



# NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION DIVISION 36

## Religion's Role in Prosocial Behavior: Myth or Reality?

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Imagine a student, a friend, or a colleague asking you whether religion has an impact on prosocial behavior or whether religious people tend to behave in a prosocial way. What would be your answer?

### An Intriguing Discrepancy and the Suspicion of Moral Hypocrisy

If you based your answer on almost all classic theorists, the answer would be affirmative. For instance, religion, as part of culture, provides mechanisms that control the natural destructiveness of humans caused by their narcissism and sexual impulses (Freud, 1927/1961). God is seen as a projection of the superegoic instance of the imaginary father and as such reminds us of the two important taboos of incest and killing (Freud, 1913/1919). Generativity, as the main developmental task of middle adulthood (Erikson, 1963), is particularly emphasized within a religious perspective (McFadden, 1999). Saints and holy figures are models of charity and altruism, i.e. behaviors that are pragmatically risky but important for human community (James, 1902/1985). Religion provides specific reinforcements and punishments, thus solidifying social moral standards (Skinner, 1969). Finally, from a sociobiological and evolutionary perspective, it is assumed that religion allows for a shift from altruism limited to natural kinship towards a cultural altruism extended to a larger cultural "kinship" (Batson, 1983) and for the creation of broad coalitions promoting ties of extended reciprocal altruism (Kirkpatrick, 2005).

But if you turn to empirical research, the answer to our question becomes more difficult and quite complex. On the one hand, self-report measures of different aspects of prosociality—volunteering, helping behavior, agreeable personality (Big Five), low psychoticism (Eysenck's personality model), forgiveness, valuing benevolence, sense of generativity—provide systematic evidence in favor of the above theories: religious people report being prosocial and they do so across the large variety of the above-mentioned ways in which prosociality is expressed (Batson et al., 1993, 2005; Dillon et al., 2003; McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Saroglou, 2002, in press; Saroglou et al., 2004). Interestingly, this prosocial tendency as a function of religion seems to be universal. For instance, the high agreeableness of religious people seems constant across countries, religions, and even cohorts (McCullough et al., 2003; Saroglou, 2002, in press), and the importance of the value of benevolence among religious people is typical of Jewish, Christian, Muslim (Saroglou et al.,

(Continued on page 2)

### INSIDE

2006 Award Winner Bios . . . . .	9
Executive Committee Minutes. . . . .	10
Council Report . . . . .	11
Position Announcement . . . . .	11
Candidate Statements . . . . .	12
Membership Application . . . . .	15
Our Mission . . . . .	16

## Religion's Role

— from page 1

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2004), and Buddhist (Saroglou & Dupuis, in press) samples.

On the other hand, there are many counter-indications or at least findings implying skepticism, especially—but not only—when we move to studies using measures other than self-report questionnaires. First, the tendency of religious people to volunteer may simply be an artifact of belonging to religious organizations that happen to organize volunteer-type activities. Second, the size of the associations between religion and prosocial measures is usually weak (not exceeding, for instance, .20 for agreeableness and benevolence). Third, not all religious dimensions imply prosocial tendencies. Fundamentalist (e.g., Jackson & Esses, 1997), orthodox (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1993), and in some cases even intrinsically religious people (e.g., Batson et al., 1999) often show prejudice, discrimination, or at least lack of prosociality towards outgroups or people threatening their values (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005, for review). Four, and more importantly, social experiments demonstrate that the motivation of prosocial behavior among the intrinsically religious is not altruistic, but rather egotistic: the need to be perceived by others as good and the non-consideration of the real needs as expressed by the persons asking for help are dominant (Batson et al., 1993, 2005). Finally, even for forgiveness, which is particularly emphasized within religion, results based on measures other than self-report questionnaires are rather disappointing (McCullough & Worthington, 1999; see also Cohen et al., 2006).

The contrast between the ideals and self-perceptions of religious people and the results of studies using other research strategies is so striking that researchers may be tempted to suspect moral hypocrisy in religious people. For instance, Batson et al. (1993) suspected moral hypocrisy in religious people with regard to prejudice: social experimental studies did not confirm the universal brotherhood ideals and even provided evidence to the contrary. Intrinsically religious people seem to need to appear prosocial rather than to really be so (Batson et al., 2005).

## Making Sense of the Discrepancy and Moving Ahead: Towards the Reality of Minimal Prosociality

We argue that the interpretative hypothesis of moral hypocrisy, although legitimate, may obscure rather than clarify our psychological understanding of the religion and prosociality issue, especially if it is extended from a discrepancy between altruistic ideals or self-perceptions and a self-centered motivation to a discrepancy between these ideals or self-perceptions and the absence of prosocial behavior. First, even from a philosophical perspective, it is debatable whether self-interest and the personal need for a positive self-image can so easily be classified as an egotistic, and thus non-altruistic motivation for prosocial behavior. More importantly, if we leave aside the—again, otherwise legitimate—question of motivation, the contrast is so strong between theories (almost all theories) and self-report-based studies (systematic findings) confirming the inherent links between religion and prosociality, and the many other (often social-experimental) studies that fail to confirm or even contradict the religion-prosociality association, that one cannot so quickly draw conclusions of moral hypocrisy in religious people. Have all classic psychology of religion theorists then been wrong? Are religious people so anxious about their image that they create a self-perception so distant from reality?

