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Title

Valley of the Gods II: Catholic Worlds of the Bay Area

Statement of the Problem

The Local Religion (LRP) is designed to support teaching and research on the religious life of the south bay area, concentrating on the intersection of religion with distinctive dynamics of the region—immigration, globalization, religious diversity, civic engagement, regional identity. LRP has been up and running for nearly two years and has made progress on several fronts.

- Curriculum and faculty development: three religious studies courses devoted to LRP have been developed by Prof. Riley, and seven religious studies faculty have integrated LRP community-based research into existing Core courses.
- Program development: LRP sponsored the Spring 2005 *Valley of the Gods: Religious Encounters in the Bay Area*, co-sponsored the Fall 2005 *Ramadan/Tishri* series, and collaborated with deSaisset and Osher on developing the Fall 2005 lecture program for the Holocaust photography exhibits.
- Research: LRP initiated two faculty-student research projects--on “representation of religious diversity in faith-based secondary schools” and “Social Capital Formation and Indonesian Churches”; a faculty research project on “comparative study of contemplative practices in the Silicon Valley” is just taking shape; and undergraduate students have produced multimedia overviews of seventy local congregations and organizations that are being prepared for a LRP web site.
- Community contacts: LRP has established working relationships with over twenty community and religious leaders.
- External grants: Following a preliminary proposal in Spring 2005 LRP was invited to submit a full \$100,000 proposal to the Ford Foundation’s *Difficult Dialogues* initiative (October 1, 2005).

At the same time, there is much more than needs to happen before we can declare LRP a going concern. In addition to linking to related scholarly projects of a similar nature in other parts of the country, LRP has more exploratory and documentary work to do locally in order to understand better and define the scope of its work here in the Valley. Among the gaps in our current documentation of our local religious landscape is coverage of the rich variety of Catholic congregations and organizations in this area.

By some estimates, Catholics make up over 33% of the region’s population (compared to 27% nationally), and represent the largest single denomination in the Valley. Popular assumptions—and in some cases, theological and ecclesial interests—to the contrary, those Catholics do not constitute a homogeneous or monolithic Catholicism. Over two hundred years of immigration has given rise to a variety of ethnic parishes (Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese) where distinctive language and culture defines those community’s mission and identity. The social stratification that characterizes the Valley means that parishioners at St. Simon’s in Los Altos bring to their church a set of needs very different from those parishioners at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Alviso bring to their church. The variety of social ministries based in organizations, churches, schools, and the diocese—direct service to homeless in urban San Jose, Catholic Worker hospitality

at Casa de Clara, policy and advocacy work through PACT, scholarships to enable low income students to attend Catholic primary and secondary schools, priests doing jail ministry—is staggering. The ritual life—for example, traditional Marian devotions at Our Lady of Peace in Santa Clara along side the Virgin of Guadalupe events like Sacred Heart project hosted by Santa Clara—is similarly varied. The interests of conservative Catholics are reflected in Latin masses throughout the Valley—we even have the “Traditional Roman Catholic Mission Chapel of Our Mother of Perpetual Help” celebrating unauthorized pre-Vatican II (Tridentine) three blocks from campus; while Catholics on the left work out their faith commitment by participating in anti-war protests out of San Jose’s Peace Center. Spiritual Centers and programs can be found throughout the region, including retreat centers like the recently renovated Presentation Center and the new SpiritSite program to bring Christian mysticism into the lives of the Valley’s Catholics. The region is home to numerous religious orders of women and men, and includes monastic communities amidst the Valley’s hectic life—for example, the cloistered Carmelites near campus and the Benedictine community at Woodside Priory in Portola Valley. Catholicism is part of major institutions in the Valley—hospitals, Catholic Charities, high schools. And yet not all Catholic life takes place within institutional frameworks—in terms of vocation, for example, the Valley is home to networks of ex-priests and ex-nuns who have formed communities to support one another’s spiritual and liturgical interests.

How can we get a handle on such complex and varied *Catholicisms*? In this project we propose to start by turning to the public series format that has been used successfully by religious studies faculty for several years, most recently in the Spring 2005 *Valley of the Gods*. With the title *Valley of the Gods II: Catholic Worlds in the Bay Area*, we think this event will provide a high profile start to our documentary interests, and give focus to related teaching and research opportunities.

Methods

We propose to run *Valley of the Gods II: Catholic Worlds in the Bay Area* during Spring 2006. The 9 sessions of this series will stand on their own as a public series; but they will also be used to drive three related efforts: curriculum development, undergraduate research, and a pilot for dissemination of LRP research.

The proposed *series* will follow in the tradition of the previous Spring Quarter programs: weekly sessions open to the public and to the campus community that engage attendees in religious dimensions of the world in which they live. We will, however, modify the model, replacing the “stand and deliver” lecture format with an interactive “interview” format. This latter approach was proposed by Rev. Tenny Wright of the Religious Studies Department, and he has agreed to both arrange for the participants as well as conduct the weekly interviews. Over the course of Winter Quarter he and LRP director Riley will develop themes related to LRP’s focus on dynamics in the Valley which will be used to prepare our participants, to guide the interview sessions, and to connect to the related efforts described below.

The *curricular development* we relate to this series will proceed along two avenues. First, faculty teaching courses on Catholic theology and Catholicism in the religious studies department and Catholic Studies minor will i) be invited to propose sites from the region that could link to their courses, and ii) be encouraged to integrate the series into their courses as co-curricular learning opportunities. In her evaluation of the Spring 2005 series, Prof. Bell underscored the importance and challenge of this integration: “If more department faculty would build the spring series into their classes, the department as a whole would benefit. I expect LRP to do another series before long, so we need to keep working on our colleagues to loosen up their syllabi and take the learning out of their immediate control.” As the quarter progresses, the LRP

director will meet to explore with these faculty ways future versions of their courses could translate connections made through the series into assignments that engage students with the kinds of communities represented in the series (assignments, worship visits, guest lectures). Second, Prof. Riley will design a RSOC 009 introductory core course around the lecture series, building in readings and assignments to deepen students' engagement with the communities featured in the series.

Undergraduate research is part of the effort in the form of LRP research assistants (and possibly RSOC 009 students or RSOC 198 practicum students) completing multi-media documentation of the communities and organizations featured in the series during Spring Quarter. For example, if the pastor of St. Clare's participates in a session on multi-ethnic parishes, a research assistant would spend time at St. Clare's conducting interviews, observing meetings and masses, and using cameras and video recorders to provide context and texture to the themes that emerge out of his interview.

During Summer 2006 a research assistant will work with LRP director Riley to create a documentary on the *Valley of the Gods II* series that would serve as a low-cost pilot of the plan to use multimedia as one way to disseminate LRP research. LRP has one experience with this kind of project—a religious studies major/Communication minor videotaped the Spring 2005 lecture series, and is still working on a 15-20 minute compilation that we will distribute to participating lecturers and post on the LRP web site. The plan for the 2006 series on the region's Catholicisms is to edit the videotape of each of the nine sessions, integrate that footage with the research assistant multimedia documentation of the participating organizations and congregations, and produce a 30-45 minute work that would be added to the LRP web site and be made available in CD-rom format to faculty and other educators in the region who could use it for instructional purposes. The documentary will also be used as an illustration of LRP's interest as we move on to document Catholic sites beyond those involved in the series.

Timetable

A detailed timeline of activities related to the Valley of the Gods series is available upon request. The project unfolds in three main stages: Planning, Preparation, Publicity (November 2005-April 2006), the Series (April-June 2006), and Production of the Documentary (June-August 2006).

Relevance to past and future teaching and research

LRP has been a major focus of Dr. Riley's teaching, service and scholarship since returning full-time to the religious studies department Fall 2003.

He has developed courses tied to LRP—RSOC 9, Ways of Understanding Religion, RSOC 198, LRP Practicum, and RSOC 124, Looking at Local Religion. He is developing projects with faculty in religious studies on collaborative efforts in the future—e.g. with Professors Bell and Gray on RSOC 9 courses in Fall 2006. RSOC 198 will most likely become an off-load standing course, and as other new courses are developed—e.g. the "Religions@SiliconValley" seminar next Spring and a mid-level course on inter-faith dialogue next year.

Scholarly activity has been limited mostly to papers at regional conferences. Dr. Riley's proposal for a paper on local religion and immigration at the 2006 American Academy of Religion Western Region conference has been accepted, and he co-authored a paper with undergraduate student David Laws at that conference in 2004. The article on interreligious dialogue for *Explore* in Spring 2005 was taken from a piece that will be submitted for publication in the Wabash Center's *Teaching Theology & Religion*. Dr. Riley is working on developing three LRP research projects with other faculty and SCU students, and continues to work with undergraduate students in courses and

through LRP to document the region's congregations and organizations. Long term research plans include two books out of LRP: one showing how to introduce students to the study of religion with community-based learning, and the other on the religious life of the Valley as a case to study what will be happening nationally in the future. If the Ford Foundation funds the "difficult dialogues" proposal LRP submitted, he would also be editing the proceedings from the academic/community conference planned for Spring 2007.

Relevance to Bannan Institute Criteria for Funding

This project ties directly to four criteria cited in the Bannan grant overview (<http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/bannan/grants/index.cfm>)

Integration of teaching and scholarship: The centerpiece of the proposed project, *Valley of the Gods II: the Catholic Worlds of the Bay Area*, simultaneously i) includes curriculum and faculty development around integrating local resources and community-based learning into courses related to Catholicism; ii) provides the basis for developing a multimedia instructional resource pilot for the study of local religion; and iii) anchors LRP's move to document and research more of the Valley's Catholic religious life.

Catholic and Jesuit character at center of educational enterprise: The proposed project complements the connections already made between local Catholic communities and SCU—e.g., the Arrupe Center's placements, Pastoral Ministries degree program and institutes, Markkula Center's "ethics summer camps" and O'Connor healthcare internship, the annual Virgin of Guadalupe Program run out of religious studies, Arrupe, and Admissions. The series on the rich diversity of Catholic life in the region will underscore the vitality of Catholicism in the region and illustrate ways in which it can be studied in the University's courses and research projects. And the project lays the groundwork for further LRP research by Santa Clara faculty and students into the many Catholic "worlds" of the Valley.

Education of the whole person: LRP is proving to be a vehicle for the integrated education at the heart of the University's current strategic plan. Examples from this past month of LRP students participation in faith-related community events--the October 6 inter-faith "Children of Abraham break fast" at the Circle of Palms plaza, the October 17 protest on behalf of the area's homeless population in front of the new city hall San Jose officially opened the previous weekend, the October 15 CAIR-sponsored Ramadan Open House at the South Bay Islamic Center--attest to the many opportunities LRP affords students to take their classroom instruction and research interests beyond the walls of the university into the community. The proposed project will be a catalyst for similar experiences with the Catholic communities of the Valley.

The commitment to the faith that does justice in the world: In his September 2005 convocation's reflection on Kolvenbach's call for a well-educated solidarity, Fr. Locatelli turned to a point that surfaced in the Future Directions discussion: in addition to concepts, "contact" is an important part of SCU's efforts to educate students to be moral, responsible citizens. (excerpts of Locatelli's talk can be found at: <http://www.scu.edu/president/reports/2004/teach/index.cfm>; the point is also argued in Ravizza's Future Directions paper:

<http://www.scu.edu/strategicplan/futuredirections/themes/mission.cfm>) The project proposed here--the public Valley of the Gods II series and its links to courses and undergraduate research--provides the kind of contact SCU wants for its students. Direct experience and analysis of the multiple ways in which faith communities engage the civic life where they are located will in turn deepen students' motivation to engage in the civic life of the communities they will join after

graduation. While graduates' disposition to volunteer in direct service programs like Loaves and Fishes, to provide financial support scholarship programs at Catholic schools, or to engage in policy debates around urban development and ethnic neighborhoods would be a function of multiple experiences at SCU, it is hoped that LRP's hands-on learning will have helped open their eyes to the possibilities Catholic communities in the region make real on a daily basis.

Grants and fellowships received during the past three year

In spring 2003 LRP received two internal grants: CML and TSC funded student hires to complete field work, prepare materials for a Local Religion Project web site for use in religious studies classes, and a pilot with a high school; in Fall 2003 LRP received a Thomas Terry curriculum development grant for further documentation and a portion of the Valley of the Gods series, a TSC grant for software and multimedia equipment, and LRP was part of a FS-RAP grant.

Publication Or Other Results Of Most Recent Internal Grant Completed

Research completed by undergraduates through internal grants has yielded the following: "Inter-religious Encounter and the Local Religion Project," Explore (Spring 2005); "Local Religion Project," a paper presented to the AAR Western Regional Meeting (Spring 2004) by David Laws (SCU 04) and Philip Boo Riley; "Local Religion, Images and Teaching Religion," a paper presented to the AAR Western Regional Meeting (Spring 2005) by Ashley Ator; and a proposal to the Ford Foundation for funding through their Difficult Dialogues initiative, "Representing Religious Diversity in Public"(October 2005).

Itemized Budget

Please send an e-mail to priley@scu.edu to see the itemized budget.