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Third Biennial Conference on Religion and American Culture Slated for June 6-9, 2013

The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture is pleased to announce the Third Biennial Conference on Religion and American Culture, to be held at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel, June 6 through June 9. The overarching themes of this third biennial conference will be “thinking again about old topics” and “new developments.” Scholars from multiple perspectives will serve on multidisciplinary panels.

Like the conferences in 2009 and 2011, the room will be set up in a circle with audience members on risers around the central round table. This set-up promotes more participation from the audience and deeper conversation among the panelists and those surrounding them. The hotel is again conveniently located in downtown Indianapolis among restaurants, museums, and public parks--all very conducive to continuing over coffee and meals those conversations begun in sessions.

Thanks to a grant from Lilly Endowment, we have reserved a block of rooms at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel at the special rate of \$79 per night. Once those rooms have sold out, rooms will be available at the going room rate, so please be sure to reserve your room right away. (Note: the special hotel rate of \$79 will not appear on the screen or on the automated response, but will be confirmed by a second email from the hotel.) The Sheraton is offering a special self-parking rate of \$10 per night, easily the best deal in town.

Early registration rates are available until May 5. These early rates are \$90 for professionals and \$50 for students. Registration after May 5 will be at the onsite rate of \$120 for professionals and \$70 for students.

To register for the conference and reserve a hotel room please visit our website: www.raac.iupui.edu

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday, June 6

6:00-8:00pm Arrival and Registration

Opening Reception

Friday, June 78:30-10:00 **Fifty Years of Non-Sectarian Study of Religion: Goals, Limitations, Expectations**

June 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Abingdon School District v. Shempp decision, which declared unconstitutional required devotional Bible reading in public schools. The decision is generally regarded as the impetus, ironically, for the development of religious studies programs in state-sponsored higher education because of its call to study scripture as history and literature. How did the decision change the course or scope of the study of religion in North America? What are the goals and limits of the study of American religion? And how do students (both/either public and/or private) shape what and how we teach and research?

Panelists: Jon Butler (Yale University)
 Patricia Killen (Gonzaga University)
 John Schmalzbauer (Missouri State University)

10:30-12:00 **Space and Place**

American religious studies has for too long been captive to outdated models of space and place, while European scholars have moved considerably beyond us in thinking about this topic. We believe that this biennial conference, which is focusing on re-thinking old topics as we consider altogether new ones, is the perfect place to push the field forward in considering space and place.

Panelists: John Corrigan (Florida State University)
 Bret Carroll (California State University, Stanislaus)
 Tracy Leavelle (Creighton University)
 Elaine Pena (George Washington University)

2:00-4:00 **Belonging and Participation** (Special Venue: Indiana War Memorial Auditorium)

This session will be held at the Indiana World War Memorial, so the civil religious overtones will be obvious, but our topic goes beyond civil religion to religion's role in all sorts of social engagement. Does religion play the same role it used to play? We know that a significant portion of American citizens do not participate in civic life and a significant portion of "believers" do not participate in organized religious life. Yet, such social movements as the Tea Party and Occupy often resound with religious echoes. Many things are at work here, including individualism and community. To what degree, then, is citizenship or faith determined by active social involvement, and vice-versa? Similarly, to what degree is involvement determined by the standard organizational forms of political parties, interest groups, denominations, or congregations?

Panelists: Korie Edwards (Ohio State University)

Kathleen Garces-Foley (Marymount University, Virginia)

Marie Griffith (Washington University, St. Louis)

Edward Linenthal (Indiana University, Bloomington)

Saturday, June 8

8:30-10:00 **Religion and Changing Technologies**

Technological change-especially changes in communication technology-has had an enormous impact on religion. But religious ideas and practices have sometimes spurred, sometimes challenged, technological change. This session provides the opportunity take the long, broad view of the relationship between religion and communication technology. How do technological changes-from printing, radio, and television to film and the internet-affect religious experience, education, organization, preaching, and even theology? How should changes in technology influence the questions we ask?

Panelists: Matthew Hedstrom (University of Virginia)

William Romanowski (Calvin College)

Jonathan Walton (Harvard Divinity School)

10:30-12:00 **Religion in Social Media**

The importance of the internet and new social media cannot be gainsaid, though as scholars our first inclination is to put it in context. What changes have come or will come because of new mass communication techniques that are heavily graphics-driven? Will the ability to merge and display multiple media sources change the way we think about religious practice? About religious organizations? About religious history? What effect will social media and new forms of (digital) interpersonal relationships or online communities have on religion?

Panelists: Verity Jones (Christian Theological Seminary)

Kathryn Reklis (Fordham University)

Scott Thumma (Hartford Seminary)

Jonathan Van Antwerpen (Social Science Research Council and The Immanent Frame)

1:30-3:00 **The Bible in American Life: Preliminary Discussions of Analysis of the General Social Survey**

The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture has been involved in a Lilly Endowment-funded study of how people use the Bible in their daily lives, outside the church. With twenty-four questions on the General Social Survey, we will be able to cross-tabulate responses to our questions with information about class, race, gender, education, region, etc. The data for that survey will be analyzed in a White Paper for distribution on the Center's website. This session will bring together an interdisciplinary panel to discuss results of that initial analysis in light of their own work on the Bible in American life.

Panelists: Art Farnsley, Moderator (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis)
Sylvester Johnson (Northwestern University)
Mark Noll (University of Notre Dame)
Valarie Ziegler (DePauw University)

3:30-5:15 **The Future of the Study of American Religion**

Having begun the conference with a look back over the past fifty years of American religious studies, the conference will conclude with a session dedicated to thinking about where we are going. Given the state of the field, emerging technologies, and current efforts, where is the field going over the next two decades? What topics will be most important? Which methods for research will prove the most efficacious?

Panelists: Nancy Ammerman (Boston University)
Kathryn Lofton (Yale University)
John McGreevy (University of Notre Dame)
David Yoo (University of California, Los Angeles)

5:30-8:00 Concluding reception



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