps are tools for representing spatial knowledge and conducting **spatial analysis**. For geographers, the term 'space' refers to locations on the earth's surface. Locations are both absolute (an agreed-upon address or set of map coordinates) —or relative ("Up North," for example). The concepts of site and situation capture the absolute and relative aspects of location. The site—the absolute location—of Willow Creek Community Church is inauspicious. It consists of wetlands and prairies located at 67 Algonquin Road in South Barrington, Illinois (latitude 42°5'33" N, longitude 88°8'9" W). But the situation—the relative location—of Willow Creek Church is ideal for growth as it is situated along a highway that runs through the prosperous and rapidly growing northwestern suburbs of Chicago.

But spatial analysis involves more than location; it also includes areal extent, pattern, diffusion, and distribution of phenomena across the earth's surface. During the quantitative revolution of the mid-twentieth century, geographers developed a significant body of theory

on networks, spatial diffusion, and spatial interaction that formed the framework for transportation models, retail location analysis, location-based software, and today's explosion of geospatial technologies (Hagerstrand, 1967; Abler et al. 1971; Golledge and Stimson 1997; Cox 2014). Parallel advances in satellite technology, global positioning systems (GPS), and geographic information systems (GIS) have enabled the widespread adoption of spatial analytical tools such as satellite navigation and tracking, address geocoding, and spatial statistical analysis. With the use of GIS, geographers can analyze topography and least-cost pathways to discover ancient roadways, measure the viewshed or visibility of topographic high points, and so forth.

*Spatial diffusion* is the process of a cultural innovation spreading from location to location over time. The innovation could be the adoption of the Christian faith, the use of a new worship song, or a technique such as using a projector during worship. Spatial diffusion moves outward from a hearth region and may occur contagiously via person-to-person contact, through relocation of people, or through hierarchical networks. In hierarchical spatial diffusion, the most connected or populous locations receive the innovation first while less connected, typically rural locations are bypassed. Language or cultural differences, international borders, or gaps in transportation networks often appear as barriers to spatial diffusion. For example, research done in Singapore suggests that the Alpha evangelistic course is able to diffuse globally due to its appeal to transnational elites who share a postmodern world of globalized intellectual and artistic references, but it fails to diffuse where that shared cultural capital is absent (Kong 2013).

*Spatial interaction theory* seeks to quantify factors such as distance, barriers, attractiveness, networks, and transport mode that influence the movement of people, goods, and services between locations. Distance exerts friction because it costs time, effort, and/or money to overcome its effects. Thus, interactions between places tend to decrease exponentially with increasing distance in a relationship, a phenomenon referred to as distance decay. Many of the technologies that have revolutionized the world—automobiles, jet aircraft, the internet—have done so by reducing the friction of distance. Still, distance matters, as evidenced by computerized stock and commodity traders who compete to erect even more direct communication networks between cities to shave milliseconds off the time it takes a message to travel from New York to Chicago. One spatial interaction model used in transportation planning uses equations resembling Newton's equation for gravitational attraction. Instead of measuring objects with masses, spatial interaction models measure the attractiveness of origins and destinations such as towns, shopping centers, and churches in

proportion to their size, whether measured by population, attendance, number of stores, or square footage. As with gravity, the force of attraction to a destination decreases as distance increases.

Transportation geographers have explored the distances that members travel to churches of different sizes, noting that, on average, people were willing to travel further for larger congregations within the same denomination (Wheeler and Stutz 1971). This is consistent with spatial interaction theory, which posits greater attractiveness for a larger congregation with more offerings. Other research on travel to churches in metropolitan San Diego from the same mainline denomination found two types of churchgoers: those for whom distance mattered a great deal and who therefore strongly preferred a nearby church, and those more willing to travel further and bypass one or more churches from the same denomination. Small churches were essentially neighborhood churches, while only the largest congregations could attract members from more than six miles away (Hinshaw and Stutz 1976). But regardless of a congregation's size, in both studies the number of members declined with distance from the church. In other words, a strong distance decay effect was noted, with a more rapid drop-off for smaller churches.

*Central place theory* offers an elegant quantitative model explaining the spatial distribution of a hierarchy of retail and service functions across a region. In central place theory, towns and cities are the nodes or centers of market areas or hinterlands. The market areas differ in size depending upon the goods and services they provide. Each good or service has both a minimum threshold market population required to support its provision and a maximum geographic range that potential customers are willing to travel. When the minimum threshold population cannot be met within the maximum range of a good, the solution is a traveling or periodic market (or a traveling preacher). Retail centers are classified hierarchically, with low-order centers offering only low-order goods with low thresholds and short ranges. Higher-order centers offer low-order goods but also more specialized goods and services with larger population thresholds and longer ranges. Central place theory has been used to calculate the minimum population densities required to support rural churches and to explain the need for multiple-point churches when the minimum population density threshold was not met (Abler et al. 1971).

An important innovation in Christian worship has been the rise of megachurches, typically defined as churches averaging over two thousand in weekly attendance. The locations of megachurches display distinct geographic patterns. Within North America, megachurches are most common in the South and Southwest. Regardless of region,

megachurches are an almost exclusively a metropolitan phenomenon because they offer high-order religious services that require a high-threshold population. While agricultural counties in the Midwest have among the highest rates of religious adherence, megachurches are largely absent because they lack the requisite population density (Warf and Winsberg 2010). Megachurches display a strong predilection for sites near suburban highway interchanges situated amongst concentrations of middle-class families with children.

Spatial interaction models are based on overly simplistic models of human behavior. Thus a parallel body of research and theory has developed on human *spatial behavior*. One of the starting points is the concept of a *mental map* containing the spatial information carried in long-term memory. A mental map contains the accumulated geographic knowledge that allows a person to navigate the world and make sense of it. We cannot peer into someone's brain and observe their mental map. Instead, researchers often elicit representations of mental maps by asking subjects to sketch a map from memory. A person's mental map will be strongly influenced by the places they travel to on a daily basis—their *daily activity space*. Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand's *time geography* developed elaborate three-dimensional representations of how people's everyday lives involve moving through time and space. Home is an anchoring point for everyone's time-space pathway, but one's age, income, mobility, gender, and family responsibilities act to constrain one's time geography. Time geography has unexplored potential applications to evangelism and church ministry. For example, because youth have more constrained time geographies, youth ministry often takes on a different geographic structure than adult ministry.

