

Context of Religious Research

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mark the date — November 5-7, 1999. It's our Fiftieth Anniversary celebration, when RRA members will convene at the Swissôtel in Boston to commemorate fifty years of creative activity in research by and about religious organizations. Plans are already taking shape for what will be a memorable meeting. Joy Charlton is preparing the program. Check her call for papers printed later in this newsletter. She has developed a broad theme to enable us to take stock of our accomplishments and share the results of our current work. The 1999 meeting will feature the biennial H. Paul Douglass Lecture, delivered this year by Loren B. Mead, researcher, author, and founder of the Alban Institute, an organization long devoted to assisting churches in reaching their full potential. The meeting will also feature several "anniversary" sessions, which are being structured by Bill Silverman. As usual, we will meet jointly with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. The Swissôtel is a fine venue—good meeting rooms and comfortable accommodations. So please plan to join us in Boston!

The 1998 meeting in Montréal was a great success. Using the theme "Reaching Across Boundaries: Religious Research That Makes a Difference," Ken Bedell produced a full program of 29 excellent sessions. RRX held a productive breakfast meeting Sunday morning, led by Cynthia Wollever, who has agreed to continue to serve as chair of the RRA Research Planning Committee, which manages RRX. Thanks, Cynthia! The highlight of this year's meeting was the presidential address by Carl Dudley of Hartford Seminary. His lecture, entitled "Significant Research: When Information Has Impact," presented new models of the dissemination of research results which can greatly enhance the likelihood that a project's findings will impact the system under study.

Annual meetings always signal beginnings and endings of work done by officers. This year marked the end of Carl Dudley's service as RRA President. It completed Ben Johnson's term as Past President. RRA has benefited greatly from the devotion of these two leaders. Thanks, gentlemen, for your good work! The 1998 meeting also saw Paul Johnson complete nine years as Editor of the Review of Religious Research. During those years the journal has remained strong, publishing excellent articles that enjoy a wide readership and numerous citations in subsequent work. Well done, Paul!

The Montréal meeting involved some unique discussions of the relations between RRA and other professional societies, particularly the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. The membership and programs of RRA have shifted during its fifty-year history, and that drift could have implications for the ways in which RRA serves its members. In view of those considerations, the Board of Directors appointed a committee to review RRA programs and relations with other research structures. You will probably hear from them in the near future as they contact you to ask your opinions about several related issues. Please give them your cooperation. The committee will report the results of its inquiry at the meeting in Boston.

So RRA is alive and well, thanks in part to your participation. Keep it up! And again, please plan to join us for our Fiftieth Anniversary celebration in Boston next November.

Edward Lehman
SUNY, Brockport

MEETINGS

The British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group's annual conference, entitled Religion & Identity will be held 7-10 April 1999 at the University of Durham. Deadline for submitting paper abstracts is 15 January. Contact Simon Coleman S.M.Coleman@durham.ac.uk or Peter Collins P.J.Collins@durham.ac.uk or the RRA Executive Office for further information. North American scholars are particularly encouraged to attend, and an effort will be made to extend accommodation privileges at the university to meet APEX fare requirements.

The Association for the Sociology of Religion will meet 5-7 August at the Essex Inn on Grant Park (Chicago). The theme is "Religion, Gender and the 21st Century." Plenary events include the Presidential Address of Nancy Nason-Clark and the Paul Hanly Furley lecture by Mary Jo Neitz. A joint ASA/ASR session is being organized by John Simpson to recognize the work of Andrew Greeley, with other joint sessions organized by Wade Clark Roof and David Smilde. Contact: Lori G. Beaman, Department of Sociology, University of Lethbridge, 4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 3M4, CANADA; email beamlg@uleth.ca. Deadlines: 15 January for session proposals, 15 February for paper abstracts. The ASA Sociology of Religion Section section day occurs on the second day of the ASR meetings, which overlap two days the ASA meeting (also in Chicago, directly across the street from the ASR hotel).

The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion meets with the RRA 5-7 November. The program theme is "The Sacred in the Secular: Finding 'Religious' Dimensions in the World Beyond Religion." Contact: Rhys H. Williams, Department of Sociology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4524; phone (618) 453-7610; email willrhyss@siu.edu —by 15 January for session proposals, 15 March for paper abstracts.

ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Results of the 1997 RRA general elections are: nominating committee chair, Paula D. Nesbitt; directors-at-large, Stuart A. Wright and James L. Guth; nominating committee, Fred Kniss and Keith Wulff.

The 1998 Nominating Committee seeks member input. This year a president elect, a new secretary, two board members, and two nominating committee members will be elected. If you wish to offer a name (including your own), contact Paula at 2550 S University Blvd., #1007, Denver, CO 80210; email pnesbitt@du.edu. The Committee will be happiest to hear from you as close after the start of 1999 as possible.

A MOVING SITE

The RRA website is moving! Our new address is <http://RRA.hartsem.edu>. With the move, we also change web masters from Ken Bedell to Scott Thumma. We express our gratitude to Ken for the work of getting the original site set up, and we look forward to new developments at Scott's hands. You might want to check out Scott's [Sociology of Religion page](#) of links and resources at Hartford Seminary's web site.

You also may be interested in becoming a part of RRX, the RRA-sponsored electronic meeting place for academic scholars and denominational researchers to share information and discussion of findings and methodologies. To join, send the word "subscribe" to rrx-request@ecunet.org for more information, e-mail Chair Cynthia Woolever woolever@ctr.pcusa.org.

On occasion you may find it worthwhile to check the SSSR website <http://fhss.byu.edu/soc/sssr/index.html> or the ASR website www.sociologyofreligion.com.

NEW EDITORS

Even as we celebrate with gratitude Paul Johnson's nine-year editorship of the Review, along with the work of his book review editor Ted Jelen, we are also extremely pleased to announce the appointment of

co-editors Chris Ellison and Darren Sherkat for the next triennium. Larry Young will serve a book review editor. Beginning now you should send your manuscripts to Darren at 1811-B Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37235. They will need four hard copies of the manuscript and a disk version of the manuscript (MS-Word, WordPerfect, or ASCII), which may be emailed as an attachment. If no disk version can be provided, five hard copies will be needed.

You may wish to note that Ted Jelen has moved to be editor of the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion and that the Publications Committee of ASR is now entering a search process for the editorship of Sociology of Religion.

NEW JOURNAL

Implicit Religion, a new journal under the general editorship of Edward Bailey, Professor and Founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion and Contemporary Spirituality (CSIRCS), will debut this fall. It will be published by the British firm Maney Publishing. For submissions, contact Edward at Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR, UK; for subscriptions, contact Maney at Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7D1, UK.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Henri Gooren has completed his Ph.D. dissertation, Rich among the Poor—Church, Firm, and Household among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City (Thela, Amsterdam). It may be ordered from Eiron, P.O.B. 40072, Washington, DC 20016 eironinc@aol.com.

Jim Richardson has been elected president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Ruth Wallace received the American Sociological Association's Jessie Bernard award at ASA's annual meeting in August.