

# IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, March 2013



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## I. Introductory Summary

Dear Colleagues

Officers and Individual Members of  
IAHR Member Societies and Affiliates

It is with best wishes from the IAHR Executive Committee that I send you this *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, March 2013* with the most important news and information on IAHR matters.

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Initially, it is my sad duty to announce that IAHR Honorary Life Member, Professor Emeritus Julien Ries passed away February 23, 2013. An obituary will be published as soon as possible in *NVMEN*.

\*

As you will all know, the IAHR Executive Committee – following the call for bids – awarded the hosting of the IAHR XXI World Congress to the *DVRW (Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft)* in collaboration with the Department of Religious Studies, the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies and the Research School “Religion” at Erfurt University.

Our German 2015 hosts have been working hard and have focused from day one on complying with this major and complicated task, and it has been a privilege and pleasure to have had the opportunity to cooperate with the local organizing committee so far.

I am thus also pleased to be able to enclose **a first circular on the IAHR 2015 XXI World Congress** in this *e-Bulletin Supplement, March 2013*, and I sincerely ask all officers to make sure that all the individual members of your association receive the circular or are directed to the (revamped) IAHR website where this circular and future announcements about the IAHR 2015 World Congress can be found.

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Likewise, it is also a pleasure to direct your attention to the upcoming BASR/EASR/IAHR Conference in Liverpool, UK, September 3-6, 2013. The conference theme is *Religion, Migration, Mutation*, and the conference venue is the Liverpool Hope University.

Below and at the relevant websites there is more information on this **IAHR Special Conference** as well as on the **IAHR Regional Conference** in Manila, the Philippines, May 16-

19, 2013 on *Healing, Belief Systems, Cultures and Religions of South and Southeast Asia*.

Here, I just want to stress the fact that the Liverpool conference also serves as the venue for the **IAHR International Committee Meeting 2013**, taking place between two consecutive quinquennial congresses. There will be several issues of importance for the IAHR and its members on the agenda, and I strongly encourage you to try your very best to send delegates to the meeting. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, *September 4, 3:00 – 6:00 pm*. An agenda and further information and material will be announced and sent to you as time draws closer to the event.

\*

One of the important items on the agenda of the meeting will be a discussion about a report and recommendations sent to the IAHR Executive Committee by a group of distinguished and dedicated IAHR members, many of whom are also IAHR Honorary Life Members and former IAHR key officers. The report, a most valuable and welcome contribution to the ongoing efforts of the Executive Committee to continuously stress, reinforce and develop the academic and scientific profile and aims of the IAHR, *inter alia* recommends that the IAHR change its name. Please find the report and its recommendations (**Recommendations of the IASR Consultation on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions**) as well as the detailed **Response by the IAHR Executive Committee to the IASR Recommendations** enclosed in two successive sections of this *e-Bulletin Supplement*.

The recommendation to change the name of the IAHR will feature as an item on the agenda for the International Committee Meeting and so will the report at large and the response from the IAHR Executive Committee. Further reflections by the IAHR Executive Committee on some of the recommendations on a restructuring of the IAHR Executive Committee, presented at the International Committee Meeting in Toronto 2010 by Prof. Jan Platvoet on behalf of the *African Association for the Study of Religions*, will also be discussed during the upcoming meeting.

\*

One of the main concerns and aims of the above-mentioned report and recommendations is the reinforcement and further development of the scientific profile and work of the IAHR. That the IAHR Executive Committee shares this concern is indicated by the fact that several of

the officers of the current Executive Committee promoted the tightening up of the academic and scientific profile that can be seen in the revised IAHR policy statement, as well as in the 2010 revised constitution, with Article 1 ending: “ The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.” This important part of the IAHR policy statement and aims was followed up in practice also at the IAHR XX World Congress in Toronto and it is now being followed up in **revised rules regarding IAHR Special and Regional Conferences.**

\*

A couple of years ago, the IAHR membership of the *Société belgo-luxembourgeoise d'histoire des religions* unfortunately had to be declared lapsed. A new Belgian association, *BABEL, Association belge pour l'étude des religions/ Belgische Associatie voor de Studie van Religies*, has now been established, and the IAHR Executive Committee has decided to recommend that it be adopted as a member of the IAHR. The Executive Committee likewise recommends the adoption of the *LSSR, Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions*, as a member of the IAHR.

However, as can be seen from the section ahead on **Membership Development**, the IAHR Executive Committee, most regrettably, has decided to declare the membership of several now former IAHR member associations lapsed. Consequently, the IAHR Executive Committee has also discussed and decided upon a **Re-admission policy following lapsed membership.**

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In an email message as of September 18, 2012, I informed all the officers of the IAHR member associations and societies as well as of the IAHR affiliates about the International Committee Meeting to take place in Liverpool. In the same email I also informed about the revised rules for recommendations for IAHR Honorary Life Membership, at the same time requesting that you considered to make any recommendations, and if you did, to send me your recommendations no later than December 1, 2012. Since this is the first implementation of the revised rules in this regard, the Executive Committee has decided to extend the deadline. The **extended deadline for recommendations for IAHR Honorary Life Membership** is April 15, 2013.

\*

Last but not least: the **IAHR website has been revamped**. You are kindly requested to visit it and you are equally welcome to send me ([t.jensen@sdu.dk](mailto:t.jensen@sdu.dk)) your comments as well as possible recommendations for additional improvements.

Respectfully yours,

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013.

## II. IAHR XXI Quinquennial World Congress 2015, Erfurt, Germany: 1<sup>st</sup> Circular

The XXI Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR, hosted by the DVRW, will take place in **Erfurt, Germany August 23-29, 2015**. The Congress theme is *Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present*:

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are constantly in processes of change. The Congress will address the processes of change, the dynamics of religions past, present, and future, on several interconnected levels of analysis and theory, namely that of the individual, community and society, practices and discourses, beliefs, and narrations.

These will be addressed within four areas:

### **Religious communities in society: Adaptation and transformation**

Embedded within complex cultures, characterized by social change and intercultural exchange, religious communities constantly adapt to their changing environments, developing practices, discourses, and institutions conceptualized as “religion”. These concepts are subject to social and cultural influences. They also shape political and economic environments. Religious traditions are invented and re-invented, imperceptibly transformed, violently reformed or emphatically defended. How, then, do religious communities and institutions adapt to cultural change? How do they affect social change? Does interreligious contact and dialogue lead to religious change? How do religious communities react to the possibilities and threats of new media? Does globalization transform public religions? To what extent do states and public law affect religions?

### **Practices and discourses: Innovation and tradition**

Founding figures, schisms and revivals characterize the dynamics of religion in past and present. Institutions develop or are dissolved. This, again, poses questions: How are religious traditions established, standardized and canonized? What are the mechanisms and agents of religious innovation? How do religious traditions repel religious change? How is sacred time and space established? Does religious individualization lead to innovation? What are the mechanisms of transformation and innovation of rituals and other practices? Do rituals create and perpetuate religious traditions? Are new religious movements or esoteric currents innovative? Does fundamentalism protect religious traditions? Does the internet lead to religious innovation? What are the dynamics of gender traditions?

### **The individual: Religiosity, spiritualities and individualization**

Individuals, too, are agents of change. Privatization, patchwork religiosity and religious deviance are not restricted to the present. Can “religiosity” or “spirituality”, popular in many contemporary self-descriptions, be used as descriptive terms of our meta-language? Under what circumstances do individuals obey or deny religious traditions? How and why do individuals converse, or gradually change their religious convictions and affiliations? How can plural religious identities or patchwork religiosities be explained, what effects do they have on religious traditions? How important are religious experiences in religions? What are individual reasons for religious deviance? How do religions control the individual? Is the privatization of religion a modern phenomenon? Do biographic developments explain individual religiosity?

### **Methodology: Representations and interpretations**

Religious change is registered and narrated by outsiders and insiders. Emic representations influence academic interpretations. Scholarly paradigms and theories are therefore as dynamic as their object. Which master narratives about religious change need to be revised? Are all religious traditions invented? What is the current status of the secularization debate? Is there some scientific value in old paradigms of religious change (e.g. decline, fall, rise, axial age)? How can theories of cultural and religious evolution be applied in historical sciences? How do new approaches in

historiography conceptualize religious change (e.g. entangled or transcultural history, postcolonial history, discourse analysis)?

Proposals for panels and papers within and across the areas outlined are welcome and may be submitted using the form on the Congress website @ [www.iahr2015.org](http://www.iahr2015.org) starting **August 1, 2013**. Proposal submission is possible through **September 15, 2014**. Registration for the Congress will open **August 2014**, the last day for registration being **June 30, 2015**.

Acceptance of proposals will be communicated by March 2015 so that visa and funding may be applied for.

Please visit the website for exact proposal and registration requirements and deadlines.

#### **About the host institutions:**

The **DVRW**, the **German Association for the Study of Religions** is a member association to the **IAHR**, the International Association for the History of Religions.



The DVRW aims to promote the academic study of religions at German universities and towards a wider public via conferences, publications, awards and workshops. Founded in 1951 as Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte, it has today more than 350 members, putting emphasis especially on the support of younger scholars. Its biannual conferences open up new fields of research to scholars from historical and contemporary, European as well as non-European fields of study. Being the national body of *Religionswissenschaft* (the Study of Religions) in Germany, the DVRW has been chosen to host the IAHR XXI Quinquennial World Congress in Erfurt, Germany, in collaboration with the Department of Religious Studies, the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies and the Research School "Religion" at Erfurt University.

The **University of Erfurt** was founded in 1379 as one of the earliest universities of Germany. Reopening its doors in 1994 with the two key research focus areas "Education" and "Religion", it offers high quality education, placing especial emphasis on interdisciplinary studies. Erfurt is one of the top German research universities for the Study of Religions, attracting internationally distinguished scholars and numerous research programs, including funding by the German Research Foundation and the European Research Council.

The city of **Erfurt**, capital of **Thuringia**, Germany, is of central importance to the history of the Protestant reformation, hosting Martin Luther in the *Augustinerkloster*, Erfurt, and at Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, where he translated the New Testament into the vernacular. Furthermore, the city in which Meister Eckhart lived and taught was a center of Christian mysticism in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and is today one of the best-preserved sites of medieval Central European Judaism (UNESCO world heritage status applied for). Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe contributed to its rich cultural heritage in music and literature at the center of Weimar classicism. At the same time, it is a paradigm for a post-socialist, de-Christianized region with a long tradition of critique of religion and secular humanism.

#### Members of the Local Organizing Committee are:

Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke, Erfurt (Congress President)  
Prof. Dr. Christoph Bochinger, Bayreuth (Congress President)  
Prof. Dr. Tim Jensen, Odense (General Secretary of the IAHR)  
Prof. Dr. Wanda Alberts, Hannover  
Prof. Dr. Martin Fuchs, Erfurt  
Prof. Dr. Vasilios Makrides, Erfurt  
Prof. Dr. Hubert Seiwert, Leipzig  
Prof. Dr. Katja Triplett, Marburg  
Prof. Dr. Katharina Waldner, Erfurt

#### The Local Organizing Team is supported by:

Dr. Elisabeth Begemann, Erfurt (Congress Coordinator)  
Dr. Bernd-Christian Otto, Erfurt

### **III. IAHR Special & Regional Conferences 2013**

**BASR Annual Conference,  
EASR Annual Conference,  
IAHR Special Conference.  
Liverpool Hope University.  
3-6 September 2013**

**The conference theme will be RELIGION, MIGRATION, MUTATION.**

The conference invites papers and panels that examine what happens to religious beliefs and practices when they are displaced, and what occurs to religions when new cultural practices interact with them. The focus on transformation is not only to be taken in connection with movements of people but panels and papers are invited that deal with the issue of mutation in the broadest sense. We invite scholars from different disciplines to participate in the conference. RELIGION, MIGRATION, MUTATION is the 12th annual conference of the EASR and the second to be organised in collaboration with the BASR.

Panels will be 2 hours long and consist of 4 speakers (papers should be no more than 25 minutes long, allowing a 20 minute discussion period). Proposals should include Panel/Papers information: title, abstract for the panel and the individual papers (150 words), any unusual IT required, list of chair, panellists, and abstracts for both the panel and the individual papers. Individual papers are welcomed.

Submission deadline: 1st June 2013

Proposed Papers and Panels should be sent to the Conference Administrator (Sara Fretheim): [frethes@hope.ac.uk](mailto:frethes@hope.ac.uk)

( For the full BASR announcement, see <http://www.basr.ac.uk/conference.htm> )



**5th SSEASR Conference  
IAHR Regional Conference  
Manila, Philippines  
May 16-19, 2013**

The full announcement from the organizers reads:

**Healing, Belief Systems, Cultures and Religions of South and Southeast Asia**

**5<sup>th</sup> SSEASR Conference, Manila, Philippines**

**May 16-19, 2013**

**A Regional Conference of the IAHR, member CIPSH under the auspices of the UNESCO**

**organised by**

**South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion (SSEASR)**

**hosted and co-organised by**

**National Museum of the Philippines**

**and**

**Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, Manila**

Bodies, made up by different elements and substances, are sites of and vehicles for the expression of our existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that the peoples of South and Southeast Asia have long expressed the belief that religious practice can facilitate (and at times, hinder) healing. The diverse beliefs systems and cultural practices of South and Southeast Asia offer many ways to reach this goal, but all reflect the premise that healing is related to spirituality. This is the philosophy of our life and belief in South and Southeast Asia. Coming under various names such as *guru*, *albularyo*, *achariya*, *sages* and *sufi*, the healers and their methods reflect the distinctive cultures of this region. Today, several healers come out to combat diseases and restore our health. However, *does this process include the treatment to our body only?* The answer is pure NO. For us, health and healing go beyond our mortal body. Healing, in this context, however, encompasses more than just the body; it also includes healing the mind, the conscience, the soul and the “essential self.” We South and Southeast Asians encompass the traditional, alternative ways and the conventional methods of healing. Our various beliefs systems and religions and cultures offer many ways to reach this goal.

This Conference covers various aspects of healing beliefs and practices in the cultures and religions of South Asia and Southeast Asia. The Philippines is a **cultural playground** of inter-ethnicity and an amalgam of hundreds of native belief systems that are spread over 7,113 islands. It is a place that displays ethnic harmony and showcases the cultural values of unity, humility, compassion, and peaceful co-existence. In an age of intolerance, religious tension, and cultural conflict, the 5<sup>th</sup> SSEASR Conference is dedicated to providing an academic platform for discussing the relationship between culture and religious healing through various scholars from all over the world.

**The National Museum of the Philippines** in collaboration with the **Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, Manila** invites you to participate in this multinational conference. This 5<sup>th</sup> SSEASR Conference has been also **declared as an IAHR Regional Conference for the year 2013**, thus attracting a large number of international experts on the subject.

Sessions and paper proposals dealing with the study of this phenomenon through various academic disciplines are invited. The papers to be submitted on the following suggested sub-themes (*but not limited to these only*) include:

- Health, Healing, and Healers in South and Southeast Asia
- Healing in South and Southeast Asian Transnational Communities
- Science and Traditional Healing Systems
- Sacred Sounds of South and Southeast Asia
- Traditional and Alternative Means of Healing
- Suffering and Penance Through the Bodily Practices
- Plants, Peoples, and Sacred Practices
- Belief Systems and Island Cultures
- Folk Christianity in South and Southeast Asia
- Pilgrimage and Spiritual Well-being
- Rites, Rituals and Sacredness in South and Southeast Asia
- Beliefs and Survival among South and Southeast Asian Diasporic Communities
- Routes as Carriers of Cultures and Religions
- Literature of Prayers and Invocations
- Indigenous Religions of South and Southeast Asia
- Festivals of the Ethnic Groups of South and Southeast Asia

*Other papers are also welcomed covering the study of any area of culture and religion in the region.*

**Note:**

The SSEASR operates under the policies and principles of the parent body International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), which seeks to promote the activities of all scholars and affiliates that contribute to the historical, social, and comparative study of religion. As such, the IAHR is the preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical and cross-cultural study of religion, past and present. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013, the Philippines celebrates the “San Isidro Labrador Festival”, the annual event for the Filipinos to respect the patron of farmer prosperity. **The festivity and watching of ritual performance and parade connected to this Festival would be our pre-Conference one day tour** for the participants. We have a 3 day -2 nights **post conference** tour to Cebu and Bohol islands( May 20-22 5pm arrival at Manila airport). Other details regarding the accommodation, the amount of registration fees and the mode of payment are on the website. For details, and registration form online filling, please visit the website [www.sseasr.org](http://www.sseasr.org) or email us at [SSEASRphilippines@yahoo.com](mailto:SSEASRphilippines@yahoo.com)

**Important Deadlines**

- **Submission of Abstract:** February 28, 2013
- **Early Registration Deadline:** till February 24, 2013
- **Last Registration Fee payment:** April 30, 2013

5<sup>th</sup> SSEASR Conference Secretariat

Telefax: +632-7313038

e-mail: [SSEASRphilippines@yahoo.com](mailto:SSEASRphilippines@yahoo.com); [fpuy@nml.ust.edu.ph](mailto:fpuy@nml.ust.edu.ph) website: [www.sseasr.org](http://www.sseasr.org)

**NB: Information on IAHR Special and Regional Conferences in 2014 will be added and issued later.**

## IV. International Committee Meeting, Liverpool, September 4, 2013

According to the IAHR By-Laws, Rule 4b, “The International Committee meets at the location and time of the quinquennial congress. In addition, the session between consecutive quinquennial congresses shall be held at the location and time of an IAHR conference.”

According to the IAHR Constitution, Article 4(b) The International Committee is composed of:

- (i) Two representatives each of the constituent national and regional societies; (ii) The Executive Committee (see below); (iii) Up to four individual members co-opted by the International Committee on the recommendation of the Executive Committee

According to Rule 3.d,

[t]he General Secretary shall notify the officers of the constituent societies/and or members of the Executive Committee concerning the date, place and provisional agenda of each session at the latest one month in advance.