A more economic and perhaps more realistic understanding of previous theory and research is to assume that the prosociality of religious people (a) also exists outside these people's minds (religious people are not delusional when they report being agreeable), but (b) is not extended to universal and unconditional altruism (this may be the case of some saints or some very specific orientations): the prosociality of religious people is rather restricted to a *minimal* prosocial behavior, i.e. a prosocial behavior limited to some targets and some conditions.

More precisely, religious people may tend not to behave prosocially when targets are outgroup members, people that

(Continued on page 3)

## Religion's Role

— from page 2

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threaten their values or even unknown people (this is probably because religion also means an identity and thus borders; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). However, if prosocial religious ethics have any impact on people's lives, this should at least manifest itself with close and familiar people: "brothers-sisters" and "neighbors" whose judgment and perception is valued, and with whom religious people are engaged in relationships implying reciprocity. We may then expect religiousness to predict prosociality towards close targets in need but to be unrelated to prosociality towards unknown targets. Such a distinction may fit well with an evolutionary perspective in psychology of religion: religion promotes an arena for *delimited* coalitions and alliances implying reciprocal altruism (Kirkpatrick, 2005).

Similarly, there are no reasons to expect religiousness to necessarily or usually imply high (e.g., high-cost), "heroic" standards of altruism and prosocial behavior. Religiousness may, however, be associated at least with a "minimum" level of prosociality, such as low aggression. Although aggression and anti-social behavior are not exactly the opposite of altruism and prosocial behavior (e.g., Krueger et al., 2001), it is well established that hostility and aggression are negatively related to agreeableness and prosocial traits and behaviors. Religious moral standards strongly condemn aggression, be it physical, verbal, or even "mental" (judging someone else negatively was considered similar to killing in early Christian spirituality; see, e.g., John Climacus, 1982).

If we assume then that religion implies at least a limited and minimal prosociality, religious people may be honest towards others and themselves when they report high altruism and prosociality and may thus not be prey to a kind of "self-delusion". Others, at least people with whom they are in contact and maintain interpersonal relationships, may also perceive religious people as prosocial, agreeable, helpful, and non-aggressive. Surprisingly, peer-ratings are rare in psychology of religion. They may however be particularly valuable as a way of testing the relevance of the suspicion with respect to the

idealized self-perceptions of religious people regarding many personal aspects (e.g., positive personality traits, subjective well-being and mental health, security in attachment, marital satisfaction). Of course, peer-validation of religious prosocial tendencies is not a direct proof of prosociality, but at least it challenges the suspicion of dishonesty or self-delusion in religious people when they score themselves high on agreeableness and prosociality.

## Two Specific Cases: Religious Fundamentalism and Modern Spirituality

Finally, considering the status of the target (e.g., close, unknown, ingroup, outgroup member) when studying prosocial behavior of religious people may be particularly important with regard to two specific orientations that are of great interest today, both for psychology of religion and society in general, i.e. religious fundamentalism and modern spirituality. As mentioned above, religious fundamentalists (RFs) are known to express prejudice and discrimination. Being high in right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2005), they are expected to show some aggression, the later being part of the authoritarianism construct. However, several studies also show that RFs are high in agreeableness (Saroglou, 2002, for a review). It could then be that, as authoritarians, the RFs are aggressive with targets labeled by the authorities as enemies, but as religious, they may not be aggressive with people in general (see also Laythe et al., 2002); they may even be prosocial, especially with close ones.

Spirituality is another dimension that pushes us to re-open the religion-prosocial behavior debate. An emerging debate exists on whether contemporary spirituality reflects an individualistic and self-centered tendency (e.g., Bellah et al., 1985) or implies highly internalized prosocial values, altruism, and generativity in a similar fashion to religion (e.g., Dillon et al., 2003). We argue that, except in cases where spirituality mainly refers to

( Continued on page 4 )

## Religion's Role

— from page 3

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experience (see, e.g., MacDonald, 2000) and does not imply engagement and some practice (see Belzen, 2005, for the distinction), modern spirituality follows the prosocial tendency of traditional religiousness because it includes an active search for and construction of meaning, the acceptance of transcendence, a sense of connectedness, and an ethics of responsibility. More importantly, if modern spirituality is defined as different from religiousness in that it is not limited to a specific religious tradition or institution (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005), then we may expect an extension of the scope of prosociality. Spirituality may thus be a predictor of overcoming in- vs. out-group borders in benevolence, helping, and tolerance of others. For instance, recent research shows that while religiousness is unrelated or negatively related (especially in the case of mono-religious/cultural countries) to the importance attributed to the value of universalism (Saroglou et al., 2004), in spirituality, high importance is attributed to this value (Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Saroglou & Muñoz, 2006). Interestingly, this is also the case with a pro-Buddhist orientation among Westerners (Saroglou & Dupuis, in press).

