In Western societies, the place of religion is controversial. Through individualization and secularization, it seems that religious inspiration is increasingly a matter for the individual. The question is whether religious motives can contribute in a positive way to social cohesion or social trust. Indeed: the question is whether transcendence (an awareness of the “higher”) does not still play an important role.

Adam B. Seligman, philosopher of religion at Boston University, has thought extensively about this theme. He has written about the foundations of the concept of civil society, about trust as a condition for social cohesion and about the indispensable role of ritual and transcendence in pluralistic societies. The Study Group Sociology of Religion and the Network Religion and Civil Society have invited him to speak about his work in the Netherlands.

In the second part of this meeting, Gabriël van den Brink will give a talk. He is a cultural sociologist, professor of Public Administration at the University of Tilburg and lector Community Safety at the Police Academy of the Netherlands. Van den Brink led the research project 'De lage landen en het hogere', and will discuss the role that transcendent inspiration and “higher” ideals continue to play in the Netherlands today.

Programme
13.30  Opening
13.40  Adam B. Seligman: On Transcendence and Society
14.20  Discussion
15.00  Break
15.20  Gabriël van den Brink: Transcending the Low Countries
16.00  Discussion
16.40  Closing and reception
N.B. Talks and discussions will be conducted in English.

Organisatie
Research network religion and civil society: www.hdc.vu.nl/res
Study group sociology of religion: godsdienstsociologie.religionresearch.org & netwerk godsdienstsociologie at Linkedin.

You are most welcome to attend this meeting (free of charge).