

TRANSFORMATIONAL POST- SECULARISM AFTER WORLD WAR II



Join us with Dr. Ben Schewel,
visiting from Duke University.

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at
2:30 pm in Birks Senior
Common Room (#100, Birks
Building, McGill University)**



McGill

In recent years, the term 'post-secular' has been increasingly used to describe the ongoing effort to envision forms of modernity in which religion plays an enduringly important role. Scholars like Saba Mahmood have rightly criticized this new, post-secular discourse for conflating secularism with anti-religious ideology. I nevertheless argue that there is a different and more coherent way of using the term 'post-secular,' and one that played an important role in the first discussions of the term after the Second World War. The basic claim of 'transformational' post-secularism, as I call it, is that contemporary humanity can only meet the challenges of globalization by establishing a new socio-spiritual order that transcends modern secularism without abandoning its commitment to diversity. I then argue that the Axial Age discourse, which arose in the post-war period and still flourishes today, should be considered a main site in which transformational post-secular deliberation has, over the last 70 years, evolved.

Benjamin Schewel is a Senior Fellow at the Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University, where he also collaborates with the Global Asia Initiative, Center for Global and International Studies. He is the Founding Director of the Center on Modernity in Transition, articulating the Kenan Institute's "Religions and Public Life" program. His first book, *Seven Ways of Looking at Religion*, was published by Yale University in Press in 2017. He is currently working on a second book, *Encountering the Axial Age*, which will also be published by Yale University Press.