## Four Empirical Studies

We carried out four studies in order to investigate these questions (see Saroglou et al., 2005, for more details). In the first study, we tested the hypothesis that religiousness is negatively associated with indirect, non-physical, aggression. Since previous evidence documenting this link is usually based on self-report questionnaires, we were interested in whether this link could also be found through a projective measure where participants face hypothetical frustrating situations, the latter being known to increase the likelihood of aggressive answers (Rosenzweig, 1976). Participants (106 psychology students) were unaware of the aims of the study and no prosocial value was activated: the study was advertised as a study in “coping and styles in which individuals cope with stressful situations”. They were asked to fill in the punch-lines of the 24 pictures of the Rosenzweig test presenting frustrating daily life situations. Afterwards, two judges evaluated the answers

by simply coding them as (1) kind, polite, (2) neutral or ambiguous about the feelings of the person who answers, or (3) aggressive (impolite, arrogant, insulting, threatening, accusing).

Results confirmed the main hypothesis: the more people valued God and religion in their life and prayed, the less they tended to spontaneously react in an aggressive way when faced with hypothetical daily hassles that occur within the framework of interpersonal relations ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ )—or, in other words, the more they tended to react in a polite and conciliatory way. Interestingly, this was not the case with fundamentalism ( $r = -.01$ ), especially when its overlap with the pro-religious tendency was partialled out (.15, n.s.), a finding suggesting that other previous studies having found fundamentalism to be positively related to self-perceived agreeableness (Saroglou, 2002, for a review) may have confounded the fundamentalist and the pro-religious components included in the RF construct.

In the second study, we hypothesized that religiousness is positively related with willingness to help family members and close relations; however, this willingness to help may not be extended to unknown targets, i.e. people with whom no relationship has been engaged, a situation that does not imply reciprocation and benefits from a positive perception by these targets. Again, the study was presented as a study in “reaction styles in the face of everyday life situations”. Participants (105 female psychology students) were administered a written description of nine hypothetical situations typical of everyday life interpersonal interactions (nine paragraphs); they were asked to report how they would react to these situations. Five of them included a person that was clearly in need and were designed such that the protagonist could only decide whether to be prosocial or not (the other four situations had nothing to do with others' needs and prosocial reactions, and were added as distracters). Two psychologists coded the answers in the five prosociality-related situations as (1) not prosocial, (2) conditionally prosocial or (3) unconditionally prosocial.

(Continued on page 5)

## Religion's Role

— from page 4

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The design of the study included two conditions, i.e. two versions of the hypothetical situations (participants were randomly assigned). In the first version-condition, the protagonist in need was presented as a member of the family, a (class or work) colleague, or a friend. In the second condition, the situations were the same but the protagonist was presented as an unknown person. In line with our hypothesis, in the close target condition, religiousness (we used our religiousness measure; Saroglou & Galand, 2004) was positively associated with willingness to help ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ). However, religiousness was unrelated to willingness to help unknown targets in the same hypothetical situations ( $r = -.01$ ). Interestingly, spirituality did not follow this distinction between the two conditions: importance of spirituality in life was associated with willingness to help both close ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ) and unknown targets ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ). This last finding is in line with increasing evidence that modern changes in the religious landscape and an increase of importance attributed to spirituality are followed by a shift from ingroup-focused (as in traditional religiousness) to universalistic ethics, values, and behaviors (Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Saroglou & Muñoz, 2006; Saroglou et al., 2004).

In the following two studies (see also Saroglou et al., 2005, for more details), we collected peer-ratings in order to deal with the suspicion of the possible self-delusion of religious people when they report being prosocial. Some previous studies provided peer validation of high agreeableness of or low use of hostile humor by religious people, but these studies were based on mother- (Saroglou & Fiasse, 2003), parent- and teacher- (McCullough et al., 2003) or spouse-ratings (Saroglou, 2004), i.e. ratings by peers who may have been biased by the willingness to project onto their children or spouses their own idealized perception of personality. The aim of our studies 3 and 4 was thus to look for confirmation of the prosociality of religious targets by peers other than parents or spouses.

For study 3, we selected two kinds of peers, a sibling and a friend of the target. Both of these can be expected to know

the target well, but also to have their independent perception of the target's personality. Targets (105 late adolescents and young adults) evaluated themselves and were evaluated by a sibling and a friend in altruism (Rushton et al., 1981) and empathy (a measure that includes empathy, perspective taking, and personal distress; Davis, 1983). As expected, not only were the religiosity and spirituality of the target positively related to self-reported altruistic behavior, but this relation turned out to be confirmed by siblings and friends. In addition, the spirituality (but not religiosity) of the target was positively related to perspective-taking (self-report) and the friend confirmed this link. Finally, although there was no relation between the religiosity or spirituality of the target and self-reported empathy, such a relation was positive and significant according to the ratings of siblings (with religiosity) and friends (with spirituality).

The main aim of study 4 was to replicate and extend study 3 with a different sample (adults rather than students), a broader measure of prosociality (Krueger et al., 2001) expanded in range and scope (not only limited to strangers and organizations, as in the Rushton et al., 1981, scale, but also including friends and acquaintances as targets), and different kinds of peers (adult friends and colleagues rather than siblings and late adolescent friends). Colleagues may be particularly important as peer evaluators. Contrary to siblings, with whom targets may be suspected to share similar values and worldviews, and friends, who are usually selected among other things because of common values and worldviews, colleagues are usually not selected. In addition, in study 4, we looked for the possible impact of social desirability (impression management) on the religion-prosociality association: if one follows the moral hypocrisy hypothesis, religious people should only want to *appear* prosocial.

