

Curriculum Vitae

Christopher F. Silver

[School Address]

Department of Psychology

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USA

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Born: October 15th, 1976 - Chattanooga Tennessee

Citizenship: United States of America

EDUCATION

- 1 Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; August 2001
- 2 Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; August 2001
- 3 Masters of Science in Psychology (Research), University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; August 2003 Thesis Title: *Training of Observers in risk rituals involving the Manasa sect of Hinduism and Serpent Handling Sects of Appalachia*
- 4 Masters of Arts in Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo Ontario Canada

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 1 UTC Sigma Xi Graduate Student Researcher of the Year Award - Awarded April 2004
- 2 Research Director of Hood Psychology of Religion Laboratory (Honors Assistantship) – UT Chattanooga

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

- 1 American Academy of Religion
- 2 American Psychological Association
- 3 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
- 4 Psi Chi National Honors Society in Psychology
- 5 Association for the Sociology of Religion
- 6 Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Music Fraternity

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

(2001-2002) A study of the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism, fundamentalism, and the big five personality dimensions.

Directed by Heinz Strieb and Ralph Hood, data from Fundamentalism scale, Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale and Five Personality Dimensions scale were examined and compared (U.S.A. and Germany). Responsibilities included data collection and statistical analyses for the U.S.A and Germany samples.

(2002-2004) An examination of Blood-n-Fire Ministries

Under the direction of Sociologist of Religion Margaret Poloma and Ralph Hood this project examined Blood-n-Fire, an inner city homeless and drug addition ministry in inner city Atlanta GA. It also included a surveying of Blood-n-Fire staff and residents. Responsibilities included administering questionnaires and conducting semi-structured interviews with the staff of Blood-n-Fire and open-ended interviews with the homeless of Blood-n-Fire, assisting professors with research and sampling decisions.

(2002-2004) Deconverts from fundamentalist new religious groups in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America (phase one).

Under the direction of Heinz Strieb, Ralph Hood, and James Fowler this project examined the life trajectories of deconverts from new fundamentalist religions. This project employed qualitative and quantitative methodologies including the Fowler faith development interview, narrative exploration and fundamentalism, and authoritarianism scales. My responsibilities comprised of conducting faith development interviews based on the work of James Fowler on Stages of Faith. Moreover, the project included narrative interviews as well as administering questionnaires.

(2003-2004) Abortion attitudes and legality, an examination of legal opinions on abortion resistance.

As the primary researcher, I directed a research team that examined what abortion resistance actions study participants believed should be illegal. In addition, we examined what belief characteristics can determine, if any, how a participant will respond to hypothetical short stories of protest situations ranging from non-violent actions to violent actions against abortion clinics. Analysis constituted replications of previous successful studies using abortion resistance themes, a fundamentalism scale, questions on political beliefs and vignettes of a fictitious individual who bomb abortions clinics. Research participants were asked to respond to the vignettes, indicating whether they believed the abortion resistance action should be illegal and punished.

(2004) Perceptions of religious conversion effectiveness within the Hare Krishna movement in the Southeast United States.

As the primary researcher, I examined the International Society for Krishna Consciousness' perceptions of religious conversion strategy effectiveness. This included interviews with first and second generation devotees regarding their perceptions of conversion strategies within the ISKCON movement before and after the US Supreme Court ruling on proselytizing in airports. From the initial interviews conducted, a questionnaire was constructed from the common themes found in the interviews.

(2004) Understanding unconscious transference and improving lineup identification accuracy in adult and elderly witnesses.

Under the direction of Forensic Psychologist David Ross, I assisted as a research technology consultant and statistician for this forensic psychology research project. I provided technological consulting on project design, implementation and analysis. This venture examined how unconscious transference occurs when an eyewitness misidentifies a familiar but innocent person from a police lineup, specifically in people over the age of forty. Through my advisement, we are able to incorporate specific research technologies which provide efficiency and accuracy.

(2004) Faith development scale construction

In cooperation with Heinz Strieb, Barbara Keller, Ralph Hood, and Zach Smith; our team is designing a Faith Development scale which will assess the research participant's faith development based on the original interview structure designed by James Fowler. In past attempts to design a scale, researchers used the questions from the faith development interview; however, these scales have generally lacked statistical reliability. Our attempt to design a Faith Development scale will use the coding mechanism to interpret interviews and similar themes from interview conducted while focusing on current religious linguistics.

(2003-Present) Deconverts from Mainstream religious denominations in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America (Phase Two).

Through my role as research coordinator for the United States team, this pursuit is examining the life trajectories of deconverts from mainstream religious denominations. This project employs a number of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including the Fowler faith development interview, as well as narrative exploration and fundamentalism, authoritarianism scales and Bromley group classifications. Responsibilities include coordination of sampling and decision making for the United States research team, administration, observation and hiring of new researchers, and the project liaison to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. I also assist in the

preliminary data analysis for all qualitative and quantitative data collected.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methods, I have broad interests in the field of Psychology of Religion with a focus on eastern religious tradition's manifestation in the west. I am interested in Tibetan Buddhism in Southern Appalachia and the regional differences incurred within, religious converts from traditionally western religious traditions to eastern religious traditions, International Society for Krishna Consciousness revisited, Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat Communities in North America, Eastern based New Religious Movements, cross cultural comparison Religious Risk Rituals, and the psychological implications of Buddhist Mysticism. Finally, I am interested in evaluative methods used by alternative religious traditions in the south to assess dogmatic effectiveness of the religious message of the tradition for devotees and potential religious converts.