*Territoriality* is an important aspect of human spatial behavior shared with other species. Territoriality begins with the human need for personal space. Human geographers, however, have mostly rejected biologically-rooted instinctual behavior as the basis for territoriality. Instead, geographers conceptualize territoriality as a set of social strategies that humans adopt to achieve power, control resources, and influence others. Territoriality is reflected in the ways that groups of people use land, organize their activities across geographic space, and attach meanings to places. Territoriality played a prominent role in the life of the ancient Jewish people, who strongly identified with the Promised Land and the holy city of Jerusalem. The division of Canaan among the twelve tribes of Israel and repeated admonitions against moving boundary markers demonstrates the proper ordering of geographic territory. In the New Testament, there is a relaxation of territorial ties. But after Constantine's conversion, there was simultaneous rapid growth in church hierarchy and territorial structures, evidenced in canons designating the territorial jurisdictions of religious

authorities and assigning persons to particular churches. Martin Luther and John Calvin rejected the Roman Catholic Church's practice of consecrating buildings, but they maintained the parish structure as a means of forming and defining the community of believers. Less hierarchical Protestant groups such as the Quakers had no use for a parish structure. Instead, their congregations functioned more flexibly in their use of territory. While the contemporary Roman Catholic Church has relaxed its rigid territorial controls on parishioners, it retains a geographic structure increasingly at odds with contemporary individualism and hypermobility.

For geographers, space and place are complementary concepts. Where earth space and spatial analysis are the domains of GIS and mathematical models, the study of *place* belongs to the realms of perception and lived experience (Tuan 1977). Where social science aspires to establish universal laws, the study of place asserts the importance of the unique and the particular. In times of rapid geographic change, there is often a reactive embrace of home and the place world. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, urban riots and protests against urban renewal and freeway construction projects prompted some geographers to question the relevance of spatial analysis and to rediscover the human experience of place. At the same time, the rise of national real estate developers, chain stores, and chain restaurants led to the production of nearly identical built environments described as *placeless* (Relph 1976). In response to the sense of placelessness and the economic and social uncertainty brought about by globalization, many have embraced *neo-localism*, a return to local identities through the consumption of local foods and locally produced craft products (Harvey 1991). Within churches, this embrace of neo-localism appears generational and may lie behind the renewed interest in parish models of congregational life.

To the geographer, a place is a location that brings together three elements: a material environment, a social setting, and an overlay of experiences, emotions, and meaning (Agnew 1987). A place—whether a village, a neighborhood, or a church—is not reducible to just one of its three elements. The essence of a particular place is the integration of the material world, social relations, and realms of meaning. Places shape our experience of the world and form the context for both thought and action. Historical geographer David N. Livingstone (2003) has demonstrated that even the production and reception of the supposedly universal truths of science are shaped by geographical context. For example, the way evangelical Christians responded to Darwin's theory of evolution varied radically from city to city, depending upon local contextual variables (Livingstone 2014). Similarly, we can expect that place-based

contextual factors will exert an important influence on congregational worship practices and their exposure to and reception of new ideas and practices.

Congregations are embedded within a wider place context, but their buildings and grounds can become a distinctive place in and of themselves. Thus congregations may be studied through the lens of church-in-place or church-as-place. Urban geography offers a helpful framework for understanding the wider place context. Distinctive urban environments have been generated as dominant urban transportation modes have shifted through the walking, streetcar, recreational automobile, and highway automobile eras. Similarly, the character of religious congregations can be classified according to the form of their surroundings (Dwyer et al. 2013). Walking-era and streetcar-era church buildings are typically constructed up to the lot lines and lack parking lots—a hindrance when most members drive. Urban context exerts a significant influence on congregational life because it structures the time geography of everyday life. For example, how people travel to church and how far they are willing to travel will affect how a church organizes its youth ministry and small-group programs. Churches in more urban locations can be more readily embedded within their surrounding place setting, using adjacent streets for overflow parking, local parks for church events, and local coffee shops for small group gatherings. Churches in walking-era or streetcar-era settings can also more readily open their grounds to outsiders who happen to walk past. Churches located in exurban, highway-based locations often feel like islands and must advertise their presence to fast-moving drivers. Exurban churches also must often create their own place environments, effectively becoming “villages” within the metropolitan region. Such churches may offer an on-site coffee shop or restaurant, playgrounds, nature trails, and outdoor amphitheaters to make up for what is missing in their surroundings (Bratton 2016).

Affective ties to place and the love of place (*topophilia*) are a profound part of the human experience (Tuan 1972). The songs of ascent in the book of Psalms celebrate the temple, Jerusalem, and Zion as the centers for the shared life of those who worship the true God. Place, writes theologian Craig Bartholomew, is an important yet often overlooked biblical theme. But like all God’s gifts, place can be misused and become an idol. The Nazi doctrines of “blood and soil” and *lebensraum* are extreme manifestations of the potential idolatry of place and home territory. Thus, geographers frequently warn of place conceptions that exclude the stranger and caution against viewing places as closed and self-contained. Instead, we should reconceptualize our places as open, interconnected, and dependent upon other places as we seek to cultivate a global sense of place (Massey 1994). In analyzing

churches through a place framework, the researcher should explore the interactions of material setting and social dynamics and the tensions between embedded identities and openness to the newcomer.

*Landscape* is both a material reality and a way of seeing. Cultural geographers have long relied on the visual imprint of cultures on the landscape as a primary source of data. Different religions produce distinctive cultural landscapes through their houses of worship, sacred sites, pilgrimage routes, plants used in worship, social hierarchies, and practices for managing bodies of the deceased. Based on the tangible evidence in the landscape, cultural geographers have observed both rising pluralism and the declining status of Christianity in North America. For example, some of the largest religious structures in North American suburbs belong to Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims. Despite the alleged religiosity of the mid-twentieth century, the Christian churches produced during this era lacked the locational and visual prominence of churches produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, the conversion of once-grand church buildings to residential condominiums offers concrete evidence of rising secularism. In cities such as Toronto and New York, numerous historic church buildings have been repurposed and marketed as architectural heritage lofts for sale to high-status professionals (Lynch 2016).

More recent work in cultural geography focuses on how landscapes—whether plantings, monuments, graffiti, or architecture—communicate a culture's values and power relations. Landscapes are a culture's unwitting biography, a text waiting to be read (Lewis 1979). But because landscapes become part of the everyday, taken-for-granted lifeworld, their artifice and ideological content is often masked (Duncan 1994). Well-tended agricultural landscapes may conceal the migrant labor and environmental degradation they entail (Mitchell 1996). Landscapes tend to act normatively, helping to reproduce social values and hierarchies. Tasteful, pastoral elite landscapes may naturalize exclusion and inequality. Monuments and place names honoring Confederate politicians and soldiers act to legitimize their cause and silence narratives of slavery and racialized injustice (Schein 2003).

