

[Report]

Report on the 125th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (January 6–9, 2011)

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The American Historical Association and its numerous affiliated societies convened for its 125th Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts on January 6–9, 2011. The general theme for the convention was “History, Society, and the Sacred.” In addition to the wide range of panel discussions, individual presentations, plenary sessions, and media presentations, there were various opportunities to visit historic locations in the Boston area. The AHA’s annual meeting is a huge event and there is always a wide range of activities and presentations to satisfy the interests of the varied list of attendees. For this attendee, the problem is usually that of having too many sessions of interest being offered during the same time slot. The sessions vary widely, from traditionally academic presentations to practical discussions of pedagogy to recent movies on topics of historical interest. In this report, I shall provide summaries of the sessions I was able to attend.

1) *The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s ; Activist Protestants or Intolerant Americans ?*

The first speaker was David J. LaVigne who spoke on the subject of “‘We Put the Bible in the Schools’ : The Ku Klux Klan on Minnesota’s Mesabi Iron Range.” (Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this session.)

The second speaker was Mark P. Richard, who presented a paper on “The Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England Catholics in the 1920s.” Richard spoke of the Klan’s support for Bible reading in the public schools and its opposition to Catholicism in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. This opposition took a violent turn in August, 1924 when the KKK robbed the Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, an event which led to the Klan’s subsequent demise. The speaker chronicled both government and citizen opposition to Klan activities (which were often violent), focusing especially on the Klan’s opposition to Catholics. Richard described the KKK as a radical fringe group of the 1920s.

The third speaker was Thomas R. Pegram whose topic was “The Hooded Schoolhouse : School Reform, State-Building, and Cultural Intelligence in the 1920s.” As Pegram explained, the KKK of the time cherished the idea and cultural icon of the “Little Red Schoolhouse” and saw as its purpose the job of protecting White Protestantism. In

this regard, the KKK stressed the importance of active public control of public schools and saw public education as anti-Pope. The speaker pointed out that local Klan leaders did, in fact, reflect national views as they carried on their active campaign to repress Catholic parochial schools.

The session concluded with Leonard Moore's commentary on the three presentations. Moore began by pointing out some of the historiographical problems faced in researching and studying the Ku Klux Klan, which he saw as a mass national movement that reached into crannies of American life but which was also a secret society. He stressed the importance of determining the context of the informational sources used by those researching the Klan. Moore reminded listeners that there are still places in the US and Canada where the Klan is active ; hence, there is still much to do in researching Klan activities in both countries. He also pointed out that French-Canadian immigrants had been particular targets of KKK attacks ; indeed, the Klan's anti-Catholic attitudes often resulted in violent attacks from the Klan. As Moore also remarked, however, Catholics fought back. He also called attention to the contrast between the Klan's intolerant perspective against Catholics and the significant degree to which this perspective undermined KKK claims to be an organization interested in progressive reforms.

2) *Film Screening of "God in America"*

In this session, attendees viewed a movie and participated in a discussion following the screening. The film was a documentary (Part 2) dealing with the interesting alliance and roles of Thomas Jefferson and the Baptists in the establishment of religious freedom through its inclusion in the American Bill of Rights.

3) *Sacred Politics : Rethinking the Rise of the Religious Right*

The first presentation was offered by Markku Ruotsila on the topic of "Carl McIntire and the Anticommunist Origins of the Religious Right." The speaker viewed McIntire as a transition from Fundamentalism to mainstream Evangelicalism. In McIntire's time, anti-communist methods defined the genre of the Christian right. From the 1930s, McIntire was the most important Fundamentalist. However, he sought to cooperate with non-fundamentalists for political reasons. McIntire's magazine, *The Christian Beacon*, had 150,000 subscribers and his radio sermons went out over 600 stations. Speaking from his libertarian framework, McIntire made "faith-based anticommunism" the creed of fundamentalism. His mentor was the Presbyterian theologian, J. Gresham Machen. McIntire opposed governmental interventions in the operations of a capitalist society and urged Christians to be active in political activities. In the 1950s McIntire cooperated with non-fundamentalists in sponsoring anticommunist rallies. He paved the way for cooperation between fundamentalists and conservative Catholics, seeing the gap between these two groups as smaller than the gap between Fundamentalism and Modernism. McIntire was a powerful factor in the mass mobilization of the Christian right. He waged campaigns to encourage people to fight Communism by writing letters to Congress. In the 1950s McIntire spearheaded an attempt to influence the Republican Party. He later also linked up with

segregationists, though this alliance led to a decline in his influence.