The target participants were 105 adults. Results partially replicated study 3. Religiosity and spirituality of the target was positively related to self-reported altruism, empathy, and perspective-taking. Except for perspective-taking, the above findings

## Religion's Role

— from page 5

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were confirmed by the colleague's evaluation: a religious or spiritual target was perceived as altruistic and empathetic. However, in this study, the friend-judgments did not confirm the prosocial tendency of the religious target, and this was the case with regard to all aspects of prosociality. Finally, the prosociality of the religious target did not seem to be an artifact of social desirability. The religion-prosocial measures' associations remain significant after controlling for impression management (self-reports), a finding that replicates previous studies by Lewis (1999, 2000). In addition, impression management (as evaluated by the target) was positively related to both his/her religiousness and his/her empathy as evaluated by the colleague who, as mentioned above, also found the religious target empathetic. Following the rationale developed by Ones et al. (1996), one can conclude that social desirability reflects a true, substantial personality disposition rather than a bias in the religion-prosociality relation.

## Conclusion and Further Research Issues

These four studies provided evidence that prosociality as a function of religiousness is certainly a limited but still substantial reality, in line with most psychological theories of religion, and not a mere self-delusion of religious people, who are known to systematically perceive themselves as prosocial.

The limits in scope and strength of prosocial behavior as a function of personal religion (prosociality towards close rather than unknown or outgroup targets; simple and low- rather than high-cost prosocial behavior; and avoidance of antisocial acts rather than heroic altruistic sacrifice of the self) may explain why the associations between religion and a variety of prosocial constructs are usually weak. It is the interaction between the situation and the person that may in specific contexts increase the predictiveness of personality on behavior (Funder, 2001; Mischel, 2004).

There is need however to move forward in our understanding of the role religion plays in prosocial behavior. First, although our measures of prosociality (projective measures and peer-ratings) go beyond a research tradition heavily based on self-report questionnaires, they are all still paper-and-pencil measures and can consequently only provide indirect evidence of the prosocial behavior of religious people in real life. One should also take note that, with the exception of some experiments (see Batson et al., 1993), the more recent social psychological experiments on religion and prosocial behavior are usually based on paper-and-pencil measures of prosociality. Similarly, peer-ratings should still only be considered as indirect indicators of prosocial behavior. Agreement between judges is a partially independent question from the question of the accuracy of the judgment, and the latter can be established when behavioral measures are used (Funder & Colvin, 1997). There is thus a need to go further and to carry out real experimental studies where behavior is directly observed.

Second, the *impact* of religiousness is only indirectly assumed through associations of prosocial measures with individual differences in religiousness. It is thus also important to go further and test hypotheses on the directions of causality, where religion (or better, some aspects of it) can play the role of an independent variable in experimental manipulations. Colleagues and I have recently carried out such experiments based on the priming technique (Pichon et al., 2005). However, the opposite causal direction is also legitimate (Saroglou, in press): people who are by "nature", i.e. somewhat genetically, agreeable (in terms of *basic personality tendencies*; McCrae & Costa, 1999), and are hence more prone to act in a prosocial way across a variety of situations, may be religious (as one among other *characteristic, cultural adaptations* of the basic traits, in terms of McCrae & Costa's model) if they meet religion in their environment.

An important area for future research is the study of the underlying psychological mechanisms that may explain why religious people tend to be prosocial. For

(Continued on page 7)

## Religion's Role

— from page 6

...we may hypothesize that religious people are prosocial because they are empathetic ...and/or because it is important for them to be fair, honest, and show respect for prosocial norms.

instance, if we borrow Batson et al.'s (2002) distinction between empathy and principlism, we may hypothesize that religious people are prosocial because they are empathetic (tend to understand others' views, share others' feelings, are affected by others' suffering) and/or because it is important for them to be fair, honest, and show respect for prosocial norms. It could also be that each of these processes fits better with specific religious orientations. In our studies 3 and 4 presented above we tried to test whether empathy, perspective-taking, and/or honesty may mediate the religion-prosocial behavior links, but the results suggest unique (i.e. additional, so to be explained) predictiveness of religiousness beyond some impact of these variables.

Finally, it is obviously important to distinguish between specific religious dimensions when studying prosocial behavior and values. Many studies tend to compare, for instance, extrinsic with intrinsic religious orientation, intrinsic with quest religion, fundamentalism with quest religion, or literal with symbolic religious thinking (e.g., Batson et al., 1999, 2001, 2005; Duriez, 2004; Fontaine et al., 2005; Goldfried & Miner, 2002). Some skepticism, however, may be warranted. Not only may these types of distinctions look somewhat "Manichean", thus making results appear a bit trivial: positive and mature versus negative and theologically incorrect religious orientations predict respectively good versus bad moral behavior. But also, many of these distinctions reflect closed- versus open-mindedness, hence making differences in results easily attributable to cognitive capacities (e.g., perspective taking: Duriez, 2004; Fontaine et al., 2005) rather than to more religion-related psychological factors. Not that the former are irrelevant, but the latter are still the heart of our concern as psychologists of religion. To give an example, if Todorov's (1991) observation is historically correct that most cases of self-sacrifice for fellow prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps were motivated by religion or a strong humanistic ideology, then it is hard to assume from a psychological, religious, and philosophical perspective that all comes down to, for instance, higher cognitive and cognition-related abilities such as an integrative

complexity of thought, symbolic thinking or openness to experience.