Though I will send you a reminder and another formal notification with a provisional agenda for **the IAHR International Committee Meeting in Liverpool, Wednesday, September 4, 2013 3:00 – 6:00 pm**, I sincerely ask the member societies and its officers to consider appointing your two delegates to the 2013 IAHR International Committee in advance.

Likewise, I sincerely ask the IAHR affiliates and its officers, in accordance with the revised Rule c, to consider appointing a representative to attend the international Committee meeting in Liverpool.

The IAHR By-Laws, Rule 5.c reads:

The executive committee of each constituent national or regional society and association appoints no more than two representatives to each International Committee meeting. These are normally, but not necessarily, the president and secretary of the constituent society or association. In addition, each affiliated association may appoint no more than one (non-voting) representative to attend each International Committee meeting.

Please remember that the General Secretary of the IAHR shall be notified about the names of the designated representatives (By-Laws, Rule 5e), and also (Rule 5d) that “Members of the Executive Committee [...] may not serve as representatives for their constituent societies or associations at the International Committee meetings.”

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013.

## V. Recommendations of the IASR Consultation on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions

### Recommendations of the IASR Consultation on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions To the Executive Committee of The International Association for the History of Religions

Held at Aarhus University  
1-2 July, 2012

#### Introduction

The Directors of the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion (A. Khan, M. Hewitt, and D. Wiebe) accepted the responsibility for the organization and staging of the twentieth world congress of the IAHR in Toronto. In undertaking this task we encountered a wide range of questions and concerns not only about the Congress itself but also about the IAHR. We noted that similar questions and concerns about the IAHR and its significance to the establishment and growth of the scientific study of religion in the context of the modern university had been raised at previous regional and international meetings of the Association. In reviewing the concerns raised, we thought that it could be helpful to the IAHR if the Institute (IASR) were to invite scholars who have been heavily involved in IAHR affairs over the years to a conversation on the *raison d'être* and future of the IAHR - to evaluate its fundamental purpose and to assess whether it can sustain the contribution it has made to the field in the past, into the future.

We thought it best to limit the number of participants in order to ensure focused and sustained discussion of issues that might produce helpful suggestions for the Executive Committee of the IAHR to consider. We also thought that the participants, for the most part, should be thoroughly familiar with the history of the IAHR and have experience in the operations of the Executive Committee of the Association. Since three Honorary Life Members of the IAHR were going to be in Aarhus for a conference, we decided to hold the meeting at the University of Aarhus and invite a fourth Honorary Life Member and several other scholars who have been actively involved in the IAHR and have raised specific concerns about the IAHR and its various affiliations and sponsorships.

The four Honorary Life Members present were: Luther H. Martin (also Program Chair of the XXth IAHR Congress), Michael Pye, Armin Geertz, and Donald Wiebe. Given the centrality of the quinquennial congresses in the affairs of the IAHR, Christoph Bochinger, one of the co-directors of the next congress, was invited to participate. Two colleagues "at large," were invited to participate because of important concerns raised by them at recent EASR conferences. Hubert Seiwert, representing the German Association for the Study of Religion unfortunately, had to withdraw at the last moment because of urgent family matters. Panayotis Pachis (representing the Greek Association for the Study of Religion, however, was able to attend and participate in the conversation. We are grateful to Armin

Geertz for making the local arrangements necessary for this meeting, as well as to Mr. Marc Andersen for providing us with a transcript of our deliberations.

Participants were provided with several publications that have dealt with critical issues about the IAHR and its role in supporting the scientific study of religion on an international level. The booklet was entitled “A Discussion on the Future of The International Association for the History of Religions: An IASR Consultation.” In addition to the background reading material, questions of interest were suggested, and participants were invited to contribute to that list, from which an agenda was created and sent to the participants two weeks in advance of the meeting. The agenda agreed to in Aarhus included five major items:

- i) The Purpose of the IAHR
- ii) “Political Objectives” of the IAHR
- iii) The Structure and Operation of the IAHR
- iv) The Financial Viability of the IAHR
- v) The Quinquennial Congresses of the IAHR
- vi) Other Issues

## **Report**

The report provided here is a summary account of the discussion by participants. The conversations were frank but collegial, our objective being to make suggestions and recommendations to the Executive Committee of the IAHR on each of the items in the agenda that we think will make the Association stronger in and more influential on the field of the study of religion. *The report concludes with a summary of definite recommendations, matters for urgent consideration, and matters for further consideration.* We hope the Executive Committee find these to be of value and give them serious consideration.

### **1. The Purpose of the IAHR**

The title of this section of the agenda was originally stated as “The Mission of the IAHR,” but was quickly changed as we were reminded that the word “mission” may have negative connotations for many of our members. We also agreed that the phrase “religious studies” – used on the IAHR Women Scholars Network page – is not the most appropriate given the ambiguity of this use of the adjective “religious.”

It is clear from the general discussion concerning the purpose of the IAHR that all participants believe that it is an important international forum of discussion for scholars of religion and that it deserves our strongest support. The IAHR has a proud heritage in this regard, having supported associations, societies, and individuals committed to the scientific (broadly interpreted) study of religion.

First Question: *Does the IAHR need to make clearer to its national and regional associations and affiliates that the IAHR is not a forum for confessional or political concerns?*

There was considerable discussion of this issue, especially given the recent affiliation of the American Academy of Religion to the IAHR. Everyone recognized that it is not only the AAR among member associations that still “harbours” a significant number of members whose primary interests are religious and/or theological. It was therefore agreed that the IAHR may wish to keep its member organizations well informed about the primary purpose of the IAHR in supporting the scientific study of religion.

There was considerable discussion about whether the IAHR might be more effective as an organization in this respect if it moved to individual membership rather than being an association of national member associations. Everyone recognized that this had negative implications with respect to the IAHR’s membership in CIPSH, and that even if membership in CIPSH might be given up (given that financial support from that body is minimal and is likely to decline further in the future) the IAHR does not have the organizational infrastructure to be able to look after such a large membership efficiently. After lengthy discussion the matter was deferred to the following day’s discussion on the structure and operation of the IAHR.

Second Question: *Would a change of name of the Association to more clearly reflect our scientific objectives make a difference in this regard?*

There was unanimous agreement that a change of name for the Association is necessary. The current name has an illustrious and understandable history and has served the Association well for most of its history, but given developments in the multiplicity of scientific approaches adopted in the study of religions today, that name no longer represents the Association’s objectives or its membership internationally. There was not immediate agreement, however, on a new name for the Association. On day one of our discussions, two candidates for an alternative to the current name emerged: i) “The International Association for the Study of Religions” and ii) “The International Association for the Scientific Study of Religion.”

The discussion on a name change for the IAHR continued on the second day. In reviewing the first day’s discussion, especially the matter of making clear the IAHR’s concern with the non-confessional study of religion, there was “full support for recommending:

That the Executive Committee of the IAHR recommend to the International Committee a change of name from “The International Association for the History of Religions,” IAHR to “The International Association for the Scientific Study of Religions,” IASSR, to be taken to the General Assembly of the IAHR at its 2015 quinquennial world congress for approval.

Question three: *Are there ways in which the IAHR can make a strong and attractive case for the scientific study of religion?*

Given the long deliberation over the change of name for the IAHR it is clear that we think such a change of name would significantly improve its chances of making a strong case for the scientific study of religion. As with question one above, not using terminology like “mission” or “religious studies” on the website and its publications (digital or otherwise) would also help “clean up” the IAHR’s scientific image. Another small but still significant issue in this respect would be deleting the religious pictures from the webpage of the IAHR, the use of which make it hard to differentiate the IAHR page from that of the AAR and other associations that wish to deliver a somewhat ambiguous image of themselves.

It is suggested that the IAHR consider appointing an international press officer who should be in charge of press releases on the website, and who should work at getting IAHR research news into more mainstream media (e.g. the recent attention given to the research of Dimitris Xygalatas and colleagues on firewalking ceremonies around the world).

It is also suggested that the IAHR consider re-branding the IAHR journal and other publications. This would be especially important were there to be a change in name of the Association.

*Question four: Should we be “commissioning” papers and monographs on the development of the scientific studies of religion?*

Several suggestions emerged in this conversation: i) that we encourage scholars (or possibly commission scholars) to explore different aspects of the history of the IAHR (perhaps for publication in NUMEN or in an edited volume); ii) that we offer a prize to younger scholars for historical work on the history of the Association. (There was some scepticism surrounding these notions.)

## **2. “Political Objectives” of the IAHR**

The basic ideas discussed here concerned the Association’s relationship to other organizations – both to its own national member associations and societies and to external political bodies such as CIPSH.

*Question One: Does our connection to CIPSH and UNESCO still benefit the IAHR or does it impose obligations that the IAHR cannot properly discharge?*

Considerable discussion was generated by this question. The IAHR is a member of CIPSH because it is an association of national member associations and this will have some bearing, therefore, on the issue of whether the IAHR might reasonably move to individual membership (discussed in more detail under section 3 below). Most of the discussion, however, related to costs and benefits of membership: financial support from CIPSH is waning and likely to decline even more in the future, yet the costs of IAHR representatives attending CIPSH meetings will continue to rise.

