The International Association for the Psychology of Religion (IAPR) is an international organization promoting the scientific research and exchange within the field of the psychology of religion. The Association is not partial to any particular trend but aspires to provide a platform for the entire spectrum of the scientific-psychological study of religion for psychologists of religion from all over the world.

Website: [http://psychology-of-religion.com/](http://psychology-of-religion.com/)

### Become a member or renew your membership:

http://psychology-of-religion.com/about-the-iapr/membership/

### Benefits of membership:

1. Regular membership with the IAPR includes the subscription to the Archive for the Psychology of Religion. For regular members, print and online version are free.

2. Members of the IAPR pay reduced conference fees for the organization's conferences.

3. IAPR members receive special discounts for their subscriptions to:
   b) *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*: $100/£60/€80 instead of $386/£231/€441.

4. IAPR members receive the Association's e-mail newsletters which keep you in touch with the scientific community and inform you about conferences, job advertisements, funding opportunities, key publications, and the Association's latest developments and activities.
Dear IAPR members,

If you would like to add information in future newsletters please e-mail me the text! This may concern general announcements, conferences (future and report from past ones), job opportunities, key publications, or any other information you think IAPR members might be interested in. If you are an early career researcher (PhD student or postdoc) and would like to see some of your work featured in the newsletter, contact me!

Here is my contact information:

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Hi! My name is Megan Johnson Shen, and I am currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. I received my PhD in social/experimental psychology from Baylor University under the guidance and mentorship of my advisor, Dr. Wade C. Rowatt. While in graduate school, my research on the psychology of religiosity and spirituality focused on two main areas: 1) the role that religiosity/spirituality plays in predicting various forms of prejudice and 2) the role it plays in coping with terminal illness. In pursuing these areas, I developed three main lines of research. In my first line of research, I examined the influence of subliminal religious primes on attitudes toward various out-groups. In my work, I found that priming individuals with religious (vs. neutral) concepts led to increases in negative attitudes toward African Americans (Johnson et al., 2010), atheists (relative to Christians), Muslims (relative to Christians), and gay men (relative to homosexual men) (Johnson et al., 2012). I also ran behavioral lab studies, which demonstrated that priming with religious concepts (versus neutral) led to increases in aggressive behavior and decreases in prosocial behaviors toward atheists. In my second line of research, I examined the role of cognitively rigid ideologies (such as right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism) as a mediator of the relationship between religiosity and prejudice. My research demonstrated that these cognitively rigid ideologies fully mediated the relationship between general religiosity (as measured by attitudes, behaviors, and self-reported belief) and negative attitudes toward African Americans, gay men, atheists, and Arabs (Johnson et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012). Finally, in my third line of research, I examined the role of religiosity/spirituality in helping advanced stage cancer patients cope with their illness as well as the role of religiosity/spirituality in influencing patients’ willingness to discuss end-of-life care (Diaz-Montes, Johnson, Giuntoli, & Brown, 2012).

Upon completing my PhD, I took at postdoctoral fellowship at MSKCC, where I have been able to develop my third line of research further and apply my background in the psychology of religion to a cancer-based population. I am currently working on projects examining how religiosity/spirituality and ethnic/racial cultural beliefs influence patients’ decision-making surrounding cancer care, specifically focused on end-of-life care decisions. Projects I am working on include: examining the role of religiosity/spirituality as a coping mechanism for bereaved parents of a child with cancer, the differing role of religious/spiritual beliefs in influencing end-of-life care treatment among black and white patients, and examining the role of chaplaincy referrals in addressing psychological distress and reducing how aggressive of care patients seek at the end of life. In addition to these research projects, I am also currently working on systematic reviews of the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and quality of life outcomes among cancer patients as well as the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and quality of life outcomes among Latino cancer patients. Finally, I have been able to collaborate with the HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (HCCN) to develop training modules for chaplains to address psychological and spiritual distress among chronically ill patients.

My future plans include writing grant proposals to further my work in the area of religiosity/spirituality and ethnic/racial cultural influences on end-of-life care decision making among cancer patients. I am currently partnering with researchers both at Memorial Sloan Kettering and Weill Cornell Medical College to examine how targeting patients’ religious beliefs and contextualizing them within the framework of their disease trajectory can improve advanced care planning and reduce the number of aggressive and futile treatment decisions patients engage in.

For more information on my research, publications, and interests, please email me at shenm@mskcc.org or see my website at http://megsnogginbloggin.wordpress.com.
First Congress on the Construction of Personal Meaning: *Exploring What Makes Life Worth Living*

**Location and date:** Vancouver, July 24-27, 2014, at the Coast Plaza Hotel.

**Registration:** Visit [www.meaning.ca/conference/](http://www.meaning.ca/conference/)

This congress is co-organized by the *International Network on Personal Meaning (INPM)* and the *Constructivist Psychology Network (CPN)*.

