

Context of Religious Research

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear RRA Colleague:

The Preliminary Program for our *annual meeting in Columbus, 18-20 October* can be accessed through our Web site: <http://rra.hartsem.edu>. Take a look! Hotel information is there, too. Later in the summer you should receive print material for registration through the mail as well. This year we will return to the traditional three-day layout of sessions, wherein we begin on Friday morning and continue into early Sunday afternoon. I hope you were already planning on attending-but if you were 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, Bob Beckley, has been working hard to put together an excellent series of offerings. We also especially look forward to Dave Roozen's Douglass Lecture.

An important part of the summer issue of *Context* is the Nominating Committee's slate of officers. Kirk Hadaway and the nominating committee you elected have assembled an able list of candidates. This year's slate includes the President-Elect and a new Secretary, as well as members of our Board of Directors and Nominating Committee. There are also two by-law amendments. Your ballot must be *postmarked by September 4th* in order to be counted. Envelopes are provided for this purpose. 

Some members are late in paying their 2001-2002 dues. If you are among them, please give this your immediate attention. A red mark on your label is your clue. If you wish, you may pay your dues by placing a check (\$24 sustaining; \$12 student) in the *outside* envelope when you return your ballot.

An exciting development for RRA members is a project in cooperation with *Hartford Seminary* under the direction of Scott Thumma, who coordinates media relations for both the RRA and SSSR, as well as serving as chair of our Research Planning Committee. Drawing upon members from both organizations as well as ASR and the ASA Sociology of Religion Section - and possibly other groups based outside the U.S., Scott is going to be assembling a Web-based list of people whom the media can contact for expert input into stories they are doing. This will also be linked to an extensive annotated sociology of religion bibliography, provided by Tony Blasi. This is an important step forward for social scientific scholarship in the study of religion. You can find more information about this project at www.hartfordinstitute.org/directoryproject.html.

Bill Swatos

CONFERENCES

It is still not too late to attend either (or both) the *ASR annual meeting*, "Religion and Societal Marginality," 17-19 August, in Anaheim (with ASA sociology of religion section sessions following)-consult the ASR Web site, www.sociologyofreligion.com - or the *SISR 26th International Conference*, "Interpreting Religion Today: Competing Processes and Paradigms," to be held at Ixtapan de la Sal (outside Mexico City), 20-24 August-contact SISR Secretary-General, Louise Fontaine, fontaine@ustanne.ednet.ns.ca.

The *BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group* plans a Study Day 17 November at St. Mary's College, Twickenham (suburban London). There will be two parallel streams, one on "Contemporary Issues in

Catholicism" and the other entitled "Mainstream Religions-Conflicts, Diasporas, Issues." More information and forms can be obtained from the Study Group's Web site: www.socrel.org.uk

A conference on *Religion, Crime & Punishment* will be held 24-25 September at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando. Speakers come from a variety of academic and applied perspectives *Jim Beckford* will particularly represent the sociology of religion. See: www.dce.ucf.edu/rcp

Queer Visions in the Americas: A Conference on LGBT/Queer Studies in Religion, will be held 24-26 May, at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The format will include plenary speakers and panels, discussion sessions, an evening film presentation, and paper panels. Abstracts are due 15 December. For more information, contact Melissa M. Wilcox in Religious Studies at UCSB: wilcox@humanitas.ucsb.edu.

The ISA Research Committee on the Sociology of Religion (RC22) invites proposals for papers to be presented at the XV ISA World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, 7-13 July. Details of the themes and conveners of the various sessions may be obtained from the ISA Congress Web site: www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2002/rc/rc22.htm. Abstracts of proposals should reach the relevant convener no later than 30 September, but note that some sessions may close prior to that, if a convener has sufficient material to meet his or her needs.

PUBLICATIONS

Research News & Opportunities in Science and Theology is edited by *Harold Koenig*. You can receive a free six-month subscription to this monthly periodical and read about findings, funding opportunities, and discussions on the relationship between religion, science, and health. Launched last September and now distributed worldwide, *RN&OST's* free subscription offer is available for a limited time only. Call 800-334-0678 or email demandcpm@hotmail.com.

Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society through the Aum Affair, edited by Robert J. Kisala and *Mark R. Mullins* has been published by Palgrave.

David O. Moberg has published an edited collection, *Aging and Spirituality: Spiritual Dimensions of Aging Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* this spring with Haworth Press.

Teaching Positions

University of Texas-Austin. The Department of Sociology anticipates receiving authorization for two tenure-track Assistant Professor positions with a starting date of September 2002.