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**Religion's Role** (from page 7)

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## Honoring the 2006 Division 36 Award Recipients

### WILLIAM C. BIER AWARD

#### Leslie Francis

Dr. Francis currently holds the Chair of Practical Theology in the University of Wales, Bangor, United Kingdom. He holds higher doctorates from the University of Oxford (DD in empirical theology) and the University of Cambridge (ScD in the psychology of religious development). Working as an empirical theologian, Dr. Francis is concerned to integrate psychological theories and methodologies within theological inquiry. Working as a psychologist of religion, Dr. Francis is concerned to operationalize and measure theologically-informed aspects of religion. His ongoing research projects include work in the theology of individual differences, the work-related psychological health of clergy, and studies in personality and religion. His recent authored and edited books include three volumes in the Personality Type and Scripture Series, *Exploring Matthew's Gospel* (2000), *Exploring Luke's Gospel* (2001) and *Exploring Mark's Gospel* (2002); *Joining and Leaving Religion* (2000); *Psychological Perspectives on Prayer* (2001); *The Naked Parish Priest* (2003); *Changing Rural Life* (2004); *The Idea of a Christian University* (2004); *Faith and Psychology* (2005); *Fragmented Faith* (2005); and *Religion, Education and Adolescence* (2005). Dr. Francis is senior editor of *Rural Theology*, co-editor of *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, and associate editor of *Journal of Beliefs and Values*.

### VIRGINIA SEXTON MENTORING AWARD

#### Michael McCullough

Michael E. McCullough, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology and the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. His scholarly work focuses on two topics. First, he is interested in the psychology and evolution of moral sentiments including gratitude, forgiveness, and the desire for revenge, as well as their links to health and well-being. Second, he is interested in several aspects of religion and spirituality, including how they evolved, how they develop in individuals, and their links to health, well-being, and social behavior. In 2000 he received the Margaret Gorman Early Career Award from the Psychology of Religion Division of the American Psychological Association. In 2001 he was awarded an American Psychological Association/John Templeton Foundation award for research in Positive Psychology. Dr. McCullough has also authored or edited five books.

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

#### Michael Nielsen

Michael Nielsen was awarded his doctorate in social psychology from Northern Illinois University in 1992. Since 1993 he has been a faculty member at Georgia Southern University. Shortly after joining GSU he created his psychology of religion website, <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/>. The website has become a hub for information regarding the psychology of religion, with

resources aimed at students, faculty and others who are interested in the field. Through his website he has answered thousands of e-mails and promoted the psychological study of religion. The website now also serves as the gateway to The Somervogel Archive, a searchable database developed by Michael Donahue and underwritten by Division 36.

### MARGARET GORMAN EARLY

#### CAREER AWARD

#### Mark Koltko-Rivera

Mark Koltko-Rivera received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from New York University in 2000. He is currently director of research at Professional Services Group, Inc. (Winter Park, Florida), where he is PI on several externally funded research projects (e.g., development of a screen for psychiatric disorders). He has taught on an adjunct basis at NYU, the University of Central Florida, Manhattanville College, and Hartford Seminary. In his recent private scholarship, he has published or is developing theoretical and empirical papers on the constructs of worldview, religiosity, basis of religious belief, religious identity, and their assessment. His article, "The Psychology of Worldviews" (Review of General Psychology, 2004), won APA Division 1's George A. Miller Award for an outstanding paper in unified psychology. He is writing a book addressing the debate between Darwinian evolution and biblical religion, including its underlying psychological foundations.



## Division 36 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

*March 4, 2006  
Columbia, MD*

*Submitted by Lydia Cho  
(on behalf of  
Lisa Miller, Secretary)  
and  
Mark McMinn*

