

**7th Annual PA-NAME Conference...**  
**Religion, Spirituality, and**  
**Multiculturalism: The Forgotten**  
**Conversation**

April 15-16, 2005

(subject to change)

**Events**

Friday, April 15, 2005

4:00-8:00 Registration

Mellon Lounge, Degenstein Campus Center

4:30-6:00 **PRE-CONFERENCE INSTITUTES**

DCC Locations

Institute One: **TEACHING THE DIFFICULT ISSUES**

**Fostering Spiritual Depth and Understanding in a Multi Cultural Setting: A Proposed for-credit college course fostering personal development in a diverse classroom**

MR 1-2

Presenters: Robert Forman, The Forge Institute; Michael Schwartz, Augusta State University; and, Diana Denton, University of Waterloo in Canada

This forum will present a creative new way to foster conversations about spirituality and religion in a multicultural college classroom. We will present a holistic and non-dogmatic college course about "spiritual explorations in a multicultural setting." It integrates academic learning with processes that foster the student's own spiritual and religious development and the ability to communicate across differences. It uses the students' own growth and communication issues as part of the course's data. It is being offered for credit at four universities this year, and more next. Panelists will lead participants through a sample exercise, explore the course's implications for our schools and our society, and describe how interested faculty can learn to utilize it on their own campuses.

**We Can't Teach What We Don't Know**

MR 3

Presenters: Gloria Tansits-Wenze, and students Caitlyn Beasley, Danielle Graziano, Michelle Jones, Amie Talarico, and Valerie Venturo, University of Scranton

In this presentation, issues of cultural and religious diversity are addressed, personified, and provided various methods of resolution. The main goal of the workshop is to raise consciousness about the discrimination that is still so prevalent today. Once achieved, we hope all children can be accepted into the classroom to more fully participate in valuable unbiased learning experiences.

## **Transcending Taboos: Talking about Sexuality, Spirituality and Multiculturalism in the Classroom**

MR 4-5

Presenters: Wendy Osterndorf & Dee McNeely-Green, Stockton College of New Jersey

Incorporating the concepts of sexuality, spirituality and multiculturalism into academic curricula is laden with controversial and morally difficult issues. Reticence to teach these concepts centers on issues that are subjective, value-driven, unique, and universal. They are also very personal and sensitive issues that can raise questions and fear in faculty, students and administrators. Faculty and colleges wishing to include this conceptual trio into the curriculum must consider several issues when designing programs and courses. Do these concepts stand individually with courses designed around them, or are they woven into a theme within a course or program? Are the concepts approached holistically or philosophically, taught in a knowledge-based format or as an acquired skill? Do faculties teach this content didactically or with life and personal influences as a component of the methodology? From an administrative perspective, can these concepts be assessed for purposes of institutional accreditation?

## **Institute Two: TACKLING THE TABOOS**

### **Vive la difference?: When Sexual and Religious Diversity Get Difficult**

DCC Conference Room

Presenter: Jeff Mann, Susquehanna University

Conversations of diversity on college campuses often suggest that when we understand the differences between groups, such knowledge will encourage understanding, friendship, and inclusiveness. Such a rosy outlook may apply when the differences between groups are minimized to the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the music we prefer, but underlying the calls to “embrace difference” and “celebrate diversity” are complex and difficult realities that make meaningful diversity a worthy goal but a grueling and arduous process.

While sexual and religious diversity are often mentioned in the grab-bag of varieties of difference, their intersection rarely receives a good, hard, honest look. The session will begin by quickly defining what sexual and religious diversity entail, and then moving on to a more detailed discussion of the conflicts that arise when people with different convictions on these subjects are permitted to honestly express themselves. The focus of this discussion will be on western religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and homosexuality, although other religions and aspects of sexual ethics will be discussed as well.

### **Buddha, Mohammad, Jesus and the Goddess? Are We Making Room at the Multicultural Table for Neo-Paganism?**

SDR 1

Presenters: Rosalie Rodriguez & Terasa Prentiss, Juniata College

So much of the conversation surrounding religious diversity reflects only the systems of Abrahamic and other major world religions, like Buddhism and Hinduism. Often times other legitimate religious practices are not a part of our conversations and are grossly misunderstood. For centuries Neo-Pagan religions like Wicca, Asatru, Druidism and Goddess Worship have been demonized and much of the history surrounding them have been lost or hidden in the push towards Christianity and the media's growing fascination with them has been somewhat of a mixed blessing. Popular culture books, movies and television programs do little to really explain the inner workings of these religions – however they have sparked a thirst for understanding.

These highly individualistic religions can pose a significant challenge to traditional clergy, multicultural affairs officers and campus ministries professionals. Our focus is to answer the question – “How do we become truly inclusive when many times we are unaware of what needs there are?”- which can also extend itself into needs of a growing number of students who identify as “spiritual” versus “religious” as well as other those who subscribe to other less known religions.

## **Religion versus Spirituality: What's Happening to Our Democratic Faith?**

SDR 2-3

Presenters: Kathleen Carico & Barbara Smith, Mansfield University

How do we handle questions of difference with our students in university and K-12 public schools when those differences relate to an issue as fundamental as faith? How do we keep talking with each other across the chasm of difference when beliefs seem absolute, i.e., is there common ground? How do we maintain an attitude of faith in and respect for each other as we wrestle with issues that are as critical as how our country—therefore—our schools—will be governed? These questions will constitute the basis for a discussion that will help each of us be more effective in promoting equality, justice, and care, primary concerns of a democratic faith.

6:15-7:30      **Dinner Reception**

Pine Lawn

Dr. L. Jay Lemons, president of Susquehanna University, invites PA-NAME conference attendees to his home for a welcome reception.

8:00              **SPECIAL EVENT: Last Words**

Stretansky Concert Hall, Heilman Arts Building

*Opening Remarks by E. Elliot Seda, President, PA-NAME and Brian C. Johnson, Campus Host*

Critically acclaimed actor and playwright, Ken Carnes, presents “Last Words”: his lauded solo-play showcasing the hearts, minds, and voices of society's condemned. Carnes, a successful dramatist and avid researcher, developed this singular program by gathering facts, opinions, and stories directly from death-row inmates, whose collective persona he now adopts on-stage. Carnes portrays a man seeking redemption, utilizing a montage of quotes--sometimes, the very Last Words--of hundreds of death-row inmates. The audience takes on the role of jury, tasked with judging Carnes' story. The show concludes with an interactive discussion, wherein the audience debates, and ultimately decides, what should be done with him. This discussion typically engenders passionate dialogue on all sides of a variety of issues, including capital punishment, philosophy, religion, psychology, and politics.

“Last Words” does NOT advocate any particular opinion about the death penalty. It does serve as a powerful means of encouraging people to think about the issue, by presenting the oft-forgotten human face behind the prison walls.

Saturday, April 16

7:30-8:30 a.m. **Registration & Continental Breakfast**

Mellon Lounge

*Vendors & Exhibits Open at 8:00 a.m.*

8:25-9:25 **General Plenary Session**

DCC Theatre

**“Honoring Religion’s Place in a Multicultural Society while Respecting All Religions”**

*Introduction of Speaker by Maria Sanelli, President-Elect, PA-NAME*

Dr. Stephen Monsma, professor emeritus of political science at Pepperdine University and research fellow at Calvin College will offer the keynote address. He is the author of many books, including *Putting Faith in Partnerships: Welfare-to-Work in Four Cities* (2004); *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies* (1997); *When Sacred and Secular Mix: Religious Nonprofit Organizations and Public Money* (1996); and *Positive Neutrality: Letting Religious Freedom Ring* (1993).

## **MORNING CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**9:30-10:30**

**Driving Forces: Influential Minority Religious Figures**

MR 4-5

Presenter: Patricia Gross, University of Scranton

The purpose of this study is to engage teacher candidates and, in turn, their students in examining the influence of minority religious figures throughout history. This work-in-progress revolves around undergraduate secondary level humanities teacher candidates enrolled in a course, Reading in Secondary Schools. These students will identify writings and beliefs of minority religious figures and demonstrate how these individuals have influenced the culture and thinking of the times and places where they have lived. Students will research the extent of influence for the persons they select, collate data and create display boards to synthesize findings and to be used as teaching tools in their future student teaching experiences.

**Religious Diversity on the College Campus**

DCC Conference Room

Presenters: Tchet Dorman & Kate Fahey, Lebanon Valley College

This presentation is designed to foster discussion among students of various religious backgrounds. The central questions of the session will be: How can students share their beliefs without offending those with different beliefs? How can students encourage their college to support diversity in religion? Is taking a class about religion enough to expose

students to the religious diversity in today's world? These are the tough questions that are never asked that will be discussed in this session.

