From the Chair

A section chair’s main duty it seems is neither to be a great visionary nor inspirer of humanity. No, it is something far more important—plan and organize the section activities at the annual meeting!

And so we are hard at work in doing just that for the ASA annual meeting in San Francisco this coming August 8-11. We have received a wonderful number of submissions to our sessions. Just in our two open submission sessions we received over 50 papers. Session organizers are finishing their paper selections, and the roundtables are being organized.

The bad news is that this year, our religion sessions will be held on Tuesday, August 11, the last day of the conference. The good news is that for this reason ASA has given our section an extra session. This year, then, we will have four thematic sessions and a roundtable session. The thematic sessions are as follows:

- Religion Doing, Religion Being
- Debate, Conflict, and Context in Religion
- Religion at the Edge: Expanding the Boundaries of the Sociology of Religion
- Religion, Race, Class, and Family Life

Having reviewed many dozens of submissions, I can tell you that we have far more strong papers than we can put into thematic sessions. That means many interesting papers also will be presented at our roundtables this year. I hope you will consider attending not only the thematic sessions, but the roundtables as well. Our section business meeting (always riveting with take-you-to-the-edge-of-your-seat action) will follow.

Our reception is scheduled for 6:30 PM on Monday, August 10th. What is more, we are working on plans for an additional networking event. We will announce those plans in our next newsletter.

Not to step too far beyond my role as conference planner, but let me encourage all active researchers to take a careful look at the effects of the newly passed stimulus package on funding opportunities. Both NSF and NIH—though not huge funders of religion research they nevertheless do fund some—must spend billions of new dollars and do so immediately. Creative new proposals will be more welcome now than probably at any point before.

I am looking forward to seeing you in San Francisco.

Michael Emerson, Rice University
Section Officers 2008-2009

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Michael O. Emerson, moe@rice.edu

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**Past Chair**  
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The Sociology of Religion Section of the American Sociological Association encourages and enhances research, teaching, and other professional concerns in the study of religion and society

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**Nomination Committee, 2009**

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**Student Paper Award Committee, 2009**

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Bill Mirola, mirola@marian.edu

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**Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review**

Beginning with the Spring 2009 issue, Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review will be published by Oxford Journals. Ownership and editorial control will be retained by the Association for the Sociology of Religion.

In March, Oxford Journals will launch a website for the journal (http://socrel.oxfordjournals.org), which will contain the notice to contributors, back issues, and other information about the journal.

Also, beginning in March, all new submissions to the journal -- excluding book reviews -- must be made through the journal's Manuscript Central on-line submission site (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/socrel). For the time being, revised submissions should be sent directly to the editorial office as before.

The $25 manuscript processing fee for non-members of the Association for the Sociology of Religion still applies, and that payment must be made directly to the editorial office. The Manuscript Central site cannot process payments.

This is an exciting development in the history of Sociology of Religion, one which we believe will provide tremendous benefits to our authors. If you have any questions, please direct them to David Yamane, Editor (sored@wfu.edu).

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Committee Assignments, 2008-2009
Member News

People

Dave Carlin, Community College of Rhode Island, has been writing occasional 1,000-word essays on politics and religion at the InsideCatholic.com, since March 2008.

Stephen Fichter has accepted an appointment as a Research Associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. In addition to his research duties, continue as pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Haworth, NJ.

David Yamane was appointed chair of the Sociology Department at Wake Forest University beginning in January 2009.

Member Publications

Anthony J. Blasi (Tennessee State), Anton K. Jacobs (Kansas City Art Institute), and Mathew Kanjirathinkal (Park University), Sociology: Inquiries into the Construction of Social Forms. This is the first complete translation of Georg Simmel's 1908 SOZIOLOGIE, two volumes. Includes and introduction by Horst J. Helle (Brill Publishers).


Todd M. Johnson (Boston University) and Brian J. Grim (Pew Forum), World Religion Database: International Religious Demographic Statistics and Sources (Brill Publishers).


Shayne Lee (Tulane University) and Phillip Sinitiere, Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators and the Spiritual Marketplace, (NYU Press)

Sean McCloud (UNC Charlotte) and William A. Mirola (Marian College), Religion and Class in America: Culture, History, and Politics (Brill Publishers).