CURRENT RESEARCH

My current focus is on Tibetan Buddhism in the Southeast Appalachia region of the United States and on the exploration of leadership and the westernization of New Kadampa Buddhism in North America.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Part-time Psychology Professor – Miller Motte Technical College

- Introductory Psychology GS110, 2006-2007

Part-time Psychology Instructor – University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

- Introductory Psychology 101, 2006-2007
- Social Psychology 331, Fall 2006-2007

Graduate Instructor- Wilfrid Laurier University

- Religions of the Americas 2004-2005

Adjunct Assistant Professor - Chattanooga State Technical Community College

- Psychology of Learning 2003-2004
- Religions of the World Spring 2004 (Team teaching with Chattanooga State President Catanzaro with a web based WebCT and classroom course)

Graduate Instructor- UT Chattanooga

- Social Science Statistics Laboratory 2001-2003
- Distance Scholar and Research Coordinator 2004-Present

Instructional training

- WebCT - e-learning online system for educational institutions
- Blackboard – Online academic suite
- Statistics using SPSS for social science undergraduates
- Teaching and Instruction in qualitative coding using Nvivo 2.0

I am prepared to teach the following courses:

In Psychology

- Introductory Psychology
- Social Psychology
- Introduction to Statistics and SPSS
- Research Methods in Psychology
- Qualitative Methods using Nvivo 2.0
- Theory and Systems of Psychology
- Psychology of Religion

In Religious Studies

- Introduction to World Religions
- Theories of Religion
- New Religious Movements in the post modern era
- American Religious Diversity: A historical reconstruction of American religious pluralism.
- Religious Conversion Motifs in Modern Society
- Mysticism East & West
- Psychology of Religion: Theory and Method
- Southern Culture meets Eastern Religion

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Silver, Christopher F. (2001). The Relationship between Religious Knowledge, and Dogmatism in College Students. Presented at the annual meeting of Southeastern Psychological Association. Orlando, FL

Hood, Ralph W., Strieb, Heinz, Morris, Ronald, & Silver, Christopher F. (2002). Fundamentalism, Right Wing Authoritarianism Reconsidered in Light of an Intratextual Model of Fundamentalism. Presented at the annual meeting of The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, UT

Silver, Christopher F. & Hood, Ralph W (2003). Religious Ritual, Serpents and Recall; An Examination of Religious Ritual Recall and Recognition. Presented at the annual meeting of The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Norfolk, VA

Silver, Christopher F. (2003). "Blood-n-Fire" as a Facilitator of Spiritual Transformation. Presented at the annual meeting of The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Norfolk, VA

Silver, Christopher F. (2004). Atlanta Hare Krishna Devotee Perceptions of Proselytizing and Religious Conversion Effectiveness. Presented at the annual meeting of Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Atlanta, GA

Silver, Christopher F., Thorpe, Heriot & Hood, Ralph W. (2004) Participant Perceptions of Abortion Resistance and Terrorism. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association, Atlanta, GA

Hood, Ralph W. & Silver, Christopher F (2004). Quantitative Comparison of Religious Deconverts and Members in New Religious Movements. Presented at the annual meeting of American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI

Silver, Christopher F. & Rob Swanson (2004). Case Studies of Deconverts from New Religious Fundamentalism in the United States. Presented at the annual meeting of American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI

Silver, Christopher F (2004). "To Be or Not to Be": ISKCON, African Americans, and the Role of Initiation in the Identity of Gaudiya-Vaishnava Believers in the Southeastern United States. Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Kansas City, Missouri

Silver, Christopher F (2004). Critic on the book review panel of Margaret M. Poloma's *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (AltaMira Press). Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Kansas City, Missouri.

Ross, Christopher F. J. & Silver, Christopher F. (2005). Personality, Religious, and Spiritual Experiences within the New Kadampa Tradition of Buddhism. Presented at

the annual meeting of American Psychological Association, Washington DC.

Silver, Christopher F. (2005). "A Variety of Deconversion Trajectories Construction of a Typology: The Examination of Two Case Studies from the United States" Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Rochester, New York.

Silver, Christopher F. & Ross, & Christopher F. J. (2005). "Tibetan Buddhism in a New Key: An Exploration of New Kadampa Buddhism's Appeal to Non-Asian North Americans". Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Rochester, New York.

Silver, Christopher F. (2005). "The Undiscovered Country: Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat as a Redefinition of North American Hinduism". Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Rochester, New York.

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

Streib, H., Keller, B., Csöff, R., & Silver, Christopher F. (2008). Deconversion, Faith Development and Fundamentalism, Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Cross-Cultural Research in Germany and the United States of America, Book In Press

Silver, Christopher F. (2003). The Relationship between Religious Knowledge, and Dogmatism in College Students. *Modern Psychological Studies Journal*, 9 pp. 26-35

Krauss, Stephen W., Hood, Ralph W., Streib, Heinz, Keller, Barbara, Morris, Ronald J., & Silver, Christopher F., (2004). The Distinction between Authoritarianism and Fundamentalism in Three Cultures: Factor Analysis and Personality Correlates. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* (2006).

Silver, Christopher F (2004). Book Review: *Buddhism Is Not What You Think: Finding Freedom Beyond Beliefs*. by Steve Hagen; *Nova Religio* Vol. 9, No. 2.

Video Production

Silver, Christopher F. (Writer, Producer, and Editor). (2000) *Dharma in the South, An Exploration of Tibetan Buddhism in the Southeast United States [Documentary]* Chattanooga Tennessee: University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Presented at the annual meeting of Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Chattanooga, TN

REFERENCES

Dr. Ralph Hood, Professor of Psychology
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Additional references available upon request.