

religious studies

AAR EDITION NEWS

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2004 Member Calendar

Dates are subject to change. Check www.aarweb.org for the latest information.

March

Religious Studies News—AAR Edition March issue.

Journal of the American Academy of Religion March 2004 issue. For more information on AAR publications, see www.aarweb.org/publications or go directly to the JAAR home page hosted by Oxford University Press, www3.oup.co.uk/jaarell.

March 1. 2004 Annual Meeting proposals due to Program Unit Chairs.

March 1. Book award nominations due from publishers. For more information see www.aarweb.org/awards/bookrules.asp.

March 5–7. Southeast regional meeting, Atlanta, GA.

March 6–7. Southwest regional meeting, Irving, TX.

March 12–14. Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

March 13. Religion and Disabilities Task Force meeting, Atlanta, GA.

March 15–16. National Humanities Day. National Humanities Day is an advocacy event organized by the National Humanities Alliance and co-sponsored by the AAR and more than 20 organizations to promote support for the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information, see www.nhalliance.org/had/2004.

March 17–18. Mid-Atlantic regional meeting, Baltimore, MD.

March 20. Committee on Publications meeting, New York, NY.

March 21–22. Western regional meeting, Whittier, CA.

March 26–27. Rocky Mountain–Great Plains regional meeting, Provo, UT.

March 27–28. Academic Relations Task Force meeting, Atlanta, GA.

(For more information on regional meetings, see www.aarweb.org/regions/meetings.asp.)

April

April 1. Notification of acceptance of Annual Meeting paper proposals by Program Unit Chairs.

April 2–3. Midwest regional meeting, Chicago, IL.

April 15. Regions Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.

April 16. Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.

April 16. Regional Secretaries meeting, San Antonio, TX.

April 16–17. Upper Midwest regional meeting, St. Paul, MN.

April 17–18. Board of Directors meeting, San Antonio, TX.

April 30–May 1. Eastern International regional meeting, Ithaca, NY.

(For more information on regional meetings, see www.aarweb.org/regions/meetings.asp.)

May

Religious Studies News—AAR Edition May issue.

Spotlight on Teaching Spring 2004 issue.

Registration materials mailed with RSN.

May 1. Nominations (including self-nominations) for committee appointments requested. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/membership/volunteering.asp.

May 7–9. Pacific Northwest regional meeting, Vancouver, BC.

May 17. Registration & housing opens for 2004 Annual Meeting.

May 17. Registration for the Employment Information Services Center opens.

May 30. Annual Meeting Additional Meeting requests due for priority consideration.

(For more Annual Meeting information, see www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2004/default.asp)

June

Journal of the American Academy of Religion June 2004 issue.

June 15. Membership renewal and Annual Meeting registration deadline for 2004 Annual Meeting participants.

July

July 1. New fiscal year begins.

July 15. Submission deadline for the October issue of *Religious Studies News—AAR Edition*.

For more information, see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn/default.asp.

July 31. Deadline for participants to request audiovisual equipment at the Annual Meeting.

August

Annual Meeting Program goes online.

August 1. Change of address due for priority receipt of the 2004 Annual Meeting Program Book.

August 2. Research Grant Applications due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/grants/default.asp.

August 15. Membership renewal period for 2005 begins.

August 31. Regional development grant applications due to regional secretaries.

September

Journal of the American Academy of Religion September 2004 issue.

Annual Meeting Program Books mailed to members.

September 17. Executive Committee meeting, Washington, D.C.

October

Religious Studies News—AAR Edition October issue.

Spotlight on Teaching Fall 2004 issue.

October 1–31. AAR officer election period. Candidate profiles will be published in RSN.

October 15. January 2005 *Religious Studies News* submission deadline.

October 15. Excellence in Teaching award nominations due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/awards/teaching.asp.

October 21. EIS preregistration closes.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.

November 18. Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.

November 19. Board of Directors meeting, San Antonio, TX.

November 19. Chairs Workshop at the Annual Meeting, San Antonio. Free for departments enrolled in the Academic Relations Program. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/department/lacadrel.asp.

November 20–23. Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. Held concurrently with the Society of Biblical Literature, comprising some 8,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 100 hiring departments.

November 22. Annual Business Meeting. See the Annual Meeting Program Book for exact time and place.

December

Journal of the American Academy of Religion December 2004 issue.

December 2. New program unit proposals due.

December 10–11. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

December 15. Submissions for the March 2005 issue of *Religious Studies News—AAR Edition* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn/default.asp.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2005 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/dues.

And keep in mind throughout the year...

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for their Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/regions/default.asp.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. *In the Field* is a members-only online publication that accepts brief announcements, including calls for papers, grant news, conference announcements, and other opportunities appropriate for scholars of religion. Submit text online at www.aarweb.org/publications/inthefield/submit.asp.

Openings: Employment Opportunities for Scholars of Religion. *Openings* is a members-only online publication listing job announcements in areas of interest to members; issues are viewable online from the first through the last day of each month. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/openings/submit.asp.

religiousstudies
AAR
EDITION NEWS

Religious Studies News—AAR Edition is the newspaper of record for the field especially designed to serve the professional needs of persons involved in teaching and scholarship in religion (broadly construed to include religious studies, theology, and sacred texts). Published quarterly by the American Academy of Religion, RSN is received by some 10,000 scholars, by departments enrolled in the Academic Relations Program, and by libraries at colleges and universities across North America and abroad. *Religious Studies News—AAR Edition* communicates the important events of the field and related areas. It provides a forum for members and others to examine critical issues in education, pedagogy (especially through the biannual *Spotlight on Teaching*), research, publishing, and the public understanding of religion. It also publishes news about the services and programs of the AAR and other organizations, including employment services and registration information for the AAR Annual Meeting.

For writing and advertising guidelines, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.asp.

Atlanta: One for the Record Books

THE CITY OF ATLANTA made AAR history by hosting the largest Annual Meeting ever last November. In both size and scope, the 2003 Annual Meeting was the biggest on record. Results from the Annual Meeting survey showed that the members overwhelmingly found the meeting to be a success. For a full listing of the survey results, visit www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2003/survey/results.asp.

Atlanta's final registration number of 8,752 attendees exceeded the previous attendance record of 8,704 (Boston, 1999). Once again, California was listed as the resident state by the most attendees: 790. Georgia, as the host state, produced the second largest number of attendees (593), followed by New York (532), Illinois (483), and Massachusetts (430). Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan drew the greatest number of international attendees. The focus on Japanese scholars and scholarship increased the number of attendees from Japan by 60 percent compared to the 2002 Annual Meeting. The AAR has been actively encouraging international scholarship in recent years; in 2004 the focus will be on Latin American scholars and scholarship.

Atlanta was a hit with Annual Meeting attendees; 89 percent of survey respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the meeting in general. Several attendees' comments suggested that the AAR return to Atlanta again — soon! One of the areas that most pleased attendees was the close accessibility between meeting hotels, with 89 percent responding with satisfied or very satisfied; many people wrote comments about the issue.

The 2003 Annual Meeting was also the largest in terms of its number of sessions: 281 sessions on the AAR program alone, compared to 270 AAR sessions in 2002. Including SBL and Additional Meeting sessions, over 800 sessions occurred over the five-day period from Thursday, November 20 through Tuesday, November 25. Survey respondents reported an 88 percent level of satisfaction with the overall quality of the sessions, and 88 percent of respondents enjoyed the opportunity to network with friends and colleagues.

The Conferon Registration & Housing Bureau completed its second year of servicing the Annual Meeting with high marks. Online registration and housing registrations increased by 5 percent (2003:

57 percent; 2002: 52 percent). Almost 4,000 hotel rooms in Annual Meeting hotels were occupied on Saturday, November 22, the peak night of the meeting. Over 15,000 hotel room nights were occupied throughout the course of the Annual Meeting.

Survey respondents also gave satisfied or very satisfied responses to hotel, exhibit, and meeting room facilities (83 percent, 79 percent, and 73 percent, respectively). Many respondents commented on cramped room facilities within the hotel. The AAR is sympathetic to these concerns and the executive office knows this was a problem for several sessions. Large meetings hosted in hotels often allow for greater accessibility by sacrificing the flexibility of room space that can be found in conference centers. Meeting room space is assigned by considering several factors, including the estimated attendance at a session as provided by the program unit chairs; proximity to another session so that two sessions hosted by the same program unit are assigned to the same hotel; and the audiovisual equipment requested in the session. In order to keep audiovisual costs as low as possible, sessions with similar AV needs will be placed in the same

room. "High-tech" sessions that include computers and LCD projectors are usually set in ballrooms in order to maximize the use of the room.

The Annual Meeting Satisfaction Survey is sent via e-mail to all AAR members (approximately 9,700) at the conclusion of each meeting and is also offered online at the AAR Web site. The number of voluntary responses this year was 1,171. Not every respondent answered each question, so the values were taken from the number of respondents who did. The survey is voluntary and open to all members.

The executive office staff would like to thank every member who participated in the survey. The post-Annual Meeting survey continues to be valuable to the Annual Meeting process. It provides the AAR's Program Committee, Board of Directors, and executive office staff with an important measure of member satisfaction of the Annual Meeting. We value this opportunity to hear your comments and suggestions on how we can continue to meet your needs and to offer an excellent Annual Meeting experience. ☛

2003 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop

Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING in Atlanta, 25 chairs and deans enjoyed presentations and discussions led by five experienced chairs. Chairs and deans from small religiously affiliated colleges, large research universities (both private and public), medium-size private colleges, and a seminary all participated in the daylong event. Laurie Patton of Emory University began by leading a discussion regarding identity and leadership. Ellen Armour of Rhodes College, Joe Gereboff of Arizona State University, and Patricia Killen of Pacific Lutheran University led a discussion about how chairs manage their professional identities as individual scholars while also being administrative leaders of academic departments, as well as those who care for intellectual souls. In the afternoon Terrence Tilley of the University of Dayton and Karen Jo Torjesen of the Claremont Graduate University led the discussion on different leadership styles and department cultures. Laurie Patton wrapped up the

event by leading a discussion on the theme of discernment.

Participants commented: "For me, this was 'dean/chair school,' which was exactly what I needed and was looking for." "Far exceeded my expectations . . . was outstanding and the whole workshop made me think about my job in startling new ways."

This chairs workshop was the latest in a series that is presented every year at the Annual Meeting and prepared by the Academic Relations Task Force. In past years the topics have been: "The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building & Managing Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands" (June, 2003); "Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department" (November 2002); "Evaluating and Advancing Teaching in the Religious Studies Department" (November 2001); and, "Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department" (November 2000). ☛

News Media at the 2003 Annual Meeting

MEDIA INTEREST in the 2003 Annual Meeting was superb, with 27 journalists attending. Most journalists were from the United States; however, one Australian radio journalist and one British television journalist attended the meeting. Stories about the meeting were published in many news outlets including the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Beliefnet.com*, the *Washington Post*, *MSNBC*, and several trade journals.

U.S. media included journalists from the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Associated Press*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *CNN*, *CBS News*, *PBS*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Religion*

News Service, *Publishers Weekly*, *Christianity Today*, and *Christian Century*.

Journalists typically view the meeting as an opportunity to interview a variety of scholars on various topics, rather than as an event to be reported. Stories from these interviews with religion scholars will continue to be published or broadcast during the next few months.

A reception was held to honor the 2003 AAR Newswriting Award winners. Honored were Susan Hogan/Albach of the *Dallas Morning News*, Deb Richardson-Moore of the *Greenville News*, and Deborah Caldwell of *Beliefnet*. ☛

American Academy of Religion 2003 Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Atlanta

November 24, 2003

11:45 AM

1. Call to Order: Robert Orsi. The president called the meeting to order at 11:57 AM.
2. Approval of the 2002 Business Meeting Minutes. It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the 2002 Business Meeting Minutes.
3. Memorial List. The president read the Memorial List of members who died in 2003 and a moment of silence was observed.
4. President's Report: Robert Orsi

President Orsi remarked that it had been an exciting year. He characterized the launching of the Centennial Strategic Plan as the most exciting event. He also remarked that the Academy was well along into the implementation of that plan.

5. Executive Director and Treasurer's Report: Barbara DeConcini

Dr. DeConcini directed everyone's attention to the Annual Report for a thorough list of the goings on of the year. She highlighted the clean audit received by the AAR and its availability by written or phone request to the executive office (404-727-3049).

DeConcini reported on the new high in membership and Annual Meeting registration AAR realized this year. She announced that many have reported

on the richness of the program and the ease and convenience of getting around. She discussed the Religion and Disabilities task force and AAR's dedication to increasing accessibility for our members with disabilities. DeConcini noted that a member of the task force was invited to a walk-through of the Annual Meeting site beforehand to assess the accessibility. DeConcini also reported on the upcoming AAR Annual Meeting sites. She ended by noting the health of the organization.

6. 2003 Election Results: Robert Orsi introduced Jane McAuliffe as president, Hans Hillerbrand as president-elect, and Diana Eck as vice president-elect. He invited Jane McAuliffe to take the podium. President McAuliffe thanked Orsi for his great leadership.

7. New Business

President McAuliffe opened the floor for new business. A short discussion ensued about the 2008 Annual Meeting decision. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Myesha D. Jenkins,
for Susan Henking,
Secretary

AAR Holds International Conference

Shannon Planck, American Academy of Religion

JUST BEFORE the Annual Meeting, AAR sponsored an international conference on the study of religion. Funding for the conference came from the Ford Foundation, with support from AAR and Emory University. The conference, initiated by the editors of *JAAR* and directed toward internationalizing the journal, served as the inauguration of a larger project entitled “Contesting Religions/Religions Contested: The Study of Religion in a Global Context.”

Some 65 scholars, activists, religious leaders, diplomats, and journalists from around the world gathered for the three-day event. Participants traveled from Mexico, Senegal, Great Britain, India, Israel, Belgium, Brazil, Japan, Turkey, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Russia, Indonesia, Ukraine, Egypt, Palestine, Taiwan, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Denmark, New Zealand, South Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Czechoslovakia, Netherlands, and Iran.

The conference included plenary addresses, panel presentations, and small-group workshops, as well as special events like a visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and a gala dinner on Emory’s campus. Former U.N. Ambassador the Honorable Andrew Young gave the opening welcome.



Nokuzola Mnende from the Icamagu Institute in South Africa asks a question to the Re-Imagining Religion panelists.

In her address, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, linked religions to contemporary international crises in health care. She spoke about the spread of global diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the politics of reproduction, highlighting religion’s impact on the status and condition of women. The second plenary speaker, Madhu Kishwar, co-founder of *Manush: A Journal about Women and Society*, focused

on the ways in which popular films in India embody responses to the social realities of religious pluralism and cultural difference. Both plenaries will be published in a special edition of *JAAR*.

Panel presentations addressed the following topics: “Re-Imagining Religion, Religions, and Their Discontents” and “Agendas for the Future.” Reflecting on the diversity of perspectives and concerns,

panelist Olga Kazmina (Moscow State University) noted that these discussions “proved the necessity of interdisciplinary and multicultural approaches to the study of contemporary religious situations.” In her comments, sociologist Rita Laura Segato (Universidade de Brasilia) noted that the historical transformation of the relationship between religion and society is “much more revealing and interesting than the discussion of secularization versus reenchantment popular among sociologists today.”

A series of smaller workshops complemented the plenary lectures and panels. These conversations focused on key issues in religion scholarship, among them “The Politics of Representation: Who Speaks for and about Religion?”; “The Engendering of Religions and Their Study”; “Religions and Violence”; and “Religion, Human Rights, and Democracy.”

In the workshop on “The Politics of Representation,” convener Ebrahim Moosa (Duke University) raised the following issues: if scholars speak about religion, especially religions not one’s own, then so should religious traditions have the opportunity to speak about and

See **CONFERENCE** p.19

An Interview with Pauline Yu, President of the American Council of Learned Societies



Pauline Yu is President of the American Council of Learned Societies. Yu, a member of the ACLS Board of Directors since 1998, was formerly Dean of Humanities in the College of Letters and Science and Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. Before becoming Dean at UCLA in 1994, Professor Yu taught at the University of California, Irvine, where she was Professor and Founding Chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures. Between 1986 and 1989, she was Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, having joined that faculty as an Associate Professor in 1985. She earlier held appointments as an Assistant Professor (1976–1980) and Associate Professor (1980–1985) in Humanities and East Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University in 1978.

