

Welcome to the October 2006 Edition of the Christians in Political Science Newsletter

HIGHLIGHTS

Organizational News

Jobs at Grand Valley State University, Texas State University, and Gordon College
Research Report

Organizational News

From our new President Amy Black: Please mark your calendars for the Biennial Christians in Political Science conference which will take place at Wheaton College from June 7 - 10, 2007 in the western suburbs of Chicago. The program will begin with dinner and a plenary session on Thursday evening and planned events will continue through Saturday night. Housing on Saturday night will be optional. Spouses and family are welcome to attend. We plan to add a range of options to this year's meeting. In addition to sharing worship time together and providing opportunities for members to present their ongoing research in any of the subfields of political science, we will also organize workshops to share ideas about teaching, research, publishing, the job market, and the tenure process. Our hope is that the conference will appeal to members at every stage of their career and in all of the subdisciplines. Most importantly, I pray this will be an opportunity for informal interaction, fellowship, and mutual edification. We'll also have lots of fun! If you have suggestions for things to include in this year's conference, please send me an e-mail at amy.e.black@wheaton.edu. I'll read your ideas and share them with the others helping with the planning. We already have one volunteer to serve on the conference program committee, and I am hoping for a couple more. This group will share the responsibility for coordinating events and requesting proposals from our membership. If you are interested in serving in this way, please let me know.

Conferences/Calls for Papers

None This Month

Professional Updates

Publication Announcements

Rick Mayes has his "Medicare Prospective Payment and the Shaping of U.S. Health Care Policy," published from Johns Hopkins University Press. See more at http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/title_pages/3463.html

James V. Schall's, S.J., new book, "The Life of the Mind," is just published by ISI Press. It is ISI's October book of the month. See more at <http://www.isi.org/books/>. In addition, his "Roman Catholic Political Philosophy" (Lexington Books), has just come out with a paperback edition.

Job Announcements

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, ALLENDALE, MICHIGAN. The Department of Political Science invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of assistant professor, to begin August 2007. Applications are welcome from candidates with a research specialization in American politics, preferably with expertise in any of the following American politics subfields: race, ethnicity, gender, methodology, public opinion, Congress, bureaucracy, political economy, state politics, and/or public policy. The successful candidate will teach the introductory American Politics and Government course and upper level courses in his or her area of specialization. Applicants must demonstrate potential for excellence in teaching and scholarship, have an active research agenda, and a commitment to undergraduate education; preference for candidates with experience interacting with diverse populations or students of color. A Ph.D. is required for appointment as Assistant Professor. Salary is competitive and commensurate with skills and experience. Grand Valley State University is a thriving 22,000 student comprehensive university located in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. The Department of Political Science has fifteen full-time faculty members, offers B.S. and B.A. degrees in political science, and administers an interdisciplinary B.A. degree in international relations. Interested applicants should send a cover letter explaining their interest in and qualifications for the position, curriculum vitae, graduate transcripts, a sample of written work in their central area of research, teaching evaluations (if available), and three letters of recommendation to: American Politics Search Committee, Department of Political Science, 1121 AuSable Hall, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401. Applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2006. Grand Valley State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution. Women and members of minority and underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply.

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS, TEXAS. TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY invites applications for a tenure-track faculty position in International Relations/International Security Policy, at the Assistant Professor level (Job Posting #2007-14). Candidate must be qualified to teach in political science programs at both the undergraduate and graduate Masters level. Salary will be commensurate with qualifications. Candidates must have earned a doctorate in Political Science or Government by 31 July 2007, have a record

of teaching experience in higher education, and a record of academic training in the field of international security. Academic training in the politics and government of East, South or Southeast Asia, or of Africa, or of Europe is preferred, together with a demonstrated ability in scholarly research in the required and/or preferred sub-disciplines, ability to communicate with students in the classroom, and effective interpersonal skills. Review of applications will begin November 1, 2006. All applications will be held in strict confidence and will be accepted until the position is filled, but applicants are strongly encouraged to submit materials before the review of applicants begins. Applicants may submit application materials electronically, using Microsoft Word doc, or rtf, or pdf files. Letters of application addressing required and preferred qualifications, a curriculum vitae, all college transcripts, samples of scholarly work (presentations and/or publications), and three letters of recommendation should be sent to: Dr. Robert F. Gorman, International Security Search Committee Chair–Job Posting #2007-14, Department of Political Science, Texas State University-San Marcos, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666-4616. Phone: 512-245-2143. Fax: 512.245.7815. E-mail: rg06@txstate.edu.

GORDON COLLEGE, WENHAM, MASSACHUSETTS. The Department of Political Studies is seeking an Assistant or Associate Professor. Successful candidates must be committed to excellence in the integration of Christian faith and the highest standards of teaching. Preference is given to candidates with a doctorate completed by the time of appointment; however, ABD will be considered. This position is a tenure-track position to begin August 2007. The department is seeking candidates for a position in International Relations. A secondary concentration in politics of the Middle East is desirable. Successful candidates would be expected to teach, on occasion, an interdisciplinary freshman level seminar, an introductory politics course, and to help team-teach the department's senior seminar. The faculty member will participate in a four-person department offering the BA Degree, with majors in Political Studies and International Affairs (the latter in cooperation with the Economics Department), preparing students for graduate and professional positions. Members teach the equivalent of three courses per semester, and participate in student advising, scholarly research, professional activities and committee assignments. Candidates must have a mature Christian faith that serves as a springboard for their academic pursuits; be competent teachers and well-trained scholars; contribute to the diversity of talents, insights and perspectives within a Christian academic community; and, be committed to the objectives of a Christian liberal arts education. Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, is a member of the elite Annapolis Group, a consortium of the nation's leading liberal arts institutions and among the premiere Christian liberal arts colleges in the country. Gordon offers excellent academics, a strong sense of community and an atmosphere of open intellectual inquiry and personal responsibility—all within the framework of Christian faith. Gordon College is located in a classic New England town on Boston's North Shore. Application review will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Please submit letter of application, vita, sample of academic writing, names of three references and a two-page statement of educational philosophy. Applications can be sent to Kina Mallard, Academic Dean, 255 Grapevine Road, Wenham, MA 01984. For more information, please visit our web page at www.gordon.edu.

