

BL
1
C65

bulletin

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 5

DECEMBER 1975

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION AT LANCASTER*

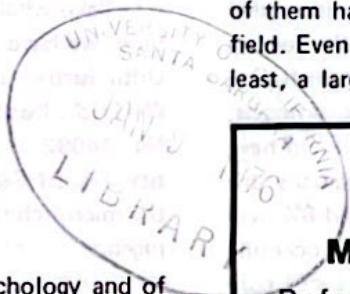
F. N. Johnson
Department of Psychology
The University of Lancaster
and
J. P. Clayton
Department of Religious Studies
The University of Lancaster

As early as 1972 the departments of psychology and of religious studies at the University of Lancaster agreed in principle to establish a combined honours degree at the University. The final proposal was approved by Senate this past spring, and the first students have now been admitted to the new scheme of study. As the scheme is quite new, the purpose and structure of the combined degree may be of some interest to others in the academic study of religion.

A.

The psychology of religion as an academic discipline has for some years now been in decline in British universities. This is not to say there have been no individual psychologists with an interest in the determinants and measurement of religious behaviour, nor individual religionists and theologians with an

interest in the psychological interpretation of religious phenomena. There surely have been such individuals, and some of them have no doubt made important contributions to the field. Even so, the psychology of religion remains, in Britain at least, a largely amateurish affair, engaged in on the one hand



MAIL SERVICE TO CANADA

Before the *Bulletin* went to press the Canadian postal strike was settled. Mail to the CSR office should again be addressed to:

CSR Executive Office
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3C5

CONTENTS

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION AT LANCASTER / F. N. Johnson and J. P. Clayton	1
EDITORIAL: ON THAT POSTAL STRIKE	2
THEOLOGIZING AND HISTORICIZING IN THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION / Ronald A. Carson and Rita M. Gross	3
THE SOCIETIES: AAR, ATLA, CSR, CTSA, CTS, SBL	6
REGIONAL NEWS	13
HORIZONS	18
ANNOUNCEMENTS	20
SCHOLARS PRESS	22
CTSA PUBLICATIONS	29
TOIL	30
RELIGIOUS STUDIES REVIEW	31
CALENDAR	32

by no doubt well-meaning psychologists who are nonetheless rather naive in their understanding of the religious behaviour they seek to interpret, or on the other hand, by equally well-meaning theologians who are nonetheless somewhat unsophisticated in their handling of psychological concepts and techniques. There is consequently very little work done in the psychology of religion in which religious phenomena and psychological techniques are handled with similar degrees of sophistication and skill.

This state of affairs is unlikely to be improved unless there is first of all a basic change in the way those who become psychologists of religion are educated. In this regard, it is unfortunate that there has been no opportunity in a British university to pursue a combined scheme of study in psychology and religion. The reasons are no doubt complex, though two in particular could be advanced. First, there has been a certain dissimilarity between the aim and orientation of most departments of psychology and most departments of theology in

Joseph Kitagawa, U.S.A., *Vice-President*
R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Israel, *General Secretary*
H. J. van Lier, The Netherlands, *Treasurer*
Ugo Bianchi, Italy
William Klassen, Canada
Juha Y. Pentikäinen, Finland
Eric J. Sharpe, United Kingdom
Peter Weidkuhn, Germany

4. An ad hoc committee consisting of C. J. Bleecker, Marcel Simon, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Eric J. Sharpe, and Joseph Kitagawa was appointed to consider the future publishing policies of the Association.

5. In the interim before the next quinquennial Congress, the Association will join regional groups in the support of four study conferences expected to be held at various times at the University of California at Santa Barbara, at the University of Venice, at Warsaw, and in India (site as yet undetermined).

The 1980 International Congress of the IAHR will be held at Winnipeg.

Apart from the long-standing interest and efforts of the American Society for the Study of Religion and the very active participation of individual scholars, especially Canadian scholars at the 1975 Congress, North American participation in international scholarship on the history of religions has been very informal, though often significant. In recognition of the urgency of increased participation, the CSR voted at its October Annual Meeting to authorize the Chairman to appoint a standing committee with special concern for international scholarship in the history of religions. It is hoped that the leadership of the CSR will contribute significantly in future years to the international dimension of scholarship in this important area.

Respectfully submitted,

George MacRae

CSR TASK FORCE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"That the discipline be enabled to take the future more into its own hands" is perhaps the most accurate description of the intention of the executive committee of CSR in forming a Task Force on Professional Development in religious studies. This informal statement of purpose is in keeping with the formal proposal that the task force "examine and propose ways in which CSR can better initiate, coordinate, and implement projects designed to strengthen and advance scholarship and teaching in the field of religion." Under the chairmanship of Walter H. Capps, University of California, Santa Barbara, the task force is charged to think creatively, judiciously, and comprehensively about professional development as this relates to the needs of individual teachers and scholars in the field as well as to the future of religious studies itself.

The project has several foci. First, it will deal with the human problems of persons in the field. Chief among these are the desires for continuing and ongoing education, particularly in light of decreased faculty mobility and sharply reduced sabbatic leave opportunities and other personal professional

amenities. Secondly, attention will be given to updated conceptions of the nature of learning and teaching. This interest refers not only to curricular revisions and teaching-and-learning skill and technique innovation, but, more significantly, to significant shifts (both present and projected) within the more comprehensive learning environment within higher education in North America. Thirdly, the task force will concentrate upon the ongoing intrinsic development of religious studies as a distinguishable area of scholarly interest. This includes identification and analyses of current and projected research needs, updating and embellishment of selected fields and sub-fields, the establishment or encouragement of new liaisons between existing fields and disciplines, as well as the specification of the components of corporate intellectual development in appropriate field-and-discipline senses. All three aspects of the project will prompt the task force to gain a realistic and workable overview of the study of religion in both present and future tenses.

Anticipations are that the task force will recommend a number of specific projects to CSR. Included among these may be shared lecture series, workshops on specific topics, plans for faculty exchanges, and organized programs for soliciting fellowships for teachers and scholars in the field. In addition to recommending specific projects, the task force will work toward composing a position paper, intended to be descriptive of the field in both its present and projected contours. Immediate plans call for the convening of a consultation on this subject. From this the task force will refine its objectives and initiate its response. The results will be disseminated widely through CSR's constituent professional societies.

"That the discipline be enabled to take the future more into its own hands" implies that the study of religion be submitted to a deliberate planning process. The intention is to create a more effective professional leadership capacity, to provide methodological assurance that religious studies can be developed, at least in modest part, by intention, prescription, and design.

Walter H. Capps



**CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As previously announced, the bicentennial year Convention will be held in Washington, D.C., at the Statler-Hilton Hotel, from the evening of Wednesday, June 9, to noon on Saturday, June 12. The convention theme will be "The Divine and the Human in Christianity."

The Convention will be structured around four major talks, as follows:

Transcendence and Immanence as Theological Categories
Louis Dupre, Yale University