The second speaker was Molly Worthen who spoke on “God’s New Grand Narrative : The Intellectual Mobilization of the Religious Right, 1970-2000.” The speaker noted that a key goal of the Christian Right has been to reassert the authority of the Bible. However, the Christian Right was also very much involved in culture wars (not just political wars), and wrestled with the problem of balancing traditional Christian values with Enlightenment thinking. The “culture wars” involved four particular historical developments which Worthen summarized for listeners : 1. The charismatic renewal movement which touched all Christian communities well into the 1970s. Of particular relevance here was the conflict between Christian experience and rationalism. 2. The church growth movement which dealt prominently with conflict between movements which emphasized personal conversion and those which focused more on people, i.e., “people movements.” 3. The profusion of new Bible translations and paraphrases, e.g., the Living Bible and the New International Version (NIV). 4. The controversy over women’s ordination, a discussion prominent particularly in the mid-1970s. Worthen’s discussion also highlighted structural changes that have taken place in the Christian Right movement. Changes took place in evangelical higher education as secular Enlightenment values clashed with traditional views of biblical authority. Development of a Christian world-view became an important goal of conservative Christians, while funding problems led many to seek funding from major corporations for religious projects. Worthen pointed out that prominent figures like Timothy Smith and Joel Carpenter worked to make evangelicals more credible in secular society.

Darryl G. Hart continued the discussion with a paper entitled “When the Religious Right Almost Turned Left : Born-Again Activism before the Moral Majority.” In the 1970s, through the work of Christian leaders such as theologian Richard Mouw, historian Richard Pierard, and journalist David Moberg (*The Great Reversal*), many evangelicals became concerned with the subject of civic duty. In 1973, several disenchanted evangelicals met in Chicago and drew up the *Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Concern*, a document critical of Evangelicalism’s failure to combat racism, American materialism, poverty, and social injustice. These left-wing evangelicals challenged the faith of Christians who put their trust in the American military and the American economy. A key figure in this discussion was the politician Mark Hatfield, an evangelical, Conservative Baptist, and Republican Senator from Oregon. Hatfield was a political maverick in the Republican Party and a staunch critic of the arch-conservative, Barry Goldwater. Hatfield opposed most armed conflicts, harshly criticized President Johnson and the US’s war in Southeast Asia, and joined with liberal Democrat George McGovern to sponsor an amendment to force the US to withdraw from Vietnam. However, Hatfield’s views offended mainstream evangelicals. He was critical of the right-wing Moral Majority and of the US’s national self-righteousness, both sacred cows of the evangelical mainstream. Hatfield’s political and Christian views were less those of a contemporary evangelical than of a radical Anabaptist. He sought to identify with the poor, to end the US war in Vietnam, to resist American materialism, and to view politics as

service. Theologically, Hatfield called upon Christians to seek biblical justice and righteousness. He was a key figure behind the emergence of evangelical activism in the 1960s and 1970s, though the young evangelicals of the time faced a powerful opponent in the well-funded and well-publicized Moral Majority. As Leo P. Ribuffo pointed out in his commentary on the papers, in the 1960s there were many more activists among the Christian Right than there were among left-wing Christians.

