

Context of Religious Research

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Outdoors it was mostly rainy and gray, but inside the Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza the sessions at this year's annual meetings were lively and informative. Special thanks go to John Bartkowski, the 2004 program chair, who organized 20 RRA sessions and one joint SSSR/RRA session. Altogether there were 59 papers presented at RRA sessions plus four author-meets-critics sessions. On Friday evening outgoing RRA president Nancy Nason-Clark delivered an impassioned address in which she called for research that is caring and involved with the concerns of the people one studies.

As Nancy leaves the presidency, the RRA is strong. We currently have 500 members and 567 library subscribers to the *Review of Religious Research*. Pat Wittberg continues her capable editorship of the *Review*. The investments in our general reserve fund, ably monitored by our treasurer David Roozen, currently amount to a healthy two and one-quarter times our annual budget. Special thanks again go to Bill Swatos our executive officer who makes sure that everything that has to happen happens on time.

During the two years of my presidency I will continue RRA's tradition of emphasizing research that helps religious leaders understand their own religious organizations better. However, I hope to give special emphasis to research that bridges the often artificial boundary that is sometimes thought to separate "applied" from "theoretical" research-the kinds of research that denominational researchers do and the type of research that academically based researchers conduct. To that end, I have asked Keith Wulff of Presbyterian (PCUSA) Research Services to be the program chair for our 2005 annual meetings in Rochester, New York. The 2005 call for papers makes a special appeal for papers and sessions that either exemplify this bridging of applied and theoretical interests or facilitate future sharing of data and research results that make such "bridging" research possible. The call for papers appears later in this issue.

In keeping with the program theme I have selected Mark Chaves to give the 2005 H. Paul Douglass lecture. Mark's wide-ranging research across such varied topics as the ordination of women, financial giving to religion, secularization within religious organizations, and the political and social service activities of U.S. congregations exemplifies this bridging of practical and theoretical concerns.

The RRA is strong, and the future holds great potential. Please feel free to contact me, dolson@iusb.edu, with your concerns as well as your ideas for making the Religious Research Association even better.

Dan Olson

Indiana University South Bend

FUNDING

Constant H. Jacquet Research Awards

The RRA will make \$**14,000** available this year on a competitive basis for applied and basic research. Priority is given to applied projects, and funding over \$3,000 to any one proposal is granted only in cases of exceptionally high merit and significance. In this competition, *applied research* is defined as a project that has an identifiable organizational or institutional client who will use the research results for specific goal-centered activities. The Committee especially encourages proposal submissions from scholars who are in the early stages of their careers, as well as proposals from students.

Funding may be used for research expenses and *release* time, but not for supplemental income or capital equipment. Because funds are limited, applicants are also encouraged to seek support from alternative sources of funding. Applicants are required to be members of the RRA. Full-time students may join the Association at the time of their application. All others must hold membership in the RRA for *at least one full year* prior to the application deadline.

Applications must include *four* copies of: (a) a requested *Awards Application Form*, completed and signed; (b) a narrative summary of the proposed project, no longer than five double-spaced, typed pages; and (c) a one-page detailed budget.

The required Application Form can be obtained from the RRA website- <http://rra.hartsem.edu> -or by writing Penny Long Marler, Department of Religion, Samford University, Birmingham, AL 35229 (email, plmarler@samford.edu). Your application must be **received** by 1 April 2005.

Applicants will be notified of the disposition of their applications within 60 days and will be asked to submit a written acceptance of their awards within two weeks of notification. Recipients should plan to expend the grant within one year after accepting the award and should note RRA support in all reports of the research for which they received the grant. Award recipients are encouraged to submit their research reports for possible publication in the *Review of Religious Research*, subject to editorial review. An account of the expenditure of the grant is required, and if an article is not submitted to the *RRR*, a narrative of the research and its findings will be expected as well.

2004 awardees were Mary Bendyna, James Fenimore, Charlene McGrew, Anthony Pogorelc, and Rebecca Sager. The full amount (\$12,000) was awarded.

Joseph H. Fichter Research Awards

The *Association for the Sociology of Religion* will make available \$10,000 this year for promising research in either of two areas, prioritized as follows: (1) *gender issues, women and religion*, and *feminist perspectives* on religion; (2) *race/ethnicity and religion*. Applicants must be members of the ASR at the time of application. Dissertation research is included within the purview of the award. Those who have recently earned the doctorate are especially encouraged to apply.