There was considerable reluctance to consider pulling out of this relationship, but the participants thought it would be well for the Executive Committee to review this matter carefully, including the number of IAHR representatives attending CIPSH meetings.

*Question Two: Given the present resources of the IAHR can it realistically presume to assist and support national and regional associations around the world?*

An important issue raised here was the question as to whether the IAHR has been, or might be seen, as a missionizing (colonial) organization given that it has been actively engaged in trying to establish the scientific study of religion in national, cultural and educational contexts that are dominated by religious structures (in India, for example, and in Muslim countries). Question was also raised as to whether some of the associations are simply too small to constitute “national” bodies and suggestion was made that in such cases it might be better not to affiliate such units but encourage individual membership. On the whole, however, the participants in this discussion could not come to a general agreement and what the IAHR might best do about these issues.

*Question Three: Now that the AAR has joined the IAHR, how can the IAHR best ‘make use’ of that relationship?*

We are well aware of the fears among some members of the IAHR generated by the new association with the American Academy of Religion. Hubert Seiwert eloquently presented these at the meeting of the International Committee in 2007. It is unfortunate that he was unable to be present at this meeting to further elaborate his concerns on this matter. All participants had read and appreciated the press release by the AAR regarding its membership in the IAHR. That press release ended with the following statement: “This new way of underscoring our global connections is still in the vision stage and a number of details are still to be worked out. But I [Jack Fitzmeier, President of the AAR] think it will take shape soon, and I believe that we will have more concrete plans in a few months. If you have any ideas or thoughts on this matter, please feel free to drop me an email.”

We suggest that the Executive Committee take this statement seriously and to respond to the AAR in a fashion that will lead to a constructive cooperation between the IAHR and its objectives and the AAR.

### **3. Structure and Operation of the IAHR**

Questions raised here included issues of the size of member associations eligible for membership; whether the statements of purpose of associations asking for membership are vetted, and whether the financial viability of these associations is reviewed. Members of this consultation who served either as president or secretary general (or both) answered these questions in the affirmative and discussion moved on.

Questions were raised here about the possibility of listing membership in the IAHR, continuing the discussion of this topic on the previous day. Several alternative proposals were discussed, including a hybrid form of membership where the IAHR would still



remain an association of associations but only represent those members of national member associations who are specifically concerned with the study of religion as a scientific undertaking – listing them according to scholarly expertise. No religio-theological discipline, of course, would be included and this would clearly indicate the character of the IAHR as a scientific association of associations.

The participants in this discussion agreed to recommend to the Executive Committee of the IAHR that it give serious consideration to registering those members of national association members who are focused on scientific studies of religion upon vetting their academic profiles.

Question: *“Given the new technologies that make possible group meetings without travel, should the Executive Committee meet more often than it is currently?”*

The participants agreed to recommend that the Executive Committee of the IAHR meet more than it currently does through use of the internet, but that these meetings be complemented by some face-to-face meetings as finances permit.

The participants suggest to the Executive Committee that they undertake a thorough review of its structure and the distribution of responsibilities among its members.

#### **4. Financial Viability of the IAHR**

Although aware that the IAHR has always operated on a shoe-string budget, there was no serious concern that the IAHR is about to close its doors, so to speak. Nevertheless, it is true that the IAHR does not have sufficient funds to carry out its responsibilities efficiently or fully. It is in with this in mind that the following questions were discussed.

Question One: *Should the IAHR consider seeking “charity status” as an aid to the fund raising task?*

It was suggested that the Executive Committee look into the question of the benefits of charity status (providing some tax benefits to donors) in raising funds.

Question Two: *The following question was raised as a kind of thought experiment in which the Executive Committee itself may wish to engage; If sufficient funds were available, what projects should the IAHR undertake that would make a major difference to the field?*

Suggestions included: book donations for the academic institutions (many of them without strong collections in this field) in which scholars of national member associations function; translation projects – for major English works in the field that have not been made available as yet to scholars in non-english-speaking countries, and vice versa; possible funding of a history of the IAHR; to provide funds to support a thorough review of IAHR publications so as to provide a complete list on line for members of the IAHR.

#### **5. Quinquennial IAHR Congresses**

The quinquennial congresses have been, and still are, the major publicly visible contribution to scholarship made by the IAHR. All agreed that the publications related to the congresses have had a significant impact on the visibility of this field of study.

Concern was raised about the IAHR's sponsorship of regional conferences that are not focused primarily on scientific research on religion and particularly on conferences that have a primarily (or even secondary) religio-theological agenda. This can seriously damage the reputation, purpose and perceptions of the IAHR. The participants suggested that the Executive Committee reassess, vet, and strictly apply the criteria for sponsoring regional and special conferences.

Question was raised as to whether the world congresses ought to meet more often than every five years. After reviewing the number of other organizations sponsoring conferences (nationally and internationally) which our members attend and participate in, it seemed to us that the spacing of the IAHR world congresses is wholly appropriate.

There was agreement – with some question – that the IAHR consider sponsoring conferences with specific issues in mind such as the methodology conferences sponsored in the 1970s and 1980s.

Christoph Bochinger informed the participants of the consultation that the organizers of the next IAHR world congress had developed a title and theme for the event. His report was discussed and met with enthusiasm by all members of this consultation.

## **6. Other Issues**

No other issues were raised and the consultation was brought to a conclusion.

### **Summary of Recommendations and Matters for Consideration**

Definite recommendations will appear in bold print; matters for urgent consideration in italics, and matters for further consideration in plain type.

#### **1. Purpose of the IAHR**

**That the Executive Committee of the IAHR recommend to the International Committee a change of name from “The International Association for the History of Religions,” (IAHR) to “The International Association for the Scientific Study of Religions” (IASSR) be to be taken to the General Assembly of the IAHR at its 2015 quinquennial world congress for approval.** (If the Executive Committee agrees, it should be made clear that “scientific” is used here in the broad sense in which we all use the notion of Religionswissenschaft).

**That the IAHR revise its webpage and remove images and terminology that does not clearly express its objectives (e.g., remove images of religious groups and symbols that fail to differentiate the page from other “religious studies” sites.)**

**That the IAHR give serious consideration to re-branding (updating) its journal.**

*That the IAHR find ways of keeping national member associations well informed about the primary purpose of the IAHR as an organization committed to supporting the scientific study of religions.*

That the Executive Committee give thought to the value of appointing an international press officer in an attempt to bring our field and Association into broader recognition.

That the Executive Committee give thought to sponsoring the publication of a history of the IAHR, or articles on various aspects of the IAHR which will draw greater attention to the work of the IAHR.

## **2. “Political Objective” of the IAHR**

**That the Executive Committee review the costs/benefits of membership in CIPSH and come to a decision regarding continued membership in that body.**

*That the Executive Committee offer to work together with the AAR on helping them to develop the vision for their “global connections” project. Serious consideration of this matter by the Executive Committee may not only quiet fears some IAHR members have of the AAR’s membership in the IAHR but have positive benefits for the IAHR.*

That the Executive Committee take time to review and revise (as necessary) IAHR policies for national association memberships especially with respect to i) contextual support (academic and political) for the scientific study of religion; ii) size of the organization; iii) financial viability of the organization; iv) costs to the IAHR in providing support of the organization; and iv) any other matters deemed important by the Executive Committee.

## **3. Structure and Operation of the IAHR**

**That the Executive Committee undertake closer scrutiny of all new national and regional associations and societies (re: intellectual ethos and financial viability) requesting membership in the IAHR.**

*That the Executive Committee meet more often than it currently does through the use of the internet, but that these meetings be complemented with some face-to-face meetings as finances permit.*

That the Executive Committee give serious consideration to registering those individual members of national association members of the IAHR who are focused on scientific studies of religion on vetting their academic profiles.

#### **4. Financial Viability of the IAHR**

*That the Executive Committee look into the benefits, if any, of gaining charity status, especially re: the possibility of providing tax receipts for donations to the Association.*

There was a suggestion that the Executive Committee might consider undertaking a thought experiment in which they consider what they would do should they have a sizable *ongoing* income from a generous donation to the IAHR. Such an exercise might disclose what members consider of first and lasting importance in the activities of the IAHR.

#### **5. Quinquennial IAHR Congresses**

**That the Executive Committee find a way to alleviate the organizers of the 2015 Congress of the burden of raising and distributing financial support to those requesting aid in order to attend the Congress.**

## **VI. Response by the IAHR Executive Committee to the IASR Recommendations**

### **IASR Consultation Recommendations**

**on**

**The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions.**

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### **A Response by the IAHR Executive Committee**

To the members of the IASR Consultation on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions:

Luther H. Martin

Michael Pye,

Armin Geertz,

Donald Wiebe

Christoph Bochinger

Panayotis Pachis

**Att.** IASR Director and IAHR Honorary Life Member, Professor Donald Wiebe

Dear Colleagues:

The IASR Consultation Recommendations on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions was discussed by the IAHR Executive Committee at its annual business meeting, August 22-23, Södertörn University, Sweden.

