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ASREC Update

➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ The Newsletter of the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture

ASREC Meets in Washington, D.C., April 2009

For a “peak” experience, join us in Washington, D.C., next April! ASREC holds its next major conference in Washington D.C., April 3-5, 2009 -- the “peak bloom” period for the capital’s famous cherry trees. The conference will meet at the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City, just two miles from Reagan National Airport and a few minutes (via metro or taxi) from the DC’s many monuments and museums.

This will be our first independent ASREC conference. It promises to be substantially larger than all previous conferences, which met jointly with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. The shift was dictated in large part by steady growth (from about 25 participants in 2002 to more than 100 in 2007) which could no longer be accommodated within the hotels that SSSR had selected for its future meetings.

The move to Washington is also designed to attract a broader range of conference participants – more scholars and students from economics, politi-



Cherry blossoms in full bloom on a spring day near the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of Destination D.C.

Tampa 2007: Another Record Turnout

Economists, sociologists, political scientists, and other scholars interested in the study of religion gathered in the Hyatt Regency in downtown Tampa, Florida, for the sixth annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture on November 1-4, 2007. The meeting, held in conjuncture with the meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Associa-

tion, featured more than 80 paper presentations by scholars from six continents and proved to be the largest ASREC meeting to date with more than 100 registered attendees.

Conference papers reflected the diverse disciplinary and geographic profile of the ARSEC membership. Among other topics,

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ASREC Descends on Tampa for 2007 Conference

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the conference included papers that proved conclusively that Weber was right, that proved equally conclusively that Weber was wrong, that economic theory has much to say about the rise in egalitarianism in Jewish families, that religiosity may indeed be affected by the business cycle, and that Protestant missionaries played a major role in the spread of the printing press around the world. Scholars explored the treatment of women in Africa, contraceptive use in Ghana, demographic changes in Central Asia, and philanthropy in China. It was truly evident from the 2007 program that an economic approach to the study of religion has much to say about innumerable topics.

In addition to the paper presentations highlighting the recent research in the field, the meeting included several other sessions of interest to conference attendees. One well-attended session focused on teaching the economics of religion and included presentations from Gary Richardson (George Mason), Michael McBride (UC-Irvine), Robert Stonebraker (Winthrop), and Carmel Chiswick (UI-Chicago).

Two book sessions were held. In the first of these sessions, Chris Bader (Baylor), Michael Makowsky (George Mason), and Larry Iannaccone (George Mason) commented on William Sims Bainbridge's *God from the Machine*. In the second session, Ar-



Roger Finke delivers his presidential address, "Faithful Measures: Toward Improving Religion Metrics," in Tampa, Florida.

thur C. Brooks' *Who Really Cares: America's Charity Divide*, was examined by Tom Smith (UI-Chicago), Daniel Hungerman (Notre Dame), Anthony Gill (Washington), and David Mustard (Georgia).

Another conference high point was Roger Finke's presidential address, "Faithful Measures: Toward Improving Religion Metrics." Delivering the speech to a packed meeting room, Finke encouraged all in attendance to devise new and innovative ways to measure religious phenomena and led a fruitful discussion of the topic with conference goers.

At the conclusion of his address, Finke also announced that ASREC's presence at the SSSR/RRA meetings would be changing because of ASREC's growth in recent years. ASREC will still co-

sponsor some sessions with the SSSR at the 2008 SSSR/RRA meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, but it will not host sessions independently. Instead, ASREC would prepare to host its first stand-alone conference in the spring of 2009 in the Washington, D.C., area.

The conference was not all business, of course, and dozens of attendees met for the very popular TANSTAAFL on Saturday and for informal socializing on Friday and Saturday nights.

Overall, the 2007 conference was an unprecedented success for ASREC and a statement about the growing influence of the organization in the academic study of religion. Several photos from the conference can be found on pages four and five.

From the Editor

It was absolutely wonderful to see such a large turnout at the 2007 conference last fall in Tampa. It never fails to amaze me how many excellent scholars are out there doing truly innovative research on religion, and I am thankful that we have the opportunity to get together on a regular basis to share our ideas and socialize. It was great to see some old friends and make several new ones.

What I appreciate the most about ASREC meetings is the interdisciplinary nature of our group. As a sociologist, I rarely get to interact with economists, political scientists, or religious studies scholars. This is unfortunate because so many good ideas find their origins in interdisciplinary dialogue, but most institutions keep us separated into different departments (and even separate colleges). If you are like me, you left Tampa with about a dozen good ideas for future papers and only wish you had the time to write them all.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who took the time to give me feedback on the first couple of issues of the *ASREC Update* that appeared last year. I hope that I am able to improve upon them with this issue and in subsequent efforts. Any feedback that you have is always welcome; email me at paul.olson@briarcliff.edu if you have any suggestions. I hope that your fall is off to a great start!

