

## PREFACE

This report, *RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION AMONG HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES*, is the second issued by the Program for the Analysis of Religion Among Latinos/as (PARAL) in 2002. It forms part of the PARAL Study, a coordinated research effort. The goal is to provide a comprehensive social scientific understanding of the religious lives and worldviews of more than 35 million persons of Hispanic heritage in the United States. This second report is the result of a unique collaborative effort between the social scientists of PARAL and of those who in early 2001 carried out the *American Religious Identification Survey 2001* (ARIS), produced under the general aegis of the City University of New York.

ARIS 2001, carried out by Drs. Barry A. Kosmin, Egon Mayer and Ariela Keysar, involved the single largest survey of American adults in recent years with a focus on religious self-identification. As such it has served as an invaluable scholarly resource not only with respect to major trends across the United States' population, but also as a unique resource with which to analyze sub-groups within the wider society that are normally not well represented in national surveys. ARIS itself was an outgrowth of the renowned 1990 National Survey of Religious Identification (NSRI).

Early in summer of 2002, the Lilly Endowment approved a grant to PARAL through the Office for Research in Religion In Society and Culture (RISC) at Brooklyn College for a secondary analysis of data on Hispanics found in the ARIS sample. The competence and reputation of the ARIS investigators were recognized by the Lilly Endowment as guarantees for the quality of this report. Moreover, the information provided here answers questions about religious adherence, identification and affiliation that could not be provided from more locally focused community studies and surveys in the PARAL Study that analyze church leaders and the dynamics of their faith communities. As a result of prior institutional and collaborative ties, the ARIS investigators were able to lend their efforts, resources and expertise to those of PARAL. In brief, the collaborative effort that produced the present report represents an on-going intellectual conversation among scholars who are also friendly academic colleagues.

PARAL is grateful to our ARIS colleagues for producing a report that answers new sets of questions and especially to the Lilly Endowment for providing the funds to do so. By including this valuable work as part of the overall PARAL Study, we have been able to develop a comprehensive look at religion among Latinos/as in the United States. We invite the reader to connect this report on religious identification nationwide with the rest of the PARAL Study in order to profit from this comprehensive analysis of religion among Hispanics in the United States.

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