



## Scientific Study of Religion

The faculty of the St Mary's Centre were represented at the annual conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, delivering the following papers:

- Tania ap Siôn, Creating a place of prayer for the 'other': An experimental study exploring the effects of re-shaping congregational space in a cathedral in Wales;
- David W. Lankshear, Listening to churchgoers in their twenties: Drawing on a congregational survey in South London;
- Leslie J. Francis, Religious experience and religious motivation among Catholic and Mainstream Protestant churchgoers in Australia: Drawing on theories from the psychology of religion.

### **Creating a place of prayer for the 'other': An experimental study exploring the effects of re-shaping congregational space in a cathedral in Wales**

Tania ap Siôn writes:

Provision of spaces for personal prayer and reflection has become a common phenomenon within historic churches and cathedrals in England and Wales, offering an example of devotional activity that operates largely outside that of traditional gathered congregations, but also in relationship with them. Over the past decade, the apSAFIP (the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer) has been employed to examine the content of personal prayer requests left in various church-related locations, mapping similarities and differences in pray-ers' concerns. Building on this research tradition, the present study examines whether experimental changes to physical environment in a cathedral in Wales has an effect on the prayer requests.

### **Listening to churchgoers in their twenties: Drawing on a congregational survey in South London**

David Lankshear and Leslie Francis write:

The *Signs of Growth* congregational survey was conducted throughout the Anglican Diocese of Southwark, covering three large episcopal areas south of the River Thames: Woolwich, Kingston and Croydon. Over 360 congregations took part, delivering over 30,000 completed questionnaires. This study draws on the data provided by 709 participants in their twenties, the age group least likely to be present in Anglican churches. The questionnaire was designed to profile the views of participants across 11 key areas styled: A sense of belonging; A sense of not belonging; Feeling at home; Drifting away; Faith and life; Building for the future; Growing in faith; Ancient and modern; Church services; Prayer and contemplation; and Other people. The analysis contrasts the views of these young participants in their twenties with the views of more mature churchgoers in their fifties and sixties who comprise the backbone of Anglican congregations.

### **Religious experience and religious motivation among Catholic and Mainstream Protestant churchgoers in Australia: Drawing on theories from the psychology of religion**

Leslie Francis, Andrew Village and Ruth Powell write:

The present study draws on two sets of theories developed within the psychology of religion (concerning religious experience and religious motivation) to illuminate differences and similarities between Catholic (N = 626) and Mainstream Protestant (N = 505) churchgoers participating in the 2011 Australian National Church Life Survey. Religious experience was conceptualised within mystical orientation and charismatic orientation theory; religious motivation was conceptualised within religious orientation theory. The data demonstrated higher levels of intrinsic religiosity among Mainstream Protestants and higher levels of extrinsic religiosity among Catholics; but little variation between the two groups in terms of quest religious orientation, mystical orientation, or charismatic orientation.