4) *Rethinking American Slavery and the History of Christianity*

I attended two presentations from this session. The first was a paper by Matthew Hill entitled, “Francis Wayland, Religion, and Antislavery in America, 1830–65.” Hill described the development of Wayland’s thought on American slavery. Wayland’s influential *Elements of Moral Science* (1835) sold over 100,000 copies in the 19th century, and one chapter of this work was devoted to Wayland’s position on slavery. As Hill explained, Wayland was obsessed with morality. He felt that slavery was a denial of the natural rights of slaves and was therefore morally wrong. Natural rights are inclusive. Furthermore, the Bible does not sanction or endorse slavery. Slavery not only promoted inequality among people, it upset the relationship between God and humans. Indeed, the New Testament (NT) stands fundamentally in opposition to slavery. Therefore, as Wayland contended, it was the responsibility of slave owners to free the slaves. The problem, however, was the various constitutional and legal obstacles faced by those who would free slaves, e.g., fears of race riots. Nevertheless, Wayland suggested that, prior to liberation, slaves could at least be taught to read and write, their work load could be reduced, and abolitionists could work within the system to improve the master-slave relationship. Wayland pointed out that the legality of an act or institution did not ensure the morality of that act or institution. Nevertheless, as Hill explained, Wayland was not a social activist in the abolitionist movement. On the contrary, Wayland felt that opposition to slavery should stop at moral exhortation, a stance which rankled the arch-abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison. Working within the system, Wayland expressed his opposition mostly through his writing. He carried on an editorial war with Matthew Fuller, who held the interesting position that slavery was a moral good and that the Bible permitted slavery *per se*, though not its enforcement. Wayland disagreed, arguing from Scripture that violence was an implicit part of slavery. Wayland pointed out that the Bible’s descriptive statements are not necessarily prescriptive and that revelation is progressive, e.g., though slavery was tolerated during the time of Moses, the time in which Jesus lived was different. Later, Wayland assumed a stance of “passive non-compliance” in regard to slavery, according to which Wayland would not help authorities capture a runaway slave though he would also refuse to harbor a fugitive slave. Not all antislavery advocates agreed with Wayland, who even got into a fight with a group called “Peace Democrats.” Wayland also saw the fears concerning race wars to be unfounded. Indeed, blacks had shown their willingness to support the country by serving as soldiers in the Civil War, and therefore, Wayland contended, these blacks were more deserving of citizenship than whites who refused to fight.

The next presentation was from Mark Draper and entitled, “The 1837-58 ‘Businessman’s Revival and Slavery, the Elephant in the Room’.” The “Businessman’s Revival” was an interesting development among Christians in the 19th century. Christian businessmen gathered together during the noon hour (and at other times) for a time of prayer and personal testimonies. The comments of each person were limited to five minutes. In order to avoid political and ecclesiastical bickering, some issues were considered to be out-of-bounds for the discussions. Draper saw the gatherings as generally successful. However, a major deficiency was the revival’s exclusion of blacks from the events. Indeed, as Draper pointed out, the “elephant” in the corner of the room was the sin of slavery. Understandably, the black press saw the revivals as unsuccessful, especially from the perspective of abolitionists and African-Americans. Draper also dealt with an interesting historiographical problem, viz., that most historians of these revivals depended only on mainstream sources. The broad populace wanted to read about successful revivals, and mainstream newspapers sought to provide that perspective. Emancipated slave Frederick Douglass was critical of these revivals, contending that they went hand-in-hand with attempts to revive slavery in America. In short, compared to the inter-racial revival we read about in Acts 2, the Businessman’s Revival could hardly be seen as successful from the perspective of slaves and other victims of racism.

John W. Stauffer offered concluding comments on the sessions’ papers, providing some helpful remarks about abolitionism in general. Stauffer pointed out that abolitionism was an idea which changed a society in a remarkable way. For years, slavery had been an integral part of societies around the world. For many, slavery had been a fact of life ; indeed, sin and bondage in general had been a fact of life. However, within a period of 100 years, an institution that had been an endemic part of society was destroyed.

5) Early screening of *Freedom Riders* (a movie produced by the Public Broadcasting System)

This is a powerful documentary film presentation dealing with the Freedom Riders phenomenon that developed in the US in 1961, when over 400 black and white Americans challenged America’s Jim Crow laws by traveling on buses and trains through the US’ Deep South. The film includes illuminating interviews with those who participated in the Freedom Rides and graphic film clips of the violent acts of racial hate which they endured along the way. Clips from the movie can be seen at www.pbs.org. The documentary DVD can also be purchased at the website.

6) *Religion in the Great Depression : Global Collapse, Local Crises*

The first paper of this session was offered by Jonathan Ebel and entitled, “In Every Cup of Bitterness, Sweetness : California Christianity in the Great Depression.” Ebel dealt with the religious dimension of poverty in America during the early 20th century. He pointed out that suffering and poverty were not just an economic problem. In 1920, economic instability was rooted in farming problems. Farm life and ownership was deteriorating and the severity of these social problems had been increasing for ten years. Furthermore, mainline clergy had regrettably been inattentive to the economic suffering of

their communities. From 1935 however, some work was being done among those staying in migratory labor camps. Religious groups sought to reform this “marginal group” and to work for the migrant laborers’ rehabilitation. Common theological discourse of the period included interaction with both secular and religious voices. Ebel grouped these discourses into three basic categories. The first group included the voices of those who spoke of a “gospel of cosmic catastrophe-ism”. These were apocalyptic voices which denied the meaningfulness of the condition of poverty. A second group was described as promoting a “gospel of Christian collectivism.” Those of this group generally looked at the poverty problem from a leftist perspective. A third group was motivated by a “gospel of righteous poverty.” Those of this group generally saw virtue in the idea of losing everything. One exemplary member of this group was California evangelist Charles E. Fuller, who preached that people should “take fiery trials as a schooling,” for God is in the suffering. Ebel pointed out that it is important to recognize the local contexts of those who spoke to this issue. For example, Fuller had been a fruit grower who had lost his orchard. In general, for many of those involved, missionary activity was an important element of work in the labor camps.

