Robert Bellah Visits Notre Dame

Robert N. Bellah, distinguished professor of sociology at University of California at Berkley and National Humanities Medal awardee, spoke at Notre Dame on March 18-20th about his work regarding religion and human evolution. His lecture “The Modern Project in Light of Human Evolution” focuses on his most recent work, Religion in Human Evolution, and gives a glimpse into the second portion of his proposed project, which would have focused more on the modern period.

During his visit, Bellah gave a captivating lecture about his work and engaged Notre Dame faculty and students in a discussion about the topics surrounding his project. Bellah said that he enjoyed meeting with “Catholic thinkers” and found many “engaging and interested conversation partners” among the faculty and students at Notre Dame, particularly those whose work involves the role of religion in society.

Bellah’s famous work, “Civil Religion in America,” focuses on religion in American public life. Published in 1967, it set his trajectory for the next 30 years as he published a number of other books on civil religion, including The Broken Covenant, Habits of the Heart, and The Good Society. Bellah’s interest in religion springs from his belief that religion is often poorly understood within the academy. His work has significantly helped to drive the discussion of religion and its place in modern life. His last work, Religion in Human Evolution, takes a step away from the broader focus of civil religion to focus on the way that human evolution and religion interact.

Overall, Bellah’s warmth and quick wit made for an entertaining and intellectually stimulating weekend. It was a valuable opportunity for faculty and students to interact with one of the great scholars of religion and cultural sociology at the end of his career. On July 30, four months after his visit to Notre Dame, Bellah unexpectedly passed away due to complications following heart surgery. He was 86 when he died, but his scholarly legacy will live on through the ages.

Undergraduate Fellows Program

Our new Undergraduate Fellows Program had a successful inaugural year. The Fellows worked with faculty members to complete individual research projects that were specific to their interests. They attended academic conferences, including SSSR and AAR, and presented their projects to faculty members and graduate students at the end of the academic year. We will be welcoming new fellows to this program for the 2013–2014 academic year, as well as supporting many of our first fellows as they continue their projects.

2012-2013 Fellows: Emily Conran, Alexa Solazzo, Chelsea Merriman, Maura Bailey, and Hope Feist
2013-2014 Fellows: Catherine Braunlich, Yue Huang, Chelsea Merriman, Maura Bailey, Hope Feist Jaclyn Paul, and Erin Stoyell-Mulholland.
**Graduate Students**

Jade Avelis  
Mehrdad Babadi  
Pete Barwis  
Cole Carnesecca  
Ben Chleboun  
Kari Christoffersen  
Shanna Corner  
Bryant Crubaugh  
Hilary Davidson  
Daniel Escher  
Kevin Estep  
Justin Farrell  
Karen Hooge  
Stefanie Israel  
Amy Jonason  
Linda Kawentel  
Hyunjin Kwak  
Peter Mundey  
Ariana Newton  
Michael Penta  
Megan Rogers  
Peter Ryan  
Brandon Sepulvado  
Sara Skiles  
Katherine Sorrell

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**Graduate Student Award**

Hilary Davidson (left) and Justin Farrell (right) won the William V. D’Antonio award for Graduate Student Excellence in the Sociology of Religion at the University of Notre Dame, awarded by Christian Smith (center). Hilary’s dissertation will draw on the NSYR Wave 4 to explore the role of religion in the American Dream. Justin’s research focuses on formulating a better account of the cultural dimensions of humanity's relationship to the natural environment. The award is named for William D’Antonio, who joined the faculty of Notre Dame as assistant professor in 1957.

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**Graduate Activities**

**American Sociological Association Presentations**

- Hilary Davidson, “What does it mean to be Generous?: The Meanings and Motivations of Financial Generosity”

- Karen Hooge, “Religiousness and Body Satisfaction In Emerging Adults”

- Peter Mundey, “Follow the Informal Rules to Limit Harm: Avoiding Negative Interactions When Using Social Network Sites”

Other presenters included Daniel Escher, Linda Kawentel, Justin Farrell, and Bradley Vermuren.

**Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Presentations**

- Shanna Corner, “Traditional Gender Ideologies: The Impact of Christian Schools”

- Megan Rogers, “Contemporary Chinese Religious Scholars' Views and Opinions of Religion”

- Brad Vermuren, “How Leaders Create Momentum: Rethinking Religious Strength in a Strategic Action Field”

Other presenters included Brandon Sepulvado, Hilary Davidson, Justin Farrell, Ben Chelboun, Justin Van Ness, Peter Ryan, and Cole Carnesecca.

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**Graduate Publications**


The Science of Generosity Project will continue to generate substantial research across many disciplines with continued support from the John Templeton Foundation. The Project was granted $394,220 to fund Phase II.

Kraig Beyerlein is working on a number of projects using project data. Christian Smith’s research team is using the data to develop books, papers, and dissertations that will be completed in the coming year.

Beyond developing strong research, the Science of Generosity project has allowed for philanthropists and non-profit executives to join the conversation about putting the study’s findings into practice. The Science of Generosity team held a successful conference in Philadelphia, PA, last October, which provided an exciting opportunity to expand the discussion. Overall, the project continues to produce cutting-edge findings and a dynamic conversation.