While architectural historians have analyzed in great depth the most significant works of religious architecture, the cultural geographer is equally interested in ordinary churches, storefront churches, church grounds, and the relationship between church buildings and surrounding land uses. A landscape analysis explores the content and meaning of church's outdoor iconography, landscaping, and even parking lots. Contemporary megachurches, for example, tend to adopt a landscape style best described as corporate pastoralism (Bratton 2016). This style is borrowed from corporate office parks who share a concern with first

impressions. Landscapes of corporate pastoralism project an image of polish and prestige through vast expanses of manicured lawns, uniform plantings, and formal water features. To analyze church landscapes would be to explore their symbolism and ask, for example, whether features such as pools and fountains evoke the rich biblical symbolism of water. Landscape analysis should also extend beyond the officially sacred to religious elements of the vernacular landscape: roadside crosses, shrines, religious messages on billboards and buildings, and cemeteries. In Latin America, differences between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals are expressed in the landscape with overtly religious symbolism reflecting the former and prosperous, manicured fields and lawns reflecting the latter (Olson 2013). The late Wilbur Zelinsky was among only a few cultural geographers paying attention to vernacular religious landscapes in North America, and much work remains to be done in exploring the content and meaning of such landscapes.

Bridging the human and physical branches of geography is *political ecology*, the study of the dynamic relations between culture and nature, people and ecosystems. Political ecology seeks to uncover the social, cultural, and political factors that shape environmental management decisions. A political ecology of worship practices might examine the culture/nature relations embodied in the liturgies and sacramental elements of water, wine, and bread. A political ecology of worship spaces might examine the environmental impacts and management strategies for energy, materials, water, pavements, and lawn chemicals in light of creation care ideals. With their large land holdings, megachurches are sometimes sites of innovative landscape management. For example, Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago coordinates its property management with the local watershed planning organization and engages in prescribed burns to maintain the ecological integrity and biodiversity of its prairie landscapes. Willow Creek and a number of other megachurches offer prayer trails through preserved native landscapes on their property, encouraging parishioners to worship God while immersed in God's creation (Bratton 2016).

#### **IV. Significant Recent Works on the Geographies of Religious Practice**

Bratton, Susan Power. 2016. *ChurchScape: Megachurches and the Iconography of Environment*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Megachurches have altered the spatial relationships between church buildings and communities and offer opportunities to rethink our relationships to communities and landscapes. While the Reformation resulted in the loss of ecclesiastical land holdings through the seizure of monastic properties, the growth of megachurches with large campuses has resulted in a recent increase in the amount of property under church control. Bratton's focus is on the landscapes created and maintained by Christian

megachurches. She argues that the design of megachurch buildings and grounds has been subject to competing influences from the Puritan plain-style meeting house, Victorian ornamentation, and corporate pastoralism. She traces the history of landscape values and practices and observes the changing relationships between churches and civic space, warning of trends toward isolation from the wider community. She details how innovative megachurches are using their spacious campuses to incorporate symbolic elements, fountains and water features, prayer walks, restored natural ecosystems, recreational spaces open to the wider community, and community gardens.

Brunn, Stanley D. 2015. *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics*. London: Springer.

Brunn enlisted an international, interfaith group of social scientists, humanists, and religious-studies faculty to explore contemporary religious geographies. This encyclopedic book's 207 chapters range in topic from sacred spaces to analytical cartography to congregational community service. A particular focus is how globalization and religious pluralism interact with traditional topics in the geography of religion such as religious diffusion, pilgrimages, and practices relating to the dead. Major world religions, secularism, and revived forms of pantheism and paganism are given equal attention. Several chapters explore the environmental implications of particular religious beliefs and practices. Scholars will find a myriad of conceptual frameworks for understanding contemporary religious life.

Cloke, Paul. 2002. "Deliver us from Evil? Prospects for Living Ethically and Acting Politically in Human Geography." *Progress in Human Geography*, 26 (5): 587–604.

Cloke observes that it is easy to engage in radical academic writing on social issues but difficult to live consistently with one's ethical values. Cloke argues for an expanded moral imagination and a vocabulary that considers invisible powers and concepts such as charity and evil. Many of the problems studied in human geography, such as homelessness and displacement, need more than analysis; they demand engaged politics and ethical living. From Augé and others, Cloke points to a religious moral understanding and how it can help us move from a sense *of* the other to a more developed sense *for* the other.

Dwyer, Claire, David Gilbert, and Bindi Shah. 2013. "Faith and Suburbia: Secularisation, Modernity and the Changing Geographies of Religion in London's Suburbs," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38: 403–419.

Dwyer et al. offer three analytical categories for studying suburban faith: "semi-detached faith," "edge-city faith" and "ethnoburb faith." Semi-detached faith is exemplified by a version of Anglicanism adapted to a privatized suburban landscape with a great emphasis on the domestic sphere. In semi-detached faith, the church is at the center of a parish community with cell groups and prayer groups meeting in private homes. Edge-city faith is illustrated by a Jain temple in London's outer-suburban greenbelt. Here, the temple's motorway location functions well for the distanced community of religious commuters who make an occasional pilgrimage to the remote, landscaped temple site. The ethnoburb version of suburban faith is illustrated by an Islamic Center that is part worship center, part immigrant service center, and part ethnic community center.

Dwyer, Claire. 2008. "The Geographies of Veiling: Muslim Women in Britain." *Geography* 93 (3): 140–147.

Veiling, argues Dwyer, is a dynamic spatial practice that is enacted differently in different contexts and takes on different meanings at school, at work, in the street, at home, or at mosque. For British Muslim women, wearing a veil is a negotiated choice that may express religiosity, a political stance, or merely confidence in their identity as a British Muslim woman.

Hackworth, Jason and Kirsten Stein. 2011. "The Collision of Faith and Economic Development in Toronto's Inner Suburban Industrial Districts." *Urban Affairs Review* 48 (1): 37–63.

As new immigrants settle in inner suburban neighborhoods of Toronto, they have sought space to build churches, mosques, and temples. Having outgrown residential neighborhoods and generally not interested in reusing discarded mainline Protestant church buildings, these groups have often sought space within industrial districts. This phenomenon has resulted in conflicts with planning officials over parking and the loss of urban space to non-economic uses. The conflicts are couched in the language of technocratic urban planning, but are tinged with racism as the planning requests are most commonly from mosques and renewalist non-European immigrant Christian churches.

Kong, Lily. 2001. "Mapping 'New' Geographies of Religion: Politics and Poetics in Modernity." *Progress in Human Geography*, 25 (2), 211–233.