1. The meeting opened with brief introductions. In attendance were five Executive Committee members—Mark McMinn, Mary Reuder, Ralph Piedmont, Patrick Bennett, and Marsha Cutting. Also present were two representatives from APA—Susan Harris (Senior Director, Journals) and her research assistant Will Schweitzer.
2. The APA representatives and the Executive Committee discussed the need and benefits of creating an APA journal covering psychology and spirituality/religion. The following were discussed: current publication venues for psychology, religion, spirituality, the scope of this potential APA journal, the possibility of the journal to be covered as a part of membership of Division 36, potential subscribers beyond division members, whether or not there are enough articles to “go to press” for two issues, and so on. APA representatives indicated that the next step would be an on-line (or paper-pencil) 5–6 item question targeting Division 36 members (including non APA, Division 36 members) assessing what such a journal would be (e.g., subtopics, interests, experience, and expectations). This next step was approved by a unanimous vote of the voting members.
3. Minutes from August 19, 2005 were accepted, with a unanimous vote of the voting members.
4. Patrick Bennett discussed the redesign of the newsletter. Redesign will include photographs, color, more visual elements, but will not be a vast departure from previous newsletters. Patrick also led a discussion about the newsletter. Ideas included more varied content (e.g., research, practice, policy, theory, and teaching) and shorter pieces that would be of interest to different constituents. Patrick Bennett will put together a proposal with these ideas to consider at the August EC meeting.
5. Discussion of the leadership training manual was deferred until the August meeting.
6. Division 36 lost a Council seat in 2007 because of the recent apportionment ballot results. This was discussed, and it was agreed that Mary Reuder will continue her term through 2007 and Phil Watkins will step down at the end of 2006. We will extend a special word of thanks to Phil at the 2006 business meeting, and will nominate him again for a Council seat in the next election (to be held in 2007). If we can regain a seat next year, then Phil could still complete his third year of service in 2008.
7. The question was raised by one of our members as to whether we could have back issues of newsletters posted on our division’s website. Patrick Bennett agreed to have back issues scanned and put on the website.
8. Ralph Piedmont attended the APA Leadership Conference and was inspired to develop a 5-year plan for Division 36 as his presidential initiative. This was discussed as an informational item and enthusiasm for the idea was expressed.
9. Scott Richards’ proposal to have a student representative who would attend the annual APAGS meeting and the Division 36 EC meetings was discussed. There was consensus that we cannot take on additional expense at this time, but there was also enthusiasm about the possibility of having a student representative. One possibility is to reduce the seed grant money that we spend in order to provide partial funding for a student representative. Because the time was running short, and because this has financial implications, we deferred this item to the August meeting, recognizing that more EC members will be present at the August meeting and this item deserves ample time for consideration.
10. Ralph Piedmont reported that there were approximately 250 people registered for the midyear meeting. He is hoping that the conference will break even this year, and may be profitable next year. The EC unanimously approved him moving forward with plans for a 2007 midyear meeting. We discussed how to make the event more visible among Division 36 members in order to increase divisional attendance.

## Report from the APA Council of Representatives Winter Meeting

*Submitted by  
Division 36 Council  
Representatives:  
Mary E. Reuder  
& Philip Watkins*

The APA Council of Representatives met for three days in Washington, DC from February 16-19, 2006.

A major item which engendered much debate was a recommendation for a change in requirements for licensing psychologists. The proposal was to require two years of approved supervised practice—one an internship and the other either pre- or post-doctoral. There was a great deal of sympathy for students who are currently required to have the second year post-doctoral. In many cases the quality of the supervision is questionable and/or students are exploited. A strong belief was expressed that the critical problem is not clock hours and their timing, but rather one of criteria for determining proficiency in designated areas. The latter was proposed as an item to go to the Education Directorate to work up a recommendation.

The 2005 Financial Report revealed a \$5.25 million surplus—a big surprise after years of just getting by. The surplus was, in part, a carry over effect of actions taken in previous years to cope with serious deficits. Much of the savings at that time was at the expense of the staff via salary cuts and forced attrition. In consequence, the Finance Committee, with the approval of Council, voted to use a portion of the surplus to correct inequities in

staff salaries. The 2006 budget will have a more modest surplus of \$600,000 as a back-up for unanticipated expenses.

After minimal debate, Council approved a proposed establishment of a new Division of Trauma Psychology. A proposal for the formation of a second new division, The Society of Human-Animal Studies received exhaustive debate. The idea of the importance of human-animal relationships was widely recognized. However, genuine conflict with the goals of Divisions 3, 6, 20, and 28 was carefully explicated and supported by documentation. Ultimately Council voted against the proposal 105-48.

Council voted to fund meetings of 12 active Task Forces. One particularly interesting Task Force is directed toward the problem of the shortage of quantitative psychologists despite a plethora of available jobs. Departments are urged to take notice.

A special Task Force on the use of torture presented a major formal resolution: 1) It is unethical for psychologists to engage in torture under any circumstances and 2) psychologists have an ethical obligation to report any observed torture to the appropriate authorities. Council's adoption of this policy was especially welcomed by members of the various branches of the military. ~

### POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

#### The Institute for the Psychological Sciences in Arlington, VA

The Institute for the Psychological Sciences (IPS) invites applications for a Full-time faculty position beginning Fall 2006. The Institute for the Psychological Sciences is a free-standing professional school offering the M.S. and Psy.D. degrees in clinical psychology.

The Institute is committed to the fruitful integration of sound science and effective practice in psychology with a Catholic perspective on the nature of persons, marriage, family, and the moral life. Successful applicants will be committed to this mission and willing to teach in accordance with such views. We are seeking a doctoral-level psychologist who is dedicated to the training and formation of future generations of psychologists through their teaching and research. Applicants should demonstrate interests and competencies in teaching in the areas of psychotherapy, psychological assessment, and professional ethics. Other duties would include academic/dissertation advising and some administrative responsibilities. Applicants should be license eligible in the state of Virginia. Rank of appointment and salary will be commensurate with qualifications.

