

# IAPR

**International Association for the Psychology of Religion**

## Newsletter of the IAPR – October 2009

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### Introduction

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#### **New newsletter editor**

Dear Colleagues,

Since Herman Westerink has been elected as new general secretary and treasurer of the IAPR during the IAPR congress in Vienna in August, the editorship of our newsletter has been transferred from Herman to me. Before introducing myself, I would like to thank Herman for his important and successful work in the past, and I wish him a fruitful and exciting time as general secretary and treasurer in the IAPR board!

My name is Constantin Klein and I work as a Research Assistant and Lecturer for Religious Education and Psychology of Religion at the ‘Center for the Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Society (CIRRuS)/Center for Biographical Research in Contemporary Religion’ in the Theological Department at Bielefeld University in Germany. I received my Diploma in Psychology in 2003 and my Diploma in Theology in 2004 at the University of Leipzig/Germany. If you would like to find out more about me, please visit the website of our institute ([http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/)) and my personal homepage ([http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/personen/klein.html](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/personen/klein.html)).

I am very pleased to serve the IAPR as new editor of the newsletter, and I look forward to receiving information from you, which will be published in the newsletter. Please feel free to contact me or to email any information of interest to me (please find my contact data at the end of the newsletter)!

Best regards,

*Constantin Klein*

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### IAPR conference report\*

\* Whoever wants to bring reports under attention of the IAPR members, please email the text to the editor of the Newsletter.

#### IAPR conference in Wien

In 1979 I was going as a young researcher to the first conference in Nijmegen. This was an initiative of Jan van der Lans, who tried for the first time to bring European Psychologists of Religion together in order to share ideas and research. It was a rather small group. More or less 45 persons participated. We were going for some times to Nijmegen and then a tour of Europe starts. In the Leuven conference, for the first time, we formalized some elements. We had chosen a name, the EPR, European Psychologists of Religion. We came together with the International Committee, a rather big name for a group of colleagues and friends, who were taken a very important decision, most of the time the only important one: "where and who to organize the next conference"? No fees, no rules, no bylaws.

Jaap van Belzen took the initiative to organize a conference in Soesterberg, in the Netherlands, where we were included in the IAPR, the International Association for the Psychology of Religion, an association with a long and old history. We were becoming international, more formal organized with rules, fees and bylaws. The price for the psychology of religion, until that moment independent from the IAPR, was included in the organization, as the Godinprice, in remembering Prof. A. Godin S.J., an important person in this field.

The congress in Vienna was perfectly organized and I like to thank Prof. S. Heine and H. Westerink for their magnificent work. As organizer of the two conferences in Leuven, I know that this is a huge lot of work. We were gathering in the central building of the Universität Wien, where the different Hörsäle are perfectly prepared for this kind of conferences. The students, helping with the technical work of presentation were very useful, certainly for people like me, who are not so trained in the use of all this technical instruments. I like to thank them in the name of the participants. There was a dangerous attraction of the garden inside. Many talks about the papers and the work, but certainly also other topics of interest. But talking with colleagues and young researchers is certainly one of the central elements of these conferences.

This was new in Vienna, the presence of students and many young researchers. It is a promise for our field, this interest of young people. They will have the task to make the psychology of religion to an interesting and important field in the psychology. This was a choice of the organizers. The young people can contact the older participants and learn what an international conference is. I would suggest repeating this in the next conferences.

We had general lectures in the morning, panels and posters. This is one of the frustrating elements in conferences: make a choice. Bilocation is still impossible (I have learned this in a course in Philosophy many years ago). The long poster session was certainly a good idea. In a rather short time it is possible to gather information. You have contact with

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young researchers and they have the possibility to meet persons they know only from the internet.

The general lectures give the possibility for well trained researchers to give an overview of their research of the last years. I would suggest giving more time to groups of researchers to give insight in their research. It is not always the boss who must give the talk, give the young researcher also the opportunity to speak and give more time for discussion. It is a suggestion for the next organizer; give more time for discussion. Interaction with others gives new ideas and we have the possibility to learn about the ideas of the other. This is not possible in a short 5 minutes.

A little remark: not all what was presented as real new is real new. I would be more careful. I saw some good trials for experimental work. That doesn't mean that the psychology of religion has to be experimental, but I repeat what I was saying for the Godin price. Psychology of religion must work with important and recognized theories in psychology. It seems for me the only possibility to be recognized in the psychology as an important field and it seems the guarantee for the future of the field.

