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Items in this supplement:

- IAHR Congress Up-Date
- Other IAHR Conferences
- Nominating Committee for Candidates during 2000-2005

***IAHR Congress Up-Date***

The following articles by Congress Director Pratap Kumar and Chair of the Academic Program Rosalind I. J. Hackett bring us news on the 18th Quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions 5-12 August, 2000, Durban, South Africa. These reports are followed by an announcement concerning CIPSH/IAHR subventions.

*REPORT FROM THE CONGRESS DIRECTOR*

Professor Pratap Kumar

The secretariat is very pleased with the enormous response we have received and still are receiving for the forthcoming congress in Durban. Both Rosalind Hackett and I, backed by the efficient team from the International headquarters, are working tirelessly to ensure this congress at the threshold of a new millennium is a great success not only in its actual administration, but also in ensuring that a really international gathering of excellent scholars meet and debate on issues that pertain to our particular enterprise. For those of us who are in South Africa, this is going to be a very crucial meeting especially in the face of drastic downsizing of the departments of religion. Of course, this is a global phenomenon and we need to take this opportunity and gather at this historic meeting and demonstrate to the whole world the need to have a sustained study of religion which affects our day-to-day life. The study of religion is at a cross-roads now, and we have this opportunity to show to the world that scholars of religion have indeed a vital role to play as public intellectuals.

From the secretariat in Durban we are doing our best to make your upcoming visit to Durban as smooth and pleasurable as possible. We have secured accommodation facilities quite close to the International Convention Centre where the congress will be held. The convention centre itself is a modern establishment with all the state of the art technology to make your presentations effective and efficient.

The Durban congress will have an excellent extramural exhibition by local religious and cultural museums in addition to our usual exhibitions of books and other scholarly items. We will also be making arrangements for local as well as national tours which will become available by the end of 1999. There are lots of interesting places such as religious centres, nature reserves, and cultural places to visit both in and around Durban. There will be various cultural entertainment items both as part of the congress as well as other ones in town at that

time. More information will be put on the webpage as we get close to the Durban congress dates. So keep reloading our webpage (<http://www.udw.ac.za/iahr>).

### *Concerns about Visiting South Africa*

Many of you are still concerned about how it is in South Africa regarding violence, political transformation and also the cost of living, especially the hotel tariffs, food, and so on. To enable you to make your decision regarding your attendance at the congress, let me make some comments:

1. The political life of South Africa is stabilising and we have just had our national elections this year. The atmosphere is generally optimistic and looking good. We do not foresee any untoward events happening as gradually people are beginning to realise the need for peaceful living and better economy. As in most countries where democracy is still in its infancy, there are teething problems, but they are not something that should deter any potential visitor to Durban. With regard to violence, there has been some negative reporting in the international media, but it is often blown out of proportion. If you take precautionary measures and follow our guidelines that we will be giving out at the time of the congress, chances are that you will be safer in Durban than in any other major city in the U.S., Europe or Asia.

2. Regarding accommodation, we have secured good accommodation at very reasonable and competitive rates to suit international standards. Hotels in South Africa and especially in Durban are well maintained and are on a par with their international counterparts. The prices we have quoted for hotels in our brochures which you may have already received are applicable for 1998, but the hotels have agreed to keep those prices for the year 2000. So you are getting a good price. Our choice of accommodation is quite vast in that it ranges from \$100 per person per night (in a 5 star hotel [Hilton] with magnificent views of the Indian ocean) to \$36 for 3 people (\$12 per person per night). All hotels are in 2 minute distance from the beachside. Please do not underestimate the lower range accommodation as they are very comfortable and clean and in very good locations. We have hand-picked our choice of hotels to ensure safety and easy access to the Convention Centre. From any of the hotels you can walk to the Convention Centre in less than 15 minutes. The accommodation is available on first come first serve basis, so please let us know of your needs well in advance.

3. Regarding travel to South Africa, from any part of the world to Durban it should cost around \$800 - \$1000 depending on where you are located. Although we are willing to assist you in organising your travel, from our experience there are more options from your local travel agent, so please check with them for competitive prices. Should you want to compare with what our local travel groups can offer you, please do not hesitate to request a quote by giving us exact details of your port of origin and destination.