Due to the many other items on the agenda, as well as to the importance of the matter, the Executive Committee agreed to return to the report and recommendations in 2013, allowing more time to consider the matter. It was also agreed to put the recommendations and the first and immediate response by the Executive Committee on the agenda of the IAHR International Committee Meeting in Liverpool in September 2013.

Please find below, nevertheless, the immediate reflections and preliminary responses to your report and recommendations. The responses are mainly given in relation to the

stated questions, and the responses to the final recommendations thus will mostly refer to responses given earlier in this document.

First of all, however, the Executive Committee wants to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation that the IASR took this initiative and that the invited IAHR members took the time and effort to participate. The fact that this group of distinguished, devoted, and experienced IAHR members (four IAHR Honorary Life Members, all of whom have served the IAHR for several decennia, some as key officers on the IAHR Executive Committee, some as director and academic program chair during the recent IAHR World Congress in Toronto 2010, and two IAHR members at large, the one serving for years as a Greek delegate to the International Committee, the other serving as President of the German association and co-director of the IAHR World Congress 2015 in Erfurt) got together to have a two-day discussion about the IAHR, and its future, is indeed encouraging. It goes without saying that the IAHR Executive Committee is equally devoted to continuously discussing the *raison d'être* of the IAHR and to sustaining and strengthening the contribution made by the IAHR to the field of the academic or scientific study of religions. The IAHR Executive Committee thus wholeheartedly shares the ambitions and aims of the report and the recommendations: to make the Association stronger and more influential.

#### *"1. The Purpose of the IAHR*

First Question: *Does the IAHR need to make clearer to its national and regional associations and affiliates that the IAHR is not a forum for confessional or political concerns?"*

The preliminary and very short reponse is this: Yes.

The IAHR must keep on communicating its policy and purpose to the member associations and to the individual members. And it is important that it does so effectively. The current and the previous Executive, however, has actually done quite a lot in this regard: Immediately after the IAHR 2005 XIXth World Congress in Tokyo, where concern about the academic or scientific profile of the IAHR as reflected by some panels or papers at the World Congress was expressed, the Executive Committee drafted a revised policy statement, stressing that "the IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns".

Please compare the information on the IAHR as published in the *IAHR Bulletin*, 38, March 2005, p. 80, with the information p.4 in *IAHR Bulletin*, 39, August 2010. In Toronto,

during the IAHR XXth World Congress 2010, this particular and highly important piece of information was, furthermore, integrated into the IAHR Constitution, Article 1.

IAHR member associations, not least those adopted after 2010 and those to be adopted in the future, by way of being and becoming an IAHR member association subscribe to this formulation and policy. They commit themselves to the stated vision and aims of the IAHR, and thus to cooperating with each other and the IAHR to implement the aims of the IAHR.

With the unanimous adoption in Toronto 2010, by the International Committee and the General Assembly, of the proposed amendments to the Constitution, the IAHR Executive Committee expects all members, old and new, not just to subscribe to the aforementioned IAHR principles in principle but also in practice. If they do not, then they ought reconsider their membership.

The IAHR Executive, though, cannot 'go around the world' policing and controlling that each member association or each individual member 'play according to the rules', but it can do whatever possible to encourage that they do so, and it can do so especially in regard to members who have been awarded the hosting of an IAHR Special and Regional Conference, not to speak, of course, of those hosting an IAHR World Congress.

Thus it is also a pleasure to be able to tell you that the IAHR Executive Committee at its meeting in Södertörn in Sweden in August 2012 adopted a set of revised guidelines and requirements for those hosting an IAHR Special or Regional Conference. The full text can be found at the IAHR website. Suffice it to quote this:

The right to use the IAHR-designation involves a number of conditions depending on the applicant member association or affiliate association and the event in question. But for all IAHR conferences, it is required that the hosting association should ensure that the academic program and the individual papers contribute to the general aims of the IAHR as spelled out in the IAHR Constitution, Article 1: "[...] *The IAHR [...] has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.*"

As regards the discussion on whether the IAHR should move to individual membership: The IAHR Executive is not blind to the potential benefits of individual membership. We do, however, see good reasons for not moving to individual membership: 1) We cannot see how we can find the resources to handle such a large individual membership efficiently, and 2) we do find it important to stimulate national and regional associations

which can then serve the individual members as well as help serve and support local higher education departments for the scientific study of religions.

The problem as we see it is rather this: how do we ensure that the officers responsible actually forward the IAHR information sent to them to *all* their members in an efficient way, and to what extent do they feed back to IAHR for the suggestions and concerns of individual members? So a key question to address in this regard is: How can the IAHR communicate more directly with the individual members of the various member associations?

"Second Question: Would a change of name of the Association to more clearly reflect our scientific objectives make a difference in this regard?"

The Executive Committee is in total agreement as to the importance of communicating the scientific objectives of the IAHR in every possible way, in words and acts.

Due to the limited time available for an in-depth discussion of the proposal to change the name of the Association in order to assist in communicating this objective, the Executive Committee decided to restrict its response to the following:

Though we can see a point in adjusting the name as well as other developments mentioned in the report and recommendations, we also hesitate: The Executive Committee is not convinced that a change of name can 'do the trick'. Also, the Executive Committee, well aware of the connotations linked to 'history of religions' in the US context, thinks that the IAHR has by now become a 'brand' that signals exactly this: the IAHR is the preeminent international forum for an academic, scientific study of religion(s)! We do not think most members think otherwise.

Apart from the above-mentioned additions to the policy statement and Constitution, we have also taken care in other sections of the text of the Constitution to make sure that the wording signals that the IAHR is an umbrella association for the academic, scientific study of religion that comprises a broader spectrum of approaches, *inter alia* historical, social and comparative studies of religion.

Furthermore, the recent active and fairly successful initiative to have a broad range of *associated* societies and associations devoted to special approaches and themes, also serves to help the IAHR evolve in accordance with the developments in the field of the academic, scientific study of religions.



Mention, moreover, must also be made of the fact that the tightened-up profile of the IAHR for several years has also been communicated to members and others by way of an explicit statement in each issue of NVMEN.

Consequently: The Executive Committee is hesitant, for various reasons, in regard to this proposal and recommendation. Thinking also about the Rome 1990 proposal to change the name, followed by intense discussions from 1990-1995, and then the Mexico Congress where the proposal was turned down by a majority, we think it might be more effective to focus attention - and use the limited resources we have - to pursue the aims of the IAHR and thus also implement the scientific agenda- in other ways than by way of a change of name and a long discussion *pro et contra*.

However, the IAHR Executive Committee will discuss the proposal again at its 2013 annual meeting and it will be put on the agenda for the International Committee Meeting in Liverpool 2013. If the International Committee wants to have a change of the name up for discussion and decision in 2015, then the Executive Committee will act accordingly.

*"Question three: Are there ways in which the IAHR can make a strong and attractive case for the scientific study of religion?"*

As regards the suggestions to "clean up" the IAHR's scientific image, also by way of 'cleaning up' the IAHR *website*, the Executive can respond as follows:

The IAHR General Secretary and President, together with the other members of the Executive Committee, have taken the first steps to restructure and update the IAHR website. We are in agreement that the site ought be more simple and with easier access to the most important IAHR matters; basic information about the IAHR, and *ad hoc* information and effective communication about IAHR-related news.

As for the pictures constituting what might be called examples of various kinds of data for the scientific study of religion, then these pictures most likely will be substituted by some other IAHR-related pictures. We are working on this.

We have also created an IAHR Facebook site which is growing well and providing an additional communicative and informational medium on IAHR-related matters and general news pertaining to the academic study of religion.

As for your suggestion to have an international press officer: to have a paid (professional) press officer working on behalf of the IAHR is well beyond the IAHR's means; if we were to divert IAHR funds towards employment of staff, the first priority would surely be administrative support to the Executive Committee and the General Secretary. In

principle, the IAHR does have at the present time an Internet Officer. Together with the IAHR General Secretary, and maybe also the Membership Secretary, this officer most likely was meant to perform something similar to what you propose.

It has proved to be less simple to have something like that function, and in view of the decision of the IAHR in Toronto 2010 *not* to have either an Internet Officer or a Membership Officer as of 2015, the current Internet Officer has not been asked to perform as an Internet Officer but rather as a member-at-large. The day to day updates of the website is thus (again) in the hands of the General Secretary, and due to his workload he normally does but ask the hired website administrator to execute updates of names of officers, announce news about IAHR publications, *inter alia* Proceedings, the *IAHR Bulletin*, and the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*.

The Executive Committee, not least the General Secretary, thus fully acknowledges the need to improve the website given its increasing importance as a tool of representation, information, and communication. .

As regards the "re-branding" of the IAHR journal, *NVMEN*:

*NVMEN* is no longer 'owned' by the IAHR but by Brill. Fortunately, the IAHR still has a say in regard to *NVMEN*, and fortunately Brill is willing to listen. At the meeting in Södertörn in 2012, it was decided that the IAHR logo be inserted into the issues of *NVMEN* and other image-related changes were discussed too.