The second presentation was offered by Alison Collis Greene and entitled “The Redemption of Souls and Soils : Religion and the Rural Crisis in the Mississippi Delta.” Green’s paper was largely a response to a famous article written by Robert Handy in 1960, viz., “Religion and Depression.” The starting point for the discussion was 1935, a somewhat symbolic year in which Protestantism lost power in spite of its attempts to exert influence in the public arena. President Franklin Roosevelt had sent a letter to clergymen asking how he might be able to help them. Seventy-five per cent of the clergy who received Roosevelt’s letter responded positively, seeing as favorable the transfer from church to state of the responsibility for social poverty and suffering. Churches expected a great revival, but instead they faced the ravages of the Great Depression. Denominations curtailed religious activities in order to help the hungry and the homeless. In spite of its works of social welfare, the Protestant establishment found itself reeling from the Great Depression, an historical crisis which ultimately revealed to churches their inability to take on the task of providing social welfare.

The third presenter was Heather D. Curtis and her topic was “‘God is not Affected by the Depression’: Pentecostal Missions during the 1930’s.” Curtis began her discussion with a reference to John Steinbeck’s famous novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, which she felt highlighted the spiritual crisis of the Depression years in the US. Her focus was on the religious dimension of the economic crisis during the period 1925-35, and she discussed the Pentecostal perspective on this issue. Curtis described the 1930s as a period of spiritual decay and cosmic catastrophe. As she explains it, some Pentecostals felt that the righteous made sense of the economic and social crises of the Depression by viewing them as judgments on an apostate age. As a result, however, there was no human remedy for the problem of this human condition. A pick-up in business would not solve the nation’s problems. Accord-

ing to the Bible the moral condition of the world would continue to deteriorate ; it was too late to patch up this world. People needed to prepare for the second coming of Christ. Other Pentecostals disagreed, however. Curtis looked at the sermons of these alternative voices and saw a different perspective on the economic and social crises of the Great Depression. Some preachers saw monetary misfortunes as lessons from God ; however, they did not view the Bible's apocalyptic passages as being of primary significance. Rather, they stressed the important of the passages which stressed themes of restoration and grace and psalms of lament. They pointed out that through God's judgments people will learn righteousness. God will take care of those who trust in God. Christians ought to respond in such difficult times by giving money to missions, even at times when their resources are scarce. God's resources are unlimited ; God is not affected by the Depression. In fact however, during this period Pentecostal missionaries had trouble raising funds for missions and social work and were, indeed, adversely affected by the Depression. Pentecostal giving in general, however, increased during this era, this being seen by many as evidence of God's blessing on a spiritually mature movement. Nevertheless, missionary budgets during this period were cut.

John Butler offered concluding comments on the papers, raising some important questions as to how we can understand the value of religion in difficult times. He felt that there are no simple answers to the problem of religion in the 1930s. He remarked that history must be worked out in local circumstances if we are truly to see how religion works in society.

7) *Science and the Sacred in National History Scholarship in Prewar and Wartime Japan*

The first paper was presented by Lisa Yoshikawa and entitled "From Myth to History to Sacred History : 'Scientific' History in the Service of the Imperial Nation." Yoshikawa discussed the role of Japanese scholars in the establishment of a twentieth century archives for documents. She particularly focused on the historiographical problem of dealing with the Japanese imperial myth. Historians are called upon to separate legends from historical evidence like documents and archeological matter. She spoke of Japanese imperial resistance to accepting scientific evidence which disproved the emperor myth.