4. One other important aspect is that many of you have sent your submissions to present a panel or an individual paper. But not many of you have sent in your registration forms and accommodation forms. It is **IMPORTANT** that every participant whether on a panel or making an individual presentation **SHOULD SUBMIT INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION FORMS AND ACCOMMODATION FORMS** with the necessary fees. Please take advantage of the early registration as it will save you up to \$50.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact us at the secretariat with any specific needs you might have regarding the congress, and our team at the organising company will do their best to assist you. We look forward to your participation at the Durban Congress.

If any of you have not received our brochure, please contact us and we will send you one right away. Our website also has the registration forms and other forms for your use. You can either register electronically or send the forms by mail.

Pratap Kumar

Director of the 18th Quinquennial Congress of the IAHR, Durban, August 5-12, 2000

For more information on the Congress please see: <http://www.udw.ac.za/iahr>

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*REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CONGRESS ACADEMIC PROGRAMME  
COMMITTEE*

Professor Rosalind I. J. Hackett

Over 80 panels, symposia and roundtable proposals have been received to date. Several more are in the pipeline. Individual papers are currently being received and will be arranged into panels in the course of the next few months. A draft programme will be available at the beginning of 2000.

The quality and range of academic contributions are extremely pleasing, and many relate well to the Congress theme: "History of Religions: Origins and Visions". Many renowned scholars in religious studies, as well as anthropology, sociology, art history, cultural studies, philosophy, archaeology, education, theology, church history, biblical studies, history, and legal studies have committed to attending the Congress. They will be coming from all over the world. Many are determined to take advantage of the IAHR's first Congress in Africa and are keen to show their support for the efforts of the South African organizers.

For the 18th Quinquennial Congress in Durban, we opted for a more open-ended structure than in previous years. Instead of relying on tradition- or area-specific categories, we wanted to encourage more multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural, comparative and thematic approaches. So far the experiment seems to have worked wonders! A number of topics have emerged as strong focus areas in the panel and paper submissions:

religion and nature/ecology

religion and hunting

diasporic religion

religion and law/human rights

indigenous peoples, indigenization

syncretism

visual religion, iconography, material

culture/archaeology

religion and locality

gender and religion

religion and cognition  
sacred vows  
religion and advocacy, conversion  
globalization  
religion and conflict/war  
millennialism  
religious education  
religion and healing  
cyberspace

religion and identity  
philosophy of religion  
mysticism/esotericism  
comparativism, Eliade  
history and enterprise of history of  
religions in varying contexts

Several strong panels have been organized which pertain to religion in Africa. In addition to the more cross-cultural sessions, there are also panels on Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, Taiwan, and Latin American religions. There will be a series of panels organized by the South African Academy of Religion, and a panel organized by the International Connections Committee of the American Academy of Religion.

Three keynote addresses are planned followed by plenary sessions. The topics chosen are History of Religions, Religion and Human Rights, Religion and Public Education/Policy in South Africa. There will be a final plenary session with panelists discussing their opinions about future trends in the academic study of religion.

Several publishers are responding well to requests for support. Some have promised to attend and a few have even offered financial contributions or sponsorship in kind.

Publicity has been good concerning the Congress, aided by the electronic age we live in. A number of associations, listservs and journals have carried announcements of the Congress. The Congress brochure has been sent out widely and distributed at conferences.

The Programme Committee has been a great support. Several members have helped considerably in creative and evaluative ways. It has been exciting having a rapid response team situated in many far-flung corners of the world!

Several people have asked about late proposals since the deadline for panels has passed and all paper proposals are to be in by end of April 1999. **YOU MAY STILL SEND IN YOUR PANEL AND PAPER PROPOSALS. WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PLACE THEM, BUT NO GUARANTEES.** We want to be able to circulate a draft programme in early 2000 so as to showcase the offerings and attract participants.

Even at this stage of the programme planning, I feel that I can assure IAHR members and non-members that this will be one of the most varied, interesting and intellectually stimulating international conferences you have ever attended.