Kong focuses on unofficial sacred spaces such as house churches, roadside shrines, domestic shrines, and religious procession routes. In previous work, Kong studied how different religious groups in Singapore negotiated religious practices and identities in spaces and landscapes other than traditional houses of worship. Here the house churches embraced a politics of inclusion, hybridity, in-betweenness, impermanence, and precarity within society.

Kong, Lily. 2013. "Christian Evangelizing across National Boundaries." In *Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety*, edited by Peter Hopkins, Lily Hong, and Elizabeth Olson, 149–165. Dordrecht: Springer.

Kong explores the role of technology in religious life by examining the spatial diffusion of the Alpha course from London to Singapore and beyond. She distinguishes religious globalization—the convergence and conformity of religious practice—from religious transnationalism, which she defines as the building of religious communities across national boundaries. The Alpha course has spread globally through the forces of capitalism and technology—the same forces that in other guises undermine religiosity.

Ley, David and Justin Tse. 2013. "Homo Religiosus? Religion and Immigrant Subjectivities." In *Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety*, edited by Peter Hopkins, Lily Hong, and Elizabeth Olson, 149–165. Dordrecht: Springer.

Ley and Tse explore the vitality of immigrant churches and the apparent theologizing effect of the immigrant experience. They draw upon Charles Taylor and Johnathan Milbank to argue for a theological reading of religious experience rather than a distant social scientific reading of religious life as mere social fact. They provocatively suggest that social-scientific explanatory frameworks may reflect an academic colonization of a religiously vibrant global south using the global north's foreign conceptual categories. Christianity promotes an ethic of weakness, they argue, and therefore resonates with the immigrant's experience of downward mobility, disorientation, loss of status, and

marginalization. The immigrant church's vitality emerges out of this experience of liminality as it becomes a social service center and home away from home. As the immigrant experiences dislocation, they find spiritual riches.

Olson, Elizabeth. 2013. "Myth, Miramiento, and the Making of Religious Landscapes." In *Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety*, edited by Peter Hopkins, Lily Hong, and Elizabeth Olson, 75–93. Dordrecht: Springer.

Olson explores the "myth" that evangelical conversions lead to economic development in Latin America. She shows how the evangelical cultural landscape of fat cows and tidy farms functions symbolically to demonstrate the links between Protestant spiritual conversion and economic progress. She argues that the power of *miramiento*—judging gazes—serves to regulate rituals and the production of symbolic cultural landscapes. Thus in a predominantly Catholic town the landscape is characterized by hilltop crosses, but in a predominantly evangelical town, Catholics are reluctant to display icons and crosses for fear of judging Protestant gazes.

Stump, Roger W. 2008. *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Approximately once every two decades, a cultural geographer will produce a definitive treatment of the geography of religion. Stump's volume is the latest installment in that line of scholarship. One of Stump's primary contributions is an examination of the multi-scalar expressions of religious life. While most analyses focus on the scale of the religious community, Stump points out that believers integrate the practice of their religion into their daily lives at scales ranging from the body to the global. While most other geographic work has emphasized the national or global scale of analysis, Stump stresses the importance of narrower geographic scales of religious practice including the adherent's body, home, and daily activity space. For example, at the scale of the body, distinctive dress, body symbolism, dietary practices, and sexual mores are means of expressing one's religious devotion. Of particular interest in Stump's work is the expression of religious identities and territorialities amidst secular space.

Warf, Barney and Morton Winsberg. 2008. "The Geography of Religious Diversity in the United States." *The Professional Geographer* 60 (3): 413–424.

Warf and Winsberg focus on ways to measure and map religious diversity. They use county-level choropleth maps as well as cartograms. They identify the Pacific Northwest as the most religiously diverse region of the United States. The least religiously diverse regions are those dominated by Baptists, Catholics, or Mormons.

Wilford, Justin G. 2012. *Sacred Subdivisions: The Postsuburban Transformation of American Evangelicalism*. New York: New York University Press.

Wilford uses a cultural-geographic lens to examine Rick Warren's Saddleback Church, attempting to explain its successful adaptation of evangelicalism to life in secularized southern California. Wilford notes the proliferation of evangelical megachurches in a particular setting that he terms "post-suburbia." The post-suburban environment is characterized above all by social and spatial fragmentation and the lack of a meaningful shared center. In post-suburbia, the most meaningful geographic center is the individual home, from which each suburban resident constructs her own city from a multitude of possible destinations. In this post-suburban environment, evangelical megachurches have flourished by paying attention to the finer scales of religious practice such as home and workplace. Evangelical megachurches have created sacred archipelagos in a sea of post-

suburban secularity by weaving symbolically flexible sacred rituals into the mundane activities of everyday life without appearing ritualistic or inauthentic. In sum, the suburban megachurch, in Wilford's view, has succeeded by appropriating the consumptive neoliberal landscape and transforming it into a religiously meaningful place.

Zelinsky, Wilbur. 2009. "Organizing Religious Landscapes." In *The Making of the American Landscape*, edited by Michael Conzen. New York: Routledge. Zelinsky, a student of Carl Sauer, focuses on material traces of religion on the landscape. His study examines houses of worship, cemeteries, shrines, public art, and roadside signs proclaiming various religious messages such as "God's Country." For Zelinsky, houses of worship are the primary religious imprint on the landscape. Zelinsky summarizes eighteenth- and nineteenth-century trends in the styles of architecture used in houses of worship, noting the different reasons for adopting the Protestant Plain, Georgian, Classical Revival, or Gothic styles, the latter becoming the most popular and widespread choice for Protestant congregations. Post-WWII religious architecture is classified into categories of modern, generic modern ecclesiastical, and modern nondescript, the latter being the preferred choice for megachurches. Adaptively reused storefronts, while less respectable and associated with Latino and African American Protestants, have also been adopted by Catholic, Mennonite, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Science congregations. Zelinsky points out the noticeable decline in the prominence of houses of worship in the American urban landscape since the nineteenth century. Consistent with his Sauerian training, however, Zelinsky is spare in interpreting the meaning of American religious landscapes and the significance of their declining prominence.

