

CONTACT: Donald Lehr - The Nolan/Lehr Group  
(212) 967-8200  
dlehr@unlimitedloveinstitute.org

FOR RELEASE:  
November 5, 2003

## **INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON UNLIMITED LOVE CITES PROGRESS ON SEVERAL FRONTS**

As it prepares to enter its third year, the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love (IRUL) reports that a wide range of efforts are underway to advance scientific understanding and knowledge of unlimited love, which the institute describes as altruistic affirmation and care for all humanity without exception. Located at the School of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the institute is among the first to seek rigorous, open-minded and empirically-focused research in this nascent field.

Leading those efforts are 21 new scientifically-based research projects that are now underway. The projects, covering a wide range of study and funded in December 2002 with more than \$1.7 million in institute grants, represent a major component of IRUL's most recent work. Areas of study include human development, neuroscience, compassionate love and health outcomes, other-regarding virtues, the evolution of altruism, and faith-based helping behaviors.

These research projects are in addition to four other projects co-sponsored through a matching grant with the Fetzer Institute and four other Fetzer-funded projects that IRUL agreed were of high value, for a total of 29 ongoing research projects. Further information is available at the institute's website at [www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org](http://www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org).

The dramatic and steady progress of the not-for-profit institute, founded in 2001 with an endowment from the John Templeton Foundation, also includes a broadening of public discourse on topics of unlimited love through seminars, publications and web sites.

In June 2003, IRUL co-hosted, with the Philadelphia-based Metanexus Institute, the "Works of Love: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Altruism" conference at Villanova University. In collaboration with the Fetzer Institute, the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Columbia University Center for Science and Religion, this international, interfaith and interdisciplinary conference drew more than 400 people from 23 countries, representing some 300 organizations. Of the 70 invited papers presented, 50 are now available, along with other conference information, at [www.metanexus.net/conference2003](http://www.metanexus.net/conference2003).

Stephen G. Post, Ph.D., the institute's president and a professor of bioethics at Case Western, has also announced publishing awards of \$1,000 to authors of any paper presented at the conference that is subsequently published in a peer-review academic journal. Already papers have been accepted for publication in *Contemporary Philosophy*, the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationship*, *Theology Today*, and *Zygon*.

Another extension of the institute's outreach is its new electronic monthly newsletter, available free by subscribing at [www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org](http://www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org). The newsletter highlights leading edge scientific studies, announcements, and publications on unlimited love. Launched in August to an estimated 5,500 recipients, the institute expects to have 10,000 subscribers by the end of the year.

Two new books in its series on unlimited love have recently been published by the Templeton Foundation Press: *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion, and Service*, by Stephen Post, and *Research on Altruism and Love: An Annotated Bibliography of Major Studies in Psychology, Sociology, Evolutionary Biology, and Theology*, edited by Post, Byron Johnson, Michael E. McCullough, and Jeffrey P. Schloss.

The institute's first book, *Altruism and Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy and Religion in Dialogue*, published in June 2002 by Oxford University Press, is now available in paperback. Dr. Post's single-author work, *Human Nature and the Freedom of Public Religious Expression*, published by the University of Notre Dame Press in July 2003, offers considerable focus on divine

love and religious experience. Post is also editor-in-chief of the five-volume *Encyclopedia of Bioethics, Third Edition*, to be published in November 2003 by Macmillan Reference. Further, several of the institute's research area consultants are developing individual book projects.

Other recent work related to the institute includes:

- *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*, a report on neuroscience, mental health, and the importance of "authoritative" communities in youth development, issued in September by the Commission on Children at Risk. Post and Byron Johnson served on the commission along with 26 other leading researchers;
- *Second International Congress on Tibetan Medicine*, focusing on alternative medicine. The institute has funded two sessions on "The Biology and Healing Power of Love" at the November 5-8 meeting in Washington, which is expected to draw several thousand people;
- *The Evolution of Altruism*, a special plenary session at the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences annual meeting last August in Philadelphia. Developed by Jeffrey Schloss in collaboration with Post and David Goetze, president of the association, the program attracted 250 top ethologists and evolutionary theorists, as well as sociologists and political theorists. IRUL has allocated funds to develop a project on unlimited love with the association;
- In collaboration with the Seminars in Christian Scholarship program at Calvin College, a three-week summer institute -- *Works of Love: Science and Theology in Dialogue* -- will be held in 2004 to give theologians, philosophers, and scientists in all areas an opportunity to think and write creatively about agape love. This is of particular interest to the institute because participation in agape or limitless love is considered the fullest experience of spirituality, giving rise to inner peace and kindness, as well as to active works of love toward all humanity.

# # #