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Association for the History of Religions  
Durban, South Africa, August 5-12, 2000  
Congress Website:  
<http://www.udw.ac.za/iahr>  
Program Up-Date:  
<http://web.utk.edu/~rhackett>

### *CIPSH TRAVEL SUBVENTIONS*

Armin W. Geertz

As a member of the *Conseil international de la philosophie et des sciences humaines (CIPSH)*, the IAHR is entitled to apply for subsidies for two purposes: 1) expenses of meetings with scientific aims and 2) expenses incurred by the preparation or printing of publications. Subsidies are not granted for "individual work, for national projects, or for administrative purposes" (*Conditions Governing the Granting of Subsidies by the CIPSH*). Requests for subsidies are put forward on forms provided for the purpose by the general secretaries of the twelve member associations every two years.

CIPSH grants subsidies to three types of meetings with the following amounts as of 1997: 1) quinquennial international congresses of the major branches of study—\$10,000, 2) quinquennial congresses of affiliated organizations—\$5,000, and 3) triennial symposia (not more than 50 participants) or expert committee meetings (not more than 20 participants)—\$4,000.

The most important condition set on subsidies for meetings is the following:

All the subsidies for international meetings are expressly intended to cover the travelling expenses of participants from economically under-privileged countries or countries far from the place of the meeting, and preferably of young scholars (*Conditions...*)

It is up to the officers of the recipient organizations to use the funds and to report back to CIPSH on their use. The IAHR procedure is that the treasurer and the general secretary decide, in consultation with others whenever necessary, who is to benefit from the subsidy. The treasurer takes care of the actual transactions and reports back to CIPSH. In most cases, the subsidies are insufficient, and, consequently, IAHR funds are also used to supplement the CIPSH subsidies in order to bring in one or two more persons.

The funds are used exclusively to cover ticket expenses. The general principle for determining beneficiaries of CIPSH subsidies to the IAHR is to bring in people who are key persons in the IAHR network. This means primarily members of the IAHR Executive Committee who live in countries with economic difficulties or who live very far away from the place of venue. The second group of persons that have priority are officers of IAHR affiliates, especially representatives of the International Committee of the IAHR which are usually the president and the secretary of each affiliate. Ensuring a broad participation by this latter group is essential to the democratic process of IAHR meetings. The third group of people that have priority are key persons in other respects such as potential contacts who might be willing to help establish IAHR affiliates or persons with relevant expertise in relation to a particular meeting.



The IAHR has been awarded a subvention of \$10,000 to cover ticket expenses to the Durban Congress. Applications must indicate in what manner applicants fulfill the above-mentioned requirements as well as the exact price of the ticket. ***Applications for subventions must be submitted to me or Gary Lease by January 31, 2000.*** Final decisions will be made by the end of February 2000. Please note my mailing and e-mail addresses on the first page of this bulletin.



### ***Other IAHR Conferences***

#### ***IAHR REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI, 27-30 JULY 1999—AN UP-DATE***

Jan G. Platvoet

The IAHR will be holding a Regional Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in collaboration with the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR). It will be the first AASR Conference in Africa. It will be hosted by the Department of Religious Studies of Kenyatta University, and it has been organised by its AASR Conference Committee on which serve Dr. Mary Getui, Mrs. Grace Wamue, Dr. Jonathan Gichaara, and Mr. Tobias Opido. It will be held in the Amani Conference Centre, run by Benedictine monks, on Thika Road, adjacent to St. Benedict's church, in Nairobi. In the tradition of the Benedictine monks, its Guest Master is Father Peter Meienberg OSB (*ordo Sancti Benedicti*). The mailing address of the Amani Centre is: PO Box 32102, Nairobi. It may be reached by telephone at + 254.2.80.26.97.

The theme of the conference is "The Religions of East Africa in the Age of Globalisation". It is a conference by invitation only. Over two thirds of its roughly sixty participants, all the twenty paper presenters and the five main respondents will be from East Africa. The first purpose of this conference is to bring scholars of religions from all academic disciplines in the universities of East Africa researching the religions of East Africa together for surveying the developments in these religions, and in the study of these religions, in this age of globalisation. The second purpose is to produce a general textbook on the full range of East African religions for use in the universities of East Africa. It should also serve to present East African scholarship on these religions to the global academic community.