Bandana Purkayastha, University of Connecticut, Living Our Religions: Hindu And Muslim South Asian American Women Narrate Their Experience (Kumarian Press).

Heidi J. Swarts, Rutgers University, Organizing Urban America: Secular and Faith-based Progressive Movements (University of Minnesota Press).

Dissertations Recently Defended

Stephen Fichter, Department of Sociology, Rutgers University. "Shepherding in Greener Pastures: Causes and Consequences of the Dual Transition by Celibate Catholic Priests into Married Protestant Ministry." (See “Dissertations in the Pipe” in the Spring 2008 Section Newsletter for the abstract)

Lynne Gerber, Graduate Theological Union. "Ruling the Unruly Body: Cultural Capital and Symbolic Power in Two Parachurch Ministries."

ABSTRACT: Ruling the Unruly Body examines bodily discipline and evangelical identity through a qualitative study of two parachurch ministries which focus on changing bodies and bodily desires: a weight loss program and an ex-gay organization. It argues that while members may not achieve their bodily aims, the ministries play an important part in generating an evangelical habitus. They also are important sites for evangelical engagement with American culture at large and the cultivation of both evangelical distinction from and exemplification of dominant cultural norms. Finally, it argues that despite the compassion expressed toward ministry members, the programs participate in and reflect larger cultural systems that produce the stigmatization of fatness and homosexuality.
How to Learn Critical Realism
Christian Smith, University of Notre Dame

Critical Realism is, in my view, the most promising approach to social science for best framing sociological research and theory. I believe that critical realism is the direction in which American sociology needs to move. Critical realism offers the best alternative to the problems and limits of positivist empiricism, on the one hand, and postmodern linguistic constructionism and even hermeneutical interpretivism, on the other. Critical realism is a significant movement and perspective in Britain, Scandinavia, and Europe. Yet few American sociologists appear to be aware of the substance and importance of the critical realist approach. Critical realism is a genuinely alternative approach to reality and social science that requires serious, focused study and mental retooling in order to learn well enough to not simply fall back into the old assumptions, frameworks, and paradigms. I suggest that scholars interested in learning critical realism read the following (linked) published chapters, books, and articles in the sequence specified, in order to grasp the full significance and capitalize upon the great promise of its approach to social science.

1. A First Overview: Begin by reading the “Introduction” (pp. 1-28) of Andrew Sayer, 2000, Realism and Social Science, New York: Sage Publications.


4. Focus on Causality and Mechanisms: A few shorter readings next help to sharpen thinking about causation and mechanisms in social science, core issues in critical realism:

5. Deepen Theoretical Understanding: Read next a few more challenging theoretical works:

6. Pursue Specific Interests: Then, dig deeper into specific areas of interest, including possibly the following, for example:
   - (a) Critical Realist Theory of Social Structure, Culture, and Agency:

Critical Realism, continued to page 5
Critical Realism, continued from page 4


(b) Critical Realism and Empirical Methodology


(c) Critical Realism and Postmodernism:

Andrew Sayer, 2000, Realism and Social Science, New York: Sage Publications.

Jose Lopez and Garry Potter, 2005, After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism, Continuum International.

(d) Critical Realism and Historical-Comparative Sociology:


(e) Critical Realism and Human Personhood


Christian Smith, forthcoming, What is a Person?: Critical Realist Personalism and Sociological Theory (under review).

(f) Critical Realism and Philosophy of Social Science


7. Additional Resources: Efforts to continue learning about critical realism can benefit from the following resources:


- Other books in the series Routledge Studies in Critical Realism

- JOURNAL: Journal of Critical Realism


- CENTERS & WEBSITES:
  - Center for Critical Realism
  - International Association for Critical Realism
  - Dictionary of Critical Realism
  - Cambridge Realist Workshop
  - Lancaster Realist Workshop
  - London Realist Seminar


Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative

With a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California has launched the Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative (PCRI). The initiative will provide up to $3.5 million in grant funding to support social science research on Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union. PCRI will award up to seven grants to regional centers and fifteen grants to individual scholars or small research teams. Letters of intent are due by August 1, 2009. Please visit www.usc.edu/pcri to learn about the initiative and download the request for proposals.