The second presentation was offered by James Mark Shields and entitled "After the Fall : Tsuji Zennosuke and the Construction of Buddhist(ic) National History." Shields spoke of Tsuji's concept of Buddhist history *vis-à-vis* a nationalist understanding of that history. Tsuji was born in 1877 and entered the historiographical department of Tokyo University in 1902. In his volume on historical documents he stated his commitment to following the scientific method in doing history. He tried to avoid conflicts between his scientific approach to history and the Japanese concept of "national history," but he was not always successful (e.g., when he praised the critics of the imperial myth). Shields points out, however, that by 1940 Tsuji himself seems to have come to support the national myth. He recognized how Japanese thought had absorbed Buddhism from India, China, and Korea, and how Japan had become the fulfillment of east Asian culture. Tsuji was supportive of

the work of Ashikaga Takeuchi largely because of the latter's Buddhist perspective. Ultimately, Tsuji seems to have come to accept the Japanese imperial myth, though his national history is that of a hybrid culture in which Buddhism has played an important role. He shows a humanitarian impulse in his support for the practice of memorializing one's enemies as well as one's own soldiers in war (*honshin byodo*). Historically, this humanitarian impulse began with the emergence of Buddhism in Japan. As Shields emphasized, the study of history is as much a study of historical effects as historical facts. He admired the work of Takeuchi because Takeuchi was a fighter who gained in mercy the longer he fought. Tsuji's humanitarian concern was Buddhist in its concern for the dead, but it did not lead to pacifism. Shields' concluding points included the following :

1. Buddhism is the foundation of Japanese humanitarianism.
2. Rituals can change hearts and minds and lead to mercy.
3. A Buddhism-inspired humanitarian spirit affected the imperial family.
4. The humanitarian spirit in Japan reached fruition during the era of the Meiji emperor.

The final presentation was made by Kiyoshi Ueda and was entitled, "Hiraizumi Kiyoshi : Sanctification of National History in Wartime Japan and Beyond." Ueda began with a short biographical statement concerning Hiraizumi, who was born in 1895, the son of a priest. The boy developed a sense of history at an early age, eventually pursuing historical studies at Tokyo University. Hiraizumi became a student of cultural history and stressed the importance of going beyond the *facts* of history to find the *truth* of history. He recognized the role of faith in history and felt that history means revival. In an article on the "Japanese spirit" Hiraizumi widely promoted this idea. Ueda points out that though Hiraizumi retained the idea of the imperial myth even after the war, he saw the concept as a kind of sentimental understanding rather than as a matter of history understood scientifically.

In his comments on the three papers, Kevin Doak spoke on the importance of considering the relationship between sacred and national histories generally.

8) *Genocide Studies : Challenges and New Directions in Teaching about Genocide*

I attended presentations by Joyce Apsel and J.D. Bowers which were followed by comments from Eric D. Weitz. Apsel opened the session with a talk on the topic, "Historic Background : Challenges and New Directions in Teaching about Genocide." She initially noted importantly that teachers and scholars in genocide studies must rely often on secondary rather than primary sources. She went on to explain that genocide studies emerged out of World War II and, of course, especially the events of the Holocaust. Since the 1990s, the floodgates of historical research on this topic have opened, as our knowledge of the genocidal arts and crimes against humanity has expanded. Apsel mentioned as sources in this regard the seminal work of Charleton Jonason, the testimonies and case studies researched by Talcott Parsons, the work of Adam Jones, and Samantha Power's illuminating research on America in the age of genocide. Apsel noted that many texts on the multi-

dimensional (dealing with the dimensions of psychology, politics, et al) subject of genocide are currently available. She offered the following as a short list of practical matters to be considered when teaching the subjects of genocide in the classroom :

1. The critical use of a syllabus, i.e., what to include and what to leave out.
2. Linking genocide to other types of violence.
3. The importance of considering where one is teaching the course.
4. The importance of teaching as opposed to preaching. Genocide should be taught as social science. Teachers should not be trying to produce activists and they should be objective in their treatment of the topic.
5. The importance of providing a theoretical framework for the topic, e.g., explaining the function of ideology in war.
6. The importance of “hands-on” projects.
7. The use of texts is to be preferred over the use of movies.
8. Students should be advised not to become numbed to the issue.
9. One should honestly face the prospect of denial by students, governments, *et al.*

J.D. Bowers followed with a discussion of “Conceptions of Genocide and Problems in Teaching.” Bowers provided listeners with an explanatory outline of his own course on genocide, offering brief discussions of six elements he includes in his course.

1. He begins with a discussion of the nature of genocide. What is it? There are different ways in which genocide can be defined. For example, one can use the United Nations’ definition ; or one can let the students develop definitions themselves and then compare their own definitions with the UN definition. Bowers stressed that the actual wording of the definition matters a great deal. He stressed the importance of the role of intentions and the views of the victims. He also pointed out that non-legal definitions may well be better than legal ones.