RSN: First of all, congratulations on being appointed the president of the American Council of Learned Societies. This is quite an honor. Can you tell us

how you first learned that you were appointed?

Yu: Thanks very much for the good wishes. I was both surprised and thrilled when Sandra Barnes, professor at the University of Pennsylvania, co-chair of the search committee, and member of the ACLS Board, called me with the news shortly after Christmas last year. It certainly added to the excitement of the holiday season! It was very difficult to leave the deanship at UCLA, and I think only the ACLS could have persuaded me to do it.

RSN: Can you tell us about what types of initiatives you expect to undertake at the ACLS?

Yu: A great deal of my effort will be devoted to furthering the mission that has been at heart of the ACLS since its establishment — supporting scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences in a variety of ways. Our core fellowship program has been substantially reinvigorated over the past few years, thanks to enhanced support from individuals, foundations, our college and university associates, and our research university consortium. Since 1997 we’ve raised more than \$17 million for the fellowship program alone, and we’ve secured commitments of an additional \$12 million over the next seven years. We have developed innovative programs targeting specific faculty populations and have streamlined and enhanced basic governance structures as well. In the past year, ACLS awarded \$5.1 million in fellowship stipends to scholars. We’ll need to continue to consolidate these initiatives, even as we develop new ones.

I’m also already working to strengthen our

ability to work with our immediate constituents, American learned societies, and the humanities community. I’ve had several meetings with the executive councils or boards of organizations like the AAR over the past few months and will continue to do so, as long as they’ll have me! It’s been extremely instructive for me, and I hope it’s been helpful for them as well. I’m especially eager to encourage collaborative initiatives between societies, and, indeed, the distinc-

ities explore how humans make sense of their lives, then surely religious studies embraces one of the central ways in which that happens. The study of religion is one of the most venerable areas of humanistic inquiry. It seems to me that there’s an inherent interdisciplinarity of approach and multiplicity of intersections with other disciplines that allow scholars of religion to make valuable contributions to other domains of scholarship as well. It’s also

“It’s also clear that, as an intrinsically and deeply global field, religious studies plays a key role in the internationalization of scholarship, not to speak of the international and political importance of religion itself.”

tiveness of the ACLS as a whole — its reach across institutional boundaries and its representative nature — positions us well to organize coordinated approaches to issues that affect us all.

The commitment of ACLS to international studies is also long-standing, and I think it needs to be reinvigorated as well, in ways that build upon our demonstrated strengths. I’ll be doing a great deal of thinking and consulting over the next several months about how best to accomplish this.

RSN: What is the most beneficial role that religious studies can play within the humanities?

Yu: If, among other concerns, the human-

clear that, as an intrinsically and deeply global field, religious studies plays a key role in the internationalization of scholarship, not to speak of the international and political importance of religion itself.

RSN: What are some ways in which the field of religion can help promote the humanities?

Yu: Because religion is in many ways a more public possession than “the humanities” are, scholars of religion may be in an especially good position to promote the understanding of the humanities outside the academy.

See **YU** p.19

Employment Information Services Center 2003

AT EACH ANNUAL MEETING, the AAR and the SBL jointly host the Employment Information Services Center (EIS). The Center is designed to facilitate communication between candidates for academic positions in the field of religion and employers seeking to fill available positions. The EIS Center provides interview space, posts job descriptions, makes candidate credentials available to employers, and conducts a message center. The 2003 EIS Center saw 405 candidates register. Ninety-eight employers registered, looking to fill a total of 121 positions. The ratio of registered candidates to registered job positions was 3.35:1.

Over the years the AAR/SBL Employment Information Services Center has collected data from registered candidates and employers. In the past, candidates have been free to select multiple subfields in religion when describing their academic qualifications. Beginning in 2003, however, EIS required that both candidates and employers designate one classification as their primary choice. By including only primary choices in these annual EIS statistics, more accurate conclusions can be drawn. However, this new method of reporting statistics means that the 2003 job classification statistics are not comparable to the EIS statistics of the past. ❧

EMPLOYERS	
Total Registered	98
Preregistered	76
Registered Onsite	22
Positions Available	121
Ratio of Positions to Candidates	1:3.35
CANDIDATES	
Total Registered	405
Preregistered	331
Registered Onsite	74
Female Participants	144
Male Participants	261
Ratio of Female to Male	1:1.8

Analysis

As can be noted in the charts to the right, the five subfields with the most positions available (in descending order) are:

- Early Christian Literature/New Testament
- Hebrew Bible
- Catholic Theology (all areas)
- Islam
- Christian Theology (general or not listed separately)

The five primary subfields of candidates (again in descending order) are:

- Hebrew Bible
- Early Christian Literature/New Testament
- Christian Theology: Systematic/Constructive

- Christian Ethics
- History of Christianity/Church History

Also noteworthy are some of the ratios of employer classifications to candidate classifications. However, it is important to remember that only primary classification choices are shown. Many jobs fall under classifications that candidates are less likely to use to describe their primary field, but may well select as a secondary or tertiary specialization (World Religions, for example). The classifications with the highest job to candidate ratio are:

- World Religions
- Preaching/Ministry
- Missiology
- Administration
- Christian Studies

JOB CLASSIFICATIONS	EMPLOYERS	CANDIDATES	RATIO
Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	3	2	3:2
East Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	4	3	4:3
South Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	6	5	6:5
Buddhism	1	7	1:7
Hinduism	1	6	1:6
Islam	7	8	7:8
Judaism	1	5	1:5
Hebrew Bible	9	48	9:48
Catholic Studies	1	2	1:2
Catholic Theology (all areas)	8	8	8:8
Christian Ethics	5	25	5:25
Christian Studies	3	1	3:1
Christian Theology (general or not listed separately)	7	23	7:23
Christian Theology: Practical/Praxis	0	8	0:8
Christian Theology: Systematic/Constructive	5	35	5:35
Early Christian Literature/New Testament	13	40	13:40
History of Christianity/Church History	3	24	3:24
Missiology	1	0	1:0
Old Testament	4	9	4:9
Pastoral Care	1	4	1:4
Preaching/Ministry	2	0	2:0
Comparative Religions	3	6	3:6
History of Religion (general)	0	5	0:5
Introduction to Religion	0	2	0:2
Philosophy of Religion	1	16	1:16
Religion/Theology: Two or More Subfields	6	11	6:11
Religious Ethics	3	10	3:10
World Religions	6	0	6:0
Arts, Literature & Religion	0	5	0:5
Central and South American and Caribbean Religions	1	1	1:1
Critical Studies/Theory/Methods in Religion	1	5	1:5
Gay/Lesbian Studies in Religion	0	1	0:1
Indigenous/Native/Traditional Religions	0	0	0:0
New Religious Movements	0	0	0:0
North American Religions	3	15	3:15
Racial/Ethnic Minority Studies in Religion	1	3	1:3
Social Sciences and Religion (e.g., Religion & Society, Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)	1	7	1:7
Women's Studies in Religion	1	4	1:4
Administration (e.g., president, dean, director, program director, coordinator)	1	0	1:0
Editorial	0	0	0:0
Library	0	0	0:0
Other	8	4	8:4
Not Reporting	0	47	0:47
Total	121	405	121:405

AAR Seeks Series Editor

The AAR seeks an editor for the Texts and Translations series. This series is devoted to making available to the religious studies community materials that are currently inaccessible, or that would fill an important research or pedagogical need were they to be collected or translated for the first time. Because of the breadth of this mandate, the series favors no particular methodological approach, and solicits works in all areas of religious studies. Recent reprints in the Texts and Translations series include Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason*; J. Samuel Preus's *Explaining Religion*; and Wilhelm Bousset's *The Antichrist Legend*. Recent translations include Schleiermacher's *Dialectic* and a Tamil poem and commentary, *The Study of Stolen Love*. The series has also recently published the 19th-century *Sabbath Journal of Judith Lomax*, as well as collections such as W. S. F. Pickering's *Durkheim on Religion*,

and Nancy Frankenberry and Hans Penner's *Language, Truth, and Religious Belief*.

AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing projects through to publication. The Texts and Translations editorship will begin with the November 2004 Annual Meeting. Experience in academic translating desirable but not necessary. Please send applications and nominations (self-nominations encouraged), including a letter describing interest, qualifications, and a current curriculum vitae, to Francis X. Clooney, S. J., Publications Committee Chair, preferably by e-mail attachment to clooney@bc.edu, or by surface mail, to Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3859. Application deadline: September 1, 2004. ❧

Going Our Way

The 2000 Survey of Departments of Religion

Hans J. Hillerbrand, Duke University

THE 2000 SURVEY of undergraduate departments of religion and theology is of considerable significance for understanding the academic study of religion in North America. It is by far the most informative empirical assessment of our field to date. It deserves (and begs for) extensive discussion and reflection, on both the national and the local institutional level, especially since the data encompass both the expected and the unexpected.

In a way, this census might be seen as a parallel to the theoretical reflections on the nature of “religion” and the “academic study of religion” that have accompanied our work during the past decades. Both have been extensive and yielded — I am thinking of Russell McCutcheon and Mark Taylor — provocative insights. However, the translation of these reflections into the academic and administrative realities of American higher education has proved to be rather complex. There is the argument that no separate administrative units (departments) for the study of religions are necessary since such a study is part of the agendas of other behavioral sciences and humanities departments. There is also the legacy that identifies “religion” with “Christianity.” And, emphatic demurrers notwithstanding, there continues the disposition to see the academic study of religion as more of an existential journey of discovery than an intellectual endeavor.

With these preliminaries before us, what does the 2000 Survey tell us?

First of all, the survey makes it clear that the universe of the academic study of religion in North America is both far more extensive than in any other country and yet is modest in size compared to such fields as chemistry or physics in the natural sciences or English and history in the humanities. There are over 3,000 departments of English and history in the United States, spread over uni-

versities, colleges, and community colleges; there are only 1,131 departments of religion, religious studies, or theology. This discrepancy in numbers finds a number of explanations, though there should be little doubt that the extensive absence of departments at public colleges and universities is a major factor. There are notable (and distinguished) exceptions — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, the University of Missouri, Arizona State University come to mind — but, looking at the country as a whole, the generalization that anxiety over breaching the wall of separation between church and state has not made public institutions part of our universe holds.

By the same token, the study of religion at church-related and “Christian” colleges and universities is more often than not at the heart of the instructional program of these institutions. Some of these institutions require one or more courses in religion for graduation; others require such courses to fulfill distribution requirements in general education. Moreover, many of these institutions are characterized by strong denominational ties or by a particular understanding of the Christian tradition, be it Catholic or Evangelical. The academic study of religion at these institutions is thus quite distinctive.

It is to be taken for granted that at these institutions “Christian Studies” dominates the curricular offerings.

The 2000 Undergraduate Survey provides empirical data to allow a better grasp of our field, both in a larger context and in its specific manifestations on college and university campuses. The analysis of the results yields a wealth of information about who we are, and what it is we are doing. To be sure, some limitations must be noted. The questionnaire was extensive and called for a host of specific information; one suspects that not all respondents answered the question-

Editor's Note:

With the completion of the data collection and analysis of both our undergraduate and graduate surveys, the Academy gathered a group of experts in the fields of religion, higher education, and the sociology of religion to review the results, identify the core questions and issues, and specify further work needed. After this daylong discussion on October 4 in Atlanta, RSN asked two of the participants who have extensive experience in the areas of graduate and undergraduate education (Richard Rosengarten and Hans Hillerbrand) to further refine and analyze the plethora of data that we had gathered and presented. Their articles in this issue of Religious Studies News highlight the salient features of both surveys. The results of both surveys and their extensive analysis will be posted on the Academy's Web site in the spring. Members will be notified of the location on our Web site in a future e-bulletin. It is the goal of the Academy to conduct regular periodic repetitions of these surveys, which will allow for trend analysis. Such analysis is critical for developing effective strategies to secure and strengthen the study of religion and theology in our colleges and universities.

naire according to the highest canons of scholarly accuracy. Also, not all of the 1,131 institutions with discrete administrative structures for the study of religion — free-standing departments, combined departments, decentered programs, and general humanities/social science programs — responded. However, the return rate (some 870 institutions) is impressive, and statistically that response return makes the findings of the survey valid for the entire field.

Perhaps the most interesting finding of the survey has to do with the nature of courses offered. It surely has been a widespread notion in the field that during the past generation or so departments of religion or religious studies changed from reflecting the model of Protestant seminaries to a new kind of department in which the study of Christianity, not to mention Protestantism, was no longer privileged over the study of other religions. The 2000 survey indicates,

“The survey makes it clear that our field is anything but embattled. It is exceedingly healthy in terms of the number of students taking courses and majoring in religion.”

Most notably, the data dispel a number of myths and generalizations that most of us — including the present writer — have tended to consider revelatory truths about our field.

To begin with, the survey makes it clear that our field is anything but embattled. It is exceedingly healthy in terms of the number of students taking courses and majoring in religion. During the four-year period (1996–97 to 1999–2000), enrollment in religion courses increased by over 15 percent, while the number of religion majors increased, during the same time, by 25 percent. In absolute numbers, religion courses had 685,000 students enrolled in 1999–2000 and 593,000 enrolled in 1996–97. This is surely impressive, even though both figures need to be viewed in light of the overall enrollment increase in American higher education during those four years.

however, that the nature of the field has changed far less than this might have suggested. The academic study of religion in the U.S. continues to be foremostly the study of Christianity. Here are some figures. Almost half of all courses (exactly 45.1 percent) taught in 1999–2000 were on Christian topics, with courses on “Introduction to the Bible” (11 percent of all courses), “Introduction to the New Testament” (10.5 percent), and “Christian Theology” (9.4 percent) leading the way. By way of comparison, Islam accounted for only 1.3 percent of all courses offered, while courses on Judaism accounted for 3.1 percent.

Analogously, courses on Christian topics were offered by more departments: New Testament courses were offered by 84 percent of the departments; Old Testament courses

See HILLERBRAND p.19

They Also Serve

Contingent Faculty in the Academy

Carey J. Gifford, American Academy of Religion

AT A SPECIAL TOPICS Forum at the 2003 Annual Meeting (“The Use and Abuse of Adjunct Faculty in Religious Studies”), further data analysis was presented on the state of contingent faculty in the field of religious studies and theology in the U.S. and Canada. As a result of our further analysis of the data that we collected in our 1999–2000 survey of undergraduate departments of religion and theology in the U.S. and Canada, we have now confirmed empirically what many have felt — based on anecdotes and insights — to be the case.

The number of male contingent faculty in 1999–2000 was 2,443 and the number of female 1,051, making for a total of 3,494, a 32 percent increase over 1996–97. The ratio of women to men was 1 woman for every 2.3 men. The ratio of contingent

faculty to full-time faculty was 1 contingent for every 1.6 full-time positions.

We also found that contingent faculty taught 5,303 courses in 1999–2000. The average number of courses taught by any one contingent faculty was 6.45, for which the average per course compensation was \$2,445. Freestanding departments (as opposed to combined philosophy and religion departments, programs which borrow faculty from a number of departments, or humanities or social science divisions) paid the most for any single course taught by contingent faculty, with 33 percent paying \$1,000–\$1,999, and 27 percent paying \$2,000–\$2,999 per course.

Sixty percent of all male contingent faculty were employed by freestanding departments. However, we found that fully 28

percent of all institutions did not have any male contingent faculty. Twenty-one percent had only one contingent male, with only 16.5 percent having two. The greatest concentration of males (36.2 percent) were in Protestant institutions.

With regard to women, 65 percent of female contingents were employed by freestanding departments. Fifty-two percent of all institutions did not have any female contingent faculty. Twenty-four percent had only one, and only 11 percent had two. Again, the greatest concentration (36 percent) was in Protestant institutions.

We were curious, then, about what the census figures might show regarding the geographical dispersion of contingent faculty across the Academy's ten regions. The following statistics reflect our findings:

- The percentage of women contingent faculty was greatest in the Midwest region.
- The percentage of men contingent faculty was greatest in the Southeast region.
- The percentage of all contingent faculty was greatest in the Southeast region.