Zelinsky, Wilbur, and Stephen A. Matthews. 2011. *The Place of Religion in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Focusing on the visible manifestations of religion in the urban landscape, Zelinsky and Matthews' volume is filled with maps and photographs. Over three years of fieldwork was spent documenting the architectural style, date of construction, physical condition, size, and symbolization of every church, temple, synagogue, and mosque in Chicago and its Cook County suburbs. Of all denominations, Roman Catholic places of worship stood out with the most extensive geographic coverage, the most locations, and the greatest physical dominance of their surrounding neighborhood. Lutheran churches were most likely to display stained glass windows, Episcopal churches were concentrated in affluent lakefront neighborhoods and were the most partial to the Gothic style, and Jewish synagogues most enthusiastically embraced architectural modernism. Orthodox Christian churches and South Asian temples most faithfully reproduced Old World precedents and serve wide swaths of territory, requiring long commutes for attendees. African American neighborhoods had the highest density of churches, nearly half of which were in converted storefronts. A dramatic downturn in the construction of new religious structures after 1970, the adoption of nondescript architectural styles, and fewer religious structures per capita in newer suburbs suggest significant changes to religious life.

## V. Classic Works in the Geography of Religion

These books and articles are important, path-setting works in the geography of religion.

Bjorklund, Elaine M. 1964. "Ideology and Culture as Exemplified in Southwestern Michigan." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 54: 227–241.

Bjorklund focuses on ways the worldview of Dutch Reformed churches manifested itself in the landscape of the ethnic island of West Michigan. Dutch land divisions, building types, and clothing were quickly abandoned. However, strict adherence to biblical teaching and its application to everyday life created a distinctive culture region. This culture region is not visually distinctive except for the number and size of churches and parochial schools. In a rural area of Ottawa and Allegan counties, Bjorklund mapped a core region where persons of Dutch ancestry owned the majority of land, where alcohol sales and Sunday retail hours were forbidden, and all churches were Reformed.

Glacken, Clarence J. 1967. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Glacken's masterful contribution explores three primary questions in natural theology: 1) "Is the earth, which is obviously a fit environment for man and other organic life, a purposefully made creation?"; 2) "Have [the earth's] climates, its relief, the configuration of its continents influenced the moral and social nature of individuals?"; and 3) "Have [the earth's physical geographies] had an influence in molding the character and nature of human culture?" With its broad survey of worship practices across time and space, scholars of religion will find a wealth of data and links to primary sources.

Park, Chris C. 1994. *Sacred Worlds: An Introduction to Geography and Religion*. London: Routledge.

This text updated the earlier work of Sopher on the geography of religion. Park is a respected British geographer and Anglican whose other work is primarily in environmental geography. This book surveys the religious roots of much geographic scholarship from the Reformation through Darwin, then adopts a thematic approach to the study of religion. Themes include the spatial patterns of religion, the diffusion of religions, religious culture regions, effects on demography, imprints on the landscape, and sacred places and pilgrimages. Park summarizes a number of attempts to improve upon Zelinsky's work on the religious regions of the United States. He is optimistic about the use of spatial statistical techniques and notes that the complexities of religious diversity are not captured in a single bounded-area map of religious regions. The process of innovation diffusion with early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards is applied to religious change. Spatially, religious diffusion occurs due to either relocation diffusion or expansion diffusion. Religions contain imprints of their hearth region, retained even as they diffuse into new environments. For Christianity, religious metaphors based on livestock herding in a semi-arid rural environment have been carried around the world into vastly different geographical contexts. Park offers a useful approach to religious change, distinguishing between natural change (births minus deaths) and conversions.

Sopher, David E. 1967. *Geography of Religions*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hill, Inc.

This classic text provided the groundwork for much subsequent work on the geography of religion. Sopher's approach is thematic and comparative, emphasizing three themes: the expressions of religions on the landscape, the religious organization of territory, and the spatial distribution of different religions. Sopher begins by examining the relationships between religious systems and the physiographic environments where they arose. Sopher rejects the environmental determinism that would, for example, see monotheism as the product of pastoral nomadism in the desert. He notes the tension between Christianity's

deep Mediterranean roots and its global diffusion. The Islamic calendar, on the other hand, is a lunar calendar liberated from ecological ties. Thus Islamic rituals and devotions can be practiced in any kind of climatic environment, and Ramadan changes seasons from year to year. Future scholarship inspired by Sopher's approach might explore how church architecture and religious holidays are adapted to different physical environments.

Stoddard, Robert H. and E. Alan Morinis. 1997. *Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces: A Geography of Pilgrimages*. Baton Rouge, LA: Geoscience Publications, Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University.

This edited collection examines pilgrimages in multiple religious traditions in different contexts: Europe, Arabia, the United States, and Japan. Diverse religions have singled out places that embody or enshrine the ideals of their culture, and journeys of pilgrimage exist in important forms in many religions, especially in South Asia. Several of the studies use spatial-analytical approaches to examine catchment areas and the effects of distance and travel modes. Religious pilgrimages defy the assumptions of travel models because of the attraction of the holy site and because movement is regarded as an act of religious worship or sacrifice. Other studies use an interpretive approach to explore the personal meanings of pilgrimage.

Zelinsky, Wilbur, 1961. "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51: 139–193. This work established the county-level denominational affiliation choropleth map as the standard for visualizing national patterns of religious adherence in the United States.

## V. Classic Resources in Geography

These books and articles were selected for their conceptual and methodological contributions in human geography. While these resources do not, in most cases, explicitly address religious practices, they offer helpful conceptual tools for the analysis of worship.

Abler, Ronald F., John S. Adams, and Peter Gould. 1971. *Spatial Organization: The Geographer's View of the World*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

This book summarizes the theories, models, and techniques of quantitative geography, such as spatial interaction, spatial diffusion, central place theory, and the gravity model. The chapter on location and land use explicitly discusses the rural population densities and travel behavior necessary to support a country church. The spatial analytical concepts and techniques presented in this book could be applied to analyses of church attendance areas, hierarchical systems of congregations, or multi-site congregations and their attendance areas.

Agnew, John A. 1987. *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society*. Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Agnew develops a model of place that includes a location, locale or material setting for social interaction, and a sense of place. He then shows that place is relevant to contemporary life not just in traditional, isolated rural societies, but also in advanced urban settings. He then shows that places are embedded in the workings of the state and global economy. Agnew's simple definition of place could be applied to studying congregations as places—gatherings at a particular location with a material setting, a set

of social interactions, and a sense of place. We often remind ourselves that a church is not synonymous with the church building. However, applying Agnew's model of places suggests that it is the interaction of a particular material setting, its set of social relations, and a shared sense of identity that gives a congregation its identity.

Agnew, John A., David N. Livingstone, and Alisdair Rogers. 1996. *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

This volume brings together most major voices in human geography, including both classic articles from the nineteenth century and those by contemporary geographers. Each entry includes a short biographical sketch to provide the reader with a better understanding of the context of each scholarly contribution. Although the conceptual frameworks are not specific to worship, scholars outside of geography will find they are connected to the act of worship and religious practice. With more than forty entries, the volume's major themes are geographic history and philosophy; nature, culture and landscape; region, place and locality; and space, time, and space-time.

