

Context of Religious Research

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear RRA Colleagues:

Shortly you should be receiving the preliminary program from the SSSR office for our joint 50th Anniversary Celebration meeting in Boston, 5-7 November. I hope you are already planning on attending—but if you are not, then I hope that seeing the program will change your mind! As usual, the worst thing I can see about it is that there are so many good offerings that choice making will be a challenge. Our program chair, Joy Charlton, has been working hard to put together an excellent series of offerings. We also especially look forward to the H. Paul Douglass Lecture to be given this year by Loren Mead, retired founding director of the Alban Institute. Mead has made his mark as an interpreter of our research to solve problems in church life, especially at the congregational level.

An important part of the summer issue of *Context* is the nominating committee's slate of officers. Paula Nesbitt and the nominating committee you elected have assembled an able list of candidates. This year's election includes the President Elect and Secretary, as well as members of our Board of Directors and Nominating Committee. Your ballot must be postmarked by 15 September in order to be counted. Please note that there are also a by-law amendments to be voted on. [Neither the slate of officers nor the by-law changes have been posted to the web].

Some of you are delinquent in paying your 1999-2000 dues, about which please be attentive. We would also be greatly appreciative if you would use your influence wherever it can appropriately be employed to secure additional library subscriptions for the *Review*. Library subscriptions are crucial to our organizational health, and the *Review* is one of the best journal buys around. 

We are beginning to make the transition of business operations from Washington to Holiday, but please note that the business office remains in Washington until the end of the year. Business office correspondence that is sent to Holiday simply has to be forwarded there. Transitions are farther underway in the editorial offices, and you should be receiving a redesigned, temporarily larger *Review of Religious Research* this fall—probably a month later than usual, but after that we should be back on schedule. Not only do we have new editors, but a new printer and a new shipping system as well.

Have you returned your questionnaire on the future direction of RRA and RRA/SSSR relations? If not, please do so quickly. We want to have as wide a representation of our membership as possible, and the results need to be tabulated for this November's meeting.

Bill Swatos

MEETINGS

The Parliament of World Religions will convene in Cape Town, South Africa, 1-8 December 1999. Two regional conferences in North America to introduce potential participants to the Parliament will be held in September: on the 9th in Louisville, Kentucky, and on the 16th in Vancouver, British Columbia. More information is available on the Parliament web site www.cpwr.org.

The BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group will hold its annual conference 29 March-1 April 2000 at the University of Exeter on the topic "Prophets and Predictions." The conference will celebrate 25 years of the

Study Group and honor the contributions of David Martin and Bryan Wilson. The primary questions the conference seeks to address are: For whichever specific expression of spirituality or religious interest, time, place or society you study, what have been the effects of modernization? And assuming you are right about the past, what follows for the future? The more specific your prediction, the better! For general information contact g.r.c.davie@exeter.ac.uk. Submit paper proposals to p.heelas@lancaster.ac.uk. The registration deadline is 15 February. The paper proposal deadline is 15 January.

The Association for the Sociology of Religion will hold its annual meetings 11-13 August 2000 at the Omni Shoreham, Washington, DC. The theme is "Religion and Global Civil Society." Randal Hepner is program chair. The deadline for submission of session proposals is 15 January; for abstracts, 15 February. Contact Randy at hepnerr@pilot.msu.edu.

IN MEMORIAM

We regret to announce the death of Ross P. Scherer (1922-1999), Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Loyola University Chicago, and 1976-1977 President of the RRA. Ross died unexpectedly at his home on February 25th . Ordained in the Lutheran ministry, Ross completed his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1963 and served the National Council of Churches from 1963 to 1966, when he joined the Loyola faculty, where he helped establish the department's national reputation in the sociology of religion. RRA members will be particularly familiar with his 1980 book, American Denominational Organization. Fred Kniss observes, "Those who knew Ross well will miss his warm heart, friendly spirit and deeply committed interest in religious people and their organizations." Ross is survived by his wife, Doris, and three children.