Of course a congress is not only working and thinking; the tour with the old tramway around the city of Vienna was nice, we saw the city from different viewpoints. And we were present in the walking dinner in the City Hall of Vienna. The welcome was spoken by a psychologist, now working for the city. Psychology has different outcomes.

Vienna, it was nice, we hope to see you all again in Italia.

*Dirk Hutsebaut*

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### Conferences\*

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\* Whoever wants to bring conference information under attention of the IAPR members, please email the data to the editor of the Newsletter.

#### **Call for Posters – 2010 SPSP Pre-conference on Psychology of Religion and Spirituality**

*Date:* Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Las Vegas, NV (Riviera Hotel)

*Poster Session:* We are now accepting submissions of original research that address topics in psychology of religion, preferably from a social-personality perspective. The first 15 to 20 reasonable submissions will likely be accepted. Standard SPSP poster guidelines apply:

[www.spspmeeting.org/poster\\_guidelines.php](http://www.spspmeeting.org/poster_guidelines.php)

*Submissions* should be emailed to Kevin Ladd (KLadd@iusb.edu) and must include: 1) title, 2) author(s) and affiliation(s), 3) abstract – 250 words or less, 4) and email of the contact person. The poster session will be held about noon - 2:00pm. Presenters must register for the pre-conference.

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*Pre-conference Overview:* This pre-conference will highlight classic, contemporary, and emerging empirical research at the interface of social-personality psychology and the psychology of religion. The program will consist of invited research presentations, a poster session, and informal opportunities for networking. Invited presentations will be delivered by confirmed presenters Nicholas Epley, Aaron Kay, Lee Kirkpatrick, Jessica Li, Ara Norenzayan, Jesse Preston, Vassilis Saroglou, and Wendy Wood with Deborah Hall.

*Further Information:* For more details about this pre-conference, please go to the pre-conference webpage:

<http://www.baylor.edu/psychologyneuroscience/index.php?id=58354>

For more details about 2010 meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP):

<http://www.spspmeeting.org/>

Warm regards,

*Wade Rowatt, Adam Cohen & Kevin Ladd*

### **Conference 'Towards a Unified Science of Religion' – Call for Papers**

A Conference Sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

[http://www.otago.ac.nz/philosophy/USR\\_Home.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/philosophy/USR_Home.html)

*Date:* 12-14<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

*Abstract:* The belief in gods, demons, and other supernatural agents is a persistent feature of human culture, which cries out for explanation. In the last twenty-five years explanations of religion have reached a new level of sophistication. We now have a range of different scientific theories of religion, in cognitive science, anthropology, and evolutionary psychology, drawing upon a significant body of empirical data. This conference, sponsored by the Department of Philosophy at the University of Otago, will bring together researchers from these different disciplines and different theoretical perspectives, to explore the possibility of a unified science of religion.

*Call for Papers:* Participants are invited to submit paper proposals presenting original research on any topic related to the theme of the conference. The proposal should take the form of an abstract of no more than 200 words, and should be submitted electronically (along with contact details) to the conference secretary: Jonathan Jong (jonathan@psy.otago.ac.nz) by 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

*Further Information:* Further details about registration and accommodation and will be available on this site soon. The conference programme will be available on this site in late December.

*Conference Organisers: James Maclaurin and Greg Dawes.  
Conference Secretary: Jonathan Jong*

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### Key Publications\*

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\* Whoever wants to bring key publications under attention of the IAPR members, please email the bibliography to the editor of the Newsletter.

#### Recent publications of Spyros K. Tsitsigkos (in Greek)

- Introduction to Psychology of Religion, Athens 2009.
- Desire and Religiosity according to A. Vergote, Athens 2009.
- Heresy and Psychopathology, Athens 2009.
- Religion and Science: Contribution in the epistemologic dialectic Uncreated and Created, Athens 2009.

Spyros K. Tsitsigkos is Associate Professor of Psychology of Religion at the University of Athens. The publisher is *TREMENDUM* (George Voutzouledes, 27 Iasonidou, New Philadelphia 14342 Athens).

*Spyros K. Tsitsigkos*

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### Contact

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Please feel free to contact me or to email all information of interest to me:

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