Cloke, Paul J., Chris Philo, and David Sadler. 1991. *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates*.

The authors successfully describe the state of the art in human geography debates in the early 1990s. This text is of particular interest to those exploring geography and worship because of the diversity of references that are surveyed. Themes included in this volume include the spatial science of the 1960s, environment and regional approaches to understanding cultural geographies, Marxism, humanism, realism, structuration, and postmodern approaches.

Cosgrove, Denis. 1984. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. London: Croom Helm.

In this book, Cosgrove signaled an interpretive turn in cultural landscape studies. Cosgrove traces the idea of landscape from Renaissance Europe through the industrial revolution and to the contemporary world. Going beyond art history, he shows how landscapes are deeply imbricated with class ideologies and understandings of the relationship between people and the natural world. Cosgrove's theoretical framework could be used to explore church architecture, church grounds, and their embedded class ideologies.

Cresswell, Tim. 2004. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Cresswell, a student of Tuan, continues Tuan's trajectory of humanistic geography. Cresswell works with three related and deceptively simple concepts: space, place, and landscape. Where "space" is abstract, "place" is space invested with human meaning. Place is how we make the world meaningful and how we experience the world. Place, suggests Cresswell, is perhaps one of the most important interdisciplinary concepts for the twenty-first century. Cresswell begins by surveying the concept of place as it developed in Greek philosophy, phenomenology, and cultural geography. Some scholars, such as Relph and Harvey, see space-time convergence as undermining the unique identity of places and rendering them placeless or non-places. But rather than seeing places as defined by stasis, Cresswell argues that mobility and sense of place go hand in hand. He embraces a hybrid, open, and unbounded conception of place—a global sense of place, to use Massey's term. He then examines the practices of placemaking and their role in public memory and the formation of regional identities. Finally, he reviews the idea of being "out of place" as experienced by homeless persons, refugees, and LGBT persons for insights into the meanings and importance of place.

Duncan, James S. 1994. *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Duncan's work is a program for a more interpretively rich cultural geography. Duncan critiques the atheoretical tradition of cultural geography associated with Carl Sauer and the University of California, Berkeley, claiming that they privilege the visual without attending to the symbolic meaning and political contestation of cultural landscapes. He applies critical literary theory to the cultural landscape, arguing that it is a signifying cultural system. Duncan's case study is of the Sri Lankan city of Kandy, the last capital city in the time of Sri Lanka's ancient kings. Here, two discourses on kingship were in competition: a benevolent Buddhist monarch dedicated to upholding the religion of the people versus a powerful monarch marked by grandeur, pomp, and ceremony. Each of these discourses was expressed in place-based rituals and reconstruction of the cultural landscape of the Kandy. Thus sociopolitical processes and landscape exist in a dialectical relationship, and political struggles focus on the production and meaning of the cultural landscape. For example, the discourse of king as Buddhist monarch was expressed by reconstructing the capital city as a mirror image of the heavenly city of the gods with water features modeling the cosmic Ocean of Milk. Duncan's work is significant because it reconceptualized cultural landscapes as signifying systems embodying cultural practices.

Gregory, Derek, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael Watts, and Sarah Whatmore. 2009. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

This volume features entries germane to scholars inside and outside human geography. With more than a thousand pages, entries include references and suggested readings. Scholars interested in worship will find a plethora of background geographical themes as well as significant contributions in given thematic areas. This resource is typically a starting point for scholars interested in gaining a brief conceptual framework foundational to understanding a particular aspect of geographical literature.

Golledge, Reginald G., and Robert J. Stimson. 1997. *Spatial Behavior: A Geographic Perspective*. New York: Guilford Press.

Golledge and Stimson's book presents a spatial-analytical approach to human spatial behavior with a focus on spatial decision-making for persons and firms. The coverage is broad and deep, filled with mathematical formulas and empirical results. Topics include environmental perception, spatial cognition, cognitive maps, travel modeling, retail-center location, migration, residential mobility, and spatial behavior of special populations such as the blind or the elderly. This work, along with Abler, Adams, and Gould's *Spatial Organization*, offers a framework for spatial-analytical studies of congregational life, including church attendance areas and systems of congregations. *Spatial Behavior* offers a detailed guide to techniques for eliciting a visual representation of cognitive maps. This technique could be used to explore a congregation's understanding of its particular ministry context.

Hagerstrand, Torsten. 1967. *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

This book was originally published in Sweden in 1953 but didn't appear in English translation until 1967. Hagerstrand mapped historic sequences of the adoption of a number of agricultural improvements, then developed mathematical models and computer simulations in an attempt to reproduce the empirical results. His work showed that diffusion of innovations depended upon access to information that was not uniformly

distributed but instead declined with distance from early adopters and depended upon migration rates between regions. The outcome of the work was to show that innovation diffusion was a distinctly spatial process and that location, distance, and travel patterns were key variables in predicting the timing of innovation adoption. The concepts of spatial diffusion could be applied to the diffusion of innovations in worship to discover, for example, what routes innovations take and what barriers they encounter.

Harvey, David. 1991. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. New York: Blackwell.

Harvey is an urban-economic geographer and one of the world's leading Marxist thinkers. In this book, Harvey interprets the cultural sea change of postmodernism as rooted in the political and economic changes associated with the most recent wave of time-space compression. According to Harvey, recent revolutions in information and communication technologies have effectively compressed time and space, speeding up cultural, economic, and political processes and deepening the ties between distant places. The net effect is a fundamental alteration of our experiences of both time and space, as if the world is collapsing in upon us. As a Marxist, Harvey attributes the rise of postmodern cultural expressions to the underlying political and economic shifts to more flexible forms of capital accumulation. He attributes both rising neolocalism and nationalism to a quest for security in the midst of the uncertainty created by post-Fordist flexible accumulation. While we may reject Harvey's Marxist prescriptions for society, his work offers important insights into the role of the changing material conditions of economic life in structuring cultural life. Many urban churches have embraced elements of neolocalism but probably have not connected perceived longings for a local community to anxieties brought about by political and economic shifts.

Ley, David, and Marwyn S. Samuels. 1978. *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. Chicago: Maaroufa Press.

