

Context of Religious Research

Vol. X, No. 1 December 2000

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our October 2000 joint meeting with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in Houston was the first of our second half-century. A rich and successful meeting it was, too! Paula Nesbitt deserves our gratitude for her excellent work as Program Chairperson, in collaboration with her SSSR counterpart (and retiring RRA Board member) Peter Beyer. The theme of Gender, Religious Organization and Practice was reflected in a large proportion of RRA's sessions. Coupled with SSSR's theme dealing with transnationalism and twenty-first century challenges, the program offered a wide diversity of specific topics. Saturday night's BBQ banquet followed by Zydeco music contributed in a special way to the enhancement and celebration of *communitas*.

Ed Lehman's presidential address, entitled Clergywomen's World: Musings of a Fox, and reflecting his extensive research of twenty years on the distinctive experiences and challenges of women clergy, was the RRA's headline event. The published version will soon appear in the Review.

The annual meeting marked several transitions. Although Ed Lehman ended his term as president, he will remain on the RRA's Board as past president. Carl Dudley ended his official term as past president. In addition, Stuart Wright resigned as long-time joint SSSR/RRA publicity chair, and Cynthia Woolever completed her second term as chair of Research Planning (maintaining the RRX listserve plus organizing annual breakfast/conversation sessions). Thanks to all of these colleagues for their excellent RRA leadership.



Scott Thumma has agreed to serve as publicity chair as well as chair of Research Planning, the latter being his formal title, since it is a standing committee. As he envisions it, these additional responsibilities can be blended with the work he is already doing as manager of the RRA Website. If you haven't yet done so, check out the Hartford Institute for Religion Research Website at www.hartfordinstitute.org.

Next year, our meeting moves from the Lone Star State to the Buckeye State. YES Columbus, Ohio will be the place to be October 18-21, 2001. Capital of Ohio and home of Ohio State University, Columbus is reasonably close to major population centers in the Midwest and the Northeast. David Roozen (Hartford Seminary) will deliver the 2001 H. Paul Douglass lecture. His tentative title 10,000 Congregations: A Contemporary Dialogue with the Work of H. Paul Douglass. He plans to reveal findings from the Faith Communities Today (FACT) project <http://fact.hartsem.edu>. David is well known in RRA for his long and faithful service as RRA's treasurer and as a regular participant in our annual meetings.

The 2001 program theme is Interorganizational Relations in Religious Research (see the Call for Papers elsewhere in this newsletter). Robert Beckley, Program Chair, is already making plans for a wide range of sessions. Your participation is important to continue our tradition of outstanding annual meetings. Papers and proposals that deal with applied issues are encouraged.

I look forward to serving these next two years as your president and hope that together we can continue the success we've enjoyed in recent years.

Paul Johnson
Texas Tech University

FUNDING

Constant H. Jacquet Research Awards



The RRA will make \$8,000 available this year on a competitive basis for applied and basic research. Priority is given to applied projects, and funding over \$2,000 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. Note that, unlike the Douglass lectureship, the Jacquet award funds come from within our cash-flow budget, rather than endowment. If these awards would be endowed, we could obviously make larger and more extensive grants.

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. Materials will not be returned.

The required Application Form can be obtained from the RRA website <http://rra.hartsem.edu> or by writing: James K. Wellman, Jr., 8527 Hansen Road, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110; jkwamw@uswest.net. Your application must be received by 1 April 2001

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 expected to submit their research reports for possible publication in the Review of Religious Research, subject to editorial review.

2000 awardees were Alexei Krindatch, Jerry Park, Timothy B. Smith, and Robert Woodberry.



Joseph H. Fichter Research Awards

The Association for the Sociology of Religion will make available \$10,000 this year for promising research on gender issues, women and religion, and feminist perspectives in the study of 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 brief vita. Deadline: 1 March postmark.

Send four copies of the proposal to: Lori G. Beaman, Sociology, University of Lethbridge, 4401 Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4. For further information: beamlg@uleth.ca.

SSSR Research Awards

MEETINGS

The **British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group**'s annual conference, this year will be held 9-11 April at Plater College, Oxford. More information will be available on the BSA-SRSG's website: www.socrel.org.uk.

A conference entitled The Spiritual Supermarket: Religious Pluralism and Globalisation in the 21st Century The Expanding European Union and Beyond, co-sponsored by **INFORM** (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements), UK, and **CESNUR** (Center for Studies on New Religions), Italy, in cooperation with a group of other related societies, principally in Europe, will be held at the London School of Economics, 19-22 April. Persons interested in presenting papers need to have abstracts and a short c.v. submitted as soon as possible and in no case later than 31 December. For further information: [inform @lse.ac.uk](mailto:inform@lse.ac.uk).



The 24th annual **Implicit Religion consultation** will be held at Denton Hall, Yorkshire, 11-13 May. The conference is residential, with participation limited to about 30. All sessions are plenary, with ample time for feedback. Openings remain for about six more papers within the schedule. Contact Edward Bailey, Winterbourne Rectory, Bristol BS36 1JQ, UK; eibailey@csircs.freeserve.co.uk.

