

Newsletter

New York, New York

Recently, one of my students asked me about my plans for the Christmas break. I mentioned that I would be attending a conference in New York. We proceeded to talk about New York and academic conferences for a few minutes. During the conversation, I realized that I had not been to New York since 1988! (That’s discounting transits through the New York airports.)

I shall remedy my ‘neglect’ in January, of course. Naturally, I hope to see several of you at the conference. Further, take the opportunity to say “hello” to me if we have not met before.

Like Washington, D.C. last year, New York has many ‘sights’. Times Square and Central Park are not too far from the Sheraton, the headquarters for the ASCH sessions. For those of a mind, it’s possible to sample culinary delights from the world over. If you are attending the meeting, explore a little!

As for the serious business of the meeting, there is a summary of the sessions later in this newsletter. As you would expect, I want to encourage you attend the ‘plenary’ sessions. Put Grant Wacker’s presidential address, the president’s reception, the session and reception for the distinguished career award recipient, and the business meeting high on your list of things-to-do.

For graduate students, don’t miss the reception on Saturday at 7:30.

Next, a couple of pieces of Membership Committee business: it’s that time of year. First, remember that the annual membership now runs from January to December. Now is the time to renew your membership for 2009. There are two ways to do this: by mail (with the form at the end of the newsletter); on the Society’s web site (www.churchhistory.org). Second, check its accuracy and update your membership profile (if necessary).

And finally, on behalf of the Membership Committee, I would like to wish everyone a pleasant Christmas season and the best for the New Year.

Keith A. Francis
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Invitations...from the Executive Secretary

My word to the ASCH fellowship is one of invitations – invitations to meet, to participate, to enjoy and learn – in exciting and exotic locales.

First, after you've celebrated the New Year in your own way, I invite you to come to New York City for ASCH's annual conference on January 2-5, 2009. You can register now online through the homepage of our website (www.churchhistory.org). Or, if you click on the "Upcoming Events" link, you can download the program and a printable registration form that you can mail in. (If you want a bound copy of the program to be mailed to you, contact us at asch@yale.edu; otherwise, copies will be available at the conference). Chuck Lippy and his program committee have assembled a wonderful array of sessions. There will also be opportunities for tours, receptions, and discussing society affairs. And of course, you have the Big Apple at your feet.

If New York whets your appetite, what about Montreal in the spring? From April 16-20, 2009, we will hold our biannual spring conference in the picturesque Old City. Bryan Bademan and his committee have created the program in cooperation

with our colleagues in the Canadian Society of Church History. Featured sessions will include Canadian religious history. The walking tour of religious sites, an ASCH tradition thanks to Peter Williams and friends, will be a truly special treat this time around. Registration information will be available soon on ASCH's website.

Finally, if you haven't realized it by now, 2009 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. There are conferences aplenty to observe that landmark. On July 8-11, the University of Geneva will host "Calvin and His Influence, 1509-2009." This conference will have several sessions organized on Calvin and American society, religion, and historical consciousness by ASCH members coordinated by Tom Davis of Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis. Please be sure to put this on your calendars and stay tuned for further updates.

So whether it's New York, Montreal, or Geneva, we hope to see you soon!

Ken Minkema
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Religious Identity and Language in Seventeenth-Century England

Participants in this panel were an array of scholars working in early modern religious history. With a full room at the Washington Hilton, each of the four presenters considered the way religious identity was negotiated in seventeenth-century England.

In general, the topic of the panel reminds us that very few eras in the history of western Christianity presented women and men with such varied avenues for constructing identity. England witnessed in this century a number of shifts in religious belief, practice, and confession. The face of the Church of England had changed after the accession of Charles I and the rise of Laudianism. In addition to the more familiar Puritans, an upsurge of radicals – different shades of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, and a host of others – appeared during the revolutionary and interregnum periods. These groups offered alternatives to the established church, its prayer book and bishops. This period may be understood as an era of new opportunities for devotional expression and religious participation. The consequence, of course, was that religious identity was rather fluid.

Beth Allison Barr began the panel with a paper on gendered language in late medieval and early modern England. Barr's concern was with the circumscription of women's roles in religion in the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism. She observed that medieval writers – John Mirk in particular – employed gender inclusive language in their theological and pastoral works indicating a concern for both women and men. Such language patterns, however, changed at the Reformation. Attention to men pastorally and, indeed, an emphasis on male spiritual headship are subtly present in

the very language Protestants used in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.