2. The speaker spoke of working thematically or through the use of case studies. It is also important to engage students through the story that is told about the particular genocide. For help in taking a case study approach, Bowers recommended *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* by Adam Jones.

3. Bowers spoke of the importance and treatment of topics chosen for discussion. For example, one such possibility was the topic of *resistance*. One needs to consider the role resistance has or should play. For example, what would happen if, in fact, the victims were armed? What are the political nuances involved in the different forms of resistance?

4. Teachers should be careful to distinguish between the different systems of government involved in genocidal activities.

5. Film and new media can be used, but very carefully and very infrequently.

6. The *psychology of genocide* is an important topic in genocide studies.

Eric D. Weitz concluded the session with some helpful and informative comments on the degree to which scholarship on genocide has expanded—genocide studies are no longer limited to the Holocaust. He suggested the following journals as good sources for further

study and research on the topic : 1) Genocide Studies and Prevention, and 2) The Journal of Genocide Research.

9) *An Imperial Gaze at the Sacred Myth of American Exceptionalism*

This discussion began with comments by Patricia Rogers on “How Would I Teach This [American exceptionalism] to Undergrads ?” Rogers was dealing with the period 1790 through the Civil War. She spoke of handling the different themes that achieved prominence during this period. She spoke of the development of Washington, D.C. as the center of an expanding empire and the tension between time and space. She drew upon an old theme of the decay of civilization and upon the concept of time as something that works against us, a fear expressed by Thomas Jefferson (though not shared by Alexander Hamilton). Expansion meant a coordinate increase in military might. Rogers stressed the importance of dealing with social reform movements and with ideas like DeTocqueville’s in his *Democracy in America* and Frederick Jackson Turner’s concept of the loss of the American frontier.

Timothy Roberts followed with short talk on “American Exceptionalism and Imperialism in Light of Civil War.” Roberts saw American exceptionalism as tied in with imperialism and an aversion to violent revolutions. As he explained it, because external powers were not involved in the Civil War, the era was basically insulated from anti-exceptionalist critique. Roberts suggests that in the Civil War there were two competing, imperial sections in the country, i.e., the North and the South. One key factor, however, was the absence of a standing army, a necessity for any serious development of America’s understanding of its own exceptionalism. Roberts notes that the Civil War was connected with other colonial wars of expansion. Furthermore, the North fought all its battles (with the exception of Gettysburg) on Southern soil, an interesting historical reality that presaged later American wars on the soil of other countries.

Lisa K. Jarvinen spoke next on the topic of “American Exceptionalism and Overseas Empire,” focusing primarily on the period from the Mexican War to the War of 1812. She pointed out that since the US can only be exceptional in relation to other nations, comparative studies are essential. For example, one could look at America’s exceptionalism and its relation to US policy toward and actions in Latin America. As Jarvinen pointed out, the Monroe Doctrine (1823) had a profound effect on the free and independent status of Latin American countries. The Doctrine became the basis for repeated interventions by the US in Latin America in order to prevent European designs on the hemisphere. In the case of Mexico, in the 1830s Mexico shared borders with the US. However, a dispute arose concerning the Texas territory. This led to the US war with Mexico, a war which became the basis of later acts carried out by the increasingly “exceptional” US.

The final panel member was Daniel Byrne, who offered a short talk on “The Myth of American Exceptionalism.” Byrne discussed how American leaders used rhetoric against European colonialists but undercut their own rhetoric through America’s own imperialistic activities. Indeed, America hesitated to press for decolonization. The failure to confront

the myth of America exceptionalism persisted into the Eisenhower administration of the 1950s. Hardly an opponent of colonialism, Eisenhower claimed that he sympathized with national movements, but that he also felt that these nations were not really able to rule themselves, a position supported also by England's Winston Churchill. Needless to say, nations who saw through the myth of American anti-colonialism were not impressed by the narrative of American exceptionalism.