- Paul Olson

Marie Cornwall is New *JSSR* Editor

Marie Cornwall has been named the new editor of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, one of the leading publications for social scientific research on religious issues. She can be contacted at:

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JSSR has switched to an online submission process. All new submissions should be made online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jssr>.

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cal science, and other academic disciplines, as well as policy specialists, government officials, and journalists.

ASREC will continue to organize sessions at SSSR meetings, including several at the 2008 meetings in Louisville, October 17-19. For more information, see

www.asrec.org and
www.sssrweb.org.

The call for papers for ASREC 2009 can be found on the final page of this newsletter. Submit your paper proposals online at www.asrec.org by November 15, 2008. Complete papers are due by March 1, 2009. We hope that we will see all of you in Washington in April 2009.

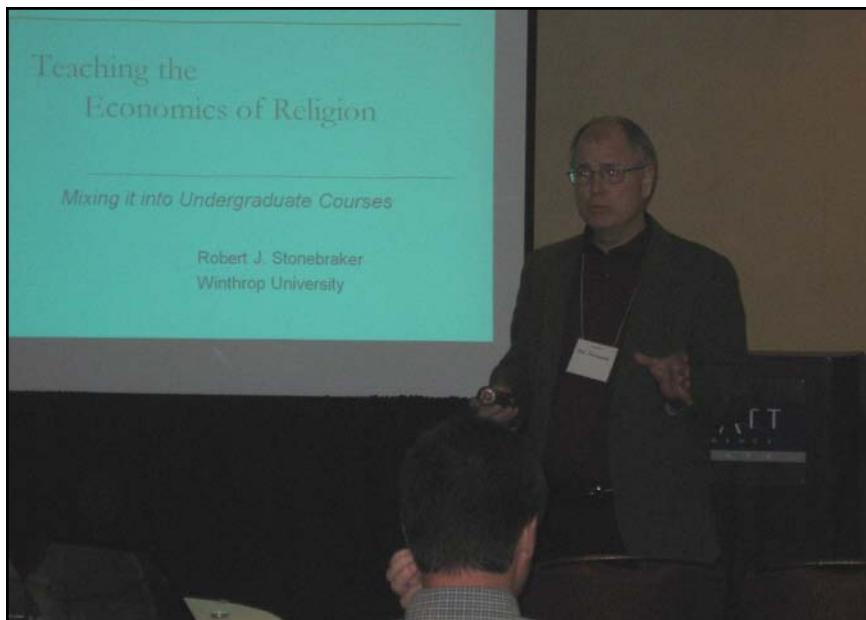
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Tampa 2007 Conference Photographs



Robert Stonebraker of Winthrop University presents on the inclusion of economics of religion material in undergraduate courses.



Eli Berman (University of California, San Diego) presents on sects and violence.



Tracey Farrigan (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture) gives her paper on casino development in Mississippi.



Sometimes technology wins: A star-studded group of ASREC members attempt to solve a technological glitch before session C9. The problem was eventually solved, and the session went on as planned.



Above: Charles North of Baylor University presents on the Medieval Church.

To the Right: All work and no play makes Jack, and Tony Gill, a dull boy. ASREC members enjoy some time socializing at the Friday Evening Social.

Below: Tom Smith (UI-Chicago) gives a smile of satisfaction after serving as the 2007 Program Chair.



A Call for Authors!

One of the goals we have for *ASREC Update* is to provide a forum for disseminating information about the economic study of religion to economists, political scientists, religious studies scholars, sociologists, and anyone else interested in the field. To this end, we would like to feature two specific types of articles in future issues of the *Update* to give the publication a little bit of added value for ASREC members.

First, we would like to have regular features on the teaching of economics and religion. If you teach a course specifically on the economics of religion to undergraduate and/or graduate students, or if you include sections on the topic in other courses, we would love to have you write a short article about your strategies for the newsletter. Even if you incorporate only one or two aspects of the topic into other courses, please feel free to share with us and the rest of the ASREC membership.

Second, if you are working with any new and/or innovative research methods that you think people should be aware of, we would like you to share them with us as well. Also, if you have devised any inventive data collection strategies that you would like to share, they would certainly be welcome, too. This could be a great venue for disseminating information that may not be appropriate for refereed journals but is still valuable enough that ASREC members should read about it.

The articles can range in length from a few hundred words to

Funding Opportunities

Grant & Fellowship Opportunity

The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment funded program housed at Louisville Seminary, offers a variety of grants and stipends to scholars and religious leaders conducting research on issues pertaining to American religious life.

A number of funding opportunities are available from the Louisville Institute including Summer Stipends of \$9,000, Dissertation Fellowships of \$18,000, First Book Grants for Minority Scholars, Christian Faith and Life grants, and Pastoral Leadership grants, all three of which go up to \$40,000, and religious institutions grants. Each program has a different deadline:

October 1: Summer Stipends

November 15: Christian Faith and Life Grants

December 1: Religious Institutions Grants

January 15: Dissertation Fellowships

February 15: First Book Grant Program for Minority Scholars

March 1: Pastoral Leadership Grants

In addition to these programs, the Louisville Institute offers a limited number of smaller grants for individual and collaborative projects through their General Grant Program. These grants are made in April, August, and December each year.