Following Barr, Calvin Lane considered the jarring contrast between John Milton's 1626 elegy for Bishop Lancelot Andrewes and the poet's public scorn for the same prelate in 1641. Lane argued that the traditional argument for reconciling this contradiction – that the immature, teenage Cambridge undergraduate simply grew up – needs reassessment. Not only did Milton grow up, the religious landscape changed in the 1630s. Lane observed that historians no longer view the categories of Puritan and Conformist (here avoiding the anachronistic "Anglican") as static. Lane suggested that Milton's praise may be indicative of Jacobean diversity; his scorn, on other hand, indicative of Caroline polarization.

Scott Culpepper then offered a paper on the fluid character of Baptist identity in early modern England. His conclusion was that the categories often used to describe Baptists in this period – General, Particular, Seventh-Day – misrepresent and constrain a very fluid religious tradition. He asked how we ought to categorize Hanserd Knollys, a Baptist who moved among Quakers, Levellers, Fifth Monarchists, and later even served for a time as a conformist vicar? Baptists, he pointed out, hazarded religious life by creatively negotiating those elements that defined just what it meant to be a Baptist. This was the case under both the Laudian regime and the commonwealth government with its more conservative Puritan sympathies.

Bracy Hill followed with a paper on the eighteenth century Independent minister Daniel Neal. Complementing his pastoral vocation, Neal wrote the history of his own

tradition. But he did so (like so many others) with apologetic goals in mind. Neal presented an historical parade of dissenters from the established church who endured suffering on account of their dissent. Hill noted that Neal's characters are harmless, far from revolutionary, and potentially trustworthy citizens. This eighteenth century historian's concern was to support the argument that dissenters were worthy of civil office. He was less interested in the definition of correct Baptist doctrine.

These papers, as respondent Scott McGinnis pointed out, all consider the way religious identity was shaped in early modern England. Words created a certain reality for late medieval women and men. Language and landscape, however, changed at the Reformation. A poet in the 1620s

might turn polemical in the 1640s not simply because he grew up, but because the atmosphere around him changed. Categories seem to consistently fail us – yet one uses the language and terms one has with sobriety. The writing of history, it seems, can be a tool for influencing contemporary circumstances as well as a vehicle for reflecting on and molding religious identity.

As a whole, these papers remind us that defining confessions historically is a two-fold task. It requires careful attention and a willingness to present conclusions somewhat tentatively.

Calvin Lane
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Editor's Note: Calvin Lane is a doctoral student in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa. The papers were read at this year's Winter Meeting of the Society.

A Word for Independent Scholars

This note comes with an invitation to a specific task.

Independent Scholarship in Church History

For good hermeneutical reasons, it has become fashionable to say that we read texts through our interpretive lenses. We mean by this that we choose to interpret the past from among a variety of possibilities for interpretation in the present. Implicit in this approach is the further idea that who we are and what we do helps us to arrive at our interpretations. Historical conclusions are not static in any abstract sense. Instead they are dynamic: formed by the dialogical processes by which we read texts.

What hermeneutics do we who serve elsewhere than in the academy contribute to the task of Church history? Though we and our academic colleagues read the same texts, might we reach different conclusions? Or, do the requirements of our daily work require us to wear lenses for interpretation that cause us to see various possibilities of meanings, perhaps differing from one another only in degree?

Stated simply for each of us, how does vocation inform our scholarship?

Would you be interested in discussing this and, perhaps, help to propose a panel on *Independent Scholarship in Church History*? I would like to invite independent scholars to discuss this question. A format for our conversation is now available.

Editor's Note: Ray Kibler is a member of the Committee on Membership.

ASCH Independent Scholars on Ecunet

One electronic means to begin our conversation is to use the secure meeting created on the Ecunet network: [ASCH Independent Scholars](#). Ecunet was chosen for this beginning because it is a non-commercial ecumenical site that is free for use by anyone. Below are brief instructions for creating an account on Ecunet and then joining the meeting.

Go to www.ecunet.org. Find the "Join Ecunet" link near the left top corner. This will take you to the option of "Lite Member: Free!" or "Full Member" with the annual fee. Follow prompts according to your choice. After you have established and then logged into your account using the web-based interface, then please e-mail me your Ecunet inbox name. You will be added to the meeting at once.

Of course, *Independent Scholarship in Church History* will be one of the many, many topics we will discuss together. Further, you are invited, encouraged strongly, to introduce your own topics. Soon, we may choose to move to "live chat" conversations in real time. Later, we can add opportunities for meeting in live audio-visual formats from anywhere in the world.

I look forward to hearing from you!