When we look at the number of contingent faculty by types of institutions, the number of majors in those institutions, and the number of courses taught, the same geographical concentration patterns are present. These three facts regarding geographical concentration mirror the results of the census as a whole: that our field is geographically concentrated in the Southeast, especially among Protestant baccalaureate institutions. ■

The AAR Graduate Survey at First Blush

Some Initial Thoughts on Institutional Definition and Doctoral Areas of Concentration

Richard A. Rosengarten, University of Chicago Divinity School

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY of Religion seeks to develop reliable data on the field, and it has taken an important step toward that goal in its recent surveys of undergraduate and graduate programs. The difficulties entailed in such an undertaking will be familiar to most readers of this piece, but merit brief rehearsal: as even a cursory review of *Openings* illustrates, programs in religion at the undergraduate level are idiosyncratic, with reference both to what individual appointments are expected to cover (Hinduism and New Testament, e.g.), and to each department's self-understanding and articulation. Graduate programs also have their own self-understandings and articulations, and it will be especially interesting and crucial in the future to learn what we can about how they do and do not "map onto" undergraduate curricula. In seeking data from the graduate programs, the AAR hopes to compile a database of how those who teach undergraduates are trained, and thus to achieve a reliable and ongoing taxonomy of the field of graduate education and, presumably, some sense of how graduate education shapes undergraduate instruction in religion.

My assignment is to offer preliminary observations on the data in the graduate survey. What we have is responses from 60 of the 99 institutions contacted (15 Canadian institutions on the original mailing list had to be dropped due to under-reporting). While possibly less reliable than the undergraduate survey, the graduate survey presents some useful and interesting data. Space conveniently excuses the challenge of a full review (the survey itself is 40-plus pages in length), and in what follows I focus on two tables: the actual names of the 60 participating programs, and the "Areas of Concentration" within which students at these institutions pursue their programs of doctoral study. A general reason for my choice of these tables is that the data they provide is the most straightforward self-reporting in the survey; there is the least room in these responses, and in a reader's analysis, for misconstrual of a program's self-understanding. Other survey data, perhaps especially the numbers that describe placement, are comparatively opaque. But each of these tables also holds intrinsic interest. As the list of eligible institutions (see Web address below) underscores, the survey on graduate programs raises taxonomic questions about graduate education in religion. I want to suggest that such questions begin, and may in fact end, with questions of nomenclature. Table II's list of areas of concentration highlights important issues about the location of the study of Christianity in graduate education, and the relationship of confessional and non-confessional perspectives within the academy.

What's in a Name?

The full list of eligible institutions, including those who responded, is available at www.aarweb.org/department. The institutional names listed are the ones they provided (they are not chosen from a pre-set listing). The immediate reaction some will have to this table is that it is "apples and oranges." These appear to be very different institutions in terms of their purposes in devoting themselves to the study of religion. We find departments of religion and theological seminaries, schools of theology, religion, and divinity, and variations on these. The student at Andrews Theological Seminary and her counterpart at Syracuse University's Department of Religion would appear to have very different concep-

tions of the business of their graduate education. So how we organize this list of institutions into some set of categories will be crucial to understanding both who is in this survey and, by extension, who is doing graduate education in religion.

Editor's Note:

The Academy surveyed those universities, theological schools, and seminaries in the United States and Canada that offered an academic doctoral program in religious studies or theology. We defined academic doctoral programs as those in which students earn a doctorate with the intent of becoming scholars, researchers, or professors. The purpose and nature of such a doctoral degree must be to prepare individuals for research and teaching in religion and theology. Typically the resultant degree would be the PhD, ThD, STD, DHL, or DHS. We were not soliciting information on professional doctoral degrees whose intent and purpose is to further an individual's administrative, or counseling competence, such as the ministerial degree.

The following chart, which I construct from the list of responding institutions, offers an elementary organization by their common designation.

Table I

Participating Program's Designation	# respondents
Department of Religion/Religious Studies	20
Theological Seminary	12
Department of Theology/Theological Studies	7
School of Theology	6
School of Religion	3
University-related Divinity School	2
Seminary	1
Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies	1
Free-standing Divinity School	1
Committee on the Study of Religion	1
School of Religious Studies	1
Institute of Religion	1
Graduate Division of Religion	1
Graduate Department of Religion	1
Theological Union	1

The immediate question raised by such "sorting" has to do with the degree to which this reflects a common syntax that supports even this minimal taxonomy. Is there a difference between "religion" and "religious studies"? Does the moniker "school of" transform or merely underscore the differences implied in the institutions that follow that phrase with

theology (6), religion (3), and religious studies (1)? What difference is there, for instance, between my own institutional home, a university-related divinity school, and the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard, with which we occasionally compete directly for PhD students? (It would be especially interesting to hear the answer to this question from the Harvard Divinity School, which offers a ThD but did not respond to the survey.)

Such questions would seem to lend credence to the much-invoked distinction between theology and religious studies. Following that lead, there are 30 "theological" and 29 "religious studies" respondents. If we examine the programs in each, however, the distinction does not disappear but it does become more complex. An example underscores the complexity. Princeton University's Department of Religion, a respondent, includes in its curriculum doctoral areas of concentration in ethics and in biblical studies. Princeton Theological Seminary, also a respondent, also includes these areas of concentration in its doctoral curriculum. Despite these parallel programmatic structures that ensure their common inclusion in the survey, and student cohorts that might well identify their interests similarly and apply for at least some of the same jobs, they are not in my experience commonly grouped together in discussions of graduate education in religion. The reasons for this are not unrelated to the fact that one calls itself a department and resides in a university, while the other is a free-standing theological seminary. Some, perhaps many, feel confident that they know the difference between the two New Jersey respondents. But any account that offers a straightforward

and uncomplicated distinction will quickly bump into the important fact that these two responding institutions share a principled and vigorous endorsement of academic standards. This raises a set of questions that merit more serious conversation than they have received, about classic distinctions between the academic and the confessional in the study of religion.

A look at these names, and consideration of the questions they raise, also invites a caveat concerning the degree to which the survey actually captures graduate education in religion in the United States. There always has been, is today, and should always be significant scholarship on and teaching of religion not only in the departments, programs, schools, and committees that make such work their explicit business, but in related departments (philosophy, anthropology, literature, history, etc.) at many of the academic institutions to which some respondents belong. For understandable reasons, the AAR Graduate Survey does not capture that information in this survey. Yet if we are going to understand fully the structure and institutional self-understandings of graduate programs in religion, we will need to know a good deal more about this. It may also help us to frame the questions raised in the following section about the place of Christianity in graduate curricula.

Areas of Concentration

The AAR Survey solicited a set of data describing the areas of concentration of students in these doctoral programs. The responses to this question in the Survey are listed seriatim in Table II.

Table II
Distribution of students' primary concentration

Area of Concentration	Distribution
Christianity: New Testament/Christian Origins	397
Christian Theology: Constructive	372
Christianity: History	322
Old Testament or Hebrew Bible	241
Christian Theology	208
Christian Theology: Practical	195
Christianity: Ethics	175
Judaism	127
Missiology & Evangelism	103
Christianity & Judaism in Antiquity	100
Philosophy of Religion	86
Christian Education	71
Bible Exposition, Liturgical Studies, and Preaching	57
Culture and Theory in Religion	56
Pastoral Care and Counseling/Religion and Personality	53
Buddhism/Japanese/East Asian Religions	53
Social Scientific Studies	47
Hinduism/South Asian Religions	43
Ethics and Religion	43
Islam/West Asian Religions	33
Religion and Modernity; Religion and Social Change; Theology and Society	32
Theological Studies	19
American Religious History	18
Christianity	16
Religion in Antiquity	13
Bible and Theology	13
Confucianism/Chinese Religions	12
Middle East Studies	6
Interdisciplinary Studies	5
Rabbinics	4
Indigenous Traditions	3
African/African-Diaspora Religions	2
World Mission	1

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Volunteering for Committee Service in the Academy

Much of the work of the Academy outside of the Annual Meeting is accomplished through committees and task forces. These groups of members contribute their time and talents in support of the AAR's mission to foster excellence in the study of religion. For the ongoing vitality of the Academy's work, it is important to welcome new voices into the conversation and to achieve broad and diverse member participation in these activities. The Academy encourages letters of nomination for committee appointments, including self-nomination. All appointments are made by the president in consultation with the executive director. Please send nominations, including a curriculum vitae, to Myesha Jenkins at mjenkins@aarweb.org.

AAR would like to thank the following outgoing Committee, Task Force, and Jury members whose terms ended in 2003.

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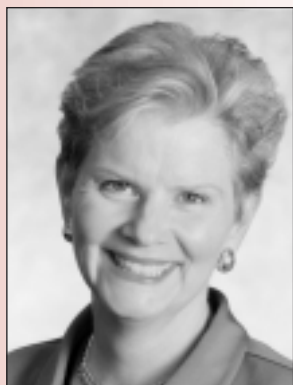
Robert Thurman, Columbia University (International Connections)

Manabu Watanabe, Nanzan University (International Connections)

* deceased

A Conversation with the President

Jane McAuliffe, Georgetown University



Jane Dammen McAuliffe is Dean of the College at Georgetown University and Professor in the Department of History and the Department of Arabic. She came to Georgetown in 1999 from the University of Toronto, where she was Chair of the Department for the Study of Religion and Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. Previously she had been on the faculty of Emory University's Candler School of Theology and was an associate dean there. McAuliffe received her BA in Philosophy and Classics from Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and her MA and PhD in Religious Studies from the University of Toronto. She has published primarily in the areas of Qur'anic studies and Muslim-Christian relations. Titles include Qur'anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis (Cambridge, 1991), Abbasid Authority Affirmed: The Early Years of al-Mansur (SUNY, 1995), and With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Oxford, 2003). Presently she is the general editor of a five-volume Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an (Brill, 2001), of which three volumes have now been published. Her work has been supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship (1992), a Mellon Foundation fellowship (1994), a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship (1996), and a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship (1997).

RSN: Tell us something about your background. In what type of religious life, if any, did you grow up?

McAuliffe: I was a middle child in a family of six children and both my parents were very devout Roman Catholics. I grew up in a world of parochial schooling and CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) dances, of novenas and May processions, of little confession books where MORTAL SINS were listed in capital letters and venial sins were lowercased. We knelt down after dinner most nights to say the "family rosary" — "the family that prays together, stays together" was a frequent slogan in our house — and we gathered in front of the TV weekly for a good dose of Bishop Sheen. I've had fun reminiscing with my predecessor, Bob Orsi, over all of these memories. That world of mid-century American Catholic devotionism is one that he has chronicled with acuity and affection. But, in many ways, it is now a lost world, one that my children can hardly imagine.

RSN: How did your parents or your extended family influence your career?

McAuliffe: As a family, we talked about religion and theology a lot. It was a staple of our dinner table conversations and I can

recall countless Sunday dinners in which the day's sermon was discussed or debated. My mother, who was not college-educated, was nevertheless a voracious reader and much of what she read was concerned with theology, spirituality, liturgy, and biblical studies. My father, perhaps because he was a convert to Catholicism, had a tremendous interest in matters of ecclesiology and church politics. Added to this, several of my siblings spent various amounts of time in a convent or a seminary, and the notion of a vocation to the religious life was a prized ideal in our household. One older brother in particular, who was a seminarian for about ten years, kept feeding me lots of interesting books and articles, many of them dealing with the theological ferment that immediately preceded and coincided with the second Vatican Council. My closest relative, my mother's sister, is a Franciscan nun who taught at a Catholic women's college in the Midwest and who was also very generous to me with reading material and good conversation.

RSN: Can you describe your early higher education?

McAuliffe: All of my education until grad school — elementary, secondary, and undergraduate — was in Catholic schools. I spent my high school years at Georgetown Visitation in Washington, D.C., the oldest Catholic girls' school in the country. It's a wonderful school and I'm delighted that my youngest is a student there now. For college, I did what Catholic women of my generation quite ordinarily did — I headed for a Catholic women's college, Trinity College, also in Washington, D.C. This was in the '60s, just before places like Yale, Georgetown, Princeton, etc., began to admit women, and most of my high school friends, both male and female, also departed for single-sex schools. I'm actually a big believer in the value of single-sex schools for women and Trinity offered me terrific opportunities for leadership and for quasi-tutorial connections with faculty. It was a solid liberal arts curriculum and I ended up doing a double concentration in philosophy and classics.

RSN: At what point did you decide you wanted to become a scholar of religion?

McAuliffe: If you want the honest truth, I've always felt that I landed in this field by sheer luck. A week after graduation from Trinity College, I married the love of my life and assumed that I was thereby forsaking any teenage dreams of an academic career. The first two babies quickly followed, 16 months apart, and with a graduate student spouse, life was pretty hectic and decidedly hand-to-mouth. (By that time we were living in New York and my husband was finishing a PhD in Italian literature at NYU.) After figuring out the rudiments of cooking, cleaning, and infant care, I began to feel a bit restless and signed up for a graduate class at Fordham in religious education. Initially, I was motivated by a feeling of inadequacy at the thought of trying to pass on my faith to these new little people in my life. The course was interesting, and the following semester I took another one, this time with Ewart Cousins. In a conversation with him, he sensed my growing interest in theological studies and suggested that I try some of the courses at Union Theological. So I did that, taking one a semester, which was all that we could afford, both in terms of tuition and child-care dollars.

At some point during those single-course semesters, I found out about a program supported by the Danforth Foundation that provided funding for women who had been out of school for awhile but wanted to return for full-time PhD work. I sent in an application, said a non-stop series of novenas, and got lucky! At just that point, my husband was offered a position at the University of Toronto — and here's where the stars really lined up right — Toronto was just beginning a PhD program in religious studies. In my first year of full-time coursework, I took a number of classes in various religious traditions and became fascinated with Islam. That launched me in the direction that I've pursued ever since.

“And I do think that the word “service” captures a great deal of who we are as academics and of what we do in our vocations of teaching, scholarship, administration, etc.”

RSN: Describe the period of your doctoral study. What was it like and how did you feel while studying at Toronto?

McAuliffe: Well, part of my answer to the previous question segues into this one. The Toronto graduate program in religious studies was — and is — a terrific, interdisciplinary endeavor. It was created by pulling together faculty from departments and programs across the university whose research involved some aspect of religion. In my case, for example, I actually studied primarily with faculty from what is now known as the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, but did so only after some core preparation in method and theory, as well as in religious traditions other than the one in which I concentrated. Toronto was also generous with teaching opportunities and quite soon after arriving there I was given the chance to develop a new undergraduate course. I then taught the equivalent of a two-thirds load for the rest of my time as a graduate student. Consequently, time management was always a problem. By then we had three children, an infant and two in elementary school, so I learned how to work productively in very brief time segments. Now, as an administrator, that's a technique that still stands me in good stead!

RSN: While at Toronto what were your areas of greatest interest and with whom did you study?

McAuliffe: I took my first graduate course at the University of Toronto with Will Oxtoby, whose enthusiasm for the entire field of religious studies was boundless and whose death last year was a real loss to the field. A course on Islamic philosophy with Michael Marmura was my first exposure to Islamic studies and it was followed by an opportunity

See **MCAULIFFE** p.16

Department Meeting

Santa Clara University Department of Religious Studies

Catherine Bell, Chair

Santa Clara University is a Jesuit university founded in 1851, the oldest institution of higher education in California. It has approximately 4,500 undergraduates in the College and 4,000 graduate students in programs in law, business, engineering, education, and ministry. It is located at the site of one of the original Franciscan missions along the Camino Real and it sits in the heart of Silicon Valley. So students traipse over a rich archaeological site in a highly wired (now wireless?) environment. Compared to many schools in the West, there is a sense of history and regular reflection on it — with recent emphasis on unflattering moments in “mission” life before the university was founded. After many years of a theology program in which students were constantly taking half-credit courses in aspects of Thomism, a proper Department of Theology was formed. Finally, under the influence of the late Catholic theologian Theodore Mackin, this became the Department of Religious Studies in the late '60s, an explicit commitment to an undergraduate curriculum that places Christianity within a fully global context.

Bell received her BA in 1975 from Manhattanville College in New York, where her teachers included PhDs from Chicago such as Franklin Gamwell. Not uninfluenced, she went to the University of Chicago Divinity School where she took her PhD in 1983. She studied history of religions with Mircea Eliade and Joseph Kitagawa, focusing on Chinese religions. Her dissertation addressed the role of “texts about rites” in early medieval Daoism. She has published two books that further developed her ideas about rites (Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice [1992]; Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions [1997]), while a series of articles has pursued her interest in the printed text in Chinese popular religion. After research time in Beijing, she suddenly became department chair in 2000 and her research is severely impacted, but she is currently focusing on the social and material aspects of “believing.”

RSN: How long have you been in the department, and acting as chair?

