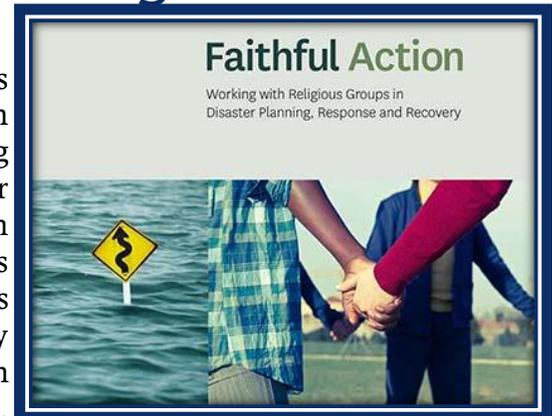


## “A Public Sociology of Religion”

To conclude two days of events focused on religious responses to human trafficking, Prof. Richard Flory presented on “A Public Sociology of Religion” to RPLP Fellows on the morning of Friday, October 25, 2013. Flory was serving as a visiting scholar for the Religion and Public Life Program’s panel discussion on Thursday evening, providing insight and expertise on the responses of various religious groups to human trafficking. Surrounding this larger event, several less structured gatherings were hosted by RPLP, including a lunch with local religious leaders and an informal dinner with student fellows and RPLP staff members, both of which facilitated meaningful conversations on the issue.

Flory’s concluding presentation on Friday morning was a helpful way to widen the lens following the intense discussions of the previous day. The purpose was to provide a framework for student researchers and interested faculty to reflect on how sociologists of religion examine “public” issues like human trafficking.

Prof. Elaine Howard Ecklund introduced Flory’s work, noting that sociology of religion can sometimes be controversial within academic circles. Flory spoke from his experience as Director of Research at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture (CRCC) at USC and, in particular, CRCC’s work in Los Angeles over the past several decades. Civic religion, as Flory called the response of religious groups to create a more unified city, has had both success and failure during the past two decades. While the initiative of religious groups in organizing, advocacy, community development, and interfaith dialogue has become a normal part of the civic sphere, there is still work to be done. Flory’s research demonstrates that the efforts of religious groups tend to be collective in a crisis, but can struggle to maintain this collective approach at the conclusion of a unified crisis response effort. Flory’s presentation, which was offered in a more relaxed setting than the panel event, demonstrated how sociological research on religion can serve a larger public purpose.



## RPLP Welcomes Sarah Hamshari



The Religion and Public Life Program is pleased to introduce Sarah Hamshari as the newest Research Project Manager. Sarah will manage the Religion Among Scientists in International Context study, also known as RASIC, which is an eight country study examining how physicists and biologists in these countries view the relationship between science and religion. Sarah’s role with the study will involve communicating with European and Asian scientists, scheduling interviews, planning research trips, and other essential functions in order to facilitate this important research.

Sarah is well suited to work closely on a study with an international scope, as she has lived outside of the U.S. for much of her life. All of her studies are extremely relevant as well, including coursework in international organization and policy writing and a minor in International Relations at Cornell University. Most recently she received her Master’s degree in Global Policy Studies from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin in May. Her background and training have already proven to be extremely applicable, as she