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Committee on Membership Report – December 2007

REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP – NOVEMBER 2007

Statistical Table

	DEC. 2006	APRIL 2007	NOV. 2007
Total Members	2231	2256	2613
Members Outside U.S.A.	180	184	247
Largest No. of Non-U.S.A. Members			
Canada	49	52	65
United Kingdom	37	36	50
South Korea	8	8	12
Nigeria	Not in Top 5	Not in Top 5	11
Australia	12	12	10
Largest Membership by State			
California	163	167	183
Texas	146	153	175
Massachusetts	130	135	145
Illinois	119	122	135
Indiana	110	111	118
Total Student Membership	579		756
Largest Student Membership by State			
Texas	46		65
California	37		54
Massachusetts	43		52
Illinois	29		39
New Jersey	Not in Top 5		36
Non-U.S.A. Student Membership	62		114

Membership by Categories

Regular Overseas	- 10
Graduate Students	- 756
Retired	- 209
Free	- 139
Institutional	- 4
Institutional Overseas	- 15
No Status	- 109

COMMENTS ON MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

1. The statistics are still approximate; the reason for this is the lack of up-to-date information in members' records. The inaccuracies are shrinking: 'No Status' is down to 109 members from 213 in December 2006. The newsletter may be one medium to use to encourage members to keep their records accurate.
2. Increase in membership, December 2006-November 2007: 382
3. Increase in Non-U.S.A. membership, 2006-2007: 67
4. Increase in graduate student membership, 2006-2007: 177
5. Graduate student membership as a percentage of membership: 28.93 percent (up from 25.95 percent in December 2006 and 15.9 percent in December 2005)
6. Other interesting points:-
 - i. California and Texas have the largest numbers of members but there significant numbers in smaller states such as Pennsylvania (118), North Carolina (105), and Virginia (100); these members concentrated in and around university towns.
 - ii. The wide range of home addresses for members – from Vatican City to Myanmar to American Samoa (but a very large majority of members reside or are based in the United States - 2365).
 - iii. The numbers are small, but still interesting: Nigeria – 11; South Africa – 3; Tonga – 1; Burkina Faso – 1.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

The Committee on Membership has been working on several projects all focused on the objective of retaining and increasing the Society's membership. The following are examples:-

1. The launch of a newsletter;
2. Active encouragement of submission of paper proposals from graduate students and scholars working in non-Western religious history;
3. The holding of the first graduate student reception to encourage graduate student participation in conferences;
4. Investigation of ways to bring ASCH members who are independent scholars into more regular contact;
5. Investigation of the possibilities for regional meetings.

Editor's Note: This report was given at the Winter Meeting. A copy is included here because paper copies were not distributed at the Business Meeting and it may be of interest to members who did not go to the meeting in January.

Program for Winter Meeting

The ASCH registration desk will be located at the Sheraton New York Hotel, 3rd Floor Lobby East

Hours: Friday, January 2, Noon-6:00 PM
 Saturday and Sunday, January 3-4, 8:30 AM-Noon; 1:00-5:00 PM
 Monday, January 5, 8:00 AM-Noon

All sessions will take place in the Sheraton New York Hotel.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 -----1:00-3:00 PM-----

Session 1

The Nature and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Conflicts over the Eucharist
 Madison Suite 2

Session 2

Religion in Late Antique Antioch (*Jointly sponsored with the American Catholic Historical Association*)
 Liberty Suite 4

Session 3

Roundtable on Religions along the Mississippi River: Region and Space in American Religious History
 Madison Suite 3

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 -----3:30-5:00 PM-----

Executive Committee Meeting
 Liberty Suite 1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 -----3:30-5:30 PM-----

Session 4

Religion and the World of Print in Early America
 Madison Suite 2

Session 5

Late Medieval and Early Modern Catholic Responses to Heretical "Saints" (*Jointly sponsored with the Society for Reformation Research*)
 Madison Suite 3

Session 6

Rethinking Radical Pietism and Its Trans-Atlantic Setting (*Jointly sponsored with the Pietism Studies Research Group*)
 Madison Suite 4

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 -----5:00-6:00 PM-----

Editorial Board Meeting
Liberty Suite 1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 -----7:30-9:00 PM-----

Council Meeting
Riverside Suite

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----7:30-9:00 AM-----

Breakfast for Women in Theology and Church History

Pre-registration not required; attendees will be asked to donate at event
Liberty Suite 3

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----9:30-11:30 AM-----

Session 7

From the Delta to the City: Holiness and Pentecostal Religion in the Great Migration
Madison Suite 2

Session 8

America's Wars and American Religion
Liberty Suite 5

Session 9

Christianity, the Religious Other, and Demonic Language in Medieval and Early Modern France (*Jointly sponsored with the Society for Reformation Research*)
Madison Suite 3

Session 10

Women and Community in the Middle Ages (*Jointly sponsored with the American Catholic Historical Association*)
Liberty Suite 4

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----1:00-4:30 PM-----

A Tour of New York City Houses of Worship

Meet at the ASCH Registration Desk, Sheraton New York Hotel, 3rd Floor Lobby East