Bell: I came to the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara in 1985 after living in Japan and Taiwan for nearly four years. California was just one more exotic culture to me then, a New Yorker by birth. I was the first person tenured in Asian religions; and in truth I felt like I was responsible for the whole non-Christian world, depending on how you count Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. For a number of years I taught all the Asian offerings, as well as comparative courses that included Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. It was a great education. But I never expected to be chair — I tried to be a good lieutenant without showing any interest in advancement. However, when my predecessor, Denise Carmody, was suddenly appointed university provost in 2000, the chair position had to be filled quickly and I was one of the few available full professors. It has turned out to be more demanding than I imagined, although I have a few incalculable assets: a truly excellent administrative assistant and a cooperative set of colleagues.

RSN: Can you tell us anything distinctive about the department or faculty?

Bell: The department at Santa Clara University is unusual in several ways. Since the undergraduate core curriculum includes three courses (quarter system) in religion, we have a very large department compared to most undergraduate institutions — currently

22 tenured or tenure-track faculty, inevitably supplemented by some adjuncts. The size creates a scholarly community that is quite accomplished, dynamic, and collegial. When I came in 1985, other departments were still prone to poke fun at Religious Studies — not really understanding the professional field behind it. Due to several good chairs before me, it is now one of the strongest departments in the college. We had seven books published in the last two years alone! We don't have graduate students, except for an occasional stray from neighboring institutions, and the college is committed to quality undergraduate teaching. All of which means there is a heavy course load — and yet we are expected to be productive scholars. Teacherscholars. Of course, it is great to have Berkeley, Stanford, and GTU all in the Bay Area orbit. We feel quite in touch with various intellectual circles.

RSN: How does your department organize religious studies as a field of knowledge?

Bell: Since we offer approximately 120 courses each year, we organize such a huge curriculum in two main ways. First, the courses are divided into three areas: Scripture and Traditions; Theology, Ethics and Spirituality; and Religion and Society. This imperfect but useful system generally helps students find the types of courses that interest them, but it also represents a department consensus, built up over time, about what we consider important for this school to provide. As a Catholic institution, this is the place to study that tradition in depth, but we understand the breadth of context needed today for any specialization. So, with temporary holes here and there, we cover all the main areas articulated by the Academy.

But then it gets really interesting. In addition to the three areas, the courses required by the core curriculum are sequential, a first-level course, second, etc. We have experimented with distinguishing them by approach, substance, and pedagogical purpose. So, for example, first-level courses in all three areas would be equally concerned with providing a basic language or set of categories for thinking about religion — not just do you believe or not. Second-level courses are designed to provide a coherent and substantive body of data about a tradition (Islam) or a method of study (psychological approaches), attempting to expand the student's basic awareness of what religion includes. The third-level course, one of the last courses taken to complete the Core, deliberately addresses open-ended issues, questions for which there are no neat answers. Those courses try to model how to engage the concerns raised by religion or about religion in the life of any thoughtful person. Sometimes I think we may have gotten a little too ambitious, but we have learned a lot in defining a sequence of goals. And, of course, it makes religion very central to the Core; it is the only requirement that straddles all four years of a student's intellectual life.

RSN: What difference, if any, is there to being at a Catholic and Jesuit university?

Bell: Well, the first thing that struck me is how quickly you become self-conscious about sweeping generalizations about religion. Every day one is reminded how diverse religious communities are in the beliefs and practices of their members, yet how powerful religious “cultures” are — both locally and larger — notwithstanding a secular pluralist consumer society. At the

same time, of course, the faculty and student body at Santa Clara is probably among the most diverse of undergraduate institutions. The Jesuits constantly reflect on their place in the world, where to give their energies, and how to stand for something without appearing to stand against something else. That is an influence on campus that most of us think is very humane. The Jesuit Catholic influence is strongest when it is subtle and humble, embracing differences, not encouraging prima donnas, and understanding that since values matter to all of us there is a common language to speak — by deed as much as word.

Santa Clara is also always subject, to some degree, to the ramifications of what is happening in the Catholic Church. But the administration has vigorously defended academic freedom of speech, not simply in discussions of the papal document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, but much more frequently in reply to some parents who would prefer greater orthodoxy.

“As department chair, however, I suppose I take a visceral pleasure in solving problems — creatively or maybe just definitively. Yet I undeniably enjoy being able to think about the larger picture, trying to put my finger on the real issues, and then to begin to arrange the pieces in ways that address them.”

RSN: Is there anything distinctive about the teaching you and your colleagues do?

Bell: There is a basic challenge for the professional scholar teaching undergraduates: to keep the focus on the most basic and important issues without being simplistic or short on substance. Students love religion classes if they address the “big questions” and show how they come embedded in complex issues and histories. An experienced teacher can do this; a beginner has to run through all her “material” several times before she realizes the connections that are pedagogically important. If a faculty member feels he has to choose between faithfulness to the details of his subject matter and capturing the interest of his young students, then he is misconstruing the challenge. I was asked how to teach “postmodern theology” when they did not know any theology — well, the answer is the same for theology, biblical studies, Buddhism, or comparative ethics, etc.: Teach the questions, old and new. Teach them how knowledge changes. Jonathan Z. Smith wrote a great little piece years ago, “Narratives into Problems,” (*JAR* 56:4), which argues that the introductory course should focus on questions, arguments or “theses.” But all courses should, so I give the article to all my new faculty.

RSN: How do you support scholarship among a faculty that carries a heavy teaching load?

Bell: Well, that's hard. It helps to remain productive oneself, but that is only part of creating an atmosphere of gentle expectation that everyone is working on something that can be shared. Carrots and sticks are much less effective than an atmosphere in which one's professional self-respect involves continuing scholarship. So, you always address them as the scholars they are, scholars who are teaching

a lot and over involved in service. Recently we have started the academic year with a small retreat in which the main event, and the one most enjoyed, is to sit around a large table and take turns telling what we are currently working on. All sorts of connections and conversations ensue.

RSN: Does your department have any plans for the future?

Bell: Yes. We are currently launching a department initiative called the “Local Religions Project,” something we have been planning for awhile. A recent national study led by Robert Putnam (*Bowling Alone*) of Harvard found that compared to others around the nation, in our community, Silicon Valley, there is hardly any “social capital,” that is, the activities and organizations that create bonds among citizens. Yet Silicon Valley emerged as particularly active religiously. We are a terribly rich patchwork of distinct religious communities, but each community,

especially the newer immigrants, tends to ignore the others — in order to preserve cultural identity in the middle of a globalized technological economy. They want their children to stay close. In comparison to New York City or Boston, it appears, more sub-communities live closer together but with less interaction. Well, this is fascinating: religion providing small community cohesion, but repelling involvement in any larger network. The Local Religions Project wants to address this issue, slowly, and learn. We are beginning by creating a data bank, an inventory, and a map; and we are starting to link those efforts to the classroom by making contacts, asking for the opportunity for students to visit on field trips, and then for community leaders to visit our campus in return. The goal is to see if the university can serve as a neutral forum in which these communities can explore ways to build relationships — social capital — without losing anything. We are learning from the projects that have gone before us, like Diana Eck's Pluralism Project, or the models currently developed at USC and UC-Santa Barbara. But we are also trying something a bit different, and hope that the Jesuit presence will reassure these neighbors that “godlessness” is not the result of greater involvement in society.

RSN: What gives you the greatest job satisfaction?

Bell: My greatest job satisfaction as a human being comes when I go home and leave it all behind me. As department chair, however, I suppose I take a visceral pleasure in solving problems — creatively or maybe just definitively. Yet I undeniably enjoy being able to think about the larger picture, trying to put my finger on the real issues, and then to begin to arrange the pieces in ways that address them. But I am a slow learner at times, and I have no head for the all details and deadlines. ❖

Editor's Note:

Recipients of AAR's research grants are asked to submit a brief report. Ronald M. Davidson was a 2001–2002 recipient of an Individual Research Grant. His report is below.

Research Briefing*Epigraphic Research in Indian Esoteric Buddhism*

Ronald M. Davidson, Fairfield University



THE PROPOSED PROJECT was to travel to the Office of the Chief Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore (Karnataka State, South India), and to research unpublished inscriptions. This project was motivated by Leslie C. Orr's observation that, "Approximately 15,000 Chola period inscriptions have been found so far, and about a third of these have been published" (*Donor, Devotees, and Daughters of God*, Oxford, 2000, p. 21). Inscriptions are essential primary data for any historian of India, and I needed to determine if there was an analogous case for North Indian inscriptions. My conversations with Indian archaeologists seemed to verify this, since there was the claim sometimes made that 100,000 inscriptions had been discovered but only approximately 57,000 have been published or even reported.

I arrived in Mysore on 21 May, 2002. Fortunately, a chance encounter in Boston in April with Dr. Frederick Smith of the University of Iowa had provided the optimum contact: Dr. M. S. Nagaraja Rao, a former director general of the Archaeological Survey of India and current director of the Dhvanyaloka Centre for Indian Studies in Mysore. Dr. Nagaraja Rao is quite enthusiastic about American scholars and currently working with the University of Iowa in various capacities. Very kindly, he made a room in his guesthouse available for me and graciously took me around to introduce me to three key individuals: Dr. K. M. Bhadri, Chief Epigraphist and Director of Epigraphy, Dr. T. S. Ravi Shankar, Assistant Director of Epigraphy, and Dr. H. V. Ramesh, Honorary Director of the Oriental Institute, Mysore University. Without Dr. Nagaraja Rao's introductions, my time in Mysore would have been much less profitable.

Dr. Bhadri gave me complete access to the epigraphic library, where most of the important publications on epigraphy in India have been collected. From May 23 to June 19, I worked almost every day in the library, reading through the abstracts of epigraphs or their full texts; on the weekends I worked on translating a Sanskrit text I had brought with me. I concentrated on those epigraphs found in the *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, inclusive of the years 1913–1994, the abstracts and epigraphs in *Indian Archaeology — A Review*, inclusive of the years 1963–1992, all volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, all vol-

umes of *Epigraphia Indica*, and all volumes of *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*. Besides these, I read through most back issues of *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, the *Indian Antiquary*, the *New Indian Antiquary*, the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, and many dozens of volumes of collected inscriptions, festschrifts and other sources where inscriptions have been published. During this time, I estimate that I surveyed the abstracts or full inscriptions of approximately 30,000 inscriptions and filled three notebooks with notes. As I came to know Dr. Ramesh and some members of the Epigraphical Society of India, I was also able to join as a life member — impossible without actually being in Mysore.

It quickly became obvious that Leslie Orr's statement was entirely true, but that this applied primarily to Chola inscriptions rather than those from North India. There were some North Indian inscriptions that have not been published, but they are relatively few in comparison to the great body already published. The claims to 100,000 inscriptions are evidently part of South Asian rhetorical style, and have little bearing in fact. Garbini's 1993 survey (Riccardo Garbini, "Softward Development in Epigraphy: Some Preliminary Remarks," *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* XIX: 63–79) has shown that no more than 60,000 have been reported in any print medium, and Dr. Bhadri assured me that there are not hoards of epigraphs stacked

up in some storeroom. As there is now a great competition to publish epigraphs in a timely manner — with many epigraphers and relatively few new epigraphs — I believe this to be the case.

However, it became equally obvious to me that, despite some claims by Buddhologists that known Mahayana or other later Buddhist inscriptions have been surveyed, this is not the case. There are more Mahayana epigraphs, for example, than had been generally reported in Buddhological literature, and I did happen across two Vajrayana inscriptions that will be useful, as well as a host of related Buddhist and non-Buddhist inscriptions from medieval India. The greatest benefit from my stay in Mysore, though, is that I managed to gain a better understanding of the breadth and scope of Indian epigraphy, its nature and limitations. I have been able to determine what it is and what it is not. This would have been impossible in the U.S., for there is no library that contains the collection found in the Mysore archive.

I wish to thank the American Academy of Religion for the support provided for my stay in Mysore for the month I needed. While the geopolitical military standoff between India and Pakistan, which happened exactly while I was there, made the trip a little more exciting than I had anticipated, my time in the epigraphy library was very well spent and I enjoyed making the scholarly contacts in Mysore. ❧

In the Public Interest*Promoting the Public Understanding of Religion in the Schools*

Diane L. Moore, Harvard University

ENHANCING the public understanding of religion is, appropriately, an important priority of the AAR. Aside from legitimate concerns about the future of the profession and a desire to better educate citizens about religion as a sociocultural as well as a theological phenomenon, scholars of religion know all too well that the consequences of our national religious illiteracy are grave ones that serve to foster and often justify bigotry, intolerance, and fear. Though these consequences are well documented throughout the history of the U.S., they have come into bold public relief in the aftermath of 9/11. Shocking images of targeted violence against those perceived to be of Arab descent and a growing discomfort with the underlying justifications for many of our nation's policies related to terrorism have been well documented and need not be rehashed here. It is, however, worthy of note that 9/11 and its aftermath have sparked an unprecedented desire by many in the nation to learn more about Islam in particular and, by extension, religion in general as a sociocultural phenomenon. This is especially apparent in our nation's schools. Public and independent schoolteachers have scrambled to find useful, credible information to address these issues responsibly in classrooms all across America.

This spate of interest is in many ways heartening to those of us who have devot-

ed our careers to the public understanding of religion. There is, however, a danger that many of these activities may actually exacerbate the very problems they are intended to overcome. In the context of our national illiteracy about religion in general and specific traditions in particular, educational efforts by those who have not been trained in religious studies will often unwittingly reproduce unexamined stereotypes and/or problematic methodological assumptions that deepen rather than minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding. Here I will outline what I perceive to be two common and related examples of public illiteracy about religion as they are manifest in the schools. I will close with some suggestions for how we in the Academy can join with others to further promote the public understanding of religion in intellectually credible, constitutionally sound, and educationally innovative ways.

Religion Perceived as Ahistorical Devotional Practice

Given the fact that few people have been exposed to the study of religion from a sociological perspective, religion is often interpreted from a simplistically defined prescriptive lens with little understanding of its descriptive or social-historical dimensions. Wilfred Cantwell Smith articulated an understanding of these distinc-

tions as "religious experience" and the "cumulative tradition" to represent religion as both devotional practice and social-historical phenomenon. While many have since taken issue with Smith's specific representation of these arenas as discrete, scholars of religion recognize that the study of religion is not an ahistorical enterprise. This insight is not widely shared, however. For a complex array of reasons, many citizens still equate religion itself with theological beliefs that are both timeless and self-contained. (This understanding is, of course, influenced by a Protestant Christian representation of religion.) Though many will recognize that within a given tradition there are often competing claims regarding what constitutes legitimate expression of the faith, these disputes are rarely understood in their social, political, and historic context. This lack of exposure to religion as a social/historical phenomenon coupled with the fact that relatively few are aware of even the basic tenets of most of the world's religious traditions creates an intellectual black hole where spurious claims have as much credibility as more accurate ones. Without the fundamental tools to assess competing representations *within defined contexts*, simplistic and/or sensationalist depictions are often uncritically accepted. Thus, for example, Islam becomes equated with media representations of the Taliban or, conversely (and

with the intention of countering that depiction), Islam is portrayed as a religion that promotes rather than denigrates fundamental human rights. Both representations share the assumption that Islam is itself definable in absolute terms devoid of historical/cultural expression — an assumption that few people trained in the study of religion would accept.

Religion Prone to Uncritical Embrace or Simplistic Rejection

The second example of religious illiteracy that I will highlight is related to the first: Because religion is often associated with discrete belief systems, it can easily be either rejected as obsolete or embraced and interpreted uncritically through one's own particular experience. For example, as Stephen Carter and others have documented, religion is often disregarded or trivialized as a credible contemporary worldview because it is equated with "blind," simplistic faith; oppression (especially of women and those representing "foreign" religious traditions); irrational views that are contradictory to science; and/or unfounded (naïve) optimism. Those who hold these views about religion have a difficult time taking religion seriously as a contemporary, relevant, and sophisticated phenomenon. On the other

See **MOORE** p.16

Editor's Note:

"In the Public Interest" is a regular feature in Religious Studies News, prepared by the Academy's Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion.

