

Context of Religious Research

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 2007 annual meeting in Tampa is now history, and we look forward to our next meeting in 2008. We were honored this year to have Randall Collins deliver the H. Paul Douglass lecture, entitled “The Four Ms of Religion: Magic, Membership, Morality and Mysticism.” His address was a stimulating theoretical perspective on religious practice and its current evolution. It was very well received by a large audience, and I anticipate its publication in the *Review of Religious Research*. I also hope we will hear more from Dr. Collins on this topic in the future.

The program, organized around the theme “Changing Religious Forms and Connections” by Scott Thumma, included nineteen regular RRA sessions, six joint RRA/SSSR sessions, as well as the Douglass lecture and the RRX breakfast. The program included several sessions well within the theme, dealing with organizational networks, advisory councils in Catholic parishes, megachurches, and new religious movements. Other sessions considered Catholic identity, religious growth and decline, race and ethnicity issues, and clergy leadership. Several books were presented by their authors and discussed by panels. Sessions were well attended and lively, despite the lure of beaches and the warmth of central Florida.

Next year our meeting will be in Louisville, Kentucky at the Seelbach Hilton Hotel, October 17-19. The Seelbach is a lovely old four-diamond hotel, which opened in 1905. In addition to Al Capone and F. Scott Fitzgerald, famous guests have included nine US Presidents and at least one ghost. Mark it on your calendar to attend. And also note that the deadline for session proposals is January 31 and paper proposals, March 15. Our program theme is “Conflict and Renewal/Stability and Tradition: What is a (Religious) Body to Do?” The call for papers includes many topics around the theme—conflict within and among religious bodies, renewal movements and institutional change, growth and diversity, power and authority relationships, and religiously inspired terrorism. A full copy of the call appears on the final page of this issue of *Context*, along with contact information for me and for Adair Lummis, who will serve as associate program chair.

The meetings in Louisville will also mark the 50th anniversary of the *Review of Religious Research*. To mark this event, a special issue of the *Review*, edited by Jackson Carroll, will be published. The issue will feature significant articles from prior issues of the *Review*, along with commentaries by past editors or others involved in the publication process. There will also be a special reception at the meeting sponsored by the Louisville Institute. We thank Jack Carroll and Jim Lewis for their contributions to the RRA and the upcoming meetings.

The *Review* has continued to thrive under the editorship of Pat Wittberg in 2007. Although Pat will edit two more issues of the *Review* in 2008, we also selected a new editor, Anthony J. Blasi, and all new manuscripts should now be sent to Tony (blasi3610@cs.com). Albert A. Herzog will serve as book review editor (herzoga3@sbcglobal.net).

The finances of RRA continue to look good, and I think Bill Swatos, our Executive Officer, and David Roozen, our Treasurer, for the excellent work they do.

C. Kirk Hadaway
The Episcopal Church Center

FUNDING

Constant H. Jacquet Research Awards

The RRA will again make \$17,000 available this year for applied and basic research. Priority is given to applied projects, and funding over \$4,000 to any one proposal is granted only in cases of exceptional significance. (This represents a \$1,000 increase to the intended maximum, approved by the Board in November.) 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 hard copies of: (a) an 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. Materials will not be returned.

The required Application Form can be obtained from the RRA website—<http://rra.hartsem.edu>. The site also provides the address information for submitting your materials. Your application must be received by 1 April 2008.

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. If an article is not submitted to the RRR, a narrative of the research and its findings will be expected instead.

The 2007 awardees were Kraig Beyerlein (University of Arizona), Philip Michael Fountain (Australian National University), Karen Monique Gredd (University of Notre Dame), Kevin A. Harris (Ball State University), Carrie S. Konold (University of Michigan), and Michael K. Romer (University of Texas).

