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Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we publish this first edition of *Fieldwork in Religion*'s third volume. Before moving further to detail its contents, however, I'd like to express my gratitude to the journal's co-founder and former editor Chris Partridge. Having become Professor in Religious Studies at Lancaster University, UK, Chris decided that it was time to relinquish his editorial duties in view of the varied responsibilities and stimulating challenges posed by his new post. Chris' original vision in respect of setting up *Fieldwork in Religion* and unstinting dedication to the editorial responsibilities brought by the journal deserve both acknowledgment and thanks. The journal's loss is Lancaster's gain.

The current volume comprises a collection of articles which treats a diverse range of topics through a variegated array of methodological approaches. Gerber's study of two North American Christian evangelical groups engaged in health-related ministries offers a much welcomed mixed-methods approach. Employing auto-biographical-narrative and discourse analysis, this article explores the paradoxical approaches (and, perhaps, ironic consequences) of Evangelical teaching in respect of fatness and homosexuality. Showing purportedly non-judgmental repertoires to be, in actuality, highly charged normative critiques, Gerber's paper underlines the morally precarious and potentially exclusive nature of certain "hate the sin, love the sinner" paradigms. In contrast, Foroutan's Australian-based study of female Muslim migrants from South Asia is a large-scale, quantitative analysis. Engaging statistical data furnished by the 2001 Population and Housing Census, this article offers both internal and comparative analyses which enable a better understanding of the challenges facing South Asian female Muslim migrants both as a group in their own right and as one among a number of constituencies populating the increasingly multicultural context of Australia. Foroutan's representation of the relevant data and subsequent analysis make a valuable contribution to ongoing

discussions about the relationship between religious-cultural identity and socio-economic opportunity.

By focusing upon the now cherished institution of the mid-week Bible study, James Bielo's case study of a Restoration Movement group offers an ethnographic reading of an important, but relatively neglected, component of the contemporary repertoire of American Evangelicalism. Bielo's article unites the established interpretative approaches of North American social science with the theoretical insights of European critical-sociology. In so doing, his qualitative treatment of the Bible-study context provides both a textured representation and insightful analysis of the religious-symbolic interactions through which meaning is fabricated and intimacy nurtured. Laycock's article provides a timely revisiting of the Mothman phenomenon which occurred subsequent to a fatal bridge collapse in Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Employing phenomenological and functionalist analyses of the various narrative threads in play, this paper offers an insightful understanding of both the evolutionary trajectory of Mothman discourse as a whole and the socio-economic roles played by its successive manifestations. Laycock's attention to the religious dimensions of Mothman discourse, in addition to its relationship with contemporary "occultural" phenomena, likewise broaden academic appreciation of its nature, development and function.