Member-at-Large

Eileen Barker, London School of Economics

Eileen Barker, PhD, OBE, FBA, is Professor Emeritus of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion at the London School of Economics. Her main research interest is "cults" "sects" and new religious movements, and the social reactions to which they give rise; but since 1989 she has also been investigating changes in the religious situation in all the traditionally Christian post-communist countries. She has over 200 publications (translated into 23 different languages). These include The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice? and New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction. In the late 1980s she founded INFORM, which provides information about the new religions that is as objective and up-to-date as possible. She is a frequent advisor to governments, other official bodies, and law-enforcement agencies around the world; and is the only non-American to have been elected President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

RSN: Can you tell our readers something about your research interest in new religious movements and the social reactions to which they give rise?

Barker: Well, I suppose I've always had a vulgar curiosity in how people can believe things that the rest of us think are clearly wrong, possibly dangerous or, at very least, somewhat weird. My first career was as an actress and I was never interested in playing pretty 'who's-for-tennis?' juveniles. I preferred the challenge of trying to portray the murderess, the psycho, or the oddball, and trying to work out (in the Stanislavski tradition) what there was in me that might (were I to have had similar experiences and to have found myself in that situation) allow me to understand why they would behave in the way they did — even if I was pretty certain I wouldn't go down the same path.

Later, through a series of accidents, I found myself transmogrified into a sociologist at the London School of Economics, but still with the same interests. For a few years I studied the different ways that science was used (or misused) to promote or denigrate religious or other ideological positions. This led me to study anti-evolution "Creation Science" at one end of the fundamentalist continuum and anti-bourgeois "Marxist Science" at the other; in between were various things like parapsychology and the sort of holistic science that some New Agers go in for.

Then I got an invitation to talk at a London conference on the Unity of the Sciences. My husband, who worked for the BBC, discovered that it was being organized by a Korean called Moon who claimed he was the Messiah, had connections with the Korean CIA, was being investigated by the Director of Public Prosecutions, and brainwashed his exploited followers. "You can't go now!" said my husband. "Nothing's going to stop me now!" I replied.

That's where I first met AAR's late president, Ninian Smart. We were fascinated by the ever-smiling and helpful Moonbeams (Ninian's term) and wondered whether they really could be that nice, almost creepily nice — were they actually brainwashed? Around that time, "deprogramming" had become popular on

the grounds that such cults had developed irresistible and irretrievable techniques to recruit their victims. A further lifelong interest was now sparked: exploring how and to what extent individuals can be controlled by social groups, and what implications this might have for issues of freedom, choice, and human rights. What a wonderful opportunity it would be to study the Unification Church and find out how they controlled their members!

RSN: Can you tell us about the reception which your award-winning book, *The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice?* has received?

Barker: It varied. The Moonies themselves weren't entirely happy with it. Some of them felt I'd betrayed them by not proclaiming the Truth as they saw it. The anti-cultists hated it because I questioned the effectiveness of brainwashing by pointing out that the overwhelming majority of those subjected to the "irresistible and irreversible" techniques managed to walk away. But the reviews were good, and it sold well! In fact, it is still being used, 20 years later — for Methods teaching as much as for informing people about the Unification Church.

RSN: Can you tell us about your research into religious change in post-communist countries?

Barker: This seemed to me to be another opportunity that was just too good to miss. Here was a wonderful laboratory situation that we could probably never have the chance to study again. A whole assortment of countries had been living under state-imposed secularism — and, almost overnight, religious freedom was being promoted left, right, and center. Of course, we now know that it hasn't worked — well, not in the way that it was hoped it would. Once the freedom honeymoon was over, governments, traditional religions, and ordinary people started to try to control everyone else's freedom — especially that of the non-traditional religions which had been clambering over the Berlin Wall since (and in several cases before) 1989.

I've now been to pretty well all the traditionally Christian post-communist countries apart from Belarus — some of them I've visited a dozen or so times. In a sense it's like studying new religions because the variety and the changes are so wide-ranging and rapid. Another thing is that you can't just look at the religions in isolation — you have to try to understand the history (during and before socialism), the economy, the politics, the culture, and so on. I really love going over there — though I must admit I tend to miss my own bed and a hot shower after a week or so.

RSN: And what about the religious and moral pluralism in Europe project?

Barker: This was a slightly unusual project for me. It involved administering an hour-long questionnaire to a random national sample of around 1,000 respondents in each of 11 different European countries. It was really hard work. I was the only native English speaker in the team and, although I had previously conducted some surveys, most of my work has involved observation and interviewing,

usually while living with different groups. I learned a lot, but, when push comes to shove, I tend to prefer meeting people to manipulating statistics.

RSN: What individual or movement has been the most influential in your intellectual life?

Barker: I don't think I can answer that one. Lots of people have influenced me, of course, but I've tended to take bits from here and there, rather than whole packages of ideas from any one individual or movement. My mother was pretty important in making me question a lot of what the rest of my world was telling me as a child. I suppose the anthropologist Mary Douglas had quite an important influence on me by making me aware of the role that conceptual boundaries play through their being both necessary and arbitrary. But I've been influenced by a whole lot of others, including students and some of the people whom I've got to know through my studies. I can't even remember the names of some of them, but they've helped me to see round intellectual corners — to glimpse at worlds which I hadn't been aware of before.

RSN: How can scholarship help reduce the occurrence of violence and aggression associated with religious movements?

Barker: Well, I'm not 100 percent convinced that it can — but I work on the assumption/hope that, other things being equal (which, of course, they rarely are), accurate, balanced knowledge is better than ignorance or half truths.

Some religious movements (new and old) have undoubtedly indulged in violent, aggressive, and/or criminal behavior, but most of them haven't and, curiously enough, recognizing that alone could go some way towards reducing problems. People tend to react to new or unfamiliar ideas and lifestyles with fear and suspicion — and ignorance, with often grossly distorted images being promulgated by the movements, their opponents, and the media. Over and over we can see situations being made worse at the individual, group, and/or governmental level — deviance amplification leading to and resulting from moral panics, as the criminologists might put it. The Waco debacle is an obvious example.

RSN: Does this tie in with your founding Inform?

Barker: Yes. By the mid-1980s I had seen plenty of examples of what appeared to me to be inappropriate behavior leading to unnecessary suffering. Some of this, I thought, might be avoided if the knowledge and understanding accumulated by scholars were more widely available — but scholars are not usually the most gripping of communicators; the media know much better than we do how to tell a good story.

Anyway, I thought it could be helpful to make scholarship more available, so I elicited the support of the British government, the mainstream churches, and several other bodies and individuals and set up something called Inform — an international network based at LSE that provides enquirers with information about minority religions that is as accurate, balanced, and up-to-date as possible. Now in

our 17th year, we have dealt with thousands of enquiries from all round the world; we have data on around 3,000 different religions and similar organizations; we organize regular day-long seminars; sometimes we mediate between the new religions and relatives of members.

Inform operates on the principle that the methods of the social sciences can produce more reliable information than the sort one gets from most other sources (which isn't to say we don't listen to and learn from people with different perspectives). If one hears a story at a dinner party about a cult-related incident that involved the speaker's cousin, it may well be true, but is not necessarily typical of new religions (or even that particular movement) or atypical of the rest of society. To take an example I often use, it is possible to read half a dozen headlines about a cult member committing suicide and start to wonder what it is about cults that leads people to take their own lives. However, one is unlikely to read a story about a Catholic committing suicide — it just isn't news — but the social scientist would want to compare the cult suicide rate with that of people of the same age and background as its membership; and if the latter were higher, we might want to ask what it is about new religions that stops people committing suicide. Of course, it may be that less people with a psychological disposition to commit suicide join the movement — but at least the question will have been raised.

But Inform operates with a working hypothesis that understanding how the world works is desirable not just from a scientific point of view (finding out what variable is likely to vary with what), but also from an empathic perspective — being able to understand why people (members and non-members) might do something in certain circumstances. Such information might alert us to, and perhaps help avert, a variety of potential problems. Of course, scholarship is never foolproof and Inform hasn't got a magic wand. I know it doesn't always work. But, I do believe — in fact I know — that it does sometimes work!

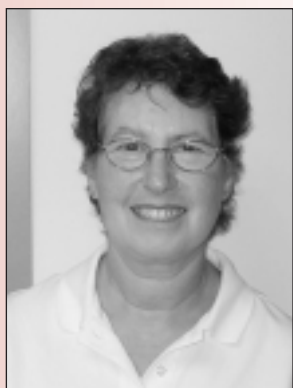
RSN: Do you see European society becoming more or less understanding and tolerant of nontraditional religious movements?

Barker: Yes — both more and less! I think the immediate influx of nontraditional religions can give rise to a variety of concerns, and there's no doubt that there's quite a bit of intolerance in some countries such as France and much, if not most, of the former Soviet Union. Economic, political, and cultural interests can appear threatened — indeed are threatened. There will always be conflicts of interests and other problems. But, despite some of the awful things that happened during the past century, Europe still has, relatively speaking, a history of tolerance and accommodation. I suspect there will be a process of increased understanding and tolerance of the present "nontraditionals," but that new nontraditionals will arrive to rock the boat. The future of religious innovations will be a rough journey; but I don't see European civilization being drowned in the immediate future. ♣

Beyond the Annual Meeting

Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion

Dena S. Davis, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law



Dena S. Davis is the Chair of AAR's Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion.

RSN: Tell us, what does your committee do?

Davis: The goal of our committee is to promote the public understanding of religion in many different venues. We have focused especially on supporting better news coverage of religion, better-informed responses by law enforcement to crisis situations involving religion, and more education of the public by religion scholars.

We have implemented a number of activities to encourage journalists to report on

religion, and to do it well. We have a yearly contest to recognize outstanding reporting in the field of religion, in three different categories. We announce the winners at the Annual Meeting, and post the winning entries on our Web site. A member of the committee sits on the awards jury, which also includes two journalists (or former journalists). Last year, we had over 50 submissions. I served on the jury, and it was fascinating to read these stories; my favorite was about the pastor who took off his toupee in the middle of a sermon about pride, and how that affected his congregation.

We also work to encourage and assist scholars to be good media resources. Tips on how to be a good source are on the Religionsource Web site at www.religionsource.org/Contents/Scholars.aspx. Although credit for the \$1.2 million Pew Grant to create Religionsource goes to AAR staff, the committee has played a supporting role. As I hope most AAR members know, Religionsource provides instant access for journalists to 5,000 scholars in the field of religion. They can research topics in ways that do not presuppose knowledge of the field, and receive contact information on scholars who are experts on the topic they are investigating. Our hope is that Religionsource will encourage journalists

to report on religion more widely and more accurately, and with a wider range of sources. We are especially concerned to reach journalists at media sources that cannot support a dedicated "religion beat."

Also, the committee annually gives the Martin Marty Award, to recognize scholars who have contributed to the public understanding of religion. Recent honorees include Diana Eck (creator of the Pluralism Project), and sociologist Robert Wuthnow.

RSN: It seems so obvious, but let me ask, what makes the work of this committee important for the Academy?

Davis: Yes, it does seem obvious! We are all in this field because we think that religion is an important piece of understanding the way in which people live their lives in this world. It's frustrating when the media ignores religion, or reports it in narrow, stereotypical ways. And it's frustrating when we see areas where our expertise could be useful, and it is ignored. I remember when President Clinton was preparing for a speech to the nation about a breakthrough in the peace effort in the Middle East, and he wanted a quote from the Koran; they had to borrow one from a driver who worked for

the Saudi Embassy. Don't you wish that the White House had experts in religion on tap, the same way they have experts in economics or foreign policy?

Our work is also important for the Academy because, to the extent that we can promote an understanding of religion in society as a whole, people will want to take classes in religion and read books about religion, and that expands our scholarly opportunities.

RSN: What have been some of the major initiatives of the committee? Or, what major initiatives do they plan on accomplishing in the future?

Davis: Our outreach to law enforcement began with the generally held opinion among scholars of religion that, had the FBI only consulted with us, the events at Waco would not have been as disastrous. Over the years, AAR staff has been instrumental in inviting FBI members to the Annual Meeting, and setting up private sessions with scholars on topics ranging from Islam to tarot. At the 2001 Annual Meeting, the CPUR and FBI worked together to stage a simulated hostage crisis: a man with a rifle had

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From the Student Desk

Graduate School and Parenting: Learning the Practice of Attention

Melissa Johnston-Barrett, Emory University



Melissa Johnston-Barrett is a PhD student in Theological Studies at Emory University. She can be reached at mjohnst@emory.edu.

THE PLATES ARE GIFTS from my husband's grandmother. They are now in a pile of big chunks, with tiny shards of porcelain scattered throughout the room. *She had been amazed that I could negotiate Atlanta traffic (after all, I am a woman). She believed the most fulfilling thing in her life to be giving birth and raising children.* The hardwood floor is tie-dyed in shades of brown, the pattern changed with the shattering of each thrown plate. I am standing silently, holding one last plate.

A professor has given me a copy of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason as a present for the birth of my son (yes, I'm still a scholar!). I treasure the gift, but find myself frustrated despite

the support given to me by faculty in my decision to have a child during coursework.

I finger the smooth edge of the plate, cool to the touch. *I don't even know yet how hard it will be when I go back to school full-time — the lack of places to nurse or pump on campus, the endless changing of meeting times (and days!) for a Tuesday night class that wrecks my childcare plans, the professor who "forgets" that I have to pump immediately before and after class in order to keep my milk up, the near lack of access to campus sites when wheeling a stroller, and night after night of four hours of sleep broken into one-hour increments . . .*

I let the last plate fly.

Being both a student and a parent (especially a new parent) is not the easiest thing to do in the academy, an institution that on the whole still honors the ideal student of 30 years ago. At times the tension can be overwhelming for those who want to take both being a scholar and being a parent seriously.

However, doing both simultaneously is not without its benefits. The tenure clock — with its seemingly endless time demands on new tenure-track faculty — has not yet started. There is the possibility of summers off and flexible schedules. And one might actually still be young enough to keep up with the kids.

But the problems are just as real. Money,

perpetually a problem for graduate students, is even tighter for graduate student parents. Quality childcare that is both accessible and affordable is especially hard to find. Gender roles that are prevalent in society find their echoes in the academy. New fathers may find that neither the university nor their professors take seriously the request for time to care for their newborn daughter. Mothers may find themselves in the awkward position of being simultaneously shamed both for staying home and not staying home with their children. And same-sex couples may find that they are completely discouraged from becoming parents at all (and their problems ignored if they are already parents).

This is sad because student parents have a gift to bring to the academy in terms of perspective. Caring for children is a good way to practice something like what Simone Weil has called "attention." Attention is the ability to make room for the other, to approach her or him without preconceived notions, without a fixed idea of what the other should be. It is, at bottom, a making of space conceptually, emotionally, and bodily.

Above all, a good parent learns to make space for each child as an individual and responds to her or his needs accordingly.

Yet unlike the type of attention that Weil speaks about in relation to school studies, the practice of attention learned from caring for children has the ability to emphasize the embodied, interdependent nature of what it is to be human. This perspective, if brought to

scholarship, can both enrich and ground academic discussions, which still seem too many times to treat the strongly individuated autonomous subject both as the ideal and the real notion of what a human being is. Children remind us that human beings do not spring fully formed and independent as they enter the world, that being dependent on others is indeed part of what it means to be human. This perspective helps to correct the tendency of the autonomous subject (in its various guises) to render fundamental facts about human existence invisible, such as birth, childhood, old age, and death. Children also remind us of how important nurturing social interaction is to the development of healthy individuals. Without it, children fail to thrive — as do adults, although we are not as quick to realize this. Recognizing these needs and realities of human life is imperative not only to producing good scholarship (especially in the humanities), but also to daily interaction with colleagues, students, and the community.

At the end of "School Studies," Weil says that the practice of attention developed in the context of school studies is a "pearl so precious that it is worthwhile to sell all our possessions, keeping nothing for ourselves, in order to acquire it." When attention is developed within the context of both school studies and parenting, the treasure may be even more precious. We can only find out if we support student parents in their endeavors to be both good students and good parents. I have a feeling that what results will be well worth the effort. ♦

Why Gods Should Matter in Social Science

Rodney Stark, University of Washington

Rodney Stark is a Professor of sociology and comparative religion at the University of Washington. This article is adapted from *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton University Press, 2003). Copyright (c) 2003 by Rodney Stark.

IF IT IS HARD to believe that conceptions of the Gods are ignored in most recently written histories, it is harder yet to understand why Gods were long ago banished from the social-scientific study of religion. But that is precisely why I have devoted two volumes to demonstrating the crucial role of the Gods in shaping history and civilization, and to resurrecting and reformulating a sociology of Gods.