Misc. Announcements

From Corwin Smidt at Calvin College: The Role of Religion in Fostering Civic Responsibility: Major Findings.

Over the past decade, a number of important scholarly studies on the civic engagement of Americans have revealed the important role that religion plays in such engagement. Roughly speaking, almost “half of all associational memberships in America are church related, half of all personal philanthropy is religious in character, and half of all volunteering occurs in a religious context” (Putnam 2000, 66). People are more likely to give money and time, even to secular efforts, if they are church members (Wuthnow 1991, 87; Campbell and Yonish 2003), and they are also significantly more likely to vote if they are church members (Wald, Kellstedt, & Leege 1993, 49). In fact, religion generally rivals education as a “powerful correlate of most forms of civic engagement” (Putnam 2000, 67), with religious involvement being one of the strongest factors contributing to both philanthropy and volunteering (Putnam 2000, 67).

In the spring of 2005, the Henry Institute at Calvin College received a major grant from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation to engage in a research study on “The Role of Religion in Fostering Civic Responsibility.” Five members of Christians in Political Science were involved in the research project: Corwin Smidt, Director of The Henry Institute; Stephen Monsma, Research Fellow at The Henry Institute; James Penning, Professor of Political Science at Calvin College, Douglas Koopman, Director of the Hope College Leadership Program; and Kevin denDulk, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Grand Valley State University.

The previous studies cited above, while important in establishing the relationship between religion and civic engagement, nevertheless suffer from several important problems. First, they focus on civic *engagement* (associational membership; volunteering, service, and philanthropy; and political participation) rather civic *responsibility*. Certainly, the study of civic engagement is important, but the notion of civic responsibility adds moral, or value-oriented, qualities to the analysis. Thus, a study of civic responsibility broadens the analysis to assess both attitudinal, value-rooted, commitments and behavioral responses—as well as the interplay between the two.

Second, those studies that do document the role of religion in shaping civic engagement have generally been rather confined in their assessments. Each study, while important, has usually been based largely, if not exclusively, on one major survey conducted for some particular research project. As a result, no effort has been made to gather a variety of data files from which to assess whether the particular patterns related to religion's role in fostering civic engagement hold across various studies or whether they are simply unique to one particular study. Confirmation of patterns across a variety of studies is necessary to establish more firmly that religion plays an important role in fostering civic engagement.

Consequently, our research study, a first stage in what is anticipated likely to be a much larger and innovative study, focused largely on two major tasks: (1) examining currently available data from previous studies to confirm what patterns hold true across such existing studies, and (2) seeking to ascertain the specific facet(s) of religion that have the greatest effects on civic responsibility.

Summary of Major Findings

These findings are confirmed across various survey studies conducted over the past decade.

- Church attendance rivals education as the most important variable shaping the likelihood of a respondent reporting membership in some kind of voluntary association.
- Those who report no religious affiliation tend to volunteer less and to give less to charity than those who are affiliated with some religious tradition.
- Those who report a religious affiliation are more likely to give even to secular charity organizations than those who report no religious affiliation.
- Church attendance, with its associated integration into a social network of fellow church members, has a stronger influence on volunteering and giving than religious affiliation.
- Respondents who say religion is very important in their lives, who hold traditional Christian beliefs, and who engage in private devotional activities apart from religious services generally give and volunteer more than those with the opposite characteristics.
- While Americans are most likely to acquire and practice civic skills on the job, most church members report that they had practiced some civic skill in church, confirming that churches do provide potentially important venues for the acquisition and practices of civic skills.
- Those who attend church more frequently tend to practice civic skills at higher rates than do those who attend less often, regardless of income levels.
- Among African-Americans, particularly those falling in the lowest income categories, churches provide skill-building opportunities that otherwise might not be available to them. Churches also provide important skill-building opportunities for women.
- Those who practice a "privatized religion" (i.e., who report that religion is important in their life, but who do not attend worship services with any regularity), are the least likely of all respondents to report membership in some voluntary association.
- Those who practice a "privatized religion" exhibit the lowest levels of civic and political engagement.

REFERENCES

- Campbell, David, and Steven Yonish. 2003. "Religion and Volunteering in America." Pp. 87-106 in Corwin Smidt, ed., *Religion as Social Capital: Producing the Common Good*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Wald, Kenneth, David Leege, and Lyman Kellstedt. 1993. "Church Involvement and Political Behavior." Pp. 121-138 in David Leege and Lyman Kellstedt, eds., *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1991. *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Prayer Requests

None This Month

For back issues and other information, visit our website at:

http://www.calvin.edu/henry/christians_in_political_science/index.htm