However, as with the name 'IAHR': we think *NVMEN* is a 'brand', a good one, and we think *NVMEN* strikes a fairly good balance between a more classical historical-philological IAHR profile and a more innovative IAHR profile reflecting also the "developments in the multiplicity of scientific approaches" in the study of religions today. We want to strike that balance, not least because we think this is the hallmark of the IAHR and the way for the IAHR journal to have its own special identity.

It might be added that the IAHR, in conjunction with Equinox Publishing, is about to launch a new IAHR book series (after the *NVMEN Book Series* is no longer related to the IAHR), and the intention for this series is also to strike a balance.

"Question four: Should we be "commissioning" papers and monographs on the development of the scientific studies of religion?"

During the meeting with Brill in Södertörn 2012, the Brill acquisitions editor told us that she was ready to make an effort to celebrate the 60th anniversary of *NVMEN*.

Following further talks with Brill and with the two managing editors of *NVMEN*, it has been decided that Brill will accommodate the publication of a special book meant to commemorate and celebrate this event.

The Executive Committee is setting up an editorial committee headed by the General Secretary and with former prominent IAHR officers included. The plan is to include already published articles, articles that can be considered milestones and/or highly informative as regards the history, policy making and historiography of the IAHR and then to add one or two new articles. The plan is thus to highlight and provide information about the most salient aspects of the history, vision and identity of the IAHR. This will provide both a retrospective and prospective, as well as a historical resource. We believe that this publication will meet the wishes of your report and recommendations.

## **"2. "Political Objectives" of the IAHR**

*Question One: Does our connection to CIPSH and UNESCO still benefit the IAHR or does it impose obligations that the IAHR cannot properly discharge?"*

As can be seen from the 2010 report by the General Secretary and Acting Treasurer, membership of CIPSH actually did benefit the IAHR finances in the period from 2005-2010, even when the annual fees and the (very limited) expenses related to participation in CIPSH meetings are considered.

In 2012, however, we received sad news from CIPSH, news that means that we have to reconsider the membership. When discussing CIPSH and this item in your report, the Executive Committee decided to wait and see for another year at least what happens to CIPSH. We do think that CIPSH is an important international effort to help strengthen the human and social sciences, and we believe the IAHR has an obligation to be part of the CIPSH network of international associations. We also know that the very label/imprimatur of CIPSH/UNESCO remains extremely helpful to some IAHR associations in certain parts of the world when they are raising funds for conferences and publications. But as said: we are carefully monitoring developments at CIPSH, and there is no financial outlay apart from the annual fee (500€).

Finally: for many years, before and after 2005, the IAHR sent but one representative to CIPSH meetings. Only once, with the Toronto 2010 XXth World Congress in view, and for other valid reasons, did we send two delegates, namely the President and General

Secretary. And, we are certain that that was a good investment, for many reasons, and the money spent (max 2000 USD) came back in manifold ways.

*"Question Two: Given the present resources of the IAHR can it realistically presume to assist and support national and regional associations around the world?"*

Following Tokyo 2005, the Executive Committee has worked intensively not just to tighten up the academic profile (see above) but also to straighten out and improve the financial situation.

As stated time and again in recent reports from the General Secretary and Acting Treasurer to the International Committee as well as to the General Assembly, the financial situation of the IAHR has improved significantly since 2005.

At the meeting in Södertorn, August 2012, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Executive Committee presented a draft budget 2012-2020 (i.e. extending even beyond the remit of the current Executive Committee) according to which the IAHR would still have reserves of at least \$50,000 by then.

However, the balancing of this budget depends, cf. also remarks by the General Secretary in this regard in the afore-mentioned reports, very much on the 'hidden subsidy' made up of Executive Committee members' contributions, made personally or by their universities, to the travel and subsistence costs of IAHR Executive Committee meetings.

In order to have a globally representative Executive Committee, required by the Constitution but also of importance for the Executive Committee in its efforts to be informed about and in contact with the various regions and member associations, it is essential to make sure that election to the Executive Committee does not impose an impossible financial burden on the individual elected.

In addition, the IAHR increasingly needs to be able to support officers, especially the General Secretary and President, to meet their growing obligations to attend and support the work of member associations. Hence, a significant amount of IAHR's income needs to be set aside each year to fund the ordinary work of the Executive Committee.

Nevertheless, the draft budget does have room for subsidies to IAHR Special and Regional Conferences, and the draft budget mentioned here has allowed also for a substantial amount of money to help sponsor the World Congresses in 2015 and 2020.

To come back to the discussion actually reported in relation to this question: the IAHR Executive Committee is keenly aware that it does not serve the IAHR's aims to have officers travel around stimulating and assisting the establishment of potential IAHR

member associations at any price. We have several examples of associations that seem to have been too weak – in terms of number of religion scholars, finances etc – from day one, and we do not want to establish associations whose members are not subscribing to the IAHR principles. Yet, the current Executive Committee does consider it part of its remit to promote the academic study of religions by way of assisting religion scholars in efforts to create and sustain platforms for the organized scientific study of religions. We consider this to be part of the aims of the IAHR as stated in Article 1 of the Constitution.

"Question Three: *Now that the AAR has joined the IAHR, how can the IAHR best 'make use' of that relationship?"*

The IAHR Executive Committee is also "well aware of the fears among some members of the IAHR generated by the new association with the American Academy of Religion." We have therefore been very actively engaged in following up, in various ways, in writing and in meetings with the AAR leadership ever since the 2010 admittance of AAR to membership of the IAHR where the future was discussd, *inter alia*, with the incoming AAR President Ann Taves and the AAR Executive Director, Jack Fitzmier.

The General Secretary as well as the President met again with the AAR leadership at the AAR Annual Meeting in Atlanta in November 2010, among other things discussing a new plan for the scheme and work of the AAR International Committee. These discussions were followed up at a meeting between the General Secretary and AAR Executive Director at the AAR Annual Meeting in San Francisco in 2011.

In 2010, as well as in 2011, the General Secretary has had a seat in the AAR International Committee, and he has thus been engaged in the annual discussions about a restructuring of the work of the AAR International Committee. Though not in the International Committee in his capacity as General Secretary, but in his capacity as an AAR international member, the General Secretary can testify to the fact that membership of the IAHR has been a key element in the discussions. During the most recent meeting in Chicago November 2012 in the AAR International Committee, this discussion included the elected Vice-President, later to become AAR President, Tom Tweed, and one of the key issues was how best to secure a permanent link between the AAR and its International Committee and activities and the IAHR.

Also in Chicago November 2012, the President and the General Secretary had a meeting with the incoming AAR President, John Esposito, and the General Secretary also met with

AAR Executive Director, Jack Fitzmier. The General Secretary took the opportunity during the annual meeting to encourage the AAR leadership to do as most of the other IAHR member associations do, namely mention on their website as well as in their program book membership of the IAHR.

Last but not least: at the breakfast meeting for the AAR International members, the General Secretary was given the opportunity to say a few words about the IAHR and he, together with other IAHR Executive Committee members present, afterwards had talks with several members.

### **"3. Structure and Operation of the IAHR"**

"Questions raised here included issues of the size of member associations eligible for membership; whether the statements of purpose of associations asking for membership are vetted, and whether the financial viability of these associations is reviewed."

The IAHR Executive Committee confirms what the members of the consultation who served either as President or Secretary General (or both) answered.

"Questions were raised here about the possibility of listing membership in the IAHR, continuing the discussion of this topic on the previous day."

As for the response to the recommendation in this regard, see ahead.

"Question: *"Given the new technologies that make possible group meetings without travel, should the Executive Committee meet more often than it is currently?"*

As for the response to the recommendation in this regard, see below.

As for the suggestion that the IAHR "undertake a thorough review of its structure and the distribution of responsibilities among its members", the Executive Committee can only say that it did so in the term 2005-2010, and that the first result was the (adopted) new distribution of offices, with the elimination of the Membership Secretary and Internet Officer. However, the Executive Committee continues these discussions, also in regard to the proposal from the AASR in 2010 to restructure the Executive Committee. One of the most urgent matters concerns the importance of finding a way to improve electronic communication to member associations AND to individual members.

### **"4. Financial Viability of the IAHR"**

The Executive Committee first wants to direct attention to the most recent report by the General Secretary and Acting Treasurer (*IAHR Bulletin* 39, 42-45, 55-62), as well as to what has been said above in regard to item 2, question two.

*"Question One: Should the IAHR consider seeking "charity status" as an aid to the fund raising task?"*

The Executive Committee takes note of this, and it will be part of the ongoing discussions about possible means of raising new funds. The current Treasurer had however already investigated this particular matter in the context of transferring the IAHR bank accounts after 2010, and the answer is that in general charities have to be registered with the relevant tax or charity administration authorities in each tax jurisdiction (usually that means country) in which they spend or receive funds in order to reap any benefits of charitable status in those countries; moreover any changes in the names, addresses, nationalities etc. of the principal officers (such as after each quinquennial congress) would have to be amended in the registration system of each country involved. While this makes sense for large multinational bodies with a charitable purpose, it is beyond the means of the IAHR, whose Executive Committee is itself scattered in different countries, to maintain this level of engagement with tax jurisdictions worldwide.