Applications are currently being reviewed and will be accepted until the position is filled. Send letter of interest and curriculum vita to: Chair, Committee on Faculty Recruitment, IPS, 2001 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 511, Arlington, VA 22202. IPS is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Candidate Statements for Division 36 Offices

### For the Office of President

#### *Lisa Miller*

Lisa Miller, Ph.D. is a tenured associate professor in the Clinical Psychology Program at Columbia University, Teachers College in New York. Dr. Miller earned a B.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania from the founder of the positive psychology movement, Dr. Martin Seligman. Her research focuses on the protective qualities of religion and spirituality against psychopathology in youths and parents, and on the development of innovative treatment models predicated on a spiritual reality. Her scholarship is published in top mainstream journals as well as in APA books. Recently the American Psychological Association released "Spiritual Awareness Psychotherapy," a DVD of Dr. Miller teaching and demonstrating her fundamentally spiritual approach to psychotherapy. Her research is funded by NIMH and the William T. Grant Foundation. Dr. Miller has been invited to speak on spirituality and resilience in youth to numerous policy groups such as the Commission for Children at Risk, the Heritage Foundation, US Congressional legislators and the First World Congress of Spirituality in Mexico. For the past four years Dr. Miller has been honored to serve Division 36, as Secretary (2003–2006) and as a member at large (2002–2003) on the Executive Committee.

"I am honored by the nomination from Division 36 for President. I believe that it is our time to join with the zeitgeist in the APA by broadening the deep intellectual foundation of psychology to include a fundamentally spiritual and religious perspective. The field is listening and this is our opportunity to take a leadership role in essential formulations of research epistemology, entirely new models of psychotherapy and counseling, and a much broadened view of calling in career. I envision an energetic series of colloquia at the APA convention that cut new ground in examining research and treatment from a fundamentally spiritual reality. By highlighting some of the field's most innovative ideas with rigorous scholarly analysis, we can look forward to providing additional momentum to opening psychology to spirituality."

#### *Paul Williamson*

After 17 years as a cleric, Paul Williamson turned his interests toward studying religion from a psychological perspective and prepared for a second career by earning a Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Tennessee (1999). He is presently a psychology professor at Henderson State University, where he directs undergraduate experimental research on religious issues and serves on the honors college faculty. He has authored/coauthored two books: *Foundations: Fitly Joined Together: Concise History, Polity, and Doctrine of the Church of God of Prophecy* (1999, White Wing Publishing House); *The Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism* (2005, Guilford Press, co-authored with R. W. Hood & P. C. Hill). Williamson also has authored/coauthored a number of articles that have appeared in a variety of journals, including the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Review of Religious Research*, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, and the *Journal of East Tennessee History*. He is presently conducting longitudinal research on spiritual transformation at a faith-based rehabilitation center. In Division 36, Dr. Williamson received the Margaret Gorman Early Career Award (2002) and has served on the Awards Committee (since 2003) and as the Newsletter Editor (2002–2005).

"It is indeed an honor to be nominated as president of Division 36. Since beginning as a student member in the early 1990s, I have maintained an interest in the work of our Division and have appreciated opportunities to serve during my professional years. As religious issues are evermore becoming a global, as well as a local, concern, it seems a growing number of students, psychologists, and other social scientists should be interested in the work of our Division. As president, I would work to discover ways through which we might attract such people to our membership and promote our Division's visibility in APA and the community. Given the complexity of religious issues, I also would strongly encourage the use of more diverse methodologies in conducting our research, including descriptive and experimental approaches. Finally, I would welcome opportunities to work with members on other issues seen as important to our Division's work and mission."

(Continued on page 13)

*( From page 12 )*

## CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

## For the Office of Member-at-Large

### *Jamie D. Aten*

Jamie D. Aten received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Indiana State University. He is an Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Southern Mississippi. His research emphasizes spirituality in supervision, counseling, and disaster survivors. He published one of the first supervision models to address religion, appearing in *Psychotherapy*, and is currently co-editing a special volume of the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* on clinical supervision. He is active in raising awareness about spiritual and psychological issues in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina through outreach, training, consulting, and research. Dr. Aten has also been appointed by the Mississippi Psychological Association as the state's Rural Health Coordinator.

“Division 36 has played a vital role in my development as an early career psychologist. I am honored to have been nominated for a Member-at-Large position within the Division. The continued surge of attention and research focused on religious and spiritual issues in psychology has proved to be very exciting. It is encouraging to see how members of Division 36 have and continue to shape the way our field thinks about and approaches religious and spiritual topics. If elected as a Member-at-Large, my primary goal would be to contribute to the Division's momentum by working diligently to engage and enhance involvement by early career psychologists and students. I gladly welcome the nomination and look forward to being a part of the possibilities and opportunities that lay ahead for Division 36.”

### *Stephen W. Cook*

Stephen Cook received his PhD from University of Missouri-Columbia in 1992, and is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at Texas Tech University. His research focuses on religious/spiritual issues, stress and coping, and gender. He is an active member of a multi-disciplinary workgroup at Texas Tech University focusing on research and education activities surrounding spirituality and health. For seven years he coordinated a doctoral training program in counseling psychology, and now directs his department's psychology training clinic for clinical and counseling psychology doctoral students. He served three years on the board of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP), serving as formal liaison to the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA), informal liaison to the Committee for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP), and coordinator of the Outstanding Graduate Student Award. He has been a member of Division 36 since graduate school.

“I am honored to be nominated for Division 36 Member-at-Large, and I am committed to providing the highest standards of service to our division through my work in this position. Because of my involvement in the psychology of religion in the realms of research, teaching, and practice, I believe I will be able to represent a variety of members in our division. I have an understanding and enthusiasm for several areas within the psychology of religion as well as psychology in general, and I have the dedication, ability, and experience to be an active and constructive contributor to the Division 36 Executive Committee. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve you in this position.”

