



Religion and Innovation in Human Affairs (RIHA)

Exploring the Role of Religion in the Origins of Novelty and the Diffusion of Innovation in the Progress of Civilizations

Religion and Innovation: Naturalism, Scientific Progress, and Secularization

Religion, Naturalism, and Scientific Progress (\$100,000). The University of Queensland. PIs: Peter Harrison (Queensland) and Jon Roberts (Boston University)

The project was designed to investigate the relations amongst science, naturalism, and religion, with a view to determining the nature of their historical interactions and the manner in which, singly or in combination, they have contributed to or hindered innovation in human affairs. Overall, the grant has made possible a significant intervention into current discussions of naturalism in relation to science and scientific innovation. We challenge the common idea that scientific innovation is predicated upon a thoroughgoing naturalism, and/or that naturalism is inimical to religious ways of thinking. What has emerged over the course of the project is that naturalistic and religious ways of thinking have been mutually interdependent. Assumptions about the uniformity and intelligibility of nature have typically depended upon religious ideas. It follows that religious ideas have often played a crucial, but unappreciated role in the promotion of scientific innovation.

Major Outputs:

Book:

- Harrison, Peter & Jon Roberts, eds. *Science without God? Historical Perspectives on Scientific Naturalism* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming in 2015)

Conference:

- *Science without God: Religion, Naturalism, and the Sciences*, Florida State University, February 15-16, 2013.