Emerging just after the high point of quantitative geography, editors Ley and Samuels invited eighteen geographers to explore humanistic geography. Scholars of worship and religion will be particularly interested in parts one and two, "Epistemological Orientations" and "Methodological Orientations." The first chapter defines humanistic geography as the attempt to reconcile the social sciences and humanity, attending to both the subjective and the objective, and to both ideas and material conditions. Unlike quantitative geography's emphasis on explanation, humanistic geography seeks both wisdom and understanding, whether rooted in a secular, Jewish, Christian, or Marxist interpretive frame. Three authors—Ley (Chapter 3), Wallace (Chapter 6), and Houston (Chapter 14)—explore problems of social geography, the global economy, and human-environment relationships and argue in favor of a biblical worldview.

Relph, Edward. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Limited.

Relph's work in cultural geography continues to influence and inspire architects and urban planners. *Place and Placelessness* was written at the high point of architectural modernism. Relph articulated a generation's sorrow at the replacement of authentic places with uniform "placeless" environments. For Relph, a place is a lived center of action and attention where we experience the meaningful events in our lives. Relph distinguishes places based on two binaries: self-conscious versus unselfconscious, and authentic versus inauthentic. For Relph, authenticity resides in genuinely addressing life's existential realities without kitsch, sentimentality, or pretense. Lack of authenticity is found in the dictates of mass society and modernity's obsession with perfecting techniques for manipulation and efficiency. An unselfconscious relationship to place goes beyond a mere I-It, subject-object relationship to the living, dynamic relationship conveyed by

Martin Buber's notion of I-Thou relations. Authentic, unselfconscious places in the contemporary world are rare, limited to the creations of peripheral groups such as the Amish. Gothic religious architecture such as Tintern Abbey and the Chartres Cathedral are examples of authentic, self-consciously created places. Relph suggests that homelessness has become the fate of all of us. He bemoans placeless environments such as commodified tourist landscapes, Disneyfied places, standardized subdivisions, and gigantic places lacking in human scale. Placelessness represents both environments lacking meaning and worldviews that reject the significance of individual places. What Relph calls for instead is an authentic connection to place through personal identification and engagement with a place's features, symbols, and meanings.

Sack, Robert D. 1997. *Homo Geographicus*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

We are, according to Sack, *homo geographicus*—geographical beings rooted in specific places and shaping the earth into the human habitat. Sack sees places as the nexus of the realms of nature, social relations, and meaning. All three realms are essential to making places and people what they are. In the absence of an integrating place perspective, Sack sees most scholarly work privileging one realm over the others and sliding into various reductionist views of humanity such as Marxist historical materialism, *homo economicus*, social constructivism, or sociobiology. One challenge we all face is that our contemporary lifeworlds have been thinned out, fragmented, and stretched out across geographic space. Thinned-out places lack depth of history and social connectedness. Newly emerging international divisions of geographic space have assigned particular people, things, and tasks to distinct locations, and they require intense spatial interaction between distant places. The fragmented yet interconnected world in which we live makes it difficult to understand the moral consequences of our actions. We may depend more upon interactions with distant strangers than upon interactions with friends, neighbors, and family members. Becoming more geographically aware helps us to act more effectively and ethically as we come to understand the consequences of our actions, near and far.

Sack, Robert D. 1986. *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sack conceptualizes territoriality not as instinctual, but as a set of strategies humans adopt to achieve power, control resources, and influence others. Territoriality is reflected in the ways that people use land, organize their activities across geographic space, and attach meanings to places. Sack devotes an entire chapter to the territorial structure of the Roman Catholic Church. After Constantine's conversion, there was simultaneous rapid growth in church hierarchy and territoriality as evidenced in canons designating religious authorities, delimiting jurisdictions, and assigning persons to particular churches. Luther and Calvin rejected the Catholic's consecrated church structures but maintained the parish structure as a means of forming and defining the community of believers. Less hierarchical Protestant groups such as the Quakers had no use for a parish structure. Instead, their congregations functioned as nodal regions. While the contemporary Roman Catholic Church has relaxed its rigid territorial controls on parishioners, it retains a traditional geographic structure increasingly at odds with contemporary individualism and hypermobility. In capitalist modernity, territory was reconceived as abstract, impersonal, and empty, allowing it to be subdivided and subsequently filled. While modernity's abstract vision of territory was essential to maximizing production and consumption, it has made it difficult for people to feel at home in the world.

Soja, Edward W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Expanding the Geographical Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Soja extends Henri Lefebvre's conceptual contributions into cultural geography. Soja argues that modernity has prioritized history at the expense of geography, missing important aspects of our being. He develops a model of "thirdspace" as the locus for our structured individual lives and collective experiences. "Firstspace" consists of the built and natural environment, while "secondspace" is the imagined and represented spaces of advertising, redevelopment planning, and artistic portrayals. "Thirdspace" brings together firstspace and secondspace into the actual lived and imagined, real and virtual spaces of our lives. Soja's major contribution in *Thirdspace* is to integrate the realms of the material and the symbolic in understanding our lives.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1972. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perceptions, Attitudes, and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tuan is a leading figure in humanistic geography, which was a reaction against the abstract models of the spatial-analytical tradition within geography. Tuan systematically explores how our senses, culture, and worldview shape our perceptions of places. The book introduces the term "topophilia" to describe the affective ties between persons and places. Different physical environments have had different influences on cultural development and worldview development. Tuan summarizes how different cultures have sought varied environmental experiences in city, suburb, pastoral, and wilderness settings. Interestingly, landscapes once defined as profane have come to be viewed as sacred and vice versa.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Tuan examines the human experience and meanings of place in this wide-ranging book. Because analytical thought has so powerfully transformed our world, we tend to consign to oblivion those aspects of experience not given to measurement and quantitative analysis. Tuan's work is an attempt to validate the importance of our feelings and aesthetic responses to places. Places exist across multiple scales, and Tuan's reflections range from the intimate space of the hearth to the entire cosmos. In attempting to explain the shortcomings of the modern city, Tuan notes that cities gain their identities when their streets and squares become the supportive stage for public rituals and ceremonies. Places become visible through visual prominence, evocative architecture, and by dramatizing the shared aspirations and rhythms of a people. Similarly, past events have little impact on subsequent generations unless memorialized in places and pageants. Tuan's insights could help churches to become more meaningful places, to help their members remember past events, and to connect to the wider urban community through public rituals and ceremonies.

## **VI. Future Research Directions**

The following paragraphs sketch some potentially fruitful research directions using geographical concepts and methods to study Christian worship.