Psychologists have increasingly recognized that meaning is central to human functioning and well-being. Although people in the community may not be able to articulate what meaning is, they do experience deep satisfaction in meaningful activities and relationships, and they are interested in finding out how to live a worthwhile and fulfilling life. Can psychology provide a roadmap that guides their search for meaning? Though the literature on meaning is rapidly growing, it is still in a state of flux and confusion, with researchers defining and assessing meaning differently. There is an urgent need for conceptual clarity, valid measures, and synthesis of existing research findings, in order to advance the science of meaning and provide a practical guide for all those interested in meaningful living.

This Congress is the only international conference totally devoted to the study of meaning from different disciplines and theoretical perspectives. Together, we will explore the fundamental issues of what makes life worth living such as:

- What is meaning in life? Is there a comprehensive definition?
- What makes life worth living regardless of circumstances?
- How is meaning related to happiness?
- In what ways are these two constructs different and similar?
- How does meaning contribute to healing and flourishing?
- What kinds of goals or values contribute to meaningfulness and why?
- Is meaning subjective, objective, or a mixture of both?
- Does meaningfulness of life depend on what one thinks or what one actually does?
- What are the objective standards of meaningfulness of life?
- How can we build a science of meaning beyond self-report measures?
- How does meaning evolve throughout the course of one’s life?
- Do we need ultimate meaning that transcends the self and its limitations?
- How could a secular meaning system give us a sense of ultimate meaning?

**Website:** [http://nsrn.net/2014-conference/](http://nsrn.net/2014-conference/)
Check out the Religious Studies Project's newest podcast on 'Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life' featuring Dr. Tatjana Schnell (recorded at the 2013 IAPR conference).

Location and date: 19-20 November 2014, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA

Call for papers: The conference welcomes papers that further expand our understanding of nonreligion and secularity. See website for list of topics. Abstracts for panels and presentations should be submitted to Ryan Cragun at ryantragan@gmail.com by 1 June 2014. Abstracts should be 250 words long and accompanied by a short biographical note.

Registration: opens in April

The study of nonreligion and secularity, long neglected by religion researchers, has recently become a growing field of inquiry. The NSRN is an international, interdisciplinary association of scholars from various fields (religious studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, history, etc.) who are interested in nonreligion, atheism, secularity, secularism, secularization – and related issues. Since the NSRN convened its first international conference in 2009 at the University of Oxford, UK, research and publications dealing with nonreligion and secularity have continued to increase and diversify. The third NSRN conference will reflect upon accumulated and newly emerging empirical work and focus attention on how these diverse phenomena can be explained. To what extent do they fit into existing theoretical frameworks, such as secularization theories, ‘desecularization’ theories and pluralist or ‘postsecular’ models? Do we need to refine these models, or even generate new theories altogether in order to understand the occurrence and nature of contemporary secular populations and nonreligious cultures?

Conveners:

- Ryan Cragun (ryantragan@gmail.com), Christel Manning (manningc@sacredheart.edu), and Phil Zuckerman (phil_zuckerman@pitzer.edu)

Keynote speakers:

- Professor Darren Sherkat (Sociology, Southern Illinois University)
- Professor Lori Beaman (Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa)

Website: http://nsrn.net/2014-conference/
By Lucy Bregman

In *The Ecology of Spirituality*, Lucy Bregman surveys the many and varied religious, psychological, and sociological definitions of spirituality on offer. Spirituality has been made and remade many times over in the hope of fitting it to some new cultural need. Bregman argues that a better understanding of spirituality is instead rooted in specific professions and practices, and she demonstrates that it is not an irrevocably ambiguous pop cultural phenomenon, but is embodied in historic virtues and practices of a craft. March 2014

Website:
The next deadline for open-submission call for proposals for the John Templeton Foundation will be October 1, 2014. Visit https://portal.templeton.org/login to apply.

The John Templeton Foundation (JTF) will distribute more than $150M of funding in 2015 (up from $93M in 2013) for topics that range from quantum physics to the evolution of cultural complexity. A proportion of these funds are dedicated to topics relating to the scientific study of religion and spirituality, including social, cognitive, clinical, personality, evolutionary, neuroscientific, and other psychological science approaches.

JTF gives grants for up to 3 years in duration and for projects ranging in scope from $50,000 to more than $5,000,000. There are no constraints on the nationalities of the principal investigator or project members. The application process begins with an Online Funding Inquiry (essentially a letter of intent); applicants who are successful at this first stage are invited to submit a more detailed full proposal. The process includes peer review and is highly competitive: ~85% of proposals considered in the Human Sciences portfolio are rejected at the first stage and ~50% are rejected at the second stage.

Learn more about JTF's grantmaking process here: http://www.templeton.org/what-we-fund/our-grantmaking-process

Learn more about Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision here: http://www.templeton.org/sir-john-templeton/philanthropic-vision