Areas of specialization must include the sociology of religion. Other areas are open. Successful candidates should have a strong publication record and show potential for funded research. We will

consider only those individuals who have completed all requirements for the Ph.D. prior to the time of appointment. Screening will begin

October 1 and continue until the positions are filled.

Interested candidates should submit a letter of introduction, curriculum vita, a writing sample, and letters of reference to, Search Committee Chair, Dept. of Sociology, Burdine 336, The University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712-1088.

The University of Texas is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and Educator.

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

NANCY NASON-CLARK is Professor of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. She obtained her Ph.D. from the LSE. Her most recent book, *No Place for Abuse* (co-authored with Catherine Clark Kroeger) was published earlier this year by InterVarsity Press, and a co-edited special issue of *Sociology of Religion* (with Mary Jo Neitz) will be released in book form later this year by AltaMira Press. She is the author of *The Battered Wife: How Christians Confront Family Violence* (Westminster/John Knox 1997) and numerous articles appearing in such journals as the *RRR*, *SA*, *Social Compass*, *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, and *Canadian Women's Studies*. Her 1999 article in the *Journal of Family Ministry* won the "best article" award of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. She has written 15 chapters for scholarly collections. Currently Nancy is editor of *Sociology of Religion (SoR)*, the official journal of the ASR, and serves on a number of boards, including World Hope Canada. She is past president of the Association for the Sociology of Religion, has served on the councils of the RRA, ASR, and SSSR, and in the role of SSSR Program Chair. She is currently completing a book entitled *Congregations and Family Crisis*, supported by a grant from the Louisville Institute.

DON LUIDENS (M.Div., Princeton; Ph.D., Rutgers) has been on the faculty at Hope College in Holland, Michigan since 1977 and has served as Sociology Department chair since 1987. His research focuses on the mainline Protestant community, with special emphasis on the Reformed Church in America (where he has been a *de facto* denominational researcher through four denomination-wide surveys and numerous congregational studies since 1976) and the Presbyterian Church (USA). Most recently, Don represented the RCA in the Lilly-funded Faith Communities Today (FACT) and the Organizing Religious Work (ORW) projects, both under the auspices of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. He is co-author of *Vanishing Boundaries: Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers* (Westminster/John Knox) and co-editor of *Rethinking Secularization* (University Press of America), *Reformed Vitality: Continuity and Change in the Face of Modernity* (also UPA), and *Reformed Encounters with Modernity: Perspectives from Three Continents* (forthcoming from Media-Com of South Africa); his articles have appeared in the *RRR*, *JSSR*, and *SoR*, as well as *Church Herald*, *Christian Century*, and *Reformed Review*. Don has served as RRA's Nominating Committee Chair, Secretary, and is currently an at-large Director on its Board. In 1994 Don was a founding member of the International Society for the Study of Reformed Communities and has served on the ISSRC's Steering Committee since then.

CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY

MICHAEL CIESLAK is the director of research and planning for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockford, Illinois, where he has served since 1984. In this position he is responsible for projects dealing with strategic planning, research and evaluation, and parish development. Recently he designed, and was executive director of, a comprehensive planning process which involved 105 diocesan parishes and 300 trained volunteers in creating pastoral plans for each parish in response to parishioner evaluations and demographic realities. He serves as the chair of the Catholic Research Forum, an association of researchers and planners affiliated with the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development. Mike has been published in the *RRR*, *Today's Parish*, and *ParishWorks*.

JAMES K. WELLMAN, JR. Since receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1995, Jim has taught in the Comparative Religion Program at the University of Washington. He is also an active Presbyterian minister. His books include *The Gold Coast Church and the Ghetto* (University of Illinois, 1999) and a co-edited volume *The Power of Religious Publics* (Praeger, 1999). His articles include "Religious Organizational Identity and Homosexual Ordination: A Case-Study of a Protestant Denomination" in a topical section of an issue of the *RRR*, for which he served as guest editor. With recent research grants he has been studying West Coast urban churches. In 1997 he served as program chair for RRA, and subsequently helped to redesign our brochure as a part of the ad hoc Committee on the Future. Jim also chaired the Awards Committee in 2001.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIANA R. GARLAND is Chair of the School of Social Work at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. She also serves as Director of the Baylor Center for Family and Community Ministries. She is Editor of the journal *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith* and Senior Editor of *AM/FM*, a quarterly audiotape publication that reviews current developments in family ministry. She previously served as Dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky. Diana is author, co-author, or editor of fourteen books. The most recent is *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (InterVarsity Press), winner of the 2000 Book of the Year Award of the Academy of Parish Clergy.

