



Omohundro Institute
of Early American
History and Culture



Yale University

Religion and Violence in Early America

A Conference Co-Sponsored by Yale University
and the Omohundro Institute of
Early American History and Culture

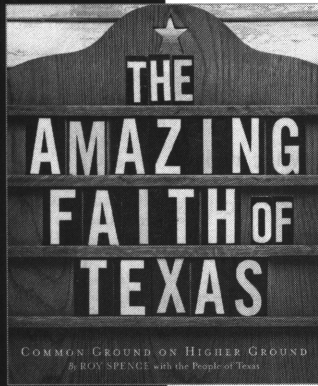
April 10–13, 2008

Call for Papers

From the perspective of the bloody wars of religion that consumed various parts of Europe during the Reformation and Counterreformation eras, religious violence in early American can seem negligible or even benign. Yet violence, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder, and the inhabitants of early North America certainly knew the pain of what anthropologists have called “sacred violence.” We hope the very definition of “sacred violence” will be a focus of debate at the conference, sparking conversations about how violence was sacralized in a colonial context but also about the ways religious beliefs and practices were used to mitigate or redirect violence in less destructive channels. This conference seeks to explore a variety of sites in North America from the seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries—the church, the courtroom, the scaffold, the battlefield, and the slave quarters, for example—where the relations of religion and violence are laid bare. The collision of European, Native and African cosmologies and practices make early North America a unique testing ground for theories about the role of violence in sustaining cultures of faith, economy, and collective and personal identity in a hostile and alien environment.

We encourage proposals that address how and in what venues violence was performed; how violent acts affected actors, victims, and spectators; why certain forms of violence were preferred or feared over others; and which elements of the intricate repertoire of sacred violence created by Europeans, Africans and Native Americans in their respective cultures were absorbed and transformed in the colonial encounter. Possible topics might include but are not limited to: the role of religion in colonial wars; the legal prosecution of heterodox beliefs or practices; the creative uses of violence within religious cultures; the destruction of religious objects, buildings, or communal sites; the violent reordering of cosmologies through the process of forced and voluntary migration; the role of print in fostering or mitigating religious violence; theologies of pain and suffering in cultural context; the psychological rupturing of notions of self and other in the act of conversion. We especially welcome proposals that are explicitly interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in nature, or which address the relationship of religion and violence from a transatlantic or crosscultural perspective.

Please submit written proposals of one to two pages outlining the subject, argument, and relevance to the conference theme, along with a brief c.v. Send as an email attachment, with the subject line "Religion and Violence Conference," to Kim Foley at kawahl@wm.edu by **March 1, 2007**. Questions may be directed to Christopher Grasso, Editor, *William and Mary Quarterly*, at cdgras@wm.edu.



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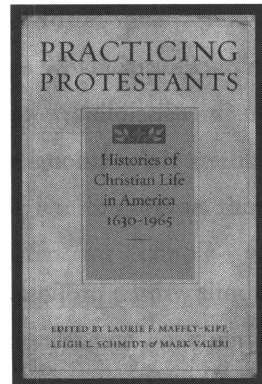
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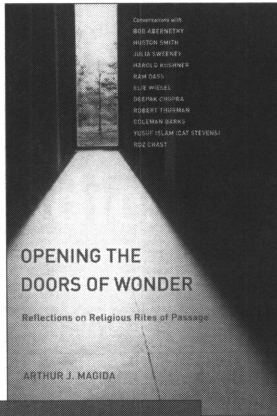
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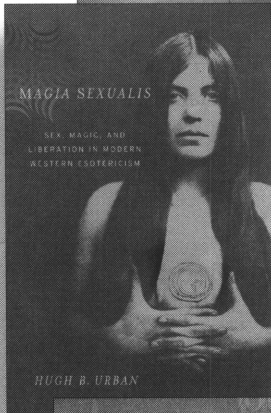
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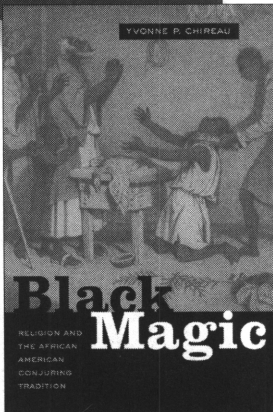
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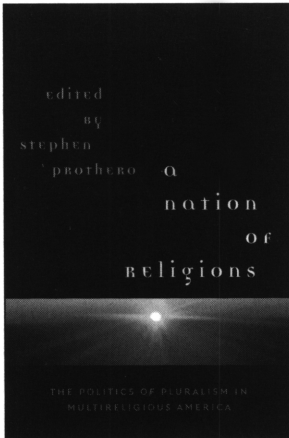
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