*( Continued on page 14 )*

*(From page 13)*

## CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

**For the Office of Secretary***Michael J. Donahue*

Michael J. Donahue obtained his M.S. (1979) and Ph.D. (1981) degrees from Purdue University, and then did a two-year postdoc in psychology of religion with Allen Bergin. He worked at Search Institute, Minneapolis, for eleven years, researching climate in religious and educational settings, directing a government-funded national field test of a middle school sexuality curriculum, and co-chairing a nationwide study of why people in five Christian denominations give money to their churches. More recently, he has taught statistics, cognitive psychology, and psychology of religion graduate readings seminars in graduate clinical PsyD programs at Azusa Pacific University (1999–2003) and the Institute for the Psychological Sciences (2005–present).

Dr. Donahue has been actively involved in Division 36, serving as a convention program committee member, 1985–1987 (chair, 1986), and hospitality suite program chair 1993–1995. From 1979–2004 he was author or co-author on 18 APA papers and posters. Although perhaps best known for his early work on intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, he and Michael Nielsen recently coauthored a chapter on “Religion, attitudes, and social behavior” in Paloutzian and Park’s *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, and he wrote an article concerning the lack of coverage of religion in the *Handbook of Social Psychology* published in the *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*. He is creator and director of the Sommervogel Archive, an online bibliography of more than 44,000 references in the social scientific study of religion; Division 36 supports the Archive by paying to have it hosted on the web.

“I am honored to have been nominated for the office of secretary of the Division. Like so many others, I benefited from the support of Division 36 members early in my career, forming friendships that have continued my entire professional life. I enjoyed serving the division during my time on the program and hospitality committees, and now that I have settled into an academic position in a school located a quick Metro ride away from APA headquarters, I would be more than happy to do so again.”

*Lewis Schlosser*

Lewis Z. Schlosser received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Maryland at College Park in 2003. He currently is an assistant professor at Seton Hall University, where he teaches in the counseling psychology doctoral program. In addition to being a licensed psychologist in New York, Dr. Schlosser maintains an active research program on (a) the role of religion and spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy, (b) the religious climate of the United States, and (c) Jewish issues. He has numerous publications in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *The Counseling Psychologist*, *Psychotherapy Research*, and other journals. In addition, Dr. Schlosser teaches a course on religion and spirituality as a component of multiculturally competent practice.

“I am honored to have been nominated to serve as the Secretary for Division 36. It would consider it a privilege to work with a collaborative, spirited, and committed group of colleagues. During my tenure as a member of Division 36, I have worked and interacted with several professionals within the field who have increased my interest in the psychology of religion. As a result, I would now like to become more actively involved with the Division, and I see serving as the Secretary as an ideal way to accomplish that goal. I have been a member of the Division for several years, and have contributed to the Division’s mission through my scholarly and teaching activities. More recently, I served the Division as a member of the 2005–2006 Program Committee. In addition to bringing my expertise on the above-mentioned topics, I believe that my strong work ethic and attention to detail would serve me well if elected to the position of Secretary. I welcome the opportunity to serve the Division’s membership, and look forward to getting to know more of you in the near future.”





**Application for Division 36: Psychology of Religion American Psychological Association**

Please photocopy and distribute to those interested in joining Division 36

**Name:** (Last, First, M.I.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home Phone** (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ **Office Phone** (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Send mail to:** \_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Office

Present Membership Status in APA: \_\_\_ Fellow \_\_\_ Member \_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_ Student Affiliate \_\_\_ None\*

Status Sought in Division 36: \_\_\_ Fellow \_\_\_ Member \_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_ Student Affiliate \_\_\_ Professional Affiliate

\*If you are not currently an APA member, please include a copy of your CV

**APA Membership #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of original APA membership:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Highest Degree:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Major field of study:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Briefly summarize your interest in Division 36:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Send Applications to: William Hathaway, Membership Chair  
 Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology  
 CRB 161  
 1000 Regent University Drive  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23456  
 Applications should be accompanied by a check for \$15 (US) made out to "Div. 36 of APA"

# Our Mission...

## Division 36, Psychology of Religion

- Promotes the application of psychological research methods and interpretive frameworks to diverse forms of religion and spirituality;
- encourages the incorporation of the results of such work into clinical and other applied settings;
- and fosters constructive dialogue and interchange between psychological study and practice, on the one hand, and religious perspectives and institutions on the other.

The division is strictly nonsectarian and welcomes the participation of all persons, without regard to personal faith, who view religion as a significant factor in human functioning.

The division's quarterly Newsletter contains original articles, book reviews, announcements, and news of interest to division members.

### **PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION NEWSLETTER**

*EDITOR: Patrick R. Bennett, Ph.D., Indiana State University*

The Newsletter is the official publication of the American Psychological Association Division 36, Psychology of Religion. The Newsletter invites articles, interviews, book reviews and announcements relevant to the interdisciplinary focus of psychology and religion. Editorial inquiries should be addressed to: Patrick R. Bennett, Ph.D.; Editor, Division 36 Newsletter; Department of Psychology; Indiana State University; Root Hall, Room B-211; Terre Haute, IN 47809. Phone: (812) 237-2446 Email: pbennett6@isugw.indstate.edu