If asked what the word “religion” means, most religious people will say it’s about God or the Gods. Yet, for a century, most social-scientific studies of religion have examined nearly every aspect of faith except what people believe about Gods. When and why did we get it so wrong?

Émile Durkheim and the other early functionalists, who emphasized the uses of religion, dismissed Gods as unimportant window dressing, stressing instead that rites and rituals are the fundamental stuff of religion. Seen from the perspective of “true” sociology, the concept of God “is now no more than a minor accident. It is a psychological phenomenon which has got mixed up with a whole sociological process whose importance is of quite a different order,” Durkheim wrote. “Thus the sociologist will pay scant attention to the different ways in which men and peoples have conceived the unknown cause and mysterious depth of things. He will set aside all such metaphysical speculations and will see in religion only a social discipline.”

Fifteen years later Durkheim had not wavered in his conviction that Gods are peripheral to religion, noting that, although the apparent purpose of rituals is “strengthening the ties between the faithful and their god,” what they really do is strengthen the “ties between the individual and society . . . the god being only a figurative representation of the society.” Thus began a new social-science orthodoxy: Religion consists of participation in rites and rituals — and only rites and rituals.

I have long suspected that the underlying “insight” that directed our attention away from God and toward ritual had to do with the fact that Durkheim and his circle were militantly secular Jews who, nevertheless, sometimes attended synagogue. In their personal experience, the phenomenology of religion would not have included belief in supernatural beings, but only the solidarity of group rituals. Those personal perceptions were then reinforced by their voluminous reading of anthropological accounts of the impassioned ritual life of “primitives” by observers who lacked any sympathy for the objects of those worship services.

Indeed, some of the most famous anthropologists advised against paying any attention to the reasons “natives” give for conducting rites. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown called it a “grievous error” to suppose anyone but a sophisticated outside observer could make sense of ritual activity. Thus, it was from his external vantage point that Radcliffe-Brown concluded that although “it is sometimes held that funeral and mourning rites are the result of a belief in a soul surviving death . . . I would rather hold

the view that belief in a surviving soul is not the cause but the effect of the rites.” By the same logic, cultures are said to “discover” the existence of rain Gods as a result of performing rain dances — never mind how it was that they started doing rain dances in the first place. One must be a highly trained social scientist to believe such things.

This, and a great deal of similar “expert” advice, turned social-scientific attention to peripheral matters, giving primacy to what people did in the name of religion, which then appeared to be fundamentally irrational to social scientists who, having dismissed the objects of those activities, could not conceive of why people engaged in such actions.

“The case that the supernatural, not ritual, provides the core of religion can be demonstrated in several quite specific and dramatic ways.”

If one truly believes that ritual is the essence of religion, then what is one to make of people who include very valuable “sacrifices” in their ceremonies, thereby depriving themselves? They must be crazy. Which is, of course, what many social scientists who devoted themselves to explaining “sacrifice” concluded. Royden Keith Yerkes stressed the blind irrationality of sacrifices in traditional societies, while Sigmund Freud claimed that the irrationality of sacrificial rites was rooted in the Oedipus complex. He argued that the burning of sacrifices commemorates the “original sin” in which the sons in a primal horde rose up and killed and ate their father and then had sex with his wives. That view was ratified at length by Roger Erle Money-Kyrle, and, in his influential psychology textbook, Brian Morris referred to Freud’s thesis as “amazing” and “tantalyzing.”

Eventually, that line of analysis “bottomed out” in such absurdities as Rodney Needham’s denial of the existence of any “interior state” that might be called religious belief and S. R. F. Price’s claim that religious belief is a purely Christian invention, so that when “primitives” pray for things, they don’t really mean it. Indeed, Dan Sperber offered the amazing solipsism that, because it is self-evident that supernatural beings do not exist, it is absurd to interpret religious rituals as efforts to enlist the divine on one’s behalf. Even Clifford Geertz went so far as to deny that healing ceremonies conducted by the Navajo are intended to cure the afflicted. Rather, he would have had us believe that those rituals merely serve to provide “the stricken person a vocabulary” to relate her or his distress “to the wider world.” Never mind that the ceremony consists almost entirely of the chant “may the patient be well.”

The notion that religion is not about belief in Gods also has flourished in less extreme forms. Robert N. Bellah condemned the “confusion of belief and religion” as an instance of the “objectivist fallacy,” claiming that the emphasis on belief is found only in “religious traditions deeply influenced by Greek thought — Christianity and Islam.” He contrasted those faiths with the religions of the East, being careful to note only those forms in which the supernatural is conceived of not as a being, but only as an impersonal, inactive “essence.”

Editor’s Note:

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Consequently, all Bellah really said was that Gods are not central to Godless religions.

Bellah also failed to acknowledge that Godless religions are not central to the religious life of the East. As I have often reported, Godless faiths are sustained only by small intellectual elites, and the popular forms of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism abound in Gods. Obviously, when Gods are many, and each is of quite limited scope, the centrality of any one or, indeed, of all of them together to the religious life will be modest in comparison with the centrality of One True God. But, rather than having identified a fallacy, all Bellah did was to dimly perceive that monotheism is different from polytheism, and that both differ greatly from the Godless religions of Eastern philosophers and Western liberals. Perhaps unwittingly, Bellah’s work itself stands as evidence that variations in conceptions of the supernatural are the basis from which all comparative analysis of religion, as well as magic, must begin.

The case that the supernatural, not ritual, provides the core of religion can be demonstrated in several quite specific and dramatic ways. The first asks why there is so much variation in the precision needed for the adequate performance of rituals.

When magic fails, it usually is assumed that the fault lay with the performance: that incantations were not precisely correct or that rituals were not done exactly right. The same assumption applies to most ritual actions performed on behalf of the small Gods of polytheism. On the other hand, while there is a correct way to perform the rituals associated with each of the great monotheisms, there is little concern about precision: No sincere Roman Catholic thinks that transubstantiation will not occur during the Mass if the priest gets some of the words wrong or out of order. Indeed, most appeals to Yahweh, Jehovah, or Allah involve a minimum of ritual, often being quite impromptu supplications by ordinary believers.

Recently, a substantial body of anthropological and experimental evidence has been assembled to explain that variations in the importance placed on ritual precision reflect differences in the capacities attributed to the supernatural agent to which (or whom) the rituals are directed. When, as in the case of magic, the supernatural agent is an unconscious entity or is a supernatural creature of very limited capacity (such as a demon or an imp), it will be assumed that each ritual must be performed with extreme precision because the supernatural agency lacks the capacity to know the intent of those performing the ritual and is unable to overlook errors in ritual performance. As the psychologist Justin L. Barrett put it, ritual precision is required when dealing with “dumb gods.”

That same logic applies, if to a somewhat lesser extent, to religions based on Gods of limited scope. They, too, may not take note of the intent of rituals, but only of their execution. Indeed, there is a substantial element of compulsion in dealing with small Gods as well as with the creatures that sometimes are invoked by magic. Here, too, the rituals must be perfect, otherwise the supernatural agent will not find them binding. In contrast, the omnipotent Gods of monotheism are thought to be fully aware of the intentions of the supplicant. Consequently, rituals are far less important and precision is barely an issue when dealing with Gods conceived of as all-seeing — if the priest errs, Jehovah knows what was meant,

and the efficacy of a prayer does not hinge on precise adherence to a sacred formula.

An even more devastating case against the primacy of ritual can be made by close examination of the most popular of all functionalist claims about religion: Religion functions to sustain the moral order. That classic proposition, handed down from the founders, is regarded by many as the closest thing to a “law” that the social-scientific study of religion possesses.

In his Burnett Lectures, W. Robertson Smith explained that “even in its rudest form Religion was a moral force, the powers that men revered were on the side of social order and moral law; and the fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society, which were also the laws of morality.” Émile Durkheim, of course, argued that religion exists because it unites humans into moral communities, and while law and custom also regulate conduct, religion alone “asserts itself not only over conduct but over the conscience. It not only dictates actions but ideas and sentiments.” And, according to Bronislaw Malinowski, “every religion implies some reward of virtue and punishment of sin.”

In one form or another, that proposition appears in nearly every introductory sociology and anthropology text on the market. But it’s wrong. Moreover, it wasn’t even handed down from the founders, at least not unanimously! Indeed, the founder of British anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor, and the founder of British sociology, Herbert Spencer, both took pains to point out that only some kinds of religions have moral implications. “Savage animism [religion] is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the very mainspring of practical religion,” Tylor reported. “Not, as I have said, that morality is absent from the life of the lower [cultures]. . . . But these ethical laws stand on their own ground of tradition and public opinion, comparatively independent of the animistic beliefs and rites which exist beside them. The lower animism is not immoral, it is unmoral.” Spencer also noted that many religions ignore morality, and he went even further by suggesting that some religions actively encourage crime and immorality: “At the present time in India, we have freebooters like the Domras, among whom a successful theft is always celebrated by a sacrifice to their chief god Gandak.”

Although little noticed, that dissenting view has continued among anthropologists. In 1922, J. P. Mills noted that the religion of the Lhotas includes no moral code: “Whatever it be which causes so many Lhotas to lead virtuous lives it is not their religion.” In his distinguished study of the Manus of New Guinea, Reo Franklin Fortune contrasted the moral aspects of their religion with that of the typical tribe, agreeing that “Tylor is entirely correct in stating that in most primitive regions of the world religion and morality maintain themselves independently.”

Ruth Benedict also argued that to generalize the link between religion and morality “is to misconceive” the “history of religions.” She suggested that the linkage probably is typical only of “the higher ethical religions.” Ralph Barton reported that the Ifugaos impute their own unscrupulous exchange practices to their Gods and seize every opportunity to cheat them. Peter Lawrence found that the Garia of New Guinea have no conception whatever of

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Passages

Life in Retirement

Jill Raitt, Professor Emerita, University of Missouri–Columbia

Jill Raitt is Professor Emerita and Director of the Center for Religion, the Professions, and the Public at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Raitt received her doctorate from the University of Chicago, a masters from Marquette University, and both a masters and a bachelors degree from San Francisco College for Women. She taught at University of Missouri–Columbia (1981–1987; 1990–1995), Duke University, Divinity School (1973–1981), the University of California–Riverside (1969–1973), and St. Xavier College (1966–1968). Her interests are the history of Christianity, especially spirituality and the theology of the Eucharist, and a recent project, "Religion, the Professions, and the Public." Her areas of specialization are the Middle Ages and the Reformation.

RSN: Tell us about the types of activities you have been involved in since you retired.

Raitt: I retired officially in August 2000, but I continued to teach full-time until May 2001 when the Department of Religious Studies threw a fabulous two-day retirement party that included a program on the study of religion, with presentations and panels that included the first faculty I hired at MU (University of Missouri–Columbia): Joel Brereton, Bob Robinson, and Larry Sullivan. Other presenters were longtime friends Wendy Doniger and Charles Long. Our first BA, Patti Faber, spoke beautifully about her time in the young Department of Religious Studies. In short, I was overwhelmed! That summer I moved from my farm to town and lived through six months of remodeling, which was a learning experience, but that caused severe asthma problems because of the dust. I love my house now, especially its big sun room where my orange trees thrive and bear big, juicy oranges.

The year 2002 was occupied with the development of a grant for a new Center for Religion, the Professions, and the Public submitted to The Pew Charitable Trusts and with teaching an honors course on religion and the professions. On December 10, 2002, I received a call telling me that we had received funding to the tune of \$1.4 million beginning April 1, 2003. (Please visit our Web site at rpp.missouri.edu.) The idea came to me in the fall of 1998; a splendid committee drawn from our MU professional schools worked with me for the following three years. So, yes, major grants take time to develop and require smaller grants and events along the way, like our Colloquia 2000, funded in part by an AAR regional grant and the Missouri Humanities Council. Last fall we conducted a faculty seminar to prepare our core faculty to teach the seminar for senior and junior fellows. The first began January 21, 2004; the second begins in January 2005. Needless to say, my one remaining horse, Irish Crème, is seeing very little of me, but she is retired and living happily with her mates on the farm where she has spent 20 of her 21 years.

RSN: Could you give us some examples of your most enjoyable activities?

Raitt: I enjoy my work as Interim Director of this Center, largely because the faculty and staff are such splendid people with whom it is a pleasure to work. Starting anything from scratch is an exciting challenge; you think about it all the time. We have to raise money as well, so I'm always alert to ways to do that, but mostly I like the sense of continual involvement and new ways of involving the Center across the campus.

RSN: Who have been your role models during your retirement?

Raitt: I'm afraid I don't have many models because most people don't retire and then begin a whole new career! I suppose my models are those who are still active in their late 70s and 80s, the ones who want to maintain their edge as long as possible. Maintaining an edge, a bright, sharp one, requires action and even friction, the tug and rub of trying to make a success of a new enterprise.

"If you're a junior, find a mentor. If you're a senior, mentor the junior faculty. The success of one shines a brighter light on all."

RSN: What makes for a satisfactory retirement? Alternatively, what has given you the greatest satisfaction in your retirement?

Raitt: I tried being really retired for a semester and found that I grew a bit lazy. I like the stimulation of people working around me; I like the conversation and the challenge. So for me a satisfactory retirement means keeping active. I could use a bit more time for research — but then I have been saying that for 30 years!

RSN: What types of reading or research are you doing in retirement?

Raitt: From what I have just said, you would think this question moot, but actually, since we are searching for a new director, I have undertaken two major research projects and a third waits in the wings. I have been invited to deliver a paper in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2005 to honor the fourth centenary of the death of — who else? — Theodore Baez. I want to see what happens to philosophy and theology in the 17th century, especially regarding the Eucharist. Along the same lines, I've also agreed to write a chapter in a book on the international Reformed tradition; it will require a trip to Aberdeen, Scotland. Since my father grew up in Aberdeen, I look forward to the visit.

RSN: Do you do any teaching?

Raitt: I teach an honors course on religion and the professions every fall and, of course, I am part of the RPP seminars that the Center runs.

RSN: If you could design your perfect retirement, what would it look like?

Raitt: I think it would look very much as it does now except that the Center will have a new director and I will become a senior advisor working half time. That will allow for my other research and time to do some other things that I don't have time to do now.

RSN: Knowing what you know now, what might you have done differently during your academic career?

Raitt: I would have been more politic, more open to others. Otherwise, I am happy with my career. The Department of Religious Studies here continues to be a strong, collegial group of faculty and students. It is an achievement anyone would be proud of, although I am calling Steve Friesen its second founder because of the fine leadership he is providing.

RSN: What has been the most significant change in your life since you retired?

Raitt: Living in town is my most significant change and it has been a happy one. I can't believe that I no longer yearn to ride. It's the first time in 70 years that I haven't wished myself on a horse! But then I rode long hours last Thanksgiving when I visited my nephew and his family in Buckeye (near Phoenix), Arizona. I gave them my lovely Arabian mare, Irish Fire, and now they have three horses. We rode across the desert together and I was as much at home in the saddle as ever.

RSN: If you could give advice to your younger colleagues who are still teaching, what would it be?

Raitt: First, and I do mean first, appreciate your colleagues across whatever campus you inhabit; work with them, build bridges. The most destructive academic scenes I have witnessed have been those where faculty fight one another, pull each other down, consider anyone else's success their failure. If you're a junior, find a mentor. If you're a senior, mentor the junior faculty. The success of one shines a brighter light on all. There is more than one way to think about almost everything, so listen before you criticize.

Second, don't wait for opportunity to knock; go break down its door!

Third, use summers for research and go after fellowships. Ask for help in writing good proposals and don't lose heart!

Fourth, support AAR. It's our profession's strongest advocate. Take students, undergrads, and grads, and help them learn the ropes at regional and annual meetings. ♣

STAR News

News of Scholarship and Teaching



Eugene Gallagher Named Connecticut's Top Professor

EUGENE V. GALLAGHER, Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies at Connecticut College, and Chair of the AAR's Committee on Teaching and Learning, has been named the Connecticut Professor of the Year by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Gallagher, who joined Connecticut College in 1978, founded the college's Center for Teaching and Learning in 1996. The center serves as a resource for college professors to continually hone and sharpen their teaching skills — expertise that is critical in the intimate academic environment at Connecticut College. "This award is about good teaching, which is central to the culture at Connecticut College," Gallagher said. "This is what distinguishes us from other colleges."

Gallagher is the co-author of the book *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, and is the author of *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus* and *Expectation and Experience: Explaining Religious Conversion*.