The conference is meant to serve two more purposes. One is to assist the scholars of religions in East Africa to found an East African Association for the Study of Religions that can promote scholarship in religions in East Africa and integrate it into the global community of scholars in religions through affiliation to the IAHR, hopefully in 2000 when the IAHR convenes for its first congress in Africa in Durban, South Africa. Prof. Armin W. Geertz, IAHR General Secretary, will participate in this conference on behalf of the IAHR, which has granted this conference the status of Regional Conference and is also supporting it financially. The other purpose is for the leadership of the AASR to meet and discuss policies for the coming period. The AASR Executive and some ten other AASR members have been admitted as participants. They will be mainly active as respondents to the papers presented. Further information may be obtained from the two main organisers:

Dr. Mary Getui, AASR Regional Representative for East African and Chair-person of the Department of Religious Studies, Kenyatta University, P.O. Box 43844, Nairobi, Kenya.

Telephone: + 254.2.810.901-12. Fax: + 254.2.891.782. E-mail: [getui@AfricaOnline.co.ke](mailto:getui@AfricaOnline.co.ke)

Dr. Jan G. Platvoet, AASR Vice President, Gildenring 52, 3981 JG Bunnik, The Netherlands. Tel./Fax: +31.30.656.2680. E-mail: [jgplatvoet@wxs.nl](mailto:jgplatvoet@wxs.nl)

*IAHR SPECIAL CONFERENCE IN BRNO, 9-13 AUGUST 1999—AN UP-DATE*

Armin W. Geertz

The IAHR will be holding a Special Conference in collaboration with the North American Association for the Study of Religion and the Czech Society for the Study of Religions in Brno, Czech Republic. It will be hosted by the Masaryk University in Brno and the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, U.S.A. The topic of the conference is "The Academic Study of Religion During the Cold War: Ideological and Theological Constraints, East and West". There will be about 40 participants from various parts of the world to discuss this topic. The IAHR Executive Committee will be holding its annual meeting during the conference where it will deliberate on a variety of organizational matters, Durban 2000, future conference locations, bids for the IAHR quinquennial congress in 2005 and other important matters. For further information on the conference contact Dr. Iva Dolezalova, Institute for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University, Arne Novaka 1, 660 88 Brno, CZ; phone: 420-5-41121408, fax: 420-5-41121406; e-mail: dolezalo@phil.muni.cz

***Nominating Committee for Candidates during 2000-2005***

In compliance with the Constitution of the IAHR and with the nomination procedural rules for the Executive Committee of the IAHR, adopted by the International Committee in Hildesheim on May 24, 1998, a nominating committee was appointed in February 1999. The committee is composed of three elder stateswomen and/or statesmen who no longer seek office. They are chosen in view of their close knowledge of the IAHR and their wider knowledge of international scholarship. They are also chosen in terms of gender and regional representation. The Executive Committee voted on the matter and appointed the following:

- Prof. Louise Bäckman (chairperson), Solna, Sweden
- Prof. Jacques Waardenburg, Lausanne, Switzerland
- Prof. Donald Wiebe, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Their charge is to produce one or more nominations for the positions of all the officers and the members-at-large. These candidates, as well as any other candidates that may be proposed by members of the International Committee, will be subject to election at the next International Committee meeting in Durban, South Africa on August 9, 2000. According to the constitution, members of the International Committee may propose alternative nominations not less than one month prior to each international congress, which means one month before the day prior to the opening of the congress. The actual opening date of the congress is not yet in place, but the advertised date is August 5, 2000. Thus, alternative nominations must reach me by e-mail or ordinary mail no later than July 4, 2000. All nominations shall be made public, but those nominations that are inconsistent with the constraints mentioned in the constitution and in the rules adopted in Hildesheim will not be taken into consideration. These rules will be published in the next full bulletin which will be coming soon.

The nominating committee will announce their list of nominees no earlier than August 4, 1999 and no later than November 4, 1999.



Association Internationale pour L'Histoire des Religions



International Association for the History of Religions