### **Holidays, Holy Days, Ceremonies and Traditions: How Our Society Pervades and Affects Practices Across Cultures Within the U.S.A**

SDR 1

Presenter: Denise Hinds-Zaami, The Pennsylvania State University

Aside from the well known capitalization of certain holy days within the Christian tradition, how have other belief systems been compromised within the context of our society due not to oppression perhaps but to lack of awareness, time, and cultural sensitivity. The pressure to become acculturated to the culture of the majority within a society, is often great when that majority group controls "time off" from work or school, and even sanctions (overt or covert) for nonconformity. This session aims to address the following questions: Are holidays really holy days anymore? Do we practice what we mean? Does a multicultural view take the impact and importance out of any specific faith practice? In our society today, is there room for a multicultural perspective? Many perspectives, one society: Does it work? Shall we combine traditions and celebrate archetypal themes? Shall we allow peoples "blank days" to take off from jobs and schools in order to celebrate in the ways they so choose? What gives strength and durability to a faith tradition? What is healthiest for peoples to be united and embracing of diversity in our future?

**9:30-11:00**

### **Reaching Out from the Center of Our Souls**

MR 3

**Presenters: Lisa Baer & Reverend David Witkovsky, Juniata College**

Contemplative spiritual practices offer us a type of spiritual experience that leads to an increased openness and appreciation of various faiths while building our trust and commitment to the practices of our own faith. This workshop is offered as a forum in which to discuss the common grounding of various contemplative practices and the opportunities they provide to create openness and dialogue among people of diverse faiths.

### **Reconciling the Reconcilable: Exploring Religiosity and Homophobic Attitudes among Catholic College Students**

MR 1-2

Presenter: Catherine Mattingly, Arcadia University

Due to our responsibility as student affairs practitioners to create campus environments that promote student development, we must be especially concerned with variables that may inhibit a safe, empowering community. Catholic affiliated institutions, intentionally or unintentionally, may not be doing this for gay and lesbian students. The study described in this presentation intended to investigate the relationship between religiosity and homophobic attitudes toward gay and lesbian college students at a Catholic affiliated institution. The findings may assist practitioners to create and maintain campus

environments that support gay and lesbian students' academic, emotional and spiritual development, free from fear and judgments.

### **Spiritual Eclecticism as a Model for Peace**

SDR 2-3

Presenters: Noel Hubler, Eric Bain-Selbo, Jeffrey W. Robbins, Lebanon Valley College and Jeff Long, Elizabethtown College

Discusses spiritual eclecticism models as alternatives to the provincialism of competing power structures, offering the potential to wrest control from traditional centers of spiritual power that depend on dogmatic authority and places the power in the hands of individual practitioners. Further, it concretely demonstrates that rival systems can be integrated for mutual benefit.

**10:00-11:00**      *Refreshments Available*

Mellon Lounge

**11:05-11:45**      **PA-NAME Meeting**

DCC Theater

Learn more about the purpose and mission of PA-NAME and the national NAME organization. Meet the officers and find out how you might become a partner in multicultural education.

**11:50-1:05**

### **Addressing Bullying & Tolerance Through Language and Performance Arts with Children's Literature that Familiarizes the Reader with Buddhist History and Philosophy**

MR 4-5

Presenter: M. LaVora Perry, Author & Publisher

Can readers with little or no personal knowledge of Buddhism gain meaningful understanding of this faith tradition by way of a non-dogmatic approach while perceiving that their own religious belief systems are respected? M. LaVora Perry, author of *Taneesha's Treasures of the Heart* (a black, urban, American Buddhist facing a bully) and *Wu-lung & I-lung* about a master calligrapher in ancient China, will lead participants in an exploration on providing fun and meaningful introductions to non-mainstream religions to students.

