

Denison Journal of Religion

Volume 7

Article 8

2007

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

(2007) "Front Matter," *Denison Journal of Religion*: Vol. 7 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/religion/vol7/iss1/8>

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The
Denison Journal
of
Religion

Published by the Denison University Department of Religion

Volume VII: Number 2

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Letter from the Editors

When we, the editors, met to choose which pieces to include in this volume of the *Denison Journal of Religion*, we faced a complex task. We received many more submissions than we could print in the space allotted, so we were forced to make some difficult decisions. In choosing which essays to print, we considered numerous factors, including the quality of writing, depth of research, effective use of sources, and diversity of subject matter. We made a conscious effort to select pieces that most accurately represent the different interests of students of religion and demonstrate the compelling perspectives that these students offer.

The essays by Laura Perrings and Stephanie Dixon that address the biblical story of the Tower of Babel demonstrate the various interpretations that can arise from the same source, and we hope that their inclusion will encourage readers to engage actively with and be amenable to new ways of understanding sacred texts. [Readers might also want to check out the essay by Al Klingler on “Tower of Babel” in the [Denison Journal of Religion](#) IV (2004): 33-44.] Tracy Riggle’s essay about Desmond Tutu and Patrick Hamilton’s essay about American Sufism examine how religion and spirituality can transform, and be transformed by, individuals and cultures—a concern that is vital for understanding our modern world. The remaining essays by Laura Perrings and Emily Toler consider the importance of historical, social, and political context in understanding religious movements and sacred texts, inviting readers to challenge their own beliefs about how these institutions are subject to change and reinterpretation.

While each of the submissions we received was impressive, we feel that those reproduced here best exemplify the quality and diversity of scholarship that characterize the Department of Religion here at Denison. Happy reading!

Emily Toler, Senior Editor
Katherine St. Clair, Junior Editor

About the Contributors

Stephanie Dixon graduated from Denison in May 2007 with a double major in Religion and Spanish. She is currently living in Chicago and working as an administrative assistant at Wind Point Partners, a private equity investment firm.

Patrick Hamilton will graduate from Denison in May 2008 with a major in East Asian Studies and minor in Studio Art. After graduation, he plans to travel either to China to attend graduate school, volunteer, or teach, or to the Middle East to teach or work as a consultant.

Laura Perrings graduated from Denison in May 2007 with a double major in English and Religion. She is currently seeking employment in publishing.

Tracy Riggle graduated Summa Cum Laude from Denison in May 2007 with a double major in Religion and Psychology. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and conducted her senior honors project with Dr. David Woodyard. She is currently teaching with the Teach for America program in New York City.

Emily Toler will graduate from Denison in May 2008 with a double major in English and Religion. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school, where she will pursue her doctorate in English, studying contemporary American literature.