The **Association for the Sociology of Religion** will meet 17-19 August in Anaheim, California. The theme is Religion and Societal Marginality. Plenary events include the Presidential Address of Anthony J. Blasi and the Paul Hanly Furley lecture by Luigi Tomasi. Contact: Patricia Wittberg, Sociology Department, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202; pwittber@iupui.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 Anaheim, 21 August.

In addition, immediately following the ASR meeting, the **International Society for the Sociology of Religion** (ISSR/SISR) will hold its biennial meeting in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico (20-24 August). The theme is Interpreting Religion Today: Competing Processes and Paradigms. For further information contact the SISR secretariat: lfontaine@ustanne.ednet.ns.ca.

The **Society for the Scientific Study of Religion** meets with the RRA 18-21 October. The program theme is Mainstreaming the Scientific Study of Religion. Contact: Mark Chaves, Department of Sociology, University of Arizona, P.O.B. 210027, Tucson, AZ 85721-0027; mchaves@u.arizona.edu. Deadlines: 15 January for session proposals, 15 March for paper abstracts.

ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS



Results of the 2000 RRA general elections are: Nominating Committee Chair: Kirk Hadaway; Directors-at-Large, Dean Hoge and Donald Luidens; Nominating Committee, Cynthia Woolever and Ronald Lawson. The Board expresses its appreciation to all those who allowed their names to stand.

The 2001 Nominating Committee seeks member input. This year a president-elect, secretary, two board members, and two nominating committee members will be elected. If you wish to offer a name (including your own), contact Kirk at UCBHM, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; hadawayk@ucc.org. The Committee will be happiest to hear from you as close after the start of 2001 as possible.

EDITOR SEARCH

This is not a case of déjà vu! The editorial term for the Review of Religious Research is three years, and current co-editors Darren Sherkat and Chris Ellison, for personal and professional reasons, have decided not to see reappointment to a second term. (Paul Johnson's three-term tenure perhaps lulled us into falsely thinking that extended service would be the norm.) The new editor(s) will begin receiving manuscripts in January 2002, in anticipation of the September 2002 issue (vol. 44, no. 1).

With the Board's approval, President Johnson has appointed an ad hoc Editor Search committee to consist of himself, the Executive Officer, and Chris Ellison, to be chaired by Ed Lehman. Nominations,

including self-nominations, may be sent either to Ed (edlehman@frontiernet.net) or to the Executive Office (William_Swatos@baylor.edu). If you nominate someone other than yourself, please make sure that s/he is at least open to considering serving in this position and, of course, is an RRA member. Nominations will be received until the position is filled, but should be submitted no later than 15 January to receive full consideration. Any member of the committee would be happy to talk with persons who wish to know more about the position. A formal position description will be made available to nominees later in the search process.

FUTURETHINK



During the past year, the RRA ad hoc Committee on the Future, originally formed in response to the SSSR initiative toward merger of the two organizations (now defunct), has busied itself in think about the directions in which we might move forward to clarify our own focus and constituencies. One concrete product of this effort has been a new membership brochure. Jim Wellman and Craig This, consulting with Paul Johnson (chair of the Future committee) and your Executive Officer, have been the primary individuals responsible for this work. The product is professionally designed and, like the new cover of RRR, gives a more positive, contemporary image of the Association. Because we do not want to waste the brochures, we are not sending them out with this mailing, but if you would like to see one better yet, if you would like a quantity of them for a specific target audience that you can identify to us do not hesitate to phone or email the executive office for a copy (727-844-5990 or William_Swatos@baylor.edu). During the coming year we will be doing some mail solicitations of new members using these brochures, as well as taking them to conferences of cognate groups.

The Committee will continue to work on a more one-to-one level seeking to enlarge our association through reaching out to target audiences, especially groups that might meet with us. It seeks your input in identifying and contacting groups of religious researchers and applied practitioners who might reasonably benefit by association with us.

WEBSITE/RRX

Over the next month the RRA web site will undergo major revisions in its look and formatting to match the new brochure. A part of these changes will be the installation of an RRX bulletin board discussion area to replace the existing RRX listserve system. Current RRX members will be notified before the changes take place. We will also be posting past Presidential Addresses and H. Paul Douglass Lectures in pdf format. Drop by in December to take a look at the new and improved site. Scott Thumma reports at the time of this writing that we had over 900 visitors to the site in the past 30 days.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Our present database makes it possible to generate a membership directory for members' personal use only upon request. The cost for this is \$5, including postage. You may either send that amount through the mail or email it using a Master or Visa card (don't forget to include the card's expiration date). We provide only a paper directory, not an electronic one. It is possible for publishers and other reputable concerns to purchase the RRA mailing list at \$50. This is in label format only. The database is continuously maintained, so any directory or mailing list will be as current as humanly possible yet still likely to be out-of-date the day it is printed.