### **Religious Communities?: Examining the Social, Political, and Corporeal in Congregations in the Susquehanna Valley**

SDR 2-3

Presenters: Shari Jacobson and students David Antoniewicz, Rachel Beatty, Rachel Folk, Laura Hanson, Denise Hughes, Megan Janssen, Mallery Koons, Megan Lucas, Kathryn McCarron, Erin Smith, Esteban Umaña, Suzanne Veiga, Kyle Vowler, and Erin Wente, Susquehanna University

This student panel examines how religious communities in the Susquehanna Valley are constructed and come to be made meaningful to their members. When taken as a whole, what emerges from the papers is a trenchant critique of Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and profane. Instead of taking these domains as self-evident, the papers examine first, the variety of ways in which they come to be produced, and second, the ways in which the lines between them are often blurred. This is significant for social scientists curious about the ways in which "religious" ideas and practices iterate with what are often considered non-religious social formations, e.g., citizenship, gender, race, and ethnicity. By examining topics such as the role religious institutions play in the lives of new immigrants, the impact of ritual on congregants' social relationships, the use of the gendered/racialized body in religious worship and ways of knowing, and the significance of commitments to social justice when choosing a religion, this panel demonstrates that attempts to cordon off religion from other aspects of everyday life are misguided. All papers are based on original ethnographic research conducted in the following congregations: Baptist, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lutheran, Mennonite, Nazarene, Unitarian Universalist, and Wiccan.

## **The American Catholic School System: Preserving Heritage and Culture**

SDR 1

Presenter: Jeffery Cox, Millersville University

What is the role of parochial schools in a multicultural society and how might these schools be more effective in educating the next generation in the art of religious pluralism? These questions and others will be the focus of this presentation.

### **1:10-2:10 Conference Luncheon**

Evert Dining Room

### **2:15-2:40 Book Signing with Dr. Stephen Monsma & M. LaVora Perry**

Mellon

Lounge

## **AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

**2:45-4:15**

**Multi-religious and Multi-cultural Values in a Universe of Uncertainty: Using case studies to create a new "social analysis grid" in which a "win-win" approach to conflict can be applied to current religious or cultural conflicts.**

DCC Conference Room

Presenters: Norma Arnold & Rev. Robert James of Temple University (retired)

The purpose of this session is to review and examine a set of common "antinomies"-- ways in which we have set up discussions about multicultural and multi-religious futures

into "either-or" positions instead of "win-win" situations (e.g., similarity vs. difference, universal vs. individual, conflict vs. harmony, God-ordained vs. non-God-ordained, Christian vs. Jews, Muslims; Jews vs. Christians, Muslims; Muslims vs. Christians, Jews, secular vs. religious, political vs. non-political, etc.) and to create new ways of overcoming these "either-or" positions by analyzing the meaning and implications of case studies of current event situations which require careful analysis and decision-making in educational and other systems.

## **Creating Boundaries and Maintaining Openness: A View from Jewish Communal Life**

MR 1-2

Presenter: Rabbi Nina Mandel, Congregation Beth-el of Sunbury, PA,

Explores the tension between particularism and universalism in Jewish communities. The target audience will be all those interested in inter-faith dialogue work which addresses difference as well as similarity. Our discussion will include basics for understanding Judaism not simply as a religion, but as the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people. We will also look at how the concept of Jewish "chosenness" has been (mis)used in contemporary settings to both bolster and degrade communal boundaries. Participants will have the opportunity to look at traditional Jewish texts and work through a hands-on exercise based on these texts.

## **Religious Pluralism & Christian Privilege: The Road Less Traveled**

MR 4-5

Presenter: Jamie Washington, Washington Consulting Group

A recent study done in higher education revealed two of the top five issues on the minds of first-year students are spirituality and engaging effectively across difference. This session will create a space for us to begin to examine the dynamics of spiritual and religious diversity in the context of Christian privilege.

## **4:15-4:30 Closing Ceremony**

DCC Theatre

*Remarks by Tchet Dereic Dorman, Conference Planning Committee Chair and Dominic Scott, Treasurer, PA-NAME*

## **4:30-5:45 Dinner on your own.**

*(For your convenience, the Evert Dining Room is open for your all-you-care-to-eat dining pleasure at a discounted rate of \$6.25)*

## **6:00 SPECIAL EVENT: The India Children's Choir**

Stretansky Hall

The people of the Hmar tribe of northeast India were fierce headhunters. In 1910, a missionary, Watkin Roberts, sent the Gospel of John to a Hmar chief. The chief invited Roberts to come and explain the Scriptures. He went despite a ban by the British Colonial rulers, and five young tribesmen chose to follow the Lord Jesus. The converts grew in faith and became leaders of a new and growing church. Within two generations, the entire tribe was evangelized.

Headhunting stopped and "hearhunting" began. They now carry the Gospel to the corners of the globe and are the driving force behind Bibles For The World's "Billion Bible Campaign"--an ambitious effort to reach every family on earth with the Bible in the next ten years. The members of the India Children's Choir are the heirs of those who first believed.