A proposal of not more than five double-spaced, typed pages should outline the rationale and plan of research. A detailed budget should be attached, as should a vita. Send *four* copies of the proposal to: Ruth A. Wallace, Chair, 4908 41st Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20016-1710. Further information is available on the ASR Web site www.sociologyofreligion.com or by writing: rwallace@gwu.edu. *Deadline: 1 March postmark.*

SSSR Research Awards

The *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* has authorized several thousand dollars for its 2005 research awards competition. At least a one-fourth of the grants will go to persons who are graduate students or have held the doctorate for less than five years. Awards are intended to cover research expenses, travel, student assistance, and up to \$1,500 in stipend. Applicants must have been SSSR members for *at least one year* at the time they submit their proposals, which are limited in length to a maximum of five double-spaced, typed pages, including abstract and budget. The budget should include a rationale for expenditures. In addition, applicants should enclose a *brief* curriculum vitae listing their research and publications. For further information, consult the SSSR Web site, www.sssrweb.org or contact executive officer, Larry Greil, fgreil@alfred.edu.

MEETINGS

The *28th ISSR/SISR Conference* will be held *18-22 July 2005* in Zagreb, Croatia. The theme is ***Religion and Society: Challenging Boundaries***. For further information, contact SISR executive officer Karel Dobbelaere, sisr@soc.kuleuven.ac.be.

The *Association for the Sociology of Religion* will meet *13-15 August* in Philadelphia. The theme is ***Religion, Politics, and the State at Home and Abroad***. Plenary events include the Presidential Address of Jay Demerath and the Paul Hanly Furfey lecture by Dipankar Gupta. Contact: David Yamane, Program Chair: ASR2005@wfu.edu. The call for papers is also on the ASR Website: www.sociologyofreligion.com. Deadlines: 15 January for session proposals, 15 February for paper abstracts. The *ASA Sociology of Religion Section* also meets in Philadelphia at this time, as does the *Society for the Study of Social Problems*. For up-to-date information on these organizations' activities, consult their respective sites: www.asanet.org/section34/index.html and <http://www.sssp1.org>.

ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Results of the 2004 RRA General Election are: Nominations Chair, Dean Hoge; Directors-at-Large, John Bartkowski and Peter Beyer; Nominating Committee, John O'Hara and Pat Wittberg. The amendment to the by-laws also on the ballot was enacted. David Roozen was also re-elected by the Board to another two-year term as Treasurer.

The 2005 Nominating Committee seeks member input. This year a new president-elect, secretary, two board members, two nominating committee members, and a chair for the new Publications Committee will be elected. If you wish to offer a name (including your own), contact Dean Hoge at Sociology, Catholic University, Washington, DC 20064; hoge@cua.edu. The Committee will be happiest to hear from you as close after the start of 2005 as possible.

Religious Research Association 2005 Annual Meeting

Congregations, Denominations and Research on Religion: Promoting Cooperation

November 4-6 - Hyatt Regency - Rochester, New York

Although the behavioral study of religion now extends far beyond the narrow study of religious organizations, RRA was established, in part, to focus on denominational research. While denominational researchers often collect data to answer practical questions, many academic researchers are unaware that these same data sources could address a broad range of more general theoretical questions. Moreover, academically based scholars sometimes have access to research results that would be of great interest to denominational researchers. As always, we encourage papers on any topic related to the behavioral study of religion, but this year we especially invite papers and sessions that (1) describe denominationally collected data and their availability to other researchers, (2) make use of such data to answer either applied and/or more theoretical questions, or (3) present results that would be of special interest to denominational researchers and religious leaders. We hope sessions this year can build bridges between the rich sources of data that exist and the applied and theoretical questions waiting to be answered.

1. Examples of possible papers and sessions on denominational data sources

Denominational web pages as a source of data

Survey data collected by denominations

Congregational yearbook data collected by denominations

Pitfalls and solutions in working with denominational data

Availability of denominationally collected data

2. Examples of topics that might use denominational data

Factors involved in congregational growth/decline

Congregational and contextual factors affecting member giving and attendance rates

The parish ministry as a profession

Relationship between clergy's mental health and religious doubt

Effect on congregations of receiving government funding ("Faith Based Initiatives")

Generational differences in religious giving and attendance

Relationship among generations in immigrant congregations

3. Examples of topics of special interest to denominational researchers and leaders

Congregational web pages: purposes, use and effectiveness

Religion social capital and health

Relationship between government funding of welfare and charitable giving

Generational differences in charitable giving

The future of denominations

Taxation, consumer society and religious giving

Send proposals to:

Keith M. Wulff
Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
email: kwulff@ctr.pcusa.org
100 Witherspoon St
Louisville, KY 40202
Fax: 502 569 8736

Include email address on all proposals

Session proposals due: January 15, 2005

Paper proposal due (title and abstracts of 150 words or less) March 15, 2005

Completed papers due to discussant: September 30, 2005