Professor Gallagher has received several awards acknowledging his teaching success. These include the American Academy of Religion Excellence in Teaching Award in 2001, the Connecticut College John S. King Teaching Award in 2002, the Connecticut College Student Government Association Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1993, and the Sears Roebuck Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Campus Leadership in 1991.

The Professor of the Year award rewards outstanding professors for their dedication to teaching, commitment to students, and innovative instructional methods. It is the only national program to recognize college and university professors for their teaching skills. The award has been given since 1981. ♣

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hand, those raised with a strong sense of religious identity within a particular tradition may assume that the theological claims of one's own community are both broadly representative and ideologically "true." Those who fall within this category often have a difficult time accepting both the diversity within their own traditions as well as the fact that there are other credible faith perspectives that are worthy of study and understanding. Both of these assumptions (overall rejection and uncritical acceptance) are rooted in a narrowly defined representation of religion that is both simplistic and dangerous.

The Need for the Academic Study of Religion in the Schools

These and other expressions of religious illiteracy are common ones shared by individuals from a wide diversity of educational, economic, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds and experiences. Given that most people are educated about religion through their own faith traditions and/or popular culture, this state of affairs is hardly surprising. With little to no exposure to the study of religion as an integrated and sophisticated sociocultural phenomenon, what else can be expected? The relevant fact here is that widespread religious illiteracy in America is the product of inexperience rather than incompetence. If there is any hope of substantially and effectively promoting the public understanding of religion, the academic study of religion must be more responsibly and intelligently integrated into the curricula of the nation's schools.

This awareness is hardly novel. The AAR has itself been involved periodically in

promoting the study of religion in the schools for over 30 years and other organizations and institutions, such as the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School, the Religion and Public Education Resource Center at California State University, Chico, Religious Studies in Secondary Schools, the California 3 Rs Project, and the First Amendment Center, have supported similar goals. Though some progress has been made, widespread misunderstanding of the religious liberty clauses of the First Amendment coupled with the lack of adequate teacher training in the study of religion has substantially hindered the comprehensive effectiveness of these efforts. The recent surge of interest in religion is in many ways encouraging, but the challenges associated with teaching about religion in intellectually responsible ways are still significant ones that will require more substantial efforts to overcome than have heretofore been attempted.

Many of us who have been involved in efforts to promote the public understanding of religion in the schools have begun to formulate a consensus around how to advance this effort at this important historical juncture.¹ There are many initiatives under consideration, but I will briefly highlight two of the most ambitious ones that directly involve scholars of religion in pivotal ways.

The formulation of standards and frameworks for the study of religion in the schools

Though we do not advocate the creation of a new, required field of religious studies as a separate discipline to be tested

and monitored by state departments of education, we do feel there is a grave need to articulate benchmark standards for what responsible teaching about religion entails. Religion is already present within state standards in a variety of disciplines and it is also offered at the secondary level in stand-alone electives such as "The Bible as Literature" and "Introduction to World Religions." Unfortunately, few teachers are adequately trained in the academic study of religion to know how to teach this material responsibly. The establishment of standards would provide a basic foundation for educators and students alike. This initiative would involve a coalition of scholars of religion, teachers, teacher educators, and representatives from key state departments of education.

The inclusion of the academic study of religion in teacher training programs

Though ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers in the field are helpful and important to maintain, more substantial exposure to both the methods and content of religious studies is required for teachers to be adequately trained. Toward this end, we encourage the establishment of pilot programs in selected colleges and universities whereby teacher education programs partner with religious studies departments to include the academic study of religion as an aspect of preservice teacher training. The California State University, Chico provides one such model and we at the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at the Harvard Divinity School are in conversation with the Harvard Graduate School of Education to establish a closer partnership in this area.

Contrary to popular belief, religion has always been and continues to be "taught" in our nation's schools in overt and often covert ways. However, due to the lack of adequate teacher training, coupled with widespread religious illiteracy, the quality of that instruction is dubious at best and often poor. The need for citizens to be better educated about religion as a social-historical phenomenon has always been present and is especially apparent now. Though it is obviously impossible to fully eradicate religious bigotry and misrepresentation, we can certainly minimize the basic ignorance that fuels them by promoting the responsible academic study of religion in the schools. ❧

Notes

¹ This loosely defined coalition is composed of several members of the AAR (including but not restricted to those who serve with me on the Religion in the Schools Task Force) and individuals associated with the other organizations or programs mentioned above.

Religion in the Schools Task Force
www.aarweb.org/profession/ris/default.asp

Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School
www.hds.harvard.edu/prse/programdesc.html

Religious Studies in Secondary Schools
www.rsiss.net

Religion and Public Education Resource Center
www.csuchico.edu/rs/rperc

First Amendment Center
www.firstamendmentcenter.org

McAULIFFE, from p.9

to work with some wonderful faculty, particularly Roger Savory and Michael Wickens. I studied both Arabic and Persian with Michael Wickens and he also guided my doctoral thesis. It would be hard to imagine a better mentor. Cambridge-educated, extraordinarily well-read, and a man of deep cultural sensitivities, Wickens placed high expectations on his students but was also unflaggingly generous to them with his time. That combination of exacting standards and unbounded accessibility remains my ideal of thesis supervision. In my work with him there emerged the two research themes that have sustained my scholarship ever since: one of these is the Qur'an and its exegetical tradition, and the other is the relation between Islam and Christianity and the many forms of interaction between those two traditions.

RSN: Can you tell us about your first teaching position and the transition from one side of the desk to the other?

McAuliffe: After a two-year postdoc in Canada, I was offered a faculty appointment at Emory's Candler School of Theology and spent six very happy years there. There is an invigorating intellectual energy at Emory, and Candler was among the very first schools to incorporate serious attention to religious pluralism within the theological curriculum.

Plus my colleagues there are some of the best human beings I've ever met! The only downside was a commuting marriage. We moved our home to Atlanta — and our fourth child was born during my first years there — but my husband, who remained on the faculty of the University of Toronto, was doing a weekly trek between Hartsfield and Pearson. So, when Toronto offered me a position, I quickly accepted so that we could kiss that commute goodbye, and my years as chair of the religion department there were interesting and productive.

RSN: What has given you the greatest satisfaction in the different roles in which you have served: department and university administrator, editor, professor, society leader, and scholar?

McAuliffe: I think that you've captured it in the word that you used, "served." Years ago I was struck by a speech given by Sister Margaret Claydon, who was the president of Trinity College when I was a student there. She encouraged us, as undergraduates, to imagine our future lives, both professional and personal, as a series of opportunities to serve and she urged us to embrace those opportunities as a privilege. I'm not sure why her remarks have stayed with me as such a touchstone, but they have. And I do think that the word "service" captures a great deal of who we are as academics and of what we

do in our vocations of teaching, scholarship, administration, etc.

RSN: Editing a major reference book requires considerable organizational skills, as well as immense command of an entire field. What compelled you to serve as the general editor of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*?

McAuliffe: Probably a moment of temporary insanity. No, seriously, I was honored to be approached with the opportunity to do this. But it has been a huge amount of work and, as you correctly note, it's as much an administrative task as it is a scholarly one.

The initial period was tough because this was a brand new venture. We didn't have a model in any Western language for what we were trying to do and there are not a lot of people who identify themselves primarily as scholars of the Qur'an. So I've had to coax some colleagues to stretch themselves a bit and to tackle topics that were not in their areas of regular research. I've been both amazed and gratified, however, by the great generosity of our colleagues. People have accepted the invitation to contribute even when it meant they really were overloading themselves, and they've produced superb articles. Most of all, I've had a marvelous group of associate editors with whom to work: Claude Gilliot, Bill Graham, Wadad al-Qadi, and Andy Rippin. They read everything; they offer great edito-

rial and bibliographic suggestions, and they are an endless source of encouragement.

RSN: Can you tell us a bit about your current research, teaching, or administrative interests?

McAuliffe: At the moment, my attention is pretty securely focused on the faculty and students of Georgetown University and on my work in Qur'anic studies. What research time I can grab on weekends and the occasional evening is devoted largely to the *EQ*, although I'm also working on an edited volume for Cambridge University Press, as well as a book project that I nudge ahead at a snail's pace. For the rest of my waking hours, I do what a dean does and, quite frankly, I enjoy it immensely. Curricular planning, faculty development, hiring/tenuring/promoting, lots of fund raising, coordination of student advising, loads of interesting university initiatives — there's plenty to fill the day and to keep the intellect active. I'm blessed with an extraordinarily good group of faculty and administrative colleagues and, in all honesty, I wake up every morning eager to see them and to serve them. That's my definition of a great job! ❧

DAVIS, from p.13

barricaded himself and his two small children in his house, claiming that it was also his church, and refusing access to officers who wanted to foreclose on the property because of his refusal to pay taxes. Every 15 minutes we stopped the action and asked for comments and questions from scholars in the audience. AAR members had plenty of suggestions for how their expertise could be useful — some of which the FBI accepted. The committee has sponsored three related special topics forums: a presentation by a former FBI crisis negotiator and the formerly violent religious adherent he negotiated with; a panel on the causes of misunderstanding among believers, law enforcement agents, and religion scholars; and, last year, a

panel entitled “How Religion Matters in Crisis Situations,” which included perspectives from a journalist, two religious studies scholars, and two FBI officials.

At present, we are considering new avenues for our interest in bringing together scholars of religion with law enforcement. Perhaps corrections officers, or child protection workers, will be our next focus.

The committee also initiated a *Religious Studies News* column called “In the Public Interest,” identifying topics and recruiting guest editors. Topics have included important Supreme Court decisions, the flap over assigning part of the Koran as required freshman orientation reading at UNC, and the role of religion in the debate over embryonic stem cell research.

RSN: What contributions have different members made?

Davis: One of the great things about the committee is the diverse backgrounds of our members. Laura Olson is a political scientist; she was instrumental in organizing our 2003 Special Topics Forum, “Religion in the 2004 Election.” Judy Buddenbaum is a professor of journalism; Debra Mason is executive director of the Religion Newswriters Association. Gene Gallagher, a former member of the committee, has continued to play a pivotal role in planning fora with the FBI.

RSN: Committee work can be demanding. What makes you willing to give so freely of your time and talent? How has this work been fulfilling in scholarly or professional ways, for instance?

Davis: The work of this committee has been especially gratifying to me because it brings together my two disciplines: religion and law. Also, because I teach in a law school rather than in a religion department, being active in AAR is a wonderful way of remaining close to what I consider my home discipline.

RSN: What would you say to someone interested in your committee?

Davis: It’s a fair amount of work, but it really helps one to understand and to influence the shape of the Annual Meeting and of the entire organization. ✦



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RSN192

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AAR would like to thank the following outgoing program unit chairs whose terms ended in 2003.

- Jonathan E. Brockopp, Pennsylvania State University (Study of Islam Section)
- Rüdiger V. Busto, University of California, Santa Barbara (Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Group)
- Sarah Caldwell, Holliston, MA (Hinduism Group)
- David Daniels, McCormick Theological Seminary (Afro-American Religious History Group)
- Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Yale University (Reformed Theology and History Group)
- Harvey Hill, Berry College (Modern Historical Consciousness and the Christian Churches Seminar)
- Barbara A. Holdrege, University of California, Santa Barbara (Comparative Studies in Hinduisms and Judaisms Group)
- Suzanne Holland, University of Puget Sound (Bioethics and Religion Group)
- Christopher Ives, Stonehill College (Japanese Religions Group)
- Jane Naomi Iwamura, University of Southern California (Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Group)
- Sarah Iles Johnston, Ohio State University (Europe and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity Group)
- Zayn Kassam, Pomona College (Study of Islam Section)
- Thomas P. Kasulis, Ohio State University (Philosophy of Religion Section)
- Bockja Kim, Hong Kong University (Korean Religions Group)
- Lois Lorentzen, University of San Francisco (Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group)
- Michael M. Mendiola, Pacific School of Religion (Bioethics and Religion Group)
- Randall Nadeau, Trinity University (Chinese Religions Group)
- Scott Noegel, University of Washington (Relics and Sacred Territory [Space] Consultation)
- Stephanie Paulsell, Harvard University (Christian Spirituality Group)
- Tracy Pintchman, Loyola University, Chicago (Hinduism Group)
- Jeffrey C. Pugh, Elon University (Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Analysis Group)
- Rubina Ramji, University of Ottawa (Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group)
- Jennifer Rycenga, San José State University (Lesbian-Feminist Issues and Religion Group)
- Andrea Smith, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (Native Traditions in the Americas Group)
- Bron Taylor, University of Florida (Religion and Ecology Group)
- Anne Thayer, Lancaster Theological Seminary (History of Christianity Section)
- Brannon M. Wheeler, University of Washington (Relics and Sacred Territory [Space] Consultation) ♣

ROSENGARTEN, from p.7

This data is in part shaped by a set of choices offered to the responding institutions, so in part reflects preconceived rubrics. As with the responding institutions, the resulting tabulated list is initially bewildering but the sheer number and variety of the responses requires more interpretation. Table III, which I constructed from Table II, offers one set of rubrics to organize the data.

Approximately three-fifths of the reported doctoral students in these programs pursue graduate study in some aspect of the Christian tradition, and four-fifths do so if one includes what I here designate as the “applied” fields. The six largest sets identify a concentration in an aspect of Christianity (New Testament/Christian Origins; Theology: Constructive; History; Old Testament/Hebrew Bible; Theology; Ethics). No other religious tradition in the survey differentiates, and Christianity does so in profusion. It is also present implicitly in several cohorts in the “methods” rubric, and in at least one of the “non-Christian traditions/regionally organized.” The “applied” section outnumbers the “methods” and “non-Christian traditions/regionally organized” sections. In short, these responses organize decisively around the Christian tradition.

This point merits further discussion, but some preliminary observations can be made. First, to understand the place of Christianity in graduate education, one crucial question concerns how it is studied. Taking the most prominently featured area of concentration, New Testament/Christian Origins, as an example, suggests that the answer may vary substantially. Visits to Web sites of the responding institutions reveal a range of programmatic emphases (and combinations of these) in this concentration: historical-critical, history of interpretation, literary criticism, history of religions, deconstructive/critical-theoretical. The graduate survey raises crucially for our future consideration the ways in which Christianity is de facto the center of gravity in the academic study of religion. This is all the more notable when one correlates these questions with the responses about curriculum in the undergraduate survey, which together leave little doubt that — however it is studied, and whomever is teaching —

the Bible remains the touchstone text for the study of religion in the United States.

It is also interesting to think about this question with respect to what one could designate as the “border territories” that Table III creates, and that challenge its rubrics: Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, Religion in Antiquity, and American Religious History are all uneasy placed in these categories. We would need to know more about the specific programs involved to understand and organize better their placement. While their respective numbers do not loom particularly large in the aggregate directions described in the chart, it may nonetheless be the case that these areas present a useful entrée into questions about how religion is studied in graduate programs.

This data is all the more striking in the context of the recent decision by the AAR to hold its annual meetings apart from the Society of Biblical Literature. On this survey’s accounting, at least, study of the Bible is a central component of graduate education in religion in the United States. The undergraduate survey correlates substantially with this emphasis. The ensuing division of these professional societies will not reflect the wider professional practice in the profession they aspire to serve.

Conclusions

The common challenge presented by these relatively straightforward Tables might be described as the difficult relationship between what is overwhelmingly on the ground in juxtaposition with its complex invocation: that these emphases are present is manifest, but whether the survey fully captures the range and idiosyncrasy of practice is dubious. This is not to fault an important survey, but to say that the first general step it invites is the standard one of the refinement and reformulation of its categories of analysis on the basis of generated data. I am here suggesting that such a process will raise immediately a set of difficult yet crucial questions: about the place of Christianity in the study of religion, about the complex interaction of constructive, historical, and human scientific approaches to the study of religion, and about the very broad institutional matrices that our work embraces. All that redounds, I want to suggest, to the glory of our work and testifies

to the complex phenomena that is religion; and it would be a shame not to pursue the groundwork established here because it raises such fundamental and complex matters.

Correlative analysis with the undergraduate survey also will be a crucial next step. There are a set of important, and potentially very revealing, specific questions to ask. For example, to follow up on the discussion of areas of concentration above: are the graduate programs in New Testament/Christian Origins training the faculty who are actually teaching all the undergraduate biblical studies? To what degree do the schema of disciplinary training reflected in graduate programs in biblical studies “map onto” the undergraduate curricula? Such specific answers will help us in beginning to address the much larger, equally fascinating question of the degree to which graduate programs really do shape undergraduate education in religion.