*"Question Two: The following question was raised as a kind of thought experiment in which the Executive Committee itself may wish to engage; If sufficient funds were available, what projects should the IAHR undertake that would make a major difference to the field?"*

The response to the suggestions given in the report: the afore-mentioned plan for a special publication in honor of NVMEN and thus also of the IAHR may be in correspondence with some of the suggestions. The same goes for the planned IAHR book series. Apart from that, the Executive Committee will continue discussions about how best to use the money we actually have and to discuss also what kind of project we could undertake if we had more money. As suggested above, with sufficient funds the IAHR might well use this for administrative help which would free up Executive Committee officers, especially the General Secretary, to concentrate on improving communications in all directions among members and advancing the IAHR's profile worldwide.

## **"5. Quinquennial IAHR World Congresses"**

As regards the suggestion to "reassess, vet, and strictly apply the criteria for sponsoring regional and special conferences", please see above. The new guidelines for hosting IAHR Special and Regional Conferences constitute the most obvious response to this suggestion.

As regards the IAHR "sponsoring conferences with specific issues in mind such as the methodology conferences sponsored in the 1970s and 1980s", the Executive Committee agrees that this is a good idea to be considered and handed over also to potential hosting associations.

Turning now to the report's final "Summary of Recommendations and Matters for Consideration":

As stated initially (p.2), full responses to several concluding recommendations have been given as responses to questions raised earlier in the report by the IASR consultation. This will be indicated below, and the responses to several recommendations will therefore be brief.

In the report by the IASR consultation "definite recommendations" appear in bold print; matters for "urgent consideration" in italics, and "matters for further consideration" in plain type. The rendering below has retained that formatting. All responses appear in bold and red.

### **"1. Purpose of the IAHR**

**That the Executive Committee of the IAHR recommend to the International Committee a change of name from "The International Association for the History of Religions," (IAHR) to "The International Association for the Scientific Study of Religions" (IASSR) be taken to the General Assembly of the IAHR at its 2015 quinquennial world congress for approval. (If the Executive Committee agrees, it should be made clear that "scientific" is used here in the broad sense in which we all use the notion of Religionswissenschaft).**"

#### **Response:**

**Please see above pp. 4-5.**

**The recommendation from the IASR consultation will be put forward to the International Committee meeting in 2013 in Liverpool.**

**"That the IAHR revise its webpage and remove images and terminology that does not clearly express its objectives (e.g., remove images of religious groups and symbols that fail to differentiate the page from other "religious studies" sites.)"**



**Response:**  
**A revision is in progress. Please see above pp. 5-6.**

**"That the IAHR give serious consideration to re-branding (updating) its journal."**

**Response:**  
**In progress. Please see above pp. 6-7**

*"That the IAHR find ways of keeping national member associations well informed about the primary purpose of the IAHR as an organization committed to supporting the scientific study of religions."*

**Response:**  
**Done/In progress. Please see above pp. 2-5.**

"That Executive Committee give thought to the value of appointing an international press officer in an attempt to bring our field and Association into broader recognition."

**Response:**  
**In progress. Please see above p. 6.**

"That the Executive Committee give thought to sponsoring the publication of a history of the IAHR, or articles on various aspects of the IAHR which will draw greater attention to the work of the IAHR."

**Response:**  
**Done/In progress. Please see above, p. 7.**

## **"2. "Political Objective" of the IAHR"**

**"That the Executive Committee review the costs/benefits of membership in CIPSH and come to a decision regarding continued membership in that body."**

**Response:**  
**Done/In progress. See above, pp. 7-8.**

*"That the Executive Committee offer to work together with the AAR on helping them to develop the vision for their "global connections" project. Serious consideration of this matter by the Executive Committee may not only quiet fears some IAHR members have of the AAR's membership in the IAHR but have positive benefits for the IAHR."*

**Response:**  
**Done/In progress. See above, p. 10.**

"That the Executive Committee take time to review and revise (as necessary) IAHR policies for national association memberships especially with respect to i) contextual support (academic and political) for the scientific study of religion; ii) size of the organization; iii) financial viability of the organization; iv) costs to the IAHR in providing

support of the organization; and iv) any other matters deemed important by the Executive Committee.”

**Response:**

**Done/In progress. See above pp. 2-4; 9.**

### **”3. Structure and Operation of the IAHR”**

**”That the Executive Committee undertake closer scrutiny of all new national and regional associations and societies (re: intellectual ethos and financial viability) requesting membership in the IAHR.”**

**Response:**

**Done/In progress.**

*”That the Executive Committee meet more often than it currently does through the use of the internet, but that these meetings be complemented with some face-to-face meetings as finances permit.”*

**Response: The Executive Committee did not have time to discuss this proposal in Södertörn 2012, but it has done so on previous occasions. Two obvious problems in the use of the internet for meetings involving a global Executive Committee are (a) time differences and (b) quality of internet access. However, as of now, the Executive Committee meets two days per year, and the President and General Secretary plus quite a few other officers and members-at-large often meet in more informal ways at conferences during a year. The Executive Committee communicates about matters by email several times per year.**

”That the Executive Committee give serious consideration to registering those individual members of national association members of the IAHR who are focused on scientific studies of religion and? on vetting their academic profiles.”

**Response: The Executive Committee discussed this briefly but its immediate response was that this was not possible. As it is now we do not have lists of individual members of the member associations.**

### **”4. Financial Viability of the IAHR”**

*”That the Executive Committee look into the benefits, if any, of gaining charity status, especially re: the possibility of providing tax receipts for donations to the Association.”*

”There was a suggestion that the Executive Committee might consider undertaking a thought experiment in which they consider what they would do should they have a sizable *ongoing* income from a generous donation to the IAHR. Such an exercise might disclose what members consider of first and lasting importance in the activities of the IAHR.”

**Response:**  
**See above pp. 11-12, and 8-9.**

**"5. Quinquennial IAHR World Congresses2**

**"That the Executive Committee find a way to alleviate the organizers of the 2015 Congress of the burden of raising and distributing financial support to those requesting aid in order to attend the Congress."**

**Response:**  
**Money has been set aside for this purpose and experiences from Toronto 2010 will be shared with the German organizers and host.**

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Once again: Thanks to the IASR and the members of the consultation. Your initiative, concern, reflections, suggestions and recommendations are encouraging and stimulating.

If you do not have any objections, then your report and recommendations as well as this response will be published and sent to IAHR member associations in an *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* to be published February 2013.

On behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee

Sincerely

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General, Copenhagen, February 3, 2013

## VII. Revised Rules for IAHR Special & Regional Conferences

### Rules and Procedures for IAHR Special Conferences (updated August 2012)

The IAHR holds a world congress every five years. In between the five-year congresses, the IAHR sponsors at least one conference a year during which the Executive Committee or its officers can hold annual business meetings and the International Committee can meet (usually) triennially. Because the IAHR has increased its membership considerably, there is a growing wish among member societies to hold IAHR *special* conferences.

An IAHR *special* conference usually focuses on a *special theme* with participation by local scholars and a number of invited scholars from other countries.

An IAHR special conference is normally hosted and run by one or more constituent national or regional member associations or societies of the IAHR. An IAHR affiliate society may also be the host of an IAHR special conference.

The right to use the IAHR-designation involves a number of conditions depending on the applicant member association or affiliate association and the event in question. But for all IAHR conferences, it is required that the hosting association should ensure that the academic program and the individual papers contribute to the general aims of the IAHR as spelled out in the IAHR Constitution, Article 1: "[...]The IAHR [...] has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns."

Furthermore, it is required that attempts are made by the hosting association to cover the travel and living expenses of at least two key people from countries with weak currencies. Such people are usually members of the IAHR Executive Committee or are executives of an IAHR national society. Any participating representative of the IAHR should be allowed time to speak about the IAHR and its activities.

It is further recommended that attention be paid to gender balance in terms of speakers as well as of participants.

It is also required that the General Secretary be kept informed about developments and provided with conference programs and the address list of the participants.

Furthermore, publication of the proceedings must be consistent with the IAHR congress publication policy available <http://www.iahr.dk/congress.html>.

Three free copies of any publications resulting from the event should be provided to the IAHR General Secretary.

If the Executive Committee decides to hold its annual meeting during the event, this part of the program will need to be coordinated with the General Secretary. Other conditions are subject to negotiation.

Within two months of the event, the host of an IAHR special conference should provide the IAHR General Secretary with a brief (max. 1000 words) report on the conference suitable to be reproduced in an *IAHR Bulletin* or an *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*.

