

**American Society of Church History
2017 Council Reports**

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President's Report

The year 2017 has been a season of transition and growth for ASCH in terms of: 1) Staffing, 2) Conferences; 3) Governance; 4) Diversity.

1) Staffing

ASCH's Executive Secretary Keith Francis submitted his resignation, effective December 31, 2016. The presidential team recruited Caleb Maskell as Executive Secretary; Bryan Bademan as Assistant Secretary for Finances; and Andrew Hansen as Assistant Secretary for Membership, with Matt King as Webmaster/Digital Content Supervisor. This expanded leadership team stepped into their new roles at the January 2017 annual meeting in Denver. Over the past year, they have done outstanding work, bringing enhanced clarity to ASCH finances, membership records, communication, and internet presence. They have one additional year in their current appointment; ASCH's incoming president, Ralph Keen, will oversee a search during 2018.

2) Conferences

ASCH has navigated a shifting relationship with the AHA, following lengthy negotiations in 2016. We remain affiliated and continue to encourage co-sponsored annual meeting sessions, but ASCH is now hosting independent meetings next door to, rather than as part of, the AHA annual meeting. We were able to negotiate excellent hotel contracts in Washington D.C. (2018) and Chicago (2019); we obtained sleeping room rates lower than AHA could offer and free meeting room space (including space for our own book exhibit), within a few minutes' walk of AHA headquarters' hotels. So far our budget seems to be on track. Our schedule still mirrors that of the AHA, facilitating joint participation by those who desire it, without burdening others with paying dual registration fees. We will continue to evaluate whether this meeting model should continue, but most indications to date are favorable.

In 2015, ASCH signed a hotel contract for a spring meeting to be held in Berkeley in April 2017. This hotel contract was unfavorable. Through aggressive management and assistance from ACHA, we held a successful conference that did not lose money. The experience has, however, made us more cautious about arrangements for future spring meetings. Such meetings, if resumed, should involve written partnership commitments from another institution and/or society willing to assume or share risk; care should be taken in negotiating contracts for affordable hotel rooms (closer to \$120/night than \$219/night, with conservative block sizes).

3) Governance

At the January 2018 business meeting, ASCH membership will vote on a new Constitution and By-laws, which were discussed at the January 2017 business meeting, with feedback invited in the following months. These new governance documents should greatly enhance transparency and democratic processes in the Society.

4) Diversity

As we approach Philip Schaff's 200th birthday (January 2019), ASCH both celebrates past achievements, and looks forward to developing a more expansive and inclusive vision of "Church History" in the twenty-first century. As part of this effort, in 2017, we launched two ad hoc committees on International Scholars (chaired by Jehu Hanciles) and Diversity in the U.S. (chaired by Paul Lim) to advise Council on practical steps that we can take as a Society to

encourage and support a wider range of scholarship and to make ASCH hospitable to a wider range of members; the first of these committees has already prepared its report, which will be discussed by Council in 2018. The Nominations Committee for 2017 has been working, and the Personnel Committee for 2018, will continue to work to make complementary changes on the level of leadership; under the new governance documents, members of the Society may nominate candidates for President and Council, and the membership will be encouraged to select among multiple candidates. The January 2018 ASCH luncheon will not only celebrate eight prizewinners—some well-known scholars and others at the beginning of their promising careers—but also cast vision for the future. We will invite a public conversation, starting with reflections from Paul Lim (Diversity Committee—“Facilitating Participation by a Wider Spectrum of Scholars), Sylvester Johnson (Program Policy Committee—“Broadening Our Range with Multi-Year Interest Groups”), and Daniel Ramirez (ASCH Council—“Producing Knowledge by Thinking Globally”). We anticipate challenges along our path, but we are committed to walking out our broadening vision.

Executive Secretary's Report

2017 has been a good year for ASCH. The secretarial team (myself, along with my colleagues Bryan Bademan, Assistant Secretary for Finance, and Andrew Hansen, Assistant Secretary for Membership) has been able to establish the society on a much firmer footing for both day-to-day operations and future leadership in the field of the history of Christianity.

Where We Are Today

Finances

As the report of the Finance Committee attests, we have developed fresh clarity around the ASCH's financial situation, both in terms of annual budgets and endowments. We presently stand in a strong financial position, both in terms of cash and in terms of transparency. Many thanks to Bryan Bademan for ably leading the charge in this area.

Membership

We have implemented a new online system for maintaining membership, paying annual dues, and registering for meetings. This has been a labor-intensive work, but has been quite successful, resulting in what we expect will be higher than average membership renewals. Many thanks to Andrew Hansen for ably leading the charge in this area.

Website / Email Communications

We have overhauled the ASCH email communications system, and rebuilt the ASCH website. We have sought to make each attractive and easy to use. We have also focused a good deal of energy on using these vehicles to communicate the mission of the society, as they are the primary point of public interaction with ASCH.

Book Prizes

We have worked hard, along with Anne Blue Wills and the Research and Prizes Committee, to bring the ASCH book prize awards back onto their proper schedule. Awarding these prizes is a very important part of the work that our society does, and we are very pleased to be able to celebrate the awarding of *eight* prizes this year, to some very worthy and very diverse books and essays. We look forward to a simpler year in 2018.

We have also begun to shape a strategy, in conversation with Bryan Bademan and the Council, for increasing the cash value of our book prize awards, as well as for more deliberately using our prizes to advance the mission of the society.

Research Awards

Early in the new year, pending Council approval, we expect to start offering two awards for graduate student research – one in memory of John F. Wilson, and another yet to be named. The amounts of these awards will be minimum \$1000. Pending Council approval, these prizes will be administered by the GS/IS committee. These prizes will help to demonstrate ASCH's commitment to fostering new scholarship. It is our hope that these prizes will also help to further ASCH's commitment to scholarship in a diversity of fields. Finally, it is our hope that ASCH

will be able to leverage these prizes to promote future fundraising campaigns for endowing similar awards.

Travel Grants

Beginning in the new year, pending Council approval, we expect to begin to offer a number of partial stipends for travel to the Winter Meeting, administered by the Program Committee.

2018 Winter Meeting

We have higher than usual registrations – we will certainly be over 300 by the beginning of the conference. In itself this is encouraging. The roughly \$40,000 in gross revenue from the conference allows us to put on a nice reception, underwrite the Prize Awards Lunch / Conversation, provide tea and coffee service throughout the conference, record high-quality video of some key moments, and more. While we will need to assess this after the fact, we expect that all this will add up to a win for the mission of the society.

The Program Committee has worked hard to put together a high-quality program. See Ralph Keen's report from the Program Committee for some reflections on the process, and his recommendation that ASCH license some conference management software. I certainly support this idea.

2019 Winter Meeting

We have secured a favorable contract for the 2019 Winter Meeting in Chicago, IL.

ACLS

We have had a limited in-person relationship with ACLS in 2017. However, we have interacted extensively with the CEOs of a wide variety of peer organizations on the (very useful) ACLS online discussion group.

In 2018, we will begin to attend ACLS meetings in-person once again. ASCH has two representatives at an ACLS meeting – a CEO and a Delegate. I will attend as the CEO. Elesha Coffman has been appointed to replace Charles Lippy as the Society's Delegate to the ACLS, for a five year term. Elesha will begin reporting on the ASCH/ACLS relationship at future Annual Meetings.

Where We Are Going

There is room for improvement in just about all of the categories listed above. In pushing forward on these areas, we have learned a lot about the inner workings and about the potential of ASCH. In each of them, we will continue to build and adjust in line with the mission of ASCH.

Furthermore, I think that ASCH is facing two mission-critical issues as we head into 2018.

- 1) Disciplinary and Demographic Diversity in North American Context
- 2) Supporting International Scholarship in Church History

Candy Brown's President's Report touches on both these things. I simply want to add my voice to the mix by saying that I think we *must* intentionally attend to these matters as we move forward into 2018.

The *ad hoc* committees on International Scholars and on Diversity have begun to do very good work. In 2018, I would like to see ASCH begin to make some structural changes that reflect our mission and commitment to be a hospitable intellectual home for a community of scholars studying the history of Christianity in all of its diversity, complexity, and significance. I think these changes should reflect the policies that guide how we put together conference programs, the way we undertake the work of outreach for the society, the way we structure our publication strategy, and so on.

After a year of transition, discovery, and experimentation, I am genuinely encouraged about the future of ASCH. At the risk of sounding utopian, let's work together to help to build the future that we want to see for our field.

Respectfully submitted,

Caleb Maskell
Executive Secretary

Nominating Committee Report

This year in my capacity as ASCH Past President, I have had the privilege of working with an excellent Nominating Committee made up of outgoing Council members Paul Lim, David Holland, Heather Vacek, Spencer Fluhman, and Valerie Cooper. (Valerie Cooper stepped away from the work of the NC after a few months owing to commitments and obligations at Duke Divinity School.) Anne Wills also did much of the work in re-staffing the ASCH Research & Prize Committee. In an effort to pave the way for the new ASCH Constitution and By-laws, which call for a new and more open nominating process, we worked collaboratively and in conversation with various ASCH members to produce a slate of outstanding nominees. We also made every effort to nominate scholars who have been underrepresented in ASCH leadership and membership. During our work together one of our members put a very important question to us: “Is ASCH committed to diversity?” We have wished to reply to this question with a resounding, “yes,” and we have called on the ASCH leadership to join us in this affirmative response. (The leadership has responded very positively.) We are most pleased with the high caliber of scholars who have agreed to serve as President-Elect and on Council and various committees. (N.B. As Paul Lim’s name rose to the top of our list of possible President-Elect nominees, which took place without his knowledge, I worked with the remaining NC members to settle on offering him the position. Paul was not involved in this part of the nominating process for President-Elect.)

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Rittgers, ASCH Past-President

2018 ASCH Nominations

President-Elect:

1. Paul Lim, Vanderbilt

Council:

1. Matthew Bowman, Henderson State University
2. Andrea Turpin, Baylor
3. David C. Kirkpatrick, Florida State
4. Max Mueller, University of Nebraska at Lincoln
5. Lerone Martin, Washington University of St. Louis

Membership:

1. Tamara Lewis, SMU
2. Adam Bond, Virginia Union University

Finance:

1. Peter Choi, Newbigin House of Studies
2. Esther Chung-Kim, Claremont McKenna

Investment:

1. Bruce Hindmarsh, Regent College

Program Policy:

1. Mandy McMichael, Baylor
2. Meredith Riedel, Duke (will begin in May)

GS and IS Awards:

1. Elizabeth Jemison, Clemson
2. Helen Jin Kim, Emory

Current membership and service terms of ASCH Research & Prize Committee
REVISED 23 April 2017

Serving through Dec. 2017

- Todd Berzon, Bowdoin College (one year)
- Anne Blue Wills, Davidson College (additional year)
- Ray F. Kibler III, Independent Scholar (one year)
- Christine Shepardson, University of Tennessee (additional year)
- Dan Vaca, Brown University (one year)
- Peter Yoder, Berry College (one year)

Rolling off in Jan. 2018

- Andrew Finstuen, Boise State University (additional year)

Rolling off in Jan. 2019

- Ellie Gebarowski-Shafer, Middlebury College
- Horace Means, Independent Scholar
- Willemien Otten, University of Chicago Divinity School

Rolling off in Jan. 2020

- Peggy Bendroth, Congregational Library & Archives
- Maria Doerfler, Yale University
- Susan Schreiner, University of Chicago Divinity School

Rolling off in Jan. 2021 (New Nominations)

- *Robert Elder, Valparaiso University
- *Beth Kreitzer, Marymount California University
- Jennifer McNutt, Wheaton College

*Serving an additional year 2017; regular term begins 2018-2021.

Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture
Editors' Report
January 2017

Current Status

Issue 86:4 (December 2017), a special issue of *Church History* devoted to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, is in the process of being distributed. Manuscript and book review decisions have been completed and copyediting is well underway for 87:1 (March 2018). Our book review editors have compiled many of the reviews for 87:2 (June 2018) and the manuscripts have been selected for this issue. We currently have a comfortable backlog of accepted articles for the coming year.

Journal Activities Report as of December 2017

Issues 86:1–86:4 contain 1,207 pages—a considerable increase from the 899 pages of 2016. In 2017, the journal published 24 articles: 1 on ancient Christianity, 2 on medieval topics, 12 on Reformation and early modern issues (including the 6 solicited for the special edition), 3 on modern Europe, 5 on North American topics, and 1 on an African topic. Between January and September (issues 86:1–86:3), *Church History* received around 330 books from publishers and printed 177 book reviews and book notes—an increase of 56 over 2016—despite that issue 86:4 did not contain any reviews. The journal also printed 12 full-page advertisements in issues 86:1–86:4.

In 2017, *Church History* received 119 submitted manuscripts (including new, unsolicited manuscripts and resubmissions). This number is up from last year when the journal received 106 manuscripts. Of these, 11 addressed topics in ancient Christianity, 17 focused on medieval European topics, 14 examined Reformation and early modern issues, 16 dealt with modern Europe, 36 were on North American topics, 2 addressed Latin America, 9 were on Asian issues, 5 dealt with Africa, and 7 focused on theological or international studies. Additionally, 6 manuscripts were solicited for the special Reformation issue. Of the 119 manuscripts received in 2017, the editors have made final decisions on 65 while 52 are still under consideration and 2 have been withdrawn. Of the decisions made on these 65 manuscripts, 18 were (ultimately) accepted, 12 have been returned for revision and re-submission, and 35 were rejected. Authors living outside of the United States submitted 47 manuscripts (39.5% of the total), representing an increase from the 38 received in 2016. The international submissions came from:

Australia
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Chile
China
Denmark
Finland
Georgia
Germany
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland
Indonesia
Israel
Italy
Japan
Kuwait
The Netherlands
Nigeria
Pakistan
Poland
Romania
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
South Africa
South Korea
Sweden
The United Kingdom

The editors received several nominations for the 2017 Mead Prize. They have chosen to award the prize to Elise Leal (Baylor) for her article “ ‘All Our Children May be Taught of God’: Sunday Schools and the Roles of Childhood and Youth in Creating Evangelical Benevolence.” The article will be published in the upcoming September or December issue of the journal. Congratulations to Elise!

2017 found the journal staff traversing a steep learning curve. Some months after we formally took the helm in August 1, 2016, we were informed that the journal was running as many as three months behind CUP’s 2017 production schedule. Since then our copyeditor, Jessica Farrell, has been working urgently to get back on schedule. After slight delays in the release dates of 86:1-86:3, we were pushing to have the special Reformation issue released by the end December—at the very latest. As of the writing of this (12/26), the issue has been posted electronically and slated for printing and, with any luck, will be printed and distributed by the end of the year. We live in hope. Thanks to Jessica Farrell, the editors (particularly Euan Cameron and Andrea Sterk), the contributing authors, and the cooperation of the production staff at CUP for making the special issue a highly successful endeavor.

The special issue, “Material Culture in the Reformation: Art, Objects, and Ideas,” features six articles of contributors from the U.S., the U.K., Germany, and Denmark with an introduction by Euan Cameron. These works are distinctive reflections on the impact of the Reformation (principally but not exclusively the Lutheran Reformation) on the arts and the physical and material culture of religion in the early modern period. ASCH members will get their usual electronic and/or hard copy of the issue, but we have also asked Cambridge to print 1500 additional copies and to market the issue separately at key conferences in the coming year—beginning with the AHA & ASCH in January. It is our hope that the special issue will be good publicity for the society as well as for the journal, so please consider bringing this important work to the attention of your Reformation/early modern colleagues.

Despite not featuring reviews in the special issue, our plan to increase the number of book reviews to around 200 per year—up from the 120 or so in the past few volumes—was very nearly accomplished. Part of this success is due to the generous, continued assistance of Jon Butler, who has volunteered his time to work alongside Andrea Sterk with the book review editorial assistants facilitating the choice of appropriate reviewers for the breadth of topics covered in the journal. We are also continuing to interview authors and feature upcoming articles on the blog (see below).

Webmaster/Digital Content Supervisor Report (Matt King)

The ASCH’s new website is up and running. It features a reliable database and interface that is easily navigable without knowledge of HTML/CSS/Java. The website is built through Wordpress and NeonCRM, which ensures that there are professional engineers able to assist us with the website should any major problems arise. The content of the website is largely the same as the previous site but I am happy to make changes to it per any requests.

The “History of Christianity Blog” has received a facelift alongside the renovation of the ASCH website. It is now found under the “News” tab on the website and, consequently, the content of the blog has changed substantially. Despite a sustained effort from Joshua Caleb Smith (a graduate student at Baylor) and me, the ASCH blog was unable to attract a cohort of people to produce regular content for the ASCH. Two contributors wrote pieces about why historians of the Church should blog, but no one else has taken up the call to contribute. Unless the ASCH can offer incentives for people to blog, I don’t think it is viable to expect that the blog will feature weekly articles about subjects relating to the ASCH. Because of this reality, I recommend that we change the way the blog functions. Instead of putting out occasional think-pieces about academia, Christianity, and other pieces relating to the ASCH (there are frankly a number of these already), I think the blog should function as a newsfeed for fellowships, jobs, and other news relevant to the ASCH and its members. In addition to this, I plan to continue conducting interviews with authors of *Church History* articles and posting them to the blog.

Outside of the blog, ASCH's social media presence continues to grow. In the last year, our presence on Twitter has increased substantially from 1,452 followers to 1,763 followers. Although the word-count limit on tweets limits the potential for substantial scholarly engagement with individuals and organizations, the ASCH Twitter account remains our most popular tool for connecting people to our other social media platforms, specifically our blog. As of December 16th, ASCH's Facebook page has 1,480 followers and 1,414 likes, which is up from 1,390 followers and 1,414 likes in December 2016. These numbers continue to grow as we produce new content and keep readers informed about relevant scholarly opportunities relating to the ASCH. Our posts on Facebook that receive the most attention (over 3,000 viewers) are those that pertain to *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. The demographics of our readers on Facebook are similar to last year. 72% of our followers are male, 67% most of our followers are American, and the majority of our followers are between 25 and 44 years of age.

Membership Committee Report

This year the membership committee sought to address the issue of graduate student recruitment and retention. The ASCH offers free memberships to graduate students (2 years) and then discounted rates for years following, but the conversion rate of free members to paying members has historically been low.

Currently, the ASCH had 935 members (2017) and 963 (for 2018) as of December 16. Of those approximately 18% of the 2017 memberships were graduate student members who paid no membership dues, but still received a free in-print subscription. New software has allowed for far more in depth statistics than are available for previous years.

This year the membership committee proposed the resurrection (with slight modifications) of a networking opportunity. This would pair graduate students and early career scholars with some of the ASCH's more senior scholars for coffee. The cost of this event was fully born by the ASCH general budget. In all, 47 students and twenty-two senior scholars had agreed to participate by the January 1 deadline. The final numbers will be recorded in the membership committee meeting minutes. This opportunity aimed to connect junior scholars more closely to the ASCH by creating bonds of friendship and making them aware—from the mouths of established scholars—of the benefits of membership.

Other proposed ideas included a funded reception for graduate students (ASCH has also done this in the past). The budget was not there this year, but it is worth attempting in the future.

It is also worth noting that for 2017 the ASCH moved to a system of membership fees that was based on income which will presumably have some impact on revenue and membership and we will watch for changes in 2019.

The importance of transitioning graduate students from free memberships to paid ones has been discussed for several years and the challenge is worth continued study and conversation. While the ASCH would not want to discourage anyone from participating and therefore becoming engaged with the society, we should pay close attention to the number of graduate students who transition directly to being paying members. Is there typically a gap? Typically no transition? It is also worth considering automatically renewing memberships that carry a \$5 fee reduction. The goal would be to encourage people to act with the expectation that they will have a continued relationship with the ASCH, not one contingent on desire save money at the next conference registration.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Schneider *for the ASCH membership committee*

Report from the Research and Prize Committee for the Winter Meeting of the ASCH Washington, D.C., January 2018

Committee Members: Peggy Bendroth, Todd Berzon, Maria Doerfler, Robert (Bob) Elder, Andrew Finstuen, Ellie Gebarowski-Shafer, Ray Kibler III, Beth Kreitzer, Horace Means, Willemien Otten, Susan Schreiner, Christine (Tina) Shepardson, Daniel Vaca, Anne Blue Wills (chair), Peter Yoder

During 2017, in order to catch up from a period of disarray in the prize process, an expanded committee selected recipients for four book prizes and one essay prize. All books nominated for prizes over the past several years have now been considered. In order to address the backlog of awards, some temporary members joined the committee for 2017 only; two new members began their terms one year early.

Despite the challenges of a very full docket, all committee members served with exemplary dedication. The chair deeply appreciates their patience, expertise, wisdom, and good faith. Special thanks to those new members who started their terms early – Bob Elder and Beth Kreitzer; to those temporary members who helped with the prize backlog – Todd Berzon, Ray Kibler III, Dan Vaca, and Peter Yoder; and to those who served an additional year on their completed 3-year terms – Andrew Finstuen and Tina Shepardson. The chair also wishes to thank Willemien Otten, who has generously agreed to chair the committee in 2018.

The committee's work in 2017 was made much easier by Caleb Maskell, executive secretary, whose calm focus and organizational skills are unsurpassed. This committee can award prizes only when it has nominated texts in hand in a timely manner. Caleb made sure that even this expanded committee had all necessary books in plenty of time for careful reading and deliberation. Andrew Hansen, assistant secretary for membership, also assisted the chair in confirming ASCH membership for all nominated authors.

Now, for the prizes; quoted material comes from committee members' comments:

The **2015 Philip Schaff Prize** for the best church history book by a North American scholar is awarded to John W. O'Malley for his book, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, published by Belknap/Harvard (2013). O'Malley created a refreshing narrative, accessible to a variety of readers from scholars and students to lay people interested in the Council of Trent. The lively account benefits mightily from O'Malley's familiarity with his sources, and makes a significant contribution to the discipline as the first single-volume history of the Council; only two volumes of the authoritative four-volume account have been translated into English. The committee gives honorable mention to: Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Belknap/Harvard, 2014); and Derek Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium* (Penn, 2014).

The **2016 Albert C. Outler Prize** for the best book-length work in ecumenical church history goes to E. M. (Emily) Rose for her book, *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe*, published by Oxford University Press (2015). This "fascinating" book focuses on the title figure, around whose twelfth-century mutilation and

murder grew a story accusing Jews of ritually killing Christian children. Rose contextualizes William's death and shows how events such as the failed Second Crusade boosted its significance not only in the medieval period but also into the twentieth century. The committee gives honorable mention to: Neil J. Young, *We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics* (Oxford, 2015); and Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (NYU Press, 2014).

The **2017 Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize** for outstanding scholarship in church history by a first-time author is awarded to Joseph Stubenrauch for his book, *The Evangelical Age of Ingenuity in Industrial Britain*, published by Oxford University Press (2016). His "superb," "exceptionally well written book" makes a compelling argument about the evangelical movement's relationship to this historical and cultural period. Stubenrauch makes significant use of "under-explored materials" to show the "rise and influence of modern evangelical Christianity," especially the "progressive, pre-Darwin phase of global evangelicalism." The committee gives honorable mention to: Josef Sorett, *Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2016); and Anne Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and Japanese American Incarceration during World War II* (UNC Press, 2016).

The **2017 Philip Schaff Prize** for the best church history book by a North American scholar is awarded to Andrew Jacobs for his book, *Epiphanius of Cyprus: A Cultural Biography of Late Antiquity*, published by the University of California Press (2016). A "terrific read," Jacobs's excellent book explores the Bishop of Constantia through cultural categories and gives this figure and his context a depth not acknowledged in previous treatments. The committee gives honorable mention to: Douglas L. Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (UNC Press, 2017); and John Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform: The Latin Church at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cornell, 2016).

The **2018 Jane Dempsey Douglass Prize** for the best essay on women's role in the history of Christianity goes to Quincy Newell for her book chapter, "What Jane James Saw," published in *Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Patrick Q. Mason (University of Utah Press, 2016). This chapter, focused on an African-American woman in the first generation of Latter-day Saints, offers original and significant new information for historians of women, Mormonism, and Pentecostalism. The committee gives honorable mention to Crystal J. Lucky's introduction to *A Mysterious Life and Calling: From Slavery to Ministry in South Carolina* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Blue Wills
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Program Committee Report

The Program Committee for the 2018 Winter Meeting (Blake Leyerle, Randi Walker, Trish Beckman, Peggy Bendroth, Ralph Keen) solicited proposals for full sessions and individual papers, with a call for treatments of the topic of Christianity and politics, broadly defined. The intention was to have the location of the meeting and the widespread public attention on contemporary politics serve as backdrop for presentations on church-state dynamics over the course of the history of the church. 95 papers are parts of organized sessions, 47 are in sessions put together by the Committee (with various degrees of thematic coherence, as is unavoidable), and 27 presenters are parts of roundtables.

The chief challenge was in communications: recording and acknowledging submissions and keeping each participant informed of the status of his or her proposal. More than once a presenter changed email accounts so that we were only able to re-connect after they wrote; and we relied on the organizers of prepared panels to communicate with their participants. The first of these can only be prevented by urging presenters to notify us of moves. As to the second, we should have created at the start a listserv of every presenter. After a few inquiries from participants in organized panels, we did exactly that.

Having struggled to accommodate particular requests (mainly for time slots and AV equipment) and make sure that all participants were kept informed, we strongly suggest investing in some kind of conference-planning software. Automating certain parts of the process reduces error and saves time. I am not aware of how sophisticated, or how expensive, these can be, but I believe we should move expeditiously and if possible have such a program by the time submissions for the 2019 meeting start to arrive.

The chair wishes to thank his graduate research assistant, Jeffrey Nichols (history department, UIC), for invaluable assistance at every step of the process. For most of the past year the majority of Mr. Nichols's 10 hr/wk assignment was devoted to maintaining order and handling requests. Without his contribution to our work this program could not have taken form.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Keen

GS/IS Committee Report

Dear ASCH Executive Committee and Council,

I am pleased to have been asked this spring to chair the Graduate Student and Independent Scholar Committee (GS/IS). The GS/IS committee has been something of a dormant one in the past, it seems, because of a lack of budgeted funds. But with more clarity regarding budget, as set in place by the finance committee, and regular communication with the Council and other committees, we hope to reimagine the work of the GS/IS this coming year. To this end, I would like to propose that the GS/IS be established as a regular standing committee and request that the Council indicate what steps should be taken to make this happen.

I would also note that in terms of the recent work of the GS/IS, committee members agreed upon the wording and criteria for graduate travel awards, in anticipation of the 2018 winter meeting. While the call was not issued for this meeting, we hope to have the funds to make the call for the January 2019 one.

The first meeting of the GS/IS committee will be on Saturday, January 6. Our agenda includes the following:

1. Discussion of the duties and responsibilities of the GS/IS committee and move to become a regular standing committee, according to bylaws.
2. Update on budget for fellowship and grants.
3. Administration of the John F. Wilson Research Fellowship (anticipated budget of 2000).
4. Administration of the graduate student travel awards (winter meeting).
5. Discussion of other possible research and travel grant needs.
6. Discussion of how to keep the ASCH mindful of the interests of graduate students and independent scholars.

With thanks for your work on behalf of the ASCH, I submit this report,

Elizabeth Flowers