If you are interested in Louisville Institute grants, fellowships, and stipends, visit their website at <http://www.louisville-institute.org>.

several pages—that is one of the nice things about being a publication that is distributed online! We can also incorporate photographs, tables, charts, maps, and pretty much anything else you would want to include. While these articles are not peer-reviewed and may not do a lot to help you get tenure, you would be providing a valuable service to the ASREC community.

If you are interested in contributing an article on one of these topics (or a general letter to the editor), please contact Paul Olson at paul.olson@briarcliff.edu. Thank you!

Fellowship Opportunity

The Heritage Foundation in conjunction with familyfacts.org is pleased to announce a new graduate fellowship for students in the social sciences with an interest in writing theses in the area of religious behavior or family structure. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For more information, and instructions on how to apply, please see the website: <http://www.familyfacts.org/fellowship.cfm>.

Professional Opportunity

Young Scholars in American Religion Program 2009–2011

The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at IUPUI announces a program for early career scholars in American Religion. Beginning in April 2009, a series of seminars devoted to the enhancement of teaching and research for younger scholars in American Religion will be offered in Indianapolis. The aims of all sessions of the program are to develop ideas and methods of instruction in a supportive workshop environment, stimulate scholarly research and writing, and create a community of scholars that will continue into the future.

Dates: Session I: April 2–5, 2009
Session II: October 15–18, 2009
Session III: April 15–18, 2010
Session IV: October 14–17, 2010
Session V: April 28–May 1, 2011

Seminar Leaders: W. Clark Gilpin is the Margaret E. Burton Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Christianity and Theology in the University of Chicago Divinity School. He is a historian of Christianity who studies the cultural history of theology in England and America since the seventeenth century. Among his works is an intellectual biography of Roger Williams, the seventeenth-century advocate of religious liberty. A more recent book, *A Preface to Theology*, examines the history of American theological scholarship in terms of the theologians responsibilities to a three-fold public in the churches, the academic community, and civil society.

Tracy Fessenden is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Arizona State University, specializing in western religious traditions, religion and literature, and American religious and cultural history. Her recent work focuses on religion, race, gender, and sexuality in American cultural history, on the relationship between religion and the secular in American public life, and on questions of religion and violence. She is author, most recently, of *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature*.

Eligibility: Scholars eligible to apply are those who have launched their careers within the last seven years and who are working in a subfield of the area of religion in North America, broadly understood. Ten scholars will be selected, with the understanding that they will commit to the program for all dates. Each participant will be expected to produce a course syllabus, with justification of teaching approach, and a publishable research article. All costs for transportation, lodging, and meals for the seminars will be covered, and there is no application fee.

To Apply: Applicants must submit a curriculum vitae with three letters of reference directly supporting their application to the program (do not send portfolios with generic reference letters) as well as a 500-word essay indicating 1) why they are interested in participating, and 2) their current and projected research and teaching interests. The deadline for applications is 15 October 2008. Essays, CVs, and letters of reference should be sent to:

Director
Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, IUPUI
Cavanaugh Hall 417
425 University Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46202–5140

***** CALL FOR PAPERS *****

Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture

Annual Meeting: April 3-5, 2009

Hyatt Regency, Crystal City (Washington DC)



Proposals due November 15, 2008 / Papers due March 1, 2009

Submit proposals via www.asrec.org

A Bigger Conference and Better Location: ASREC'09 will be our first independent meeting. We expect a much larger and more diverse group of scholars than ever before – economists, political scientists, sociologists, demographers, and many others – plus journalists, policy specialists, and government officials. The DC venue offers many benefits, including ease of travel and access to Washington's monuments, museums, parks, and institutions. Early April is "peak bloom" time for DC's famous cherry trees, so bring the family and enjoy the sights!

Proposal Format: For each paper, please include title and an abstract of 200 words or less. For each person, please supply name, institutional affiliation, e-mail, phone number, and mailing address. We welcome preliminary drafts, especially if you're new to ASREC.

Topics/Methods: We welcome on many topics in the social-scientific study of religion, including

- Religious markets, competition, monopoly, and regulation
- Economic growth, development, poverty, and inequality
- Social networks, and social/spiritual/religious capital,
- Beliefs, attitudes, doctrines, norms, and values
- Institutions, organizations, congregations, and denominations
- Extremism, conflict, sectarianism, and religious persecution
- Religious or social trends, growth, and decline
- Conversion, switching, proselytizing, and the marketing of religion
- Religious participation, attendance, and commitment
- Religious giving, philanthropy, and church finances
- Demography, fertility, family, marriage, and gender
- Education, human capital, health, and happiness
- Race, ethnicity, and discrimination
- Politics, public choice/finance, church-state issues, and the law
- Experimental methods, simulation studies, and computational methods
- Neuroscience and evolutionary theory