In return, the IAHR special conference organizers can expect an IAHR presence (at least one or two Executive Committee members), coverage of the event in the *IAHR Bulletin*, *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* and at the IAHR website as well as possible access to IAHR avenues of publication such as *NVMEN*

## **Rules and Procedures for IAHR Regional Conferences (Revised August 2012)**

The IAHR holds a World Congress every five years. In between the five-year congresses, the IAHR sponsors at least one conference a year during which the Executive Committee or its officers can hold annual business meetings and the International Committee can meet (usually) triennially. Because the IAHR has increased its membership considerably, there is a growing wish among member societies to hold IAHR *regional* conferences.

An IAHR *regional* conference usually focuses on a broader theme with participation by scholars from a particular *region* (for instance Scandinavia, Latin America, Africa, etc.).

An IAHR regional conference is normally hosted and run by an IAHR regional member association or society. The right to use the IAHR designation involves a number of conditions, depending on the association, the host country and the event in question.

But for all IAHR conferences, the hosting association should ensure that the academic program and the individual papers contribute to the general aims of the IAHR as spelled out in the IAHR Constitution, "Article 1: [...] *The IAHR [...] has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.*"

Furthermore, it is required that attempts are made by the hosting association to cover the travel and living expenses of at least two key people from countries with weak currencies. Such people are usually members of the IAHR Executive Committee or are executives of an IAHR regional or national member association or society. Any participating representative of the IAHR should be allowed time to speak about the IAHR and its activities.

It is further recommended that attention be paid to gender balance in terms of speakers as well as of participants.

It is also required that the General Secretary be kept informed about developments and provided with conference programs and the address list of the participants.

Furthermore, publication of the proceedings must be consistent with the IAHR congress publication policy available at <http://www.iahr.dk/congress.html> .Three free copies of any

publications resulting from the event should be provided to the IAHR General Secretary.

If the Executive Committee decides to hold its annual meeting during the event, this part of the program will need to be coordinated with the General Secretary. Other conditions are subject to negotiation.

Within two months of the event, the host of an IAHR regional conference should provide the IAHR General Secretary with a brief (max. 1000 words) report on the conference suitable to be reproduced in an *IAHR Bulletin* or an *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*.

In return, the IAHR regional conference organizers can expect an IAHR presence (at least one or two Executive Committee members), coverage of the event in the *IAHR Bulletin*, *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* and at the IAHR Website as well as possible access to IAHR avenues of publication such as *NVMEN*

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013.

## VIII. Membership Developments

According to the IAHR By-Laws, Rule 1.c.

IAHR membership or affiliation will be declared lapsed by the Executive Committee, or the International Committee, or the General Assembly, if any dues remain unpaid after six consecutive notifications within a period of 18 months. Where any dues remain unpaid for three years, the society's name will be struck from the list.

At its annual meeting in Södertörn, Sweden in August 2012, the Executive Committee decided to declare the membership of the following associations and societies lapsed:

***Asociación Cubana de Estudios sobre la Religión***

No dues paid since 1999 plus certainty that the association in question is no longer in existence.

Since no officers to contact, the membership is herewith declared lapsed

***Israel Society for the History of Religion***

No dues paid since 1999 plus no response from those persons who seemed to be in office.

Since no officers to contact, the membership is herewith declared lapsed.

***Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions***

Dues missing for several years, in spite of consecutive notifications. An email notification declaring the membership lapsed has been sent January 27, 2013 to the email addresses of persons supposed to be officers.

***Associação Portuguesa para o Estudo das Religiões/Portuguese Association for the Study of Religions***

No dues paid since the association was adopted member in 2010, and no response from the person supposed to be President to email messages. The membership has been declared lapsed in an email sent January 28, 2013 to the person supposed to be President.

\*

Fortunately, the Executive Committee has also good news in regard to membership:

At its meeting in Södertörn, August 2013, the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the adoption of the *LSSR, Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions*, as a member to the IAHR. The application from LSSR, with the

recommendation of the IAHR Executive Committee, will then be presented to the IAHR International Committee at its meeting in Liverpool September 2013. See the English speaking website of the LSSR at <http://en.religijotyra.lt>

The IAHR Executive Committee, furthermore, also unanimously, has agreed to recommend the adoption of the new Belgian association, the *BABEL, Association belge pour l'étude des religions/ Belgische Associatie voor de Studie van Religies*, as a member to the IAHR. The application from BABEL, with the recommendation of the IAHR Executive Committee, will then be presented to the IAHR International Committee at its meeting in Liverpool September 2013.

See the website at <http://www.babel-religions.be>

Mention may also be made of further talks and email communications as regards possible cooperation with a representative from the *Asociation de Cientistas Sociales de la Religion del Mercosur* (ACSRM) (see <http://www.acsr.org>), and communication with Cuban scholars as regards a possible new Cuban association is ongoing. Hopefully, the result of these communications can be reported to the IAHR International Committee in September 2013 in Liverpool.

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013.



## IX. Re-admission Policy Following Lapsed Membership

Following the most recent (Toronto 2010) revised Rules of Procedure as regards membership, especially Rule 1c, according to which

IAHR membership or affiliation will be declared lapsed by the Executive Committee, or the International Committee, or the General Assembly, if any dues remain unpaid after six consecutive notifications within a period of 18 months. Where any dues remain unpaid for three years, the society's name will be struck from the list.

The IAHR Executive Committee has since then decided to declare the membership of some member associations lapsed. At the same, however, the Executive Committee also considers it apt to have a policy for re-admission to the IAHR, and the Executive Committee at its annual business meeting in Södertörn, Sweden, August 2012, agreed on the following re-admission policy:

In cases where the lapsed membership is due e.g. to the member association unilaterally withdrawing from IAHR, or a member association becoming gradually defunct through lack of membership/activity or similar circumstances, it is appropriate for the IAHR to adopt a 'case by case' approach to re-admission. As a general rule, the IAHR would encourage re-admission in such cases without regard to 'missing' dues.

However, where the Executive Committee has itself declared an association's membership lapsed under IAHR Rules as a consequence of persistent non-payment of annual dues (which constitutes a significant financial debt owing to IAHR), re-admission will normally require payment of the missing dues, as follows:

- the Executive Committee may consider re-admission at any time on certified receipt of full payment of the missing dues.
- where an association seeks re-admission to IAHR without paying any of the unpaid dues, the application will not normally be considered until five years after the association's membership was declared lapsed.
- At its discretion, the IAHR Executive Committee may accept certified part-payment of unpaid dues (the amount to be determined by the Executive Committee) to facilitate re-admission of a lapsed association before five years has passed.

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,

Copenhagen, March 2013

## **X. Deadline for Recommendations for IAHR Honorary Life Membership Extended**

As can be seen from the relevant IAHR rules , "The International Committee of the IAHR decided at its meeting in Toronto on August 18, 2010 that recommendations for honorary life membership should be presented to the International Committee at its meetings during quinquennial congresses *and* in between two consecutive congresses." (Italics Tim Jensen).

According to the same rules, the IAHR constituent member societies and associations can suggest one or two names and the Executive Committee up to three names. These names will then be forwarded to the Advisory Committee, which will choose up to three names. The General Secretary will then present their recommendation to the International Committee at its meeting in Liverpool 2013.

Following the appointment of an Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee 2010-2015, with the IAHR Honorary Life Members Professor Giulia S. Gasparro, Professor Yolotl Torres Gonzales, and Professor Armin W. Geertz as its members, I informed (e-mail message as of September 18, 2012) about the revised rules, at the same time requesting that the IAHR member associations and societies considered to make recommendations, - and to send me such recommendations no later than December 1, 2012.

Since this is the first implementation of the revised rules, the Executive Committee has decided to extend the deadline. The **extended deadline for recommendations for IAHR Honorary Life Membership** is April 15, 2013. In case you submit suggestions and one or two names, please accompany your suggested name(s) with 3-5 lines of recommendation.

As can be seen from the rules, "honorary life memberships can be conferred on senior scholars who have distinguished themselves through life-long service to the

history of religions through their scholarship, regular participation in IAHR conferences, service as national or international officers and/or other outstanding contributions.”

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013

## **XI. IAHR Website Updated**

This *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* was originally meant to be issued in February. One reason for the 'delay' was my wish to be able to upload it on the updated IAHR website – and to be able to direct you and your attention to the 'new' website, [www.iahr.dk](http://www.iahr.dk)

It is my hope that you will find the updated website useful and easier to navigate than the previous one. The new one has been so designed in order to work equally well on the different platforms, computers, tablets and smartphones. If you connect to it via these different platforms, you will discover that it adapts itself automatically to the various platforms.

Please check carefully the information provided on your association and its current President, Secretary and Treasurer: is the information given correct? Do you want to change or add to the information on your association? Is there a journal or a website that is not listed? Please also feel free to report to me if you detect broken links or other problems.

I want to thank the IAHR web-master Jeremy Hughes for his patience with my amateur questions and queries and for his willingness to try his best to combine his ideas and ideals with the needs I have as IAHR General Secretary.

Thanks also to the President, Prof. Hackett, for her input and ideas. *Inter alia* her idea to insert a link to photos from IAHR congresses and conferences.

Please do not hesitate to assist us in our efforts to continuously improve the functionality of the website.

Tim Jensen, IAHR Secretary General,  
Copenhagen, March 2013