SCIENCE OF GENEROSITY

The University of Notre Dame is pleased to announce a $3 million project on the Science of Generosity, supported with funding from the John Templeton Foundation. Open invitations are now issued for letters of inquiry proposing research on generosity in the human and social sciences.

Generosity is an important personal virtue, collective responsibility, and vital element in the building of social capital, community wellbeing, justice, and peace in the world. The aim of this Science of Generosity initiative is to stimulate scientific research on the practice of generosity in human life and society. This initiative is particularly interested in better understanding three key aspects of generosity:

- The sources, origins, and causes of generosity
- The variety of manifestations and expressions of generosity
- The consequences of generosity for both the givers and receivers involved

Four to eight proposals for funding of between $250,000 and $500,000 will be awarded in this first wave of competition in 2009. A second competition in 2010 will fund $1.2 million dollars worth of smaller projects. Letters of inquiry (LOIs) for the first wave of the competition are due April 1st, 2009.

“Generosity” is defined for purposes of this project as the disposition toward and practice of giving good things to others freely and abundantly. Generosity may involve the giving of money, possessions, time, attention, talents, aid, encouragement, emotional investment, and more. Generosity is related to but not identical with the areas of charitable financial giving, volunteering, altruism, philanthropy, informal helping, corporate giving, voluntary service, bequests and estates, relational commitment, love, and social exchange.

Proposed projects are encouraged but not limited to scholars in the disciplines of economics, behavioral economics, business & finance, sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, social psychology, family and developmental studies, geography, law, education, communications, cultural studies, religious studies, and sociobiology. Proposals may be either discipline specific or inter-disciplinary and may come from scholars with expertise in generosity research or those recently investing into researching generosity.

For detailed information about proposal procedures, topics of interest, eligibility, deadlines, available resources, contact information, or to sign up to receive project updates, refer to the project website:

http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/

Science of Generosity
University of Notre Dame
936 Flanner Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556
email: generous@nd.edu
phone: 574-631-2173
http://generosityresearch.nd.edu

See Requests for Proposals, continued to page 7
Requests for Proposals, continued from page 6

**YOUNG ADULTS**

The Life Cycle Institute at Catholic University of America is pleased to commission ten to fifteen original, topic-focused, and highly-readable syntheses of recent research on contemporary young adults (i.e., emerging adults ages 18 to 29). These syntheses will be published as part of a web-based forum, oriented primarily toward a non-specialist readership of Christian ministry practitioners interested in understanding the lives of emerging adults today, but also of potential interest to higher education and social science readers in general. These 3000 word syntheses will draw chiefly from recent and multi-disciplinary published scholarship, but may include some of the author’s own research findings. Each synthesis will also be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of 10-20 recommended sources for further reading. We invite scholars with active and relevant research programs to submit proposals for essays synthesizing scholarship on emerging adults and one (or more) of the following topics:

- Work & Careers
- Friends & Friendships
- Love
- Marriage & Cohabitation
- Parenthood
- Sex & Sexuality
- Place & Style of Residence
- Money & Debt
- Political Engagement
- Service & Community Engagement
- Faith & Spirituality
- Media and Popular Culture

Proposals describing alternate topic combinations or additional topics relevant to emerging adults’ lives will also be considered.

Proposals will be due April 1, 2009, and must include a 300-500 word description of the proposed synthesis, two samples of writing for non-specialist audiences (preferably published), and a vita. Synthesis descriptions should clearly delineate the focus of the synthesis, provide a rationale for its inclusion in this forum, include a tentative outline of the synthesis structure, and background information about the prospective author. Applicants may submit descriptions for up to 3 syntheses. Decisions will be made by May 15, 2009, and completed syntheses/annotated bibliographies will be due September 1, 2009. Essays will be reviewed for both substance and style, and payment will be made only after all revisions, clarifications, and copy editing processes are complete and final approval is given by the project staff.

Submit proposals to ttclydes@changingsea.org and visit www.changingsea.org – the project’s website – as further information will be posted to this site over the course of the year.