Cary Fraser offered comments on the four presentations prior to a time of free discussion. He pointed out the dilemma of an American exceptionalism which is, at its core, nationalistic. American exceptionalism is many faceted. For example, those who believe in American exceptionalism are more likely to support American militarism ; force of arms is necessary for "exceptional" nations. In his discussion of the origin of ideas about American exceptionalism, Fraser briefly compared the American Revolution and the Haitian revolution, a helpful comparison since both came out of the Enlightenment. On the issue of slavery, for example, the American Constitution, written as it was by slaveowners, did not mention slavery, though slavery was an integral part of American life. On the other hand, the Haitian Constitution issued the proclamation that "slavery is abolished forever." In contrast to the US Constitution, the Haitian Constitution was written by ex-slaves. Fraser raised the issue of the integrity of the American revolution, asking, "Can you have a revolution of landowners ?" He also asked why American exceptionalism has been able to persist against the reality of an American life that contradicts it ? For example, at the moral heart of American exceptionalism is the heinous way in which the US disposed of the native American peoples that had lived in America before the Europeans came. The reality is that, at the heart of American ideas of liberty are found the contradictory elements of exclusion and enslavement ; or as Fraser would put it, a cognitive dissonance lies at the heart of American exceptionalism. This was recognized by Mark Twain in his article on the Philippines entitled "There Must Be Two Americas" and by Reinhold Niebuhr, who spoke of America's self-righteousness.

10) Uncovering the "Religious" in Religious History

Kathryn Lofton opened the session with a presentation on the topic, "Religious History as Religious Studies." She began with a discussion of the importance of the years, major figures, and events we select for making our own histories. She pointed out that religion has a trans-historical element that we must deal with even as we talk about the place of religion within history. She also pointed to the need to remember that the idea of collectivity is crucial for understanding religion as an historical category.

Richard Schaefer followed with a presentation on the topic, "Why is Religion Always about Something Else ?" He explained that religion is often the motivation for something else, e.g., social action projects, rather than an autonomous phenomenon (i.e., what religious people say about their own experience of religion). This reality is at the root of several problems we face as religious people, some of which Schaefer mentioned briefly, as follows :

1. Religious people often see a source for their religion as not always reliable.

2. Religious people have a vexed relationship with social science methodologies.
3. Religious people often resist the modernizing impetus of our field (history). A good source for study on this topic is Andrew White's *Battle between Science and Religion*.
4. Religious people often battle secularization in their attempts to treat large-scale narratives.
5. Religious people have to deal with the problems of confessional historiography, a legacy received from Catholicism.
6. Religious people often confront historians whose explanations, which exclude the possibility of supernatural activities, thereby compete with religious explanations.

Schaefer points out that religion's resources include sensitivities to lived experience. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that historical agents have only partial knowledge. Schaefer comments interestingly that we can err by looking at religion as producing something deep within us. He suggests, interestingly, that we need to look more at surface aspects of our experience since we cannot really reach the depths of our own experience. In short, searching for the ineffable core of our religious experience can be very problematic.

The third presenter was Mark McGarvie. His topic was "Religious History as Intellectual History." Garvie initially pointed to the important reality that historians use texts. However, Americans do not really see religion as texts, but rather as symbols, emotions, and various cultural elements. Many people are put off by doctrines and texts which are different from what they see as their Christian belief. For this reason, teachers need to teach students how to read texts, how to think about texts, and how texts can be engendered from other texts. There is a pedagogical advantage to working with texts because we can analyze them, we can emphasize that beliefs are real to the people who hold them, we can show that the text's ideas are part of the historical context in which the text arises, we can show how biblical interpretations change because religious thought changes over time, and with texts to work with we can avoid emotions and other distractions from a scholarly approach to learning. McGarvie stressed that religion serves various purposes. It is a basis for knowing and judging, for sentiments, for morals, et al. Religion is a basis for personal sentiment as well as political values. Religion tells us what we *should* do, which makes it difficult to separate religion from disciplines like politics and law. We teach religion because there is a complexity to human life which defies any monolithic structure of belief. People create religion and history, and people can use religion to combat parochial perspectives. For example, religion can show us that Christian thought has not been static over time, that religion is not void of social or political conflict, and that one cannot evaluate religion on some kind of spectrum which seeks to illuminate the difference between a *less* religious person and a *more* religious person.

The final presenter was John White, who spoke on the subject, "Using Religion to Teach History Teachers." White dealt with the cognitive work of the historian and its relation to teaching religion. He pointed out that young teachers have little understanding of

religion and often see religion as a subject to avoid. It is important, however, to encourage students to think about religious experience. To do this requires engagement with texts, and to engage with texts is to engage with the lives of other people. In this way, texts provide teachers with ways to use experience as a teaching tool.