Of the 22 applications that were received in 2007, five were immediately excluded for failure to meet the criteria of the program. If you are interested in applying for a Jacquet award, it is important that you read these carefully both to ensure that you are eligible and that your application is both in order and timely. The chair of the Jacquet Committee this year is Bob Woodberry of the University of Texas (bobwood@mail.la.utexas.edu), UT Austin Sociology, 1 Univ Station A1700, Austin, TX 78712.

Joseph H. Fichter Research Awards

The Association for the Sociology of Religion will make available \$22,000 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) religion and disaster. Applicants must have been members of the ASR in 2007 and be current members at the time of application. (Thus if you are not a member of ASR as you read this, you may not apply in the 2008 cycle. This announcement is included here for information purposes in respect to future applications—i.e., if you want to apply in the future, you need to join now.) Gender-related research is consistently the first priority within the Fichter program; for 2009 the secondary priority is religion and poverty. The ASR Web site address is www.sociologyofreligion.com.

SSSR Awards and Grants

The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion has authorized several thousand dollars for its 2008 research awards competition. These separate grant and awards programs for students and for those who already hold the doctorate and for foreign scholars to attend the RRA/SSSR annual meeting. As with RRA and ASR awards, applicants must in all cases be SSSR members and in some cases there is a one-year advance membership requirement. The SSSR Web site is www.sssrweb.org. Grants and awards are specifically detailed at www.sssrweb.org/awards.cfm#JSRA.

ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Results of the 2007 RRA general elections are: President-elect: Keith L. Wulff; Secretary: Deborah Bruce; Directors-at-Large, Laurence Iannaccone and Paula Nesbitt; Nominating Committee, Kevin Dougherty and Christopher Ellison.

The 2008 Nominating Committee seeks member input. This year a Nominating Committee Chair, two board members, and two nominating committee members will be elected. If you wish to offer a name (including your own), contact Adair Lummis, 98 Girard Ave., Hartford, CT 06105; alummis@hartsem.edu. The remaining members of the committee in addition to those just elected are Marjorie Royle and Martin Smith. The Committee needs to hear from you by 1 April for your suggestions to get fullest consideration.

MEETINGS

The BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group conference, Religion & Youth, will be held 8-10 April at Selly Oak, Birmingham. See

www.socrel.org.uk/conferences/Birmingham%202008/callforpapers.html.

The 31st Implicit Religion Consultation at Denton Hall, Yorkshire, will be held 9-11 May. The 2008 conference has several themes. See www.implicitreligion.org.

The Association for the Sociology of Religion will meet 31 July-2 August at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers. The theme is Religion Crossing Boundaries. The session proposal deadline is 31 January; papers proposals must be in by 28 February. ASR membership is required for program participation. Queries should be directed to Program Chair Jim Spickard at ASR2008@coolsociology.org. Submissions should be sent to ASR2008@augustana.edu. Mary Jo Neitz will deliver the 2007 ASR Presidential Address.

The European Mormon Studies Association will hold its annual conference in Turku, Finland, 21-22 August, on Mormonism and the Christian Tradition. For further information: www.euromormonstudies.com.

A summer course on Religion and Politics: The Presence of Sacred and Secular Traditions in Europe and the Middle East will be held at the Central European University, Budapest, 14-25 July. The tuition is EUR500. See: <http://www.sun.ceu.hu/religion>.

Future meetings of the RRA are scheduled for Denver, 23-25 October 2009, and Baltimore 2010, exact dates TBA. It may also be helpful for you to know that cost considerations, largely connected to the use of overhead projectors, will force regular registration fees at our meetings, beginning in 2008 to rise to \$85. The SSSR banquet will no longer be held, nor will there be free coffee. These decisions were made by SSSR, but in consultation with us. Several options were considered, and this was the one the SSSR Council chose.

NECROLOGY

It is with deep regret that we note the deaths of Miriam Johnson, wife of Past President Benton Johnson and professional sociologist in her own right, of lung cancer in late November, and of Lowell Livezey, of New York Theological Seminary and director of the Ecologies of Learning Project there, of pancreatic cancer in early December. May they rest in peace.