### **A. Places of Retreat and Pilgrimage**

After his baptism, Jesus retreated to the desert wilderness for a period of testing and temptation. He regularly retreated to quiet places to pray, and it was on a high mountain that he was transfigured. Places of retreat often play an important yet understudied role in

the spiritual lives of Christian believers. An inventory of Christian retreat centers, camps, labyrinths, burial grounds, and prayer gardens coupled with an empirical social-scientific analysis of their role in the social and spiritual lives of believers would complement theological reflection on the meaning of sacred places. An up-to-date, comprehensive study of Christian pilgrimages is overdue. Ideally such a work would employ methodological pluralism, including quantitative tabulation and mapping of flows of religious pilgrims along with qualitative work on the motivations and experiences of religious pilgrims. Among participants, it would be fruitful to explore the worship practices and spiritual experiences associated with retreats, spiritual pilgrimages, and specific environments such as deserts or mountaintops.

#### B. Spatial Diffusion and Distribution of Worship Music and Liturgies

Two millennia ago, Paul's missionary journeys triggered the spatial diffusion of the Christian faith. Today, the global spatial diffusion of the Hillsong worship music movement is an example of the boundary- and distance-hopping diffusion pattern of contemporary worship practices. Mapping the diffusion pathways and geographic distribution for styles of Christian worship music, liturgies, and popular Christian speakers would provide insights into innovation hearths, core regions, barriers, and channels of movement for different genres of Christian worship.

#### C. Religious Globalization and Transnationalism

Christianity is a global religion understood to express universal truths. Still, it displays distinctive regional expressions. Greater speed and availability of transportation and communications technologies have facilitated economic and cultural globalization. But to what extent are the same forces pushing worship practices towards greater global convergence and conformity, and to what extent are regional expressions remaining distinct? Economic globalization has brought about a new international division of labor. Similarly, missiologists have noted the passing of the era of unidirectional movements of influence from western sending countries to less-developed receiving countries. This research trajectory could focus on the multidirectional movement of missionaries, speakers, and worship renewal movements alongside countertendencies to resist global convergence and conformity. A related research direction would explore the rise of religious transnationalism and the spiritual lives of immigrants and persons who maintain close ties to more than one country.

#### D. Congregational Place Identities

The New Testament epistles were typically addressed to the church identified with a particular city. How do contemporary congregations understand their place context and their mission identity with respect to geographic space? How do congregations localize their worship practices? With the use of digital projectors for the display of song lyrics and short videos, new possibilities for the use of images have emerged. To what extent are images placeless or contextualized? The trend of dropping denominational identifiers from congregational names is well established. But have place-based naming conventions replaced the denominational moniker? More broadly, how do the naming practices for congregations reflect changing cultural values, neolocalism, and the relationships between people and places?

### E. Congregations and Urban Space

Changes in transportation and urban structure after World War II altered once-tight spatial relationships between home, neighborhood, school, and church. How have congregations adapted to these changing spatial relationships? Some geographers have identified the locational patterns for megachurches (Warf and Winsberg 2010), and there has been some research on journey-to-worship travel (Ebaugh et al. 2000). The distinction between parish and niche congregations is already well established within the congregational studies literature. But additional work could be done to elucidate the varieties of congregational attendance areas using network routing and spatial statistical tools in a GIS environment. Spatial-interaction and central-place models could be readily applied to a hierarchical system of competing congregations (Golledge and Stimson 1997). In a hierarchical system of congregations, smaller churches would provide lower-order religious services with a lower threshold demand and shorter ranges, and larger churches would offer more specialized, higher-order services with a greater threshold demand and longer geographic ranges. Worshipers seeking basic, lower-order religious services would be expected to minimize effort by choosing the congregation closest to home, while those seeking the greater opportunities and higher-order religious services provided by a larger congregation would show willingness to travel further (Wheeler and Stutz 1971). One trend begging to be explored is the spatial-organizational systems of multisite congregations.

### F. Multiscalar Analysis of Congregational Mission and Faith Identities

In his last words to his disciples, Jesus identified four different geographic scales for Christian mission: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. How do local congregations and denominations structure their ministries across multiple geographical scales? How is one's Christian faith expressed at scales ranging from the body to the global? Potential research questions include exploring how different denominations emphasize some scales of Christian mission and discipleship and neglect others. How, for example, do regional, national, and global events make their way into congregational prayers? How do short-term mission trips or sister-church partnerships reshape the worship practices of sending congregations? Do certain traditions focus more on the scales of bodily and household practice while others focus more on the global arena?

### G. The Political Ecology of Worship and Worship Spaces

A political ecology research trajectory would explore how congregations manage their church grounds and interact with the surrounding environment. Bratton's work on megachurches blazed a path for subsequent researchers to follow as they look at different types of congregations, other types of sacred spaces, or different geographic contexts. Research questions include examining the extent to which church landscapes reflect creation care and hospitality to God's creation. Or, what sorts of symbolism and landscape management practices are used on unofficial sacred spaces such as camps and retreat centers? What are the grounded theologies inscribed into these landscapes? How is creation woven into congregational worship practices through, for example, outdoor baptisms, or using the church grounds to grow wheat and grapes for use in communion? When nature scenes are used as a backdrop for projected song lyrics, which sorts of nature and culture-nature relationships are depicted?

## H. High Places and Topographic Analysis

Hilltop crosses, mountaintop monasteries, towering church steeples, and other high points loom large in religious practice. Many denominational colleges were built on hilltop sites. Mixed-method approaches can be applied. GIS could be used to perform spatial analysis of sacred terrain, mapping the viewshed and visibility of such features. Qualitative ethnographic methods can explore religious and worship attitudes based on the physical terrain and geographic positioning of hilltop religious features.

## I. Congregations and Urban Design

The relationship between congregational facilities and the wider urban community could be fruitfully analyzed through the lens of urban design. Design concepts such as the urban transect, density, scale, streetscape, legibility, openness, permeability, walkability, building articulation, and height-to-width ratios provide a framework for describing and evaluating the design of church properties. The Charter of the New Urbanism (for the Congress for the New Urbanism) offers a normative framework for urban design, calling for civic buildings and public gathering places to assume prominent sites and distinctive architectural forms as befitting their roles in democratic society. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) offers design principles for creating lively outdoor rooms that bring together people. The PPS's placemaking suggestions for campuses, city squares, and public buildings could be used as a framework for evaluating the design of religious spaces.

## J. Theology of Natural Hazards

One strand in political ecology is the human response and adaptation to natural hazards. Since Voltaire wrote his provocative account of the great 1755 Lisbon earthquake, the proper, faithful religious response to natural disasters has been a theological challenge. One political ecology research trajectory could explore how natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes are addressed and interpreted in sermons and worship songs and remembered and mourned in worship liturgies.

## VII. **Additional Publications and Works Cited**

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