**Masthead Photographs**

The photographs on the masthead for this edition of the Newsletter are by photographer Matt Gainer, as a part of the Gospel Music History Archive project at the University of Southern California. The Gospel Music History Archive is an effort to preserve the legacy of gospel music in a state-of-the-art digital archive and make it available to scholars, gospel artists, librarians, church historians, teachers and anyone with internet access. The archive contains original audio and visual video interviews, music files, publicity materials, photographs, film, scholarly articles, and analysis from academic and gospel-community-based experts. When complete the GMHA will be the largest and most advanced digital repository for these collections in the world. I encourage you to visit the archive website and keep an eye on its development. This project is not yet complete, but will provide a unique source for the study of gospel music and its various expressions.

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### Conferences and Calls for Papers

**ASSOCIATION FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION**

Annual Meeting
August 8-10, 2009
San Francisco, California

“RELIGION, CULTURE, POLITICS”

**SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION**

Annual Meeting
October 23-25, 2009
Denver, Colorado

“Discoveries in the Scientific Study of Religion”

**SYMPOSIUM ON RELIGION AND POLITICS**

The Henry Institute at Calvin College will sponsor the fifth biennial Symposium on Religion and Politics from April 23-25, 2009 at the Prince Conference Center on the Calvin College campus in Grand Rapids, MI

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**EMERGING ADULTOOD**

Scholars interested in religious beliefs in emerging adulthood may wish to attend the Princeton Conference on Emerging Adulthood at Princeton Theological Seminary, May 14-16, 2009. For information, see [http://www2.ptsem.edu/iym/conferences/](http://www2.ptsem.edu/iym/conferences/)

**SURVEY RESEARCH AND AMERICAN RELIGION**

“Pollsters and Parishioners” seminar on survey research and American religion will be held from June 11-17, 2009 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The event, sponsored by the Paul Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics, is designed for graduate students and recent Ph.D. graduates who are interested in this topic. For more information, including application requirements and deadlines, click on this link: [Pollsters and Parishioners](#).
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION, NATURE & CULTURE

"Religion, Nature, and Progress"
Third International ISSRNC Conference
University of Amsterdam
July 23-26, 2009

The ISSRNC is an interdisciplinary, international society that promotes critical inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse environments, cultures, and religions.

Online registration is now open. The early registration fee (through 31 March 2009) is 250 EUR for members and 320 EUR for non-members (150 EUR for student members and 210 EUR for non-member students).

For questions pertaining to logistical matters, see the conference website: http://www.religionandnature.com/society/conferences.htm

THE 39TH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY

Yerevan, Armenia
June 11-14, 2009
www.iisoc.org/iis2009

Title of Session: “Religion in a post-secular age”

Name of Session Convener(s): Roberto Cipriani
E-mail: rciprian@uniroma3.it

After the publication of Charles Taylor's book on "A Secular Age" a debate has begun about the end of secularization and the beginning of a new era of religious revival. New religious movements are the easiest solutions but there is an increase of new modalities inside traditional forms of religion too. How to explain these trends? And what about the relationship between state and religion? Will French stream of "laicisation" have a greater diffusion than before or churches and religions will prevail as in the past?

Interested participants should contact the session convener directly with an abstract for this session no later than February 28, 2009.

EUROPEAN SOCIOLICAL ASSOCIATION

Ninth European Sociological Association Conference will take place in the University of Lisbon on Sept. 2nd-5th, 2009.

Organizing institutions are: the Instituto Superior de Ciencias do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE) together with Instituto de Ciencias Sociais of the University of Lisbon and the Faculdade de Ciencias Sociais e Humanas of the New University of Lisbon.

For complete information and an online paper submission form, please visit the Conference website: http://www.esa9thconference.com/

RN 27 - RESEARCH NETWORK ON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

Papers submission in the following thematic session:

Organizer: Roberto Cipriani (rciprian@uniroma3.it)

Religion and Churches in Europe // Religions et églises en Europe

The scenario of European society is changing rapidly, particularly in the field of religion and Churches. Culture is of vital importance to the presence of religion and Churches in the single nations. The religions and Churches which have crossed Europe have exerted a certain degree of political power, thus influencing the economy and other related spheres of life. A common datum affects religions and Churches in Europe today: a visible reduction of religious practice. Changes are also evident in other religions of non-European origin but present in almost all of Europe. The different religions and Churches operating in Europe manifest a variety of behaviors towards religious pluralism. The difference between religions of Western and Eastern Europe depends mainly on issues of national identity related to religious adherence. The territorial map of Religious Europe is not characterized only by the presence of this or that religious culture but also and above all by the existence of large numbers of minorities: Orthodox Christians or Protestants in Catholic countries, Catholics and Orthodox Christians in Protestant countries, Jews and Muslims in the majority of European countries.
THE SIXTH SYMPOSIUM OF THE SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION IN CHINA:

“Globalization and Localization of Religion”
Wuxi, Jiangsu
July 7-8, 2009

In the social scientific study of religion, the relationship of globalization and localization has become a hot topic in recent years. In the process of modernization, religious change appears to share some common patterns on the one hand, and religious expressions appear to be combined with diverse local cultures on the other hand. The newly coined term “globalocalization” is an indication of the scholarly effort to theorize such phenomena, which seems affirming a common belief among many Chinese intellectuals: the more national/local, the more international/universal.

We invite you to present papers on topics including:

- Studies of the relationships between globalization and localization.
- Empirical studies of religion in contemporary China, including major, minor, and folk religions.
- Theoretical studies in the social science of religion, including discussions of Weber, Durkheim, secularization theories, economics of religion, and postmodern theories.
- Studies of religions in the contemporary world.
- Studies of religious policies.
- Other topics of your choice are welcome too.

Abstracts and papers may be in English or Chinese. Please send abstracts to this email: crcs@purdue.edu

Inquiries about the city and logistical matters, please contact the local host: Professor Deng Zimei, Director, Institute of the Sociology of Religion, Jiangnan University. Email: zjshxyjs@yahoo.cn; Phone: 0510-85329022.

Call for Papers

Special Issue of Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion:

The Psychology and Sociology of Religion and Spirituality in Organizational Life

The literatures in religious and spiritual psychology (RSP) and sociology of religion (SOR) have received only limited attention from scholars in workplace spirituality and religion. But the scientifically-based RSP/SOR literatures could provide workplace spirituality scholarship with a host of theory, measures, and foci that would help to expand the domain of workplace spirituality. The special issue will attempt to capture thinking of RSP/SOR research and theory in an attempt to draw on its utility for workplace spirituality scholarship. It is designed to provide a stimulus for future empirical investigations and theoretical developments.

The special issue is being called to provide a forum that will introduce the viability of ideas from RSP/SOR in helping to explain the workplace spirituality phenomenon that continues to grow, both in terms of research and practice.

Short proposals (no more than 200 words) outlining the authors’ plan for a paper should be sent by May 1, 2009 to Mathew Sheep if the paper is focused on empirical or theoretical contributions and to David Trott, if the paper is focused on educational or practice issues. Successful proposals will be asked in June 2009 to submit a full manuscript (25 double-spaced pages), to be received by December 1, 2009. All submissions will be peer reviewed. For more information, please contact the Guest Editors at the following e-mails:

Mathew Sheep: msheep@ilstu.edu
David Trott: davidt@admin.stedwards.edu
From the Editor

When I was putting this issue of the Newsletter together, I was amazed at the number of opportunities for religion scholars that were sent my way. These range from several national and international conferences and symposia, funding opportunities, and various calls for papers. This, in addition to the large number of papers submitted to the program committee for the upcoming ASA meetings, suggests that the sociological study of religion not only is alive and well, but is expanding.

Along these lines, one of my goals for the Section Newsletter is to provide a somewhat less formal outlet for our collective thinking about the sociological study of religion. As one step in that direction, I’ve included the piece by Christian Smith on critical realism as a theoretical frame for studying religion. This follows the exchange in Sociology of Religion between Chris and several scholars who responded to his article, “Why Christianity Works” (see Sociology of Religion, Winter 2008, 69:441-488). Using this article as a start, I intend to include articles similar to this in the next several issues under my editorship, that hopefully can highlight new thinking, or perhaps new publications and research that may have gone unnoticed by most of us. The goal is to promote a sort of thinking out loud about the sociological study of religion that can then provide potential new resources for our own research and teaching.

The next newsletter will be out in June, and I’ll be asking for your contributions in May.

RICHARD FLORY, University of Southern California