FRED KNISS is Associate Professor of Sociology at Loyola University Chicago, where he is Director of the McNamara Center for the Social Study of Religion. He is the author of *Disquiet in the Land: Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities* (Rutgers), as well as a number of articles and chapters on such topics as "culture wars," cultural resources in social movements, and faith-based international relief and development organizations. His current research is a study of new immigrant religious communities in Chicago. Fred served as RRA Program Chair in 1996. He has served as a member the Executive Council of the ASR, Membership Chair of the ASA Section on Sociology of Religion, Book Review Editor of *SoR*, and Associate Editor of *AJS*.

CRAIG THIS is Director of the Office of Research & Planning, General Council on Ministries, The United Methodist Church. He is a member of ASR, SSSR, and RRA. He has presented papers at RRA sessions, and he currently serves on the RRA ad hoc Committee on the Future. He is project director of Mapping the Miami Valley (affiliated with the Pluralism Project) and has presented at the Symposium on Baseball and American Culture (at the Baseball Hall of Fame). Although trained as a historian, he is pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Cincinnati.

CHARLES (CHUCK) ZECH is a Professor of Economics at Villanova University, where he has served on the faculty since 1974. He received his Ph.D. from Notre Dame University. He is the author or co-author of over 50 journal articles and four books, including *Money Matters* and *Why Catholics Don't Give*. He was a participant in Yale University's "Project on Religious Institutions" and Duke's "United Methodism and American Culture" project. In addition to his academic research, he serves as a consultant to a number of judicatories and congregations.

CANDIDATES FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

JOHN P. BARTKOWSKI is Associate Professor of Sociology at Mississippi State University. Much of his current research examines the relationship between religious involvement, social inequality, and family

life. He has held office in various professional organizations, including Chair of the Membership Committee for SSSR. His work has appeared in *RRR*, *JSSR*, and *SoR*, as well as *Social Forces*, *Responsive Community*, *Sociological Quarterly*, *Gender & Society*, *Journal of Family Issues*, and other journals. His book, *Remaking the Godly Marriage: Gender Negotiation in Evangelical Families*, was published this year by Rutgers University Press. John is in the process of completing monographs on faith-based welfare reform (charitable choice) and the PromiseKeepers.

PERRY CUNNINGHAM is Manager of Research Information for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a position he has held for the past 20 years. He received a PhD in Organizational Behavior from the University of Michigan and taught in the School of Management at the University of Calgary before joining the research office of the LDS Church. He has been affiliated with RRA for over 15 years. For the past six years, he has been an active member of the research team that designed the Cooperative Congregational Studies Project. He is an avid film buff and collects jazz and blues LPs.

STEPHEN HART received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught at Wesleyan University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and SUNY-Buffalo; and directed research for the Lutheran Church in America and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He currently conducts medical research at Frontier Science and Technology Research Foundation. His publications include two books: *What Does the Lord Require: How American Christians Think about Economic Issues* (Oxford 1992; expanded ed. Rutgers 1996); and *Cultural Dilemmas of Progressive Politics: Styles of Engagement among Grassroots Activists* (Chicago 2001). He has also published articles on subjects such as responses among church members to changes in family life; the cultural and religious dimension of social movements; and privatization in American religion.

MELINDA BOLLAR WAGNER received her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and is a professor of anthropology at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. Her work on religion in America has included *Metaphysics in Midwestern America* (Ohio State University Press, 1983) and *God's Schools: Choice and Compromise in American Society* (Rutgers, 1990). Her research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Lilly Endowment/Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals. She is also the associate chair of the Appalachian Studies Program at Radford University, and has recently turned her attention to efforts at cultural conservation by directing a five county-wide ethnographic study of cultural attachment to land.



BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

1) Amend by-law I. Sec. 6: To retain only the first sentence, "All dues shall be payable annually in advance of July 1 for the ensuing fiscal year."

Rationale: The remainder of the by-law, which supplies a billing and penalty cycle, is unnecessarily specific, cumbersome, and costly in its consequences.

2a) Amend by-law III. Sec. 3a, the concluding words of the second sentence: ". . . past president for a one-year term."

2b) Amend by-law V. Sec. 3, to read: "In the absence or incapacity of the president, the past president shall serve as acting president and shall perform any functions assigned to the office of the president that the president is unable to perform. When there is no past president in office, such duties shall devolve upon the president elect."

Rationale: The present two-year term of past president requires an extended commitment from that person that is not warranted by the stability now realized within the organization by the services of the executive officer's position.

If you wish to consult it, the full text of the by-laws is on the Web site in the section "About the RRA."