For more information about this project, please visit: http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/
FEATURED UNDERGRADUATES

Undergraduate students get hands-on research experience this summer

Researchers working on the National Study of Youth and Religion project, directed by Professor Christian Smith, conducted in-person interviews with respondents all over the country this summer (see page 5). More than a dozen undergraduate students and recent Notre Dame graduates worked as research assistants over the summer to transcribe and edit those interviews in preparation for data analysis. This effort will continue during the fall semester, giving several dozen undergraduate students hands-on experience with social science research.

Pictured from left to right: Christina Senger, Abby Kostielney, and Anne Haas.

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS


NEW BOOK RELEASES!


Graduate Students (cont’d from page 2)
Lisa Swartz
Brandon Vaidyanathan
Justin Van Ness
Brad Vermurlen
Meredith Whitnah

Undergraduate Students
Maura Bailey
Catherine Braunlich
Emily Conron
Kelsie Corriston
Meghan Davis
Alexis Ellis
Hope Feist
Melanie Fritz
Yue Huang
Trent La
Emily Mediate
Chelsea Merriman
Andrew Norris
Jaclyn Paul
Aaron Sant-Miller
Christina Senger
Alexa Solazzo
Erin Stoyell-Mulholland
The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) is a longitudinal research project designed to investigate the religious practices of American youth. The project is directed by Christian Smith, and is funded in large part by the Lilly Foundation. The first three waves of data were collected between 2002 and 2008, and the fourth and final wave of data collection is wrapping up this fall.

Objectives of this final part of the study include examining change over time in religious affiliations, beliefs, and practices in the lives of emerging adults, and exploring links between religious dynamics and other aspects of these emerging adults' lives, including family-formation, educational achievement, subjective well-being, and career development. Findings will continue to provide the most detailed information to date on the dynamics of religious affiliation, belief, practice, and commitment across adolescence and emerging adulthood in the United States.

In all four waves of data collection, researchers have taken a mixed-method approach, examining the lives of American adolescents and emerging adults on both the macro level with quantitative survey data and the micro level with qualitative interview data. During this fourth wave, researchers from across the country assisted in the interview process. Interviewers included Melinda Denton (University of Texas at San Antonio), Richard Flory (University of Southern California), Lisa Pearce (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Trish Snell Herzog (University of Arkansas), Carlos Tavares (Duke University), Ria Van Ryn (Yeshiva University), and Notre Dame graduate students Jade Avellis, Kari Christoffersen, Shanna Corner, Hilary Davidson, Daniel Escher, Karen Hooge, and Katherine Sorrell.

The project has benefitted greatly from the work of dozens of graduate and undergraduate research assistants who have helped in all aspects of the study, including maintaining contact with project participants, preparing the survey and interview instruments, conducting surveys, and transcribing interview data. Preliminary results from this final wave of the NSYR project will be available in the spring of 2014, and data will be made available for analysis in the summer of 2015.

Awards and Recognitions

Christian Smith received $69,593 from The Lilly Endowment Inc. for a project on “Parental Practices and Cultures of Faith Transmission to Children: Contexts, Commitments, and Outcomes.”

Mary Ellen Konieczny received an FRSP Initiation Grant from the Office of Research of the University of Notre Dame, and a Large Research and Creative Work Grant from ISLA at the University of Notre Dame for “Serving God and Country: Religion at the United States Air Force Academy.”

Atalia Omer received a Kroc Faculty Research Grant for an ongoing research study on the role of solidarity and diaspora activism on the cycles of conflicts in Tibet and Palestine and their potential role in processes of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The grant facilitated ethnographic work with the Palestinian and Tibetan communities in Chicago.

Cole Carnesecca won a $40,000 Inter-University Center Nippon Fellows Award for tuition and a stipend for Japanese language study at IUC in Yokohama, Japan.

Daniel Escher received $90,000 from the Graduate Research Fellowship Program of the National Science Foundation to research the social effects of the coal industry in central Appalachia from 2011-2014.

Meredith Whitnah received a Dissertation Year Fellowship from the Kellogg Institute, for examining how religious NGOs in South Africa that were involved in overturning apartheid have changed over time.
The CSRS offers an ongoing colloquia series, the Colloquium on the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion (CISR), which brings together graduate students and faculty from disciplines, including sociology, history, and political science.

Last year’s speakers included:

**Spring Semester**

**Jim Nolan**  
Anthropology and Sociology  
Williams College

**Chris Bail**  
Sociology  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

**Fall Semester**

**Omar McRoberts**  
Sociology  
University of Chicago

**Stephen Monsma**  
Sociology  
Calvin College

**Upcoming 2013-2014 Speakers**

**Susan Crawford Sullivan**  
Sociology  
College of the Holy Cross

**Andrew Johnson**  
Sociology  
University of Southern California

**Jim Nolan** presenting a paper entitled:  

For upcoming CSRS events, visit: csrs.nd.edu/events