A third consideration for current and future reflection concerns the places in which religion is taught. This survey and its counterpart on undergraduates together teach us a great deal about where religion is formally taught and how it is taught. But what everyone who teaches in a liberal arts or university context knows merits investigation: that religion is taught elsewhere too, and that such work not only influences our enterprise but sometimes constitutes it. More understanding of the roles of common values of interdisciplinarity, formal and otherwise, would be a tremendous boon to our understanding.

All of this is only possible, however, because of the work that has been done. All of us who study and teach in the field of religion are now invited to measure the degree to which our guesswork is correct. Our debt to the AAR will perhaps be best paid if in the years ahead we press, prod, and massage what is here to learn more fully what it means. To that end, this survey deserves the widest possible dissemination, including established professionals and graduate students, the latter of whom can learn much for their own professional formation and training from it. All who do engage it surely shall be grateful to the AAR for an initiative of great import and considerable long-term potential. ♣

Table III

Rubric	Christianity	Methods	Non-Christian Traditions/Regionally Organized	Applied Christianity
Total	1,876	320	301	480
Components	NT/Christian Origins (397) Theology: Constructive (372) History (322) OT/Hebrew Bible (241) Theology (208) Ethics (175) Christianity & Judaism in Antiquity (100) Theological Studies (19) Christianity (16) Religion in Antiquity (13) Bible and Theology (13)	Philosophy of Religion (86) Culture and Theory (56) Hist. of Religions/Comp. Religions/Study of Religion (51) Social Scientific Studies (47) Ethics and Religion (43) Religion and Modernity; Religion and Social Change; Religion and Theology (32) Interdisciplinary Studies (5)	Judaism (127) Buddhism, Japanese, East Asian Religions (53) Hinduism/South Asian Religions (43) Islam/West Asian Religions (33) American Religious History (18) Confucianism/Chinese Religions (12) Middle East (6) Rabbinics (4) Indigenous Traditions (3) African/African Diaspora Religions (2)	Theology: Practical (195) Missiology and Evangelism (103) Christian Education (71) Bible Exposition, Liturgical Studies, and Preaching (57) Pastoral Care and Counseling/Religion and Personality (53) World Mission (1)

CONFERENCE, from p.4

respond to this scholarly work, especially when practitioners don't agree with scholarly outsiders. He also asked the workshop participants to think about how religious and scholarly voices in religion relate, if at all. The session also raised the issue of who gets to decide what counts as "good" or "bad" religion. Mona Siddiqui (University of Glasgow) later commented that "this workshop managed to touch upon all the complexities of representation, and especially the contribution of scholarship. The assumption that there is a gulf between practitioners and scholars is an erroneous one, as some of the best scholars of religion have also been practitioners of the faith. One thing was clear — the academic world is resilient and perhaps the only forum where the most sensitive of conversations can be held in the open."

In her introduction to the "Engendering" workshop, Ursula King (University of Bristol, emerita) lamented the "double blindness" that prevents gender studies and religious studies from "seeing" one another. And in the "Human Rights" workshop, discussion revolved around the idea that while there is a need for a "universal" standard of human rights to protect human flourishing, that standard must be (and is) constructed by different human communities and institutions.

Midway through the conference, participants attended a gala dinner on the Emory University campus. After dinner the Atlanta Community Chorus led by Dwight Andrews (Emory University) performed. On the bus ride back to the hotel from campus, participants serenaded their bus driver with the chorus's closing gospel hymn.

During the conference, co-directors Sheila Davaney (Iliiff School of Theology) and Gary Laderman (Emory University), along with a few conferees, conducted a phone interview with media representatives. The Associated Press picked up the story about the conference as a result.

Immediately following the conference, the majority of conferees participated in the AAR Annual Meeting. *JAAR* sponsored a special topics forum entitled "Contesting Religions: Prospects and Perils in a Global Context." Well over 100 attendees crowded into the room to participate in the conversation, further expanding the conference's reach.

For more than ten years, the AAR has included international connections and public outreach among its primary goals. Enhancing awareness of the international context for the study of religion, increasing involvement in the AAR by scholars and teachers from around the globe, and contributing to the broad public under-

standing of religion are all core aspects of the Academy's mission. This project is serving these objectives, fostering the inclusion of largely absent voices in global scholarship and public conversations about religion. It is the fruit of the reflection of the *JAAR* editorial board, under the direction of editor Glenn Yocum, on how best to engage more fully with international scholars in the study of religion. Thanks largely to the vision and commitment of book review editor Sheila Davaney, the entire project garnered the interest and support of the Ford Foundation. The project's international planning committee included Davaney and Laderman, as well as Yocum, Moosa, Kazmina, and Sunil Goonasekera (University of Peradeniya).

In addition to the conference, the grant supports the publication of a special issue of *JAAR* from the conference, a dedicated Web site for continuing the conversation, the ongoing internationalization of the *JAAR* editorial board, and the distribution of *JAAR* to libraries throughout the world that could otherwise not afford subscriptions. At the AAR Annual Meeting, the first of three sets of new *JAAR* Editorial Board members met with the rest of the editorial board. These members are Kazmina, Goonasekera, and Michiaki Okuyama (Nanzan University, Japan). The next three members will attend the Annual Meeting in San Antonio in November 2004. ❧

YU, from p.4

RSN: What can the ACLS do to promote a better understanding of the role of the humanities in our nation's current climate?

Yu: There's no doubt that we need to enhance our ability to communicate with all publics: the academic public, opinion leaders, policy-makers, and the general public. Some of our light is under a bushel. I hope we can find a way to present more readily the superb work that many of our fellows accomplish — they will provide examples of excellence in the humanities. Many of our publications, like the American National Biography and History E-Book Project, are also sterling examples of how rigorous scholarship can create tools for knowledge that are public goods.

RSN: What are your ideas about the current and future condition of the humanities?

Yu: The humanities are intellectually vibrant, and that's been accomplished with financial resources that would be considered "decimal dust" in other domains. I would not have taken on this new position if I were not optimistic about the future, but as always that will take work. I think we'll need to pay particular attention to the place of the humanities in the broad spectrum of higher education outside of our leading research universities and prominent liberal arts colleges.

RSN: What individual or movement has been the most influential in your intellectual life?

Yu: The person who most shaped my intellectual interests is probably unaware of the role she played. She was Christa Saas, who was an assistant professor of German literature at Harvard (now at Toronto, I think) when I was an undergraduate. I took a course on German poetry (Rilke, Trakl, and Benn) as a junior that kindled my love of the genre. The class was extremely small (two undergraduates, two graduates), and I was terrified most of the time because I'd only recently learned German and knew very little about German literature, but I thought she was terrific. She was my senior thesis advisor, too, and even though I eventually went on to focus on classical Chinese poetry in graduate school, she was the person who set me on that path. ❧

HILLERBRAND, from p.6

by 75 percent of departments; courses on the history of Christianity by 71 percent of departments — while courses on Islam were found only at 32 percent, courses on Buddhism at 32 percent, and courses on Judaism at 40 percent. In short, the survey indicates that the academic study of religion continues to show a Christian emphasis. This finding is, in its own way, substantiated by the statistics of the AAR Employment Information Service, where "Christian fields" comprise the majority of positions advertised and candidates available. One must note, however, that seminaries are important partners in the employment field, in addition to arts and sciences departments, and will influence the statistics.

While the 2000 survey does not explicitly say so, its findings surely allow the conclusion that this traditional Christian distribution of courses is not evenly distributed over all types of institutions — public, private, church-related, etc. Our field is, as regards departmental taxonomy, not uniform and the academic study of religion in this country is divided into departments in which

Christianity does continue to occupy a privileged place and others in which that is not the case.

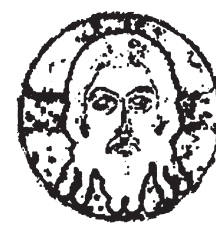
The survey contains a number of additional surprises. They range all the way from one department reporting an impressive annual budget — one is not quite sure whether to see this as an error or an irritant — to the mean and median for the total number of majors in the reporting institutions (34 and 13 respectively), two rather impressive numbers. Impressive also is the fact that roughly half of the reporting institutions indicate that a religion course (or courses) is a prerequisite for graduation.

The survey also indicates that only roughly half of the reporting departments are, in fact, free-standing departments of religion. Some 32 percent of the reporting departments are combined departments, usually combined with philosophy. The remainder of the reporting units is in various other administrative arrangements. Again, this finding underlines the distinctiveness of the academic study of religion in this country. Interestingly enough, only 87 percent of the reporting departments offer a religion

major, surely attributable to the fact that half of the organizational administrative arrangements involve other components than religious studies and may preclude a major in the field.

Another surprise pertains to the gender distribution of the faculty. At the senior (full professorial) rank, men greatly outnumber women (by about 7:1), a reality that should not come as a real surprise. However, surprising is that even at the assistant professorial rank — that is, reflecting hires of recent years — the female-male ratio is 1:2. This means that recent hiring has favored men over women by 2:1. The implication to be drawn from these numbers is that the traditional preference for males has been modified to reflect the proportionate number of women and men finishing their graduate work (roughly two-thirds of new PhD's are male, one-third are female).

A survey can be an antiquarian inventory-taking or a call for reflection and discussion. Surely, it behooves us, as individuals and members of a larger guild, to engage in the latter. ❧



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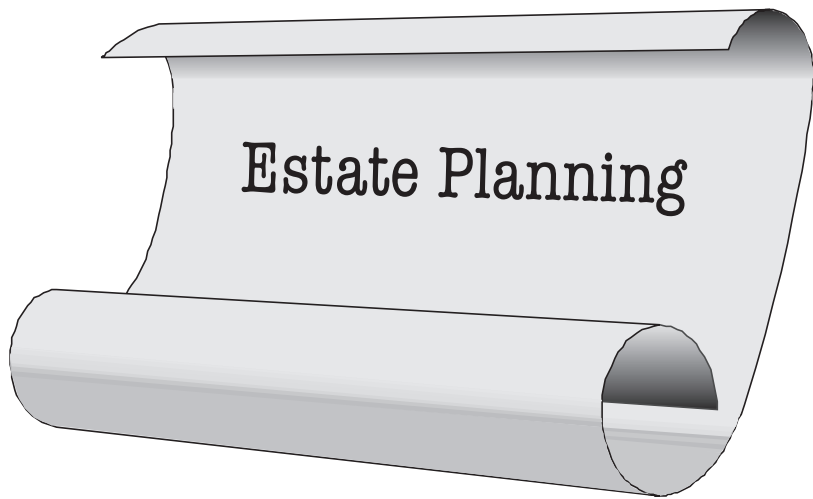


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STARK, from p.14

“sin,” and “no idea of rewards in the next world for good works.” And Mary Douglas flatly asserted that there is no “inherent relation between religion and morality: There are primitives who can be religious without being moral and moral without being religious.”

Tylor’s observation that not all religions support the moral order always should have been obvious to anyone familiar with Greek and Roman mythology. The Greco-Roman Gods were quite morally deficient. They were thought to do terrible things to one another and to humans as well — sometimes merely for amusement. And while they were quite apt to do wicked things to humans if they failed to propitiate them, the Gods had no interest in anything (wicked or otherwise) humans might do to one another. Instead, the Greek and Roman Gods concerned themselves only with direct affronts.

For example, no religious sanctions were incurred by young women who engaged in premarital sex unless they immersed themselves in sacred waters reserved for virgins. Because Aristotle taught that the Gods were incapable of caring about mere humans, he could not have concurred that religion serves the function of sustaining and legitimating the moral order. Indeed, classical philosophers would have ridiculed such a proposition as peculiar to Jews and Christians — and they would have been correct. The proposition about the moral functions of religion requires a particular conception of supernatural beings as deeply concerned about the behavior of humans toward one another. Such a conception of the Gods is found in many of the major world faiths, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. But it appears to be largely lacking in the supernatural conceptions prevalent in much of Asia and in animism and folk religions generally.

It would seem to follow, therefore, that the moral behavior of individuals would be influenced by their religious commitments only in societies where the dominant religious organizations give clear and consistent expression to divine moral imperatives. Thus, for example, were proper survey data available, they should show that those who frequented the temples in Greco-Roman times were no more observant of the prevailing moral codes than were those who were lax in their religious practice. As Tylor pointed out, that is not to suggest that societies in antiquity lacked moral codes, but only that they were not predicated on religious foundations. It follows that the moral effectiveness of religions varies according to the moral engagement of their Gods.

Unconscious divine essences are unable to issue commandments or make moral judgments. Thus, conceptions of the supernatural are irrelevant to the moral order unless they are beings — things having consciousness and desires. Put another way, only beings can desire moral conformity. Even that is not sufficient. Gods can lend sanctions to the moral order only if they are concerned about, informed about, and act on behalf of humans. Moreover, to promote virtue among humans, Gods must be virtuous — they must favor good over evil. Finally, Gods will be effective in sustaining moral precepts, the greater their scope — that is, the greater the diversity of their powers and the range of their influence. All-powerful, all-seeing Gods ruling the entire universe are the ultimate deterrent.

Two conclusions follow from this discussion. First, the effects of religiousness on individual morality are contingent on images of Gods as conscious, morally concerned beings; religiousness based on impersonal or amoral Gods will not influence moral choices. Second, participation in religious rites and rituals will have little or no independent effect on morality.

Recently, I conducted an elaborate research study to test those conclusions, based on data for the United States and 33 other nations. The results were consistent and overwhelmingly supportive.

In each of 27 nations within Christendom, the greater the importance people placed on God, the less likely they were to approve of buying goods they knew to be stolen, of someone failing to report that they had accidentally damaged an auto in a parking lot, or of smoking marijuana. The correlations were as high in Protestant as in Roman Catholic nations and where average levels of church attendance were high or low. Indeed, participation in Sunday services (a measure of ritual activity) was only weakly related to moral attitudes, and those correlations disappeared or became very small when the God “effects” were removed through regression analysis. That is, God matters; ritual doesn’t.

The findings are similar for Muslim nations, where the importance placed on Allah is very strongly correlated with morality, but mosque attendance is of no significance. In India, too, concern for the Gods matters, but temple attendance has no detectable effect on morality. But in Japan, where the Gods are conceived of as many, small, and not particularly interested in human moral behavior, religion is irrelevant to moral outlooks — concern about the God(s), visits to temples, prayer and meditation, all are without any moral effects.

Nor are there God or temple effects on morality in China. However, in China prayer does matter, but in the wrong direction! That is, the more often they pray, the more tolerant the Chinese are of immorality. I suggest that result is due to the fact that, in China, “prayer” seldom implies a longstanding, deeply felt relationship with a God, but merely involves requests for favors from various divinities of small scope. As such, praying tends to reflect a quite self-centered and self-serving activity, consistent with rapidly shifting from one God to another on the basis of results, or even taking a stick to the statue of a God who fails. Seen in that light, a question about prayer is likely to select those somewhat lacking in terms of a social conscience.

My results show that, in and of themselves, rites and rituals have little or no impact on the major effect universally attributed to religion — conformity to the moral order. Thus, it seems necessary to amend the “law” linking religion and morality as follows: Images of Gods as conscious, powerful, morally concerned beings function to sustain the moral order.

Clearly, Durkheim made a major error when he dismissed Gods as mere religious epiphenomena. Unfortunately, his error had severe, widespread, and long-lasting consequences, for it quickly became the exclusive sociological view that religion consists of rites and ritual, and that those exist only because their latent function is to integrate societies and to thereby lend sacred sanctions to the norms. In retrospect, it seems remarkable that such a notion gained such rapid acceptance and went unchallenged for so long. Stripped of its functionalist jargon, the basic argument seems to have been that, since “we” know there are no Gods, they can’t be the real object of religion — the truism that things are real to the extent that people define them as real failed to make any headway in this area of social science.

So then, let us finally be done with the claim that religion is all about ritual. Gods are the fundamental feature of religions. That holds even for Godless religions, their lack of Gods explaining the inability of such faiths to attract substantial followings. Moreover, it was not the “wisdom of the East” that gave rise to science, nor did Zen meditation turn people’s hearts against slavery. By the same token, science was not the work of Western secularists or even deists; it was entirely the work of devout believers in an active, conscious, creator God. And it was faith in the goodness of that same God and in the mission of Jesus that led other devout Christians to end slavery, first in medieval Europe and then again in the New World.

In those ways at least, Western civilization really was God-given. ☪