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----2:30-4:30 PM-----

Session 11

Christian Narrative and African-American Racial Identity
Madison Suite 2

Session 12

Re-Thinking Religion, Politics, and the Second Great Awakening
Madison Suite 3

Session 13

Exploring the Boundaries of Sacred and Secular in German Europe
Madison Suite 4

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----5:00-6:30 PM-----

Session 14

Distinguished Career Award: George M. Marsden
Riverside Ballroom

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----6:30-7:30 PM-----

Reception in Honor of the Distinguished Career Award Recipient
Riverside Suite

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 -----7:30-8:30 PM-----

Reception for Graduate Students
Riverside Suite

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----9:00-11:00 AM-----

Session 15

**She-Preachers, Impudent Housewives, and Praying Women: Baptist Identity Four
Hundred Years Later**
Madison Suite 2

Session 16

Delimiting the Body of the Church: Early Christian Identity in the West
Madison Suite 3

Session 17

The People's History of Christianity Project
Liberty Suite 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----11:30 AM-1:30 PM-----

Session 18

Heresy and Confessionalism in Cross-Cultural Perspective
Madison Suite 2

Session 19

Baptist Preachers and Higher Education in the South
Madison Suite 3

Session 20

Publishing in the History of Christianity: Tips and Trends
Liberty Suite 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----2:30-4:30 PM-----

Session 21

New Approaches to Gender and Religious Experience in a Secularizing Age
Madison Suite 2

Session 22

Christianity and the History of Gay Rights: New Narratives
Madison Suite 3

Session 23

Issues in Asian Christianity
Madison Suite 4

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----5:00-6:00 PM-----

Business Meeting
Riverside Ballroom

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----6:00-7:00 PM-----

Presidential Address
Riverside Ballroom

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 -----7:00-8:00 PM-----

President's Reception
Riverside Suite

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 -----8:30-10:30 AM-----

Session 24

Landscapes of Religious Identity and Religious Culture

Madison Suite 2

Session 25

Christianity Encounters the New China: Protestants, Catholics, and Issues of State Control in the 1950s

Madison Suite 3

Session 26

Holy Cures

Madison Suite 4

Session 27

The Papacy: Its Friends and Foes in the Later Middle Ages (*Jointly sponsored with the American Catholic Historical Association*)

Liberty Suite 4

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 -----11:00 AM-1:00 PM-----

Session 28

Theology and Religious Confession at Schools and Universities on the European Continent during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Liberty Suite 3

Session 29

Stages of Faith: Performing Christian Womanhood in the United States

Madison Suite 2

Session 30

How Southern Protestants Made (and Remade) Race

Madison Suite 3

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REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Winter 2009 Meeting of the American Society of Church History will be based at the Sheraton New York Hotel, 811 Seventh Avenue, New York City, from January 2-5.

Registering for the American Society of Church History Conference

Attendees can register by going online at www.churchhistory.org/upcomingevents.html, or by filling out and mailing in the form at the end of this program.

American Historical Association Events

The ASCH winter conference is an affiliate function of the American Historical Association's annual meeting. **Please note: Members of ASCH wishing to attend AHA events or gain access to AHA venues must register separately with AHA.** For the AHA's program and registration information, consult their website at www.historians.org/annual.

Renewal of Membership

All memberships expire at the end of December. (This change was voted at the Business Meeting held in Atlanta in January 2006.) Please remember to renew your membership in the next few weeks.

Registering for the New York Conference

Members may register for the upcoming meeting online at the ASCH website. The link to the registration page is under 'MEMBER QUICK LINKS'

Members and attendees may choose from the following event options:
(All pricing is per person)

Full Registration: (events and facilities fee for all attendees):	\$50.00
Student Registration:	\$40.00
Walking Tour (Friday Afternoon):	\$10.00
Women's Breakfast (Friday Morning):	Donation at event

Looking for Mentors...

Interested in "showing the ropes" to a graduate student or a first-time attendee to an ASCH meeting? The Membership Committee is looking for senior scholars and/or long-time attendees to ASCH conferences to mentor graduate students and first-time attendees. Members who would like to volunteer for this (vital) role should contact the Chair of the Membership Committee, Keith Francis (Keith.Francis@baylor.edu).

American Society of Church History Graduate Student Membership Form

ASCH offers a free, two-year beginning membership to graduate students. Please fill out the information below and mail or fax this form to:

American Society of Church History
Yale Divinity School
409 Prospect St., CB 473
New Haven, CT 06511
asch@yale.edu
203-432-3158
fax: 203-432-5356

Date: _____

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Mailing address: _____

Email address: _____

Degree Program: _____

Three areas of scholarly interest:
