

REPORT FROM THE Center

Ursula Goodenough to give 2009 Cookson Lecture



Goodenough to speak on Religion and Evolution

Ursula Goodenough, Ph.D., an internationally recognized cell biologist and religious naturalist, will present the Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture at Virginia Wesleyan College on Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at 7:30 p.m., in the Boyd Dining Center. Her talk is entitled “**The Humpty Dumpty Project: Putting Evolution and Religion Together Again.**”

Goodenough is Professor of Biology at Washington University in St. Louis, where she also co-teaches a course on The Epic of

Evolution. She is author of three editions of the widely used textbook *Genetics*, but is perhaps best known for her best-selling book on the relationship of science and religion, *The Sacred Depths of Nature*. For the past twenty years, she has served on the governing council of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), including four years as president. Her many professional and public service roles include review panels for the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, presidency of the American Society for Cell Biology, the Mind and Life Institute seminar on Western science for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and editorial boards for several professional journals, including *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*.

Science & Spirit magazine describes Goodenough as “a warm, brilliant and embracing woman, [whose] contradictions make up a harmonious whole – sort of like nature itself,” and calls her book *The Sacred Depths of Nature* “a poetic and accessible bestseller.”

The Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture series is named for the Center’s founding director, Dr. Catharine Cookson. Previous speakers include Dr. Martin Marty (2006) and Dr. Diana Eck (2008).

IN THIS Issue

- CENTER SYMPOSIUM RESULTS IN BOOK 2
- RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE NEWS 3
- RECOMMENDED READING 5
- NEXUS HIGHLIGHTS 6
- DIRECTOR’S ACTIVITIES 6
- LOOKING AHEAD 7
- CALENDAR OF EVENTS 8

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR



Marriage and Religious Freedom

Guest Columnist: K. Hollyn Hollman

The increasingly frequent and intense claims linking gay rights and religious liberty require attention. Charges that one’s adversaries violate religious freedom or the separation of church and state do little to advance the debate over marriage rights. Instead, they often cause confusion about the constitutional protection of religious freedom in America.

Promoting religious liberty for all means protecting the rights of individuals and faith communities to believe and practice their religion as they see fit and keeping the government from advancing or inhibiting religion. It is a fundamental value that deserves and enjoys broad support.

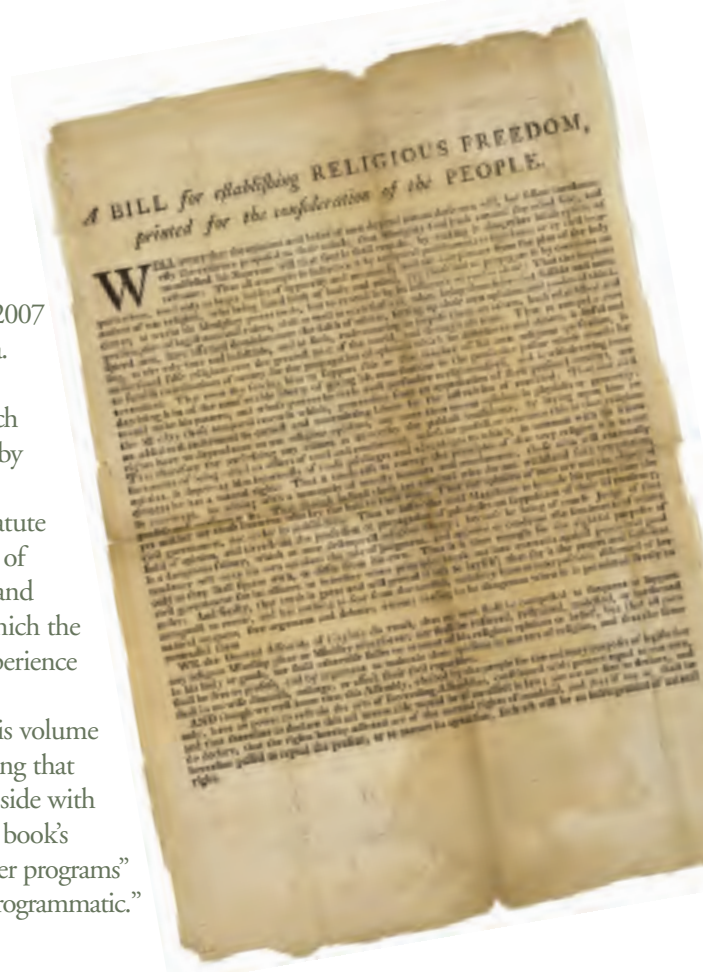
continued on page 2

Center's Symposium on Jefferson Statute Results in Book

The University of Virginia Press will publish a book based on the Center's fall 2007 symposium exploring the emergence of religious freedom in colonial Virginia. The volume, to be titled *From Jamestown to Jefferson: The Evolution of Religious Freedom in Virginia*, will be edited by Center Director Dr. Paul Rasor and Dr. Rich Bond, Assistant Professor of History at Virginia Wesleyan. It will contain chapters by each of the six symposium presenters, all of whom are leading scholars in the field.

The book examines the deep background of Jefferson's famous Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. It expands existing scholarship on the role and diversity of religious practices in early Virginia, showing how the changing political, social and religious conditions of the colonial period gradually created the space within which the Statute could emerge. It also discusses the many ways in which the Virginia experience continues to influence our understanding of religious freedom today.

Enthusiasm for the book has been high. One reviewer commented that this volume "has the potential to become the best synthesis yet written" on the subject, noting that "for the first time, essays on the religious history of Virginia will appear side by side with chapters by leading church-state scholars." Dean Timothy O'Rourke called the book's publication "truly splendid" news, emphasizing "the model it establishes for Center programs" and congratulating the Center "on an outstanding achievement, intellectual and programmatic." The book is scheduled to appear in the spring of 2011.



continued from page 1

On the question of who should receive the legal benefits of marriage, there is no single "religious freedom" answer. Admittedly, the fact that "marriage" has both a civil and a religious meaning complicates the discussion. Yet a state's determination about legal benefits to couples is similar to other policy questions about which religious individuals and communities disagree. The fact that the opinions

of some advocates are grounded in church teachings may explain the passions that have been ignited, but it hardly suggests that one side holds a trump card.

The debate has been distorted by advocates on all sides. Some vocal opponents of same-sex marriage rely on the Bible to define marriage as between a man and a woman and oppose state recognition of same-sex couples because it legitimizes

conduct they believe is immoral. Claiming to speak for the religious majority, they argue that the state's action violates their religious freedom. Yet, religious individuals and communities regularly challenge the morality of practices that are legal, including sex out of wedlock. Just because a law sparks moral objections does not mean that it violates the Free Exercise Clause.

On another side, some proponents of

Report from the Center
is published twice a year by
the Center for the Study of
Religious Freedom at
Virginia Wesleyan College

Paul Rasor
Director

Ann Sheppell
Assistant to the Director

757-455-3129
csrf@vwc.edu
www.vwc.edu/csrf



continued from page 2

same-sex marriage claim that the separation of church and state should preclude the government from recognizing only traditional marriage. They reject laws defining marriage as between a man and a woman because they see them as based on religious teachings that they reject. But, just because a law – like the prohibition on theft – happens to conform to the religious opinions of the majority does not mean that it violates the Establishment Clause.

Instead of making such broad and misleading claims, advocates for religious liberty on all sides of the marriage debate would be better served by trying to specify the interests at issue, the conflicts between competing rights, and possible ways of minimizing harm. Where and how are gay rights and religious liberty rights likely to clash?

First, there are concerns about the autonomy of houses of worship. Predictions about forced marriages and jailed clergy are misguided. The First Amendment ensures that faith traditions will continue to make their own decisions about the marriages they will perform regardless of the legal status of same-sex couples. Already, the government approves many marriages that churches do not, and churches impose requirements on marriage that the law does not. Likewise, freedom of speech ensures that pastors from across the theological spectrum will continue to speak freely in the pulpit on the basis of religious teachings, not legal prohibitions.

Second, and more difficult, there are concerns about the liberty of other institutions – such as schools and hospitals – organized by religious entities that oppose same-sex marriage. There have long been conflicts between legal protections based on sexual orientation and those based on religion, particularly in the employment

continued on page 4

The following stories are taken from the Religion Clause Blog; comments are by Center Director Paul Rasor.

Obama's Speech to Muslim World Includes Focus On Religious Freedom

On June 4, 2009, President Barack Obama delivered a major address to the Muslim world from Cairo, Egypt. In his broad-ranging speech, he said that “Islam has always been a part of America’s story,” pointing out that the first nation to recognize



the U.S. was Morocco. One section of his speech was devoted to religious freedom. He said: “Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition. I saw it firsthand as a child in Indonesia, where devout Christians worshiped freely in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. That is the spirit we need today. People in every country should be free to choose and live their faith based upon the persuasion of the mind, heart, and soul. This tolerance is essential

for religion to thrive, but it is being challenged in many different ways.

“Among some Muslims, there is a disturbing tendency to measure one’s own faith by the rejection of another’s. The richness of religious diversity must be upheld – whether it is for Maronites in Lebanon or the Copts in Egypt. And fault lines must be closed among Muslims as well, as the divisions between Sunni and Shia have led to tragic violence, particularly in Iraq.

“Freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together. We must always examine the ways in which we protect it. For instance, in the United States, rules on charitable giving have made it harder for Muslims to fulfill their religious obligation. That is why I am committed to working with American Muslims to ensure that they can fulfill zakat.

“Likewise, it is important for Western countries to avoid impeding Muslim citizens from practicing religion as they see fit – for instance, by dictating what clothes a Muslim woman should wear. We cannot disguise hostility towards any religion behind the pretence of liberalism.

“Indeed, faith should bring us together. That is why we are forging service projects in America that bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews. That is why we welcome efforts like Saudi Arabian King Abdullah’s Interfaith dialogue and Turkey’s leadership in the Alliance of Civilizations. Around the world, we can turn dialogue into Interfaith service, so bridges between peoples lead to action – whether it is combating malaria in Africa, or providing relief after a natural disaster.”

The full text of President Obama’s speech can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/.

continued on page 4

The posting of religious monuments on public grounds continues to generate controversy and litigation, as the following stories from Oklahoma illustrate.

10th Circuit Holds Ten Commandments Monument Violates Establishment Clause

On June 9, 2009, in *Green v. Haskell County Board of Commissioners*, the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals held that a display of a Ten Commandments monument on the lawn of the county courthouse in Stigler, Oklahoma, violated the Establishment Clause. It concluded that the particular history of this monument – including the religious motivation of its backers – meant that a reasonable observer would view the Monument as having the impermissible primary effect of endorsing religion.

An Associated Press story adds the following details: “The privately funded stone monument was erected in 2004. It was proposed by a construction worker who is also a part-time minister. The court noted that commissioners knew of the monument’s religious nature when they approved of it and that they supported and defended its installation. The court also noted that at least two of the three commissioners were present at the monument’s unveiling on Nov. 7, 2004. One commissioner said after it was installed: ‘That’s what we’re trying to live by, that right there. ... The good Lord died for me.’ The court said that a reasonable observer would conclude the monument and the commissioners’ actions “reflect a government endorsement of religion.”

Oklahoma Governor Signs TEN COMMANDMENTS Bill

The *Tulsa World* reported on May 19, 2009, that Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry signed House Bill 1330 that authorizes placement of a Ten Commandments monument on the State Capitol grounds. The new law may well invite litigation. Anticipating that, the drafters specified that the Oklahoma monument – which will be paid for by private funds – should have the same text as the monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds that was upheld against an Establishment Clause attack in a 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Van Orden v. Perry*, and that it was to be placed where there are numerous monuments.

Comment: In the *Van Orden* case, it was not the specific text that saved the monument; it was the fact it had been erected 40 years ago, that it was situated among 17 other monuments and 21 historical markers, and that it had the basically secular purpose of illustrating the history of the state’s legal system. In a companion case decided the same day, *McCreary County v. ACLU*, the Court ruled that a Ten Commandments display in a Kentucky county courthouse violated the Establishment Clause because it had an obvious religious purpose.

See Center Director Paul Rasmussen’s comments on these Supreme Court decisions in the fall 2005 Newsletter. In the *Green* case, the Tenth Circuit noted that the monument was situated among other monuments, yet this was not enough to save it from an Establishment Clause challenge in face of its clear religious purpose.

For more information on these and other stories, visit the CSRF Web site at www.vwc.edu/csrf.

continued from page 3

and public services contexts. Whether religious exemptions should accompany laws providing greater protection to same-sex couples is a significant issue and legitimate ground for debate. Such exemptions, whether viewed as constitutionally mandated or simply permissible, protect the religious freedom interests of autonomy and self-definition. Depending on how they are crafted, they may well give all sides in the marriage debate most of what they want.

Perhaps it is not surprising that in the debates over legal rights for same-sex couples, many claim support from our country’s proud tradition of protecting religious freedom. But it is important to recognize that supporters of religious freedom are on different sides of the debate. Supporters of religious liberty are following the debate closely, with our eyes focused on defending and extending religious freedom for all. Finding a way through the thicket of competing claims is difficult. We would all do well to remember this: the simple fact that a state’s marriage laws conflict with certain religious beliefs while conforming to others does not by itself threaten anyone’s religious liberty.

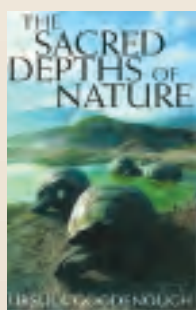


K. Hollyn Hollman is the General Counsel of the Washington, D.C.,-based Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, which does not take a position on same-sex unions. She was part of the Center’s “Religious Freedom Roundtable” panel discussion on church-state issues at Virginia Wesleyan College in the fall of 2006. ■

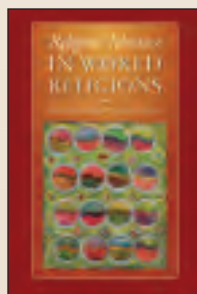


Rasor's Recommended Reading

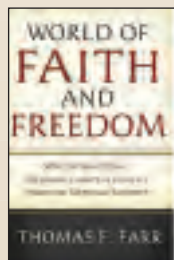
The list of recommended books begins with *The Sacred Depths of Nature*, by our fall Cookson Lecturer, Dr. Ursula Goodenough. Beyond this, the Center's library continues to expand its collection of materials relating to religious human rights in the international context. The importance of this issue is emphasized by President Obama in his June speech at Cairo University, excerpted on page 3.



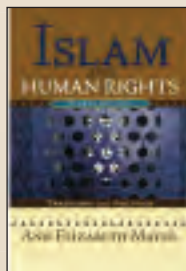
Ursula Goodenough,
The Sacred Depths of Nature (1998)



**Jacob Neusner
and Bruce
Chilton, eds.,**
*Religious Tolerance
in World Religions* (2008)



Thomas Farr,
*World of Faith and Freedom:
Why International Religious Liberty
Is Vital to American National
Security* (2008)



Ann Elizabeth Mayer,
*Islam and Human Rights:
Tradition and Politics* (2006)

BOOKS RECEIVED

A few of the new titles in the Center's collection:

ADENEY, Frances S., and Arvind SHARMA, eds., *Christianity and Human Rights: Influences and Issues* (State University of New York Press, 2007)

ANGLIM, Christopher Thomas, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and the Law in America* 2^d ed. (Grey House Publishing, 2009)

AN-NA'IM, Abdullahi, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Harvard University Press, 2008)

BLOOM, Irene, J. Paul MARTIN, and Wayne PROUDFOOT, eds., *Religious Diversity and Human Rights* (Columbia University Press, 1996)

DELAET, Debra L., *The Global Struggle for Human Rights: Universal Principles in World Politics* (Wadsworth, 2005)

FARR, Thomas F., *World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty Is Vital to American National Security* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

FOLEY, Michael W. and Dean R. HOGE, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

GOTTLIEB, Roger S., *Liberating Faiths: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom* (Roman and Littlefield, 2003)

ISHAY, Micheline, *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* 2d ed. (University of California Press, 2008)

LANE, Frederick S., *The Court and the Cross: The Religious Right's Crusade to Reshape the Supreme Court* (Beacon, 2008)

MAYER, Ann Elizabeth, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics* 2d. ed. (Perseus, 2006)

NEUSNER, Jacob, and Bruce CHILTON, eds., *Religious Tolerance in World Religions* (Templeton Foundation, 2008)

NURSER, John S., and David LITTLE, *For All Peoples And All Nations: The Ecumenical Church And Human Rights* (Georgetown University Press, 2005)

OH, Irene, *The Rights of God: Islam, Human Rights, and Comparative Ethics* (Georgetown University Press, 2007)

RUNZO, Joseph, and Nancy M. MARTIN, *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* (Oneworld Publications, 2003)

THIO, Li-Ann, *Managing Babel: The International Legal Protection of Minorities in the Twentieth Century* (Martinus Nijhoff, 2005)

WITTE, John Jr, and Frank S. ALEXANDER, eds., *The Weightier Matters of the Law: Essays on Law and Religion* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988)

WOOD, James E., E. Bruce THOMPSON, and Robert T. MILLER, *Church and State in Scripture, History and Constitutional Law* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1985)

BORROWING POLICY

All books in the CSRF collection are included in the college library's online catalog, and most are available to VWC faculty, students, and other interested users. If you would like to borrow a book, simply come to the Center offices, located on the first floor of Clarke Hall, during normal college business hours. If you are unable to come to the Center during these hours, please call the office at 455-3129, and we can make other arrangements. Specific policies can be found on the Center's web site, www.vwc.edu/academics/csrfeducation/library.php.

RELIGION and SEX:

An Interfaith Exploration of Current Issues in Sexuality and Religion

Human sexuality has posed a range of difficult challenges for all religious traditions. The 2009-2010 NEXUS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE SERIES will explore diverse responses to several current challenges facing religious institutions and individuals from a range of faith perspectives. Panelists from different faiths will be invited to reflect on questions such as the following as they consider these issues:



- *Are there religious doctrines or teachings that speak directly to these matters? To what extent are these authoritative or binding on individuals?*
- *What guidance is available in scripture? What interpretive issues are involved in the relevant passages?*
- *How has your faith's understanding of human sexuality changed or been reinterpreted over the years?*
- *Have sexuality issues caused division or controversy within your faith community?*
- *What is the relationship between religious teaching and social custom on issues of sexuality and gender?*
- *How has your personal experience affected your view of your faith's response to these issues?*

Specific program themes are as follows:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Oct. 12 | Human Reproduction and Religious Faith |
| Nov. 16 | Sexual Identity and Religious Faith |
| Feb. 8 | Gender Roles in Religion |
| March 8 | Sexuality and Spirituality |

DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITIES

Center Director Paul Rasor had several off-campus speaking engagements during the winter, spring and summer months. He also published a major peer-reviewed article and a book chapter.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

February 28: Gave a public address entitled **"Peacemaking, Force, and Justice: Responding to the Needs of the World and the Demands of Conscience,"** and led a workshop on the same subject, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY.

March 1: Preached at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington, NY, and led congregational discussion on peacemaking.

March 29: Gave a talk on **"Immigration and Religious Freedom"** at the Jewish Museum and Cultural Center, Portsmouth, VA, as part of the Museum's first year lecture series.

June 24: Delivered the Berry Street Essay, a major public address, to the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, entitled **"Ironic Provincialism,"** in Salt Lake City, UT.

PUBLICATIONS

"Theological and Political Liberalisms," *Journal of Law and Religion*, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2009.

"Identity, Covenant, and Commitment," in *A People So Bold* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2009) (book chapter).

LOOKING AHEAD

SUPPORT THE CENTER

Programs for spring 2010 had not been finalized at the time this newsletter went to press. However, a symposium or series of lectures are being planned on the theme of religious freedom in the international context, including religious human rights. Events will be coordinated with course offerings at Virginia Wesleyan relating to international affairs, possibly including a course on human rights, but all events will continue to be scheduled at convenient times and open to the public.



Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either

alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Information on specific events, including dates and times, will appear in the Spring 2010 Report from the Center and Calendar, and on the Center's Web site.

*The Center
for the Study
of Religious
Freedom needs
your support.*

You can support the Center in many ways: by attending Center programs, by sharing news of the Center's work with others, and by your financial contributions. Please share this newsletter with your family and friends, and encourage them to come to Center events.

If you would like to make a financial gift to support the Center, you may use the form below, or you may make a gift through our web site, www.vwc.edu/csrf.

Your gifts allow us to improve our programs, strengthen our library and other resources, and continue our work of promoting religious freedom.

Financial Gift to The Center for the Study of Religious Freedom

☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 Other \$_____

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please designate my gift for:

☐ Program Enhancement Fund ☐ Publication Fund ☐ Catharine Cookson Endowed Visiting Scholar Fund

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ payable to Virginia Wesleyan College. (Note fund on memo line of check.)

OR Charge my credit card \$_____ ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA Card# _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

My gift is ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of _____

Please notify: _____

Name and Address

Please mail to: College Advancement, Virginia Wesleyan College, 1584 Wesleyan Drive, Norfolk, VA 23502-5599

Calendar OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Thursday, September 17, 2009

The Constitution Undressed: Recent Supreme Court Cases on Strip Searches and Affirmative Action



Dr. Timothy O'Rourke,
Vice President for
Academic Affairs and
Kenneth R. Perry Dean of
the College, and Dr. Paul
Rasor, Center Director.
7:30 – 9 p.m.
Boyd Dining Center

OCTOBER

Monday, October 12, 2009



Nexus Interfaith Dialogue:
**Religion and Sex: Human
Reproduction and Religious Faith**
7:30 – 9 p.m.
Boyd Dining Center

Saturday, October 17, 2009

One Love Festival

An evening of music and the spoken word, demonstrating
unity in diversity and fostering a closer interfaith community.
Performers welcome; see events Web site:
www.hamptonroadsnetworkfornonviolence.org
7 – 11 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

NOVEMBER

Monday, November 16, 2009

Nexus Interfaith Dialogue:

Religion and Sex: Sexual Identity and Religious Faith

7:30 – 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

Wednesday, November 18, 2009



The Humpty Dumpty Project: Putting Evolution and Religion Together Again

Dr. Ursula Goodenough, Professor
of Biology at Washington University
in St. Louis.
Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture
7:30 – 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

All events are free and open to the public. Reservations are not required.
For more information, call 757.455.3129.



1584 Wesleyan Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502-5599

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Norfolk, Virginia
Permit 27