

NSYR Sociologists to Present at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting

Researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will present two sessions at the 2003 Annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) October 23-26, Norfolk, Va.

The first session, *The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR): A Report on Research Methods and Preliminary Findings* will be on Friday, October 24, 2003, from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Dr. Christian Smith, Stuart Chapin Distinguished Professor and associate chair of sociology at UNC-CH, is the organizer and convener of this session, as well as the principal investigator of the project. He will also speak on “The Purpose and Goals of the NSYR.”

Joining Smith in this presentation are Melinda L. Denton, project manager, who will address “Survey and Interviews Research Methodology of the NSYR”; Darci Powell, graduate student, who will discuss “Preliminary Youth Religion Findings of the NSYR Survey” and project co-investigators Mark Regnerus, assistant professor of sociology University of Texas at Austin, and Lisa Pearce, assistant professor of sociology, UNC-CH, who will speak on “Preliminary Adolescent Outcome Findings of the NSYR.”

Immediately following that session, Pearce will convene the session *Issues in Qualitative Research Design and Methodology For Studies of Youth Religion and Spirituality*. Smith is the session organizer and attendees will hear presentations “Supernatural or Spiritual Beliefs? Cultivating and Analyzing Qualitative Data from Interviews with Teens,” from Lynn Schofield Clark, assistant research professor at the University of Colorado’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication; “Sitting on the Floor, Eating Too Much Pizza, Being ‘Josie Grossy’ Again: Conducting Ethnographic Research with Teenagers” by Carol Lytch, Fund for Theological Education and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; “Conducting Nationally Representative In-Depth Interviews with Teens Around the Country” by Denton and Smith; and “Going Digital: Utilizing New Technology in Researching Youth Religion,” presented by Richard Flory, associate professor of sociology, Biola University and Don Miller, professor of religion, University of Southern California.

The conference’s theme is “Religion in Motion.” Scholars in religion and social science founded the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in 1949. Its purpose is to stimulate and communicate significant scientific research on religious institutions and religious experience. Scholars from all fields of

study who are interested in the scientific exploration of religion are invited to join the Society. For more information on the SSSR, visit <http://las.alfred.edu/~soc/SSSR/>.

The National Study of Youth and Religion, www.youthandreligion.org, is a four-year research project funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. It began in August 2001 and will continue until August 2005. The purpose of the project is to research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of U.S. adolescents; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent to which youth participate in and benefit from the programs and opportunities that religious communities are offering to their youth; to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youths' lives, and to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion.