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IN THIS ISSUE OF
Spotlight on Teaching:
News, Media, and Teaching Religion
2007 Member Calendar

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

December
Journal of the American Academy of Religion
December issue.
December 1. New program unit proposals due. December 7-8. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.
December 15. Submissions for the March 2008 issue of Religious Studies News due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/publications/RSN.

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.

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.

Religious Studies News (USPS 841-720) is published quarterly by the American Academy of Religion in January, March, April, and October. Letters to the editor and features examining professional issues in the field are welcome from all readers. Please send editorial pieces in electronic uncompressed file format only (MS Word is preferred) to: sendmail@aarweb.org

Subscriptions for individuals and institutions are available. See www.aarweb.org/publications/0610 for more information.

Deadlines for submissions:
January 15
March 15
May 15
July 15

Advertising
For information on advertising, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/0610.

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Executive Editor
Kyle Cole
Editor
Shelly C. Roberts
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Religious Studies News 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 11,000 scholars and by libraries at colleges and universities across North America and abroad. Religious Studies News 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/0610.asp.
Don’t Let Time Get Away from You!

Register for the Employment Information Services Center by October 22. The EIS Center at the Annual Meeting is an efficient way for candidates and employers to communicate and participate in job interviews. Those who register by the deadline will receive the following benefits.

EMPLOYERS:
- Unlimited use of the interview hall
- Placement of job advertisement in the Annual Meeting edition of Openings
- Seven months of online access to candidate CVs organized by specialization
- Ability to use the message center to communicate with registered candidates

CANDIDATES:
- Opportunity to place CV online for employer review
- Personal copy of registered job advertisements and employers’ interview plans
- Ability to use the message center to communicate with employers
- For more information about the Employment Information Services Center, and to register, see www.aarweb.org/eis.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Every now and then, an issue forces itself into public awareness. In our culture today, that issue is global warming — and it has triggered the discussion of sustainability in this month’s Focus section. As our readers know, Focus is where we look at topics that have broad influence over the Academy. We, as researchers and teachers, touch many people in our daily activities. Our consciousness of sustainability issues influences how we plan meetings, design curriculum, and craft public statements. As we advocate the importance of religious studies as a vital component of liberal education, we see our role in informing students and our members about sustainability issues. If we want to help make a difference in issues of sustainability — from ecological impacts to social justice ramifications — now is the time to take such action.

In Focus, we start with an article describing what the AAR is doing to plan “greener” meetings, initiate dialogue with other disciplinary associations, and offer ideas for further influence, including undergraduate and theological curriculum. We celebrate the efforts of our members in the Religion and Ecology Group, and pioneers in that research area. The foundations they have built will springboard the AAR into its sustainability initiatives. Following that article is an interview with Debra Rowe, who leads the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development. She has been active in sustainability and higher education for more than 20 years. Her efforts at the partnership, where 20+ disciplinary associations meet to discuss strategies for sustainability initiatives, help higher education associations and institutions infuse sustainability into mission, curricula, research, student life, and operations. In this interview, she discusses how sustainability moves beyond environmental concerns into areas of social justice. She believes religious studies can be a leader in discussing the critical topics that arise.

John Grim, co-chair of the Religion and Ecology Group, and Mary Evelyn Tucker contribute with an article about the movement of environmental and ecological awareness in multiple faith traditions, and the power of these traditions to influence culture and values. As John and Mary Evelyn make this argument, I think of the opportunities to use the subject as prime examples in comparative and introductory religion courses — and opportunities for revising textbooks and creating readers for these courses. John and Mary Evelyn have been leaders in this area for many years: They are the founders of the Forum on Religion and Ecology and teach religion and ecology at Yale University.

Moving out of the Focus section, Barbara Brown Taylor contributes a beautifully written piece regarding her move from the pulpit to the classroom. She writes of her joy in discovering that the classroom enables her to reach people with whom she can engage in “religious questions that matter.” This is a must read for those who believe in the power and opportunities intrinsic within a liberal arts classroom.

This issue is also full of news and information on the upcoming Annual Meeting in San Diego, for which registration opens May 15. This year there are two preconference workshops that the Academic Relations Committee is co-sponsoring: a chairs workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations,” which is co-sponsored with the Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities; and a leadership workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” which is co-sponsored with the Working Group on the Teagle Foundation-funded project The Religion Major and Liberal Education. You can see information about the workshops and registration on pages 6 and 7.

Also in this issue is a Spotlight on Teaching examining how to use news as a tool when teaching religion courses. Spotlight editor Tazim Kassam has produced another excellent issue. I always invite you to submit any thoughts, letters to the editor, comments, and criticisms concerning Religious Studies News to me at kcole@aarweb.org. We will publish feedback from readers in subsequent issues.

Kyle Cole
Executive Editor, Religious Studies News

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I greatly appreciated the wonderful coverage of publication issues in the March (2007) issue of RSN. The collection of essays deserves a place on the shelf of every faculty member and graduate student in the study of religion. In so many places, such as in Charles Mathewes’s emphasis on having a thesis, the essays give us concrete reminders of mistakes we so commonly make.

Thanks for including this particular Focus.

Robert M. Geraci
Assistant Professor
Department of Religious Studies
Manhattan College

Dear Editor:

I would like to say that this particular issue of RSN (March 2007) has been one of the most helpful and interesting that I have received to date. From the Spotlight on Theological Education to the Focus on Getting Published to the stats on the EIS employment survey and all the rest: Fantastic. Thank you.

Keep up the good work!

Patrick McCullough
Graduate Student
Fuller Theological Seminary

NOMINATIONS OF WINNERS OF CAMPUS AWARDS, OR ANY OTHER AWARDS, ARE ENCOURAGED.

Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR Web site at www.aarweb.org/awards/teaching.asp.

THE COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR THE AAR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING.

Nominations of winners of campus awards, or any other awards, are encouraged.

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SAN DIEGO

ANNUAL MEETING 2007

SUNNY SAN DIEGO welcomes the 2007 AAR Annual Meeting in November. With the San Diego Convention Center, San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina, and Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel providing a gorgeous setting along the waterfront, moving from session to session at the Annual Meeting has never been more inviting. Cruises on the bay, shopping in the Gaslamp Quarter, visits to the world-famous San Diego Zoo, and explorations of the area’s rich history and connections to Mexico make San Diego an ideal location.

Mark your calendars now for the opening of fax, mail, and online housing and registration Tuesday, May 15, 2007.

Membership

Don’t forget to renew your membership dues before you register or else you won’t be able to get the lower member registration rates. If you are not certain about your current 2007 membership status, please see www.aarweb.org/membership or call 404-727-3049.

Getting Around

Most of the Annual Meeting hotels are within walking distance of the Annual Meeting session locations. Shuttle service will be provided along several routes to outlying hotels. San Diego also features a trolley system that goes by most Annual Meeting hotels.

Getting to San Diego

We’ve teamed up with American Airlines to give you the best price and flexibility on airfare. Attendees traveling to San Diego will receive a discount airfare using the airlines’ telephone reservation system. Please reference the special file number when you or your travel agent make the reservations.

Company File Number Contact

American Airlines: A87N7AD 1-800-433-1790 or www.aa.com

Additional Meetings

Experient, our meeting planning partner, is now accepting requests for Additional Meeting space. All requests are handled on a space and time-slot available basis. The Additional Meetings program, held in conjunction with the AAR Annual Meeting, is an important service to AAR members. All Additional Meeting participants are expected to register for the Annual Meeting. Please read the instructions carefully before completing and submitting your space request. The deadline for priority scheduling is May 30, 2007. For more information about the Additional Meetings or to obtain a request form, please see www.aarweb.org/annualmeet. Questions should be directed to:

Rose Lenk
Experient, Inc.
T: 314-997-1500
E: aarsbl@experient-inc.com

Employment Information Services

The 2007 Employment Information Services Center will be located in the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel. Candidates and employers who wish to participate should visit the AAR Web site, www.aarweb.org/eis. Registration opens on May 15, 2007, along with Annual Meeting registration and housing. EIS registration closes October 22.

AAR Annual Meeting Online Services

At www.aarweb.org/annualmeet you can:

- Register for the Annual Meeting
- Reserve your hotel room
- Find a roommate
- Retrieve your Additional Meeting requests/forms
- Register for EIS
- Download EIS Center forms
- Search the Online Program Book.

Don’t miss the Annual Meeting brochure, stapled in the center of this publication.
Tours in San Diego

**Dead Sea Scrolls Tour**
Sunday, November 18, between 4:30 PM and 8:30 PM
The San Diego Natural History Museum’s exhibition Dead Sea Scrolls is the largest, longest, and most comprehensive ever assembled in any country. Spanning two floors and 12,000 square feet, 27 Dead Sea Scrolls — 10 exhibited for the first time ever — will be on display. The six-month exhibition brings together materials never before shown together, including Dead Sea Scrolls from Israel and Jordan reunited for the first time in 60 years, ancient Hebrew codices from the Russian National Library, medieval manuscripts from the British National Library, and modern interpretations of the texts. Tracing the scrolls and their meaning through time, the exhibition connects the ancient world to the modern.

Tickets for the tour will be at appointed times between 4:30 PM and 8:30 PM due to exhibit occupancy limitations. You will be contacted after your tour reservation form is received to choose an appointment time.
Tour fee: $40.

**Historic Religious Sites Tour**
Monday, November 19, 1:00–5:00 PM
Tour Guides: Rick Kennedy, Point Loma Nazarene University; Jennifer Kudla, University of Minnesota; Eugenia Constantiou and Elaine MacMillan, University of San Diego; Peter Williams, Miami University. This bus tour will visit a diverse selection of historically and architecturally significant religious sites in the San Diego area, including: Mission San Diego de Alcala, the oldest mission in California; Mission Santa Ines; and the SBL jointly host the Employment Information Services Center (EIS). The EIS Center is designed to help ease the communication process between candidates looking for jobs in the field of religion and employers who have jobs to offer. To accomplish this, we offer services such as job postings, candidate credentials both online and at the EIS Center, an interview facility, and a message center through which employers and candidates communicate.
This year, the EIS Center will be held in the Elizabeth Ballroom of the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel, a headquarters hotel of the Annual Meeting. We will open on Friday night at 7:00 PM with a short orientation session. Come and receive your Annual Meeting special edition of EIS rings, and learn how you can best utilize EIS. Immediately after the orientation, the message center will be open for use. We will be fully operational all day Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and a half-day on Tuesday.
EIS preregistration opens on May 15, 2007, and closes on October 22, 2007. Candidate CVs are due on October 25. Please see www.aarweb.org/eis for other important information and to register.

**San Diego Zoo**
Saturday, November 17, 9:00 AM
The San Diego Zoo is a world-famous destination with over 4,000 animals and 800 species in residence. The tour offers a great mini-introduction to the zoo’s mammal, bird, and plant collections. It includes a 90-minute private bus tour and one 90-minute private ved ted to 111 program units through the Online Paper/Panel Proposal System (OP3); only one program unit did not accept proposals through OP3. Proposals may be submitted through other means, but with 79% of program units using OP3 as the only means of submission, the 2,451 total is a good barometer of the success of the 2007 Call for Papers. This success represents the phenomenal growth of the AAR Annual Meeting program over the past five years. By comparison, the 2003 Call for Papers solicited 1,310 proposals through OP3 from 67 of the 79 total program units that year. The increased number of proposals is mirrored in the program unit committees make every effort to identify deserving papers, panels, and speakers connected with the International Focus and alert the Program Committee about their choices as soon as feasible.
Planning for the China focus at the upcoming Annual Meeting is being coordinated by a working group of AAR members from the various China-related units and AAR committee members. We thank all those who have contributed their expertise and recommendations to the ICC thus far. Their goal has been not only to call attention to research by Chinese scholars, but also to provide an avenue for exploring central themes and issues for scholars in Chinese religions, to strengthen existing ties, and to enhance possibilities for future collaboration between Chinese scholars and members of the AAR.
Located on the Pacific Rim, San Diego is a particularly appropriate and exciting venue for the China focus. We look forward to interacting with our Chinese colleagues at the Annual Meeting.
Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty – Honest Conversations

The Academic Relations Committee offers its chairs workshop as a co-sponsor with the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee (REM) during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego on Friday, November 16.

The daylong workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty – Honest Conversations,” will deal with issues of recruiting majors, and recruiting and retaining faculty of color, and will feature several breakout sessions. Miguel A. De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology, will lead the workshop. The event is based upon the online AAR Career Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession, which De La Torre edited (www.aarweb.org/about/rem/careerguide0708.asp). The guide will be printed and given to workshop participants.

“Many academic institutions lament the lack of diversity among student body and/or the faculty,” De La Torre said. “Here is an opportunity for chairs to discover the nuts and bolts on how to better diversify their institution, and the pitfalls to avoid when making such a commitment.”

The workshop will feature several speakers who’ve dealt with a variety of diversity opportunities and issues. Sharon Watson Fluker, vice president for doctrinal programs and administration at The Fund for Theological Education, will lead a session on recruiting majors. Following her will be Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Brite Divinity School, leading a session on realities facing faculty of color.

Zayn Kassam, Pomona College, will then discuss recruiting faculty of color, and after a lunch break, Fumitaka Matsuoka, Pacific School of Religion, will speak on retaining faculty of color.

The workshop will then move to breakout sessions. Kassam will lead one group on helping pretenured faculty; Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary, and Akintunde Akindade, High Point University, will lead another group on thinking through institutional citizenship and mentoring; and De La Torre will discuss issues from the career guide he edited.

The workshop will conclude with all speakers in conversation with the participants in a panel discussion.

“Every administrator who is not satisfied with their present level of diversity cannot miss this opportunity,” Migel De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology, said.

Fred Glennon, chair of the Academic Relations Committee, said the committee was enthusiastic about co-sponsoring this important workshop with the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee.

“Recruitment and retaining racial and ethnic minority faculty is a concern for most departments, as it is needed to recruit more racial and ethnic minority students into the discipline of religious studies,” Glennon said. “This workshop and the Guide developed by REM should prove to be an invaluable resource.”

Diversity issues have frequently been cited as potential workshop topics by past workshop participants, Kyle Cole, AAR director of college programs, said. “Each year, we get requests for a variety of diversity-related issues,” he said. “I’m very happy for the Academy that we can offer such a rich workshop topic.”

Collegues in your institution, such as chairs, other faculty members, faculty being developed to assume leadership responsibilities, and deans, may be interested in attending this workshop. Chairs may want to bring a team of faculty or send a designated faculty person. Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. The cost for the workshop is $75, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a printing of the Career Guide.

This chairs workshop is one of two workshops the Academic Relations Committee approved for the 2007 Annual Meeting. A leadership workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” was developed in response to the Teagle Foundation’s award for a two-year project to study that issue (see article, page 7).

The Religion Major and Liberal Education Friday, November 16, 2007, San Diego, CA

Amid changing global and academic contexts, what is the nature and role of the religion major? What are its goals, and how do they relate to the goals of a liberal education? How do we know if we are succeeding in meeting these goals? This workshop will bring together a distinguished group of experts to lead a day-long, interactive discussion of the religion major. Through plenaries, panels, and breakout sessions, participants will explore and share challenges, best practices, success stories, and failures.

“What is religious literacy?” Renick said. “Without a public that can engage in a discussion about the nature of religion, we cannot be a public that can discuss the nature of the major.” Prothero echoed the sentiment, saying, “We need more of our students to engage in this discussion.”

“Clearly, there is no one right way to conceive of the religion major, but there is a lot that we can learn from each other,” he said. “I hope that the workshop can provide a forum for this continuing discussion.”

The workshop will be of benefit to a range of participants: faculty, administrators, and graduate students. The goal is to bring a diverse group of AAR members together in a lively and open discussion about what it means to major in religion, what our field contributes (and should contribute) to the education of our students, and how we can be better at what we do.

TO REGISTER
Complete the information below, arrange payment, and send via fax or surface mail. You can also register online as a part of the Annual Meeting registration process: www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2007.

Name
Department
Institution

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. Send your registration form and payment of $75.00 *** before October 31, 2007 ($100.00 after and onsite).

PAYOUT INFORMATION
☐ Check: (payable to “AAR Annual Meeting,” memo “Leadership Workshop”)

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number Expiration Date

Cardholder Signature

Name on Card (Please Print)

* Card Identification Number (required for Discover cards): 4 digits on front of American Express; 3 digits on back of other cards

Register online (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2007

Register by Fax: 330-963-0319

Register by surface mail: AAR Leadership Workshop • c/o Experient • 2451 Enterprise PKWY • Owingsville, OH • 44087 • USA

May 2007 RSN • 7
Buster's, Beach House & Longboard Bar
627 Fourth Ave

This casual eatery sits on the boardwalk across from bobbing boats and nautical flags flapping in the breeze. Buster's menu is a monotonous affair with everything from Hawaiian rice bowls and prime rib hash at breakfast to paella, pizza, and pork katsu at night. $8

Cheese Shop
627 Fourth Ave

This favorite deli specializes in something that can be hard to find downtown: a tasty, well-made sandwich. There's lots more than cheese on the menu — although you can have a cheese sandwich made with one or more of seven kinds of freshly made focaccia. Don't miss the specialty roast beef and roast pork loin jobs piled high. You can also have a nice, simple, sit-down breakfast here, with a menu featuring everything from homemade granola and old-fashioned oatmeal with brown sugar and raisins. $10

Chive
558 Fourth Ave

Slide onto a cushioned, pillow-backed bench at this glowing Gaslamp eatery and let the indulgence begin. Entrees range from free-range chicken to cheese to veal — really. Standouts include the giant Niman Ranch pork porterhouse atop marinated cabbage and useful white cheddar grits, the spice-crusted lamb loin, and the free-range veal chop, which is tender and served with a tasty asparagus risotto cake. $$$

Croce's Restaurant & Jazz Bar
802 Fifth Ave

This Gaslamp destination — named for the late musician Jim Croce and operated by his wife, Linda — isChives host nightly to serious jazz and R&B performers. And even though diners get free access to the live music next door, music isn't the only draw. Some entrees are comforting classics, like pork chops with grilled potatoes and Brussels sprouts, and free-range chicken with forest mushroom risotto. Others are light and inventive, like grilled swordfish with a sweet curried-ginger sauce and searedahi with a creamy beurre blanc. $$$

Dakota Grill & Spirits
901 Fifth Ave

This casual bar sophisticated spot serves up American fare with Southwestern inspiration and a whole lot of energy. Wood-fired pizza, fresh seafood and steaks, pastas, rotisserie chicken, and skirt steak are popular choices for locals and tourists, and the restaurant's location and satisfying burgers make it a natural for dignity yet inexpensive business lunches. There's live piano music from Wednesday evening through Saturday. $$

La Fiesta
628 Fifth Ave

La Fiesta combines elegant dining and authen- tic Mexican food. It offers traditional and fami- ly-friendly favorites, as well as a variety of fresh seafood and more contemporary dishes influ- enced by Spanish and South American flavors. Well-known for its margaritas, La Fiesta boasts a full bar with over 65 different types of tequila. $$

La Gran Tapab 611 B ST

Tapas and other Spanish traditions are the hid- den jewels of San Diego dining. La Gran Tapas leads the charge of intimate and romantic ven- ues where you can find these tasty dishes. The lunch menu offers a delicious alternative to your traditional working lunch. The restaurant also offers daily meat or seafood specials. For dinner the paella is the best in town — cooked to order and made with chicken, shrimp, pork,chorizo, mussels, and so much more, baked on saffron rice. $$$

Masala: Spices of India
314 Fifth Ave

Masala serves tantalizing Indian cuisine in a modern and exotic atmosphere. The name, which means “many spices,” alludes to the age- old art of infusing dishes with delicate, often secret spice blends. Masala’s menu, which offers an extensive assemblage of dishes representing the best of Northern, Southern and Western India cuisine, includes a wide range of both flavor and texture. $$$

Napa Valley Grille
502 Horton PLZ

Proving that a shopping mall doesn’t have to be a wasteland when it comes to dining, Napa Valley Grille is a popular, moderately upscale lunch spot for downtown workers, when in between-sized salads, sandwiches, and pasta dishes are rolled out. Come back at dinner and the atmosphere is often subdued, and here you’ll find a satisfying selection of grilled items: ahi with tunas and ponzu, a New York steak with a tomato fondu, plus sea bass crusted in Yulon gold potatoes and braised lamb shank with French lentils. $$$

Ocean Street Seafood Restaurant
401 S St

As sleek as a 1930s ocean liner, yet as relaxed as a dinner on the shore, the Oceanaire provides the perfect setting to enjoy ultra-fresh seafood, flown in daily from around the world. Sip a “Subiacan” in the lounge, sizzle up to the oyster bar, or kick back in a histrionic booth before diving into a sea of steak-cut Alaskan halibut, seasonal favorites like fresh Copper River salmon, and hard-to-find delicacies like true Dover sole or blafrian tuna. $$$

Pacific Fish Co.
601 Pacific Hwy

Located across from the Embarcadero, this downtown seafood restaurant offers fresh fish and an upscale yet intimate 1940s-style atmosphere, with a full bar, or kick back in a horseshoe booth before diving into a sea of steak-cut Alaskan halibut, seasonal favorites like fresh Copper River salmon, and hard-to-find delicacies like true Dover sole or blafrian tuna. $$$

Pacifica City Co.
601 Pacific Hwy

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Rancho Tapas
601 Pacific Hwy

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Sushi Bar Nitpon
532 Fourth Ave

A traditional Japanese sushi-only menu enables this restaurant to provide patrons with the freshest fish. There are more than 15 sushi rolls available. $7

Valentine’s Taco Shop
844 Market St

Located just a block or two from downtown’s Gaslamp Quarter, Valentine’s Market Street location is an easy and affordable one-stop shop for fresh Mexican food. For about three bucks, Valentine’s offers chicken, beef, or vegetarian “Santa Fe” burritos the size of your head. It’s hard to beat deals like this, and the menu is full of filling bargains. $$

DRINKING
The Grape
823 Fifth Ave

With its dark wood furnishings and hazy yel- low lighting, San Diego’s first wine bar has the feel of a small European bistro, where you find yourself away time by the glass. The wine list includes more than 75 wines by the bottle, numerous flights of two-ounce pors, and about 50 wines by the glass. The Grape also offers excellent cocktails (try the “Grapesicle” or “Oatmeal Cookie”) and a good selection of ports.

Hennepes’s Tavern
708 Fourth Ave

Pub food, great beer, and Irish charm make this casual bar a welcome addition to the Gaslamp historic- ly-quiet scene. Hennepes’s is one of the best spots to gather for happy hour because all draft beers, well drinks, and house wine are discounted and the appetizers are plentiful and cheap.

Karl Strauss Brewing
1157 Columbia St

Friday evenings are a blast at San Diego’s orig- inal brewpub, which also provides an escape from too many tourists on Fifth Avenue. The relaxed mood makes up for the noise. Ten beers are available on any given day, ranging from heavy stouts to lighter lagers and ales. If you can’t choose, order the “Taster 6” beer sampler — you get six different beers in five ounces glasses (be careful, your companions will want to try them all, too).

Mister Tiki Mai Tai Lounge
801 Fifth Ave

Mister Tiki’s bright ambience, high ceilings, and retro atmosphere make it a departure from the tiki tradition. You can dine by the light of the lava lamp and blown-glass tropical fish in a booth of woven rattan and retro-inspired fab- ric. Bamboo panels line the walls and ceilings, and tikis and giant, glowing plastic flowers decorate the rooms. Vacation-inspired cock- tails include four different mai tais, a passion fruit mojito, and a sake martini served with a chilled cardamom stick.

Rock Bottom Brewery
401 S St

“ You’ve reached Rock Bottom!” chirps the hostes answering the phone at Rock Bottom’s downtown San Diego brewery. This 40,000-square-foot brewery is a huge Gaslamp draw. The two-story restaurant fea- tures stylish decor for dining at booths and tables, an upstairs pool lounge, and two bars. $
**WHERE TO STAY IN SAN DIEGO**

**Hilton San Diego Gaslamp Quarter**

401 K ST

Located in the heart of the historic Gaslamp Quarter, Hilton San Diego is a sprawling urban retreat in the midst of a booming downtown San Diego scene. Here you will find a sophisticated hotel that mixes modern design with attentive service and impressive amenities. Guestrooms at the Hilton San Diego Gaslamp Quarter hotel include pillow-top mattresses with down comforters, as well as up-to-the-minute amenities such as complimentary high-speed Internet access and dual-line telephones with voice mail and data port. All of the deluxe accommodations include one king or two double beds, overfilled chair with ottoman, coffee maker, spacious work space, 25-inch TV with premium channels and On-Command movie service, and in-room mini bar. $155/$175/$175/$175

**Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego**

1 Market Pl

Located next to Seaport Village and a short walk to the Gaslamp, downtown’s Manchester Grand is the largest hotel in San Diego. Enter the Grand’s magnificent lobby, and your gaze immediately will be drawn forward to the four-story-high open ceilings and giant windows from top to bottom. Beautiful harbor views can be found in unexpected places. Upper-floor hallways take guests by large windows overlooking the water, while the rooms themselves are nicely decorated and generous in space. Each rooms windows open to catch the Pacific breeze. Guest rooms, each 340 square feet, offer partial views of the city and have one king or two double beds. Each room includes a work station with high-speed Internet access. Stylish décor complements the deluxe amenities, including Portico bath products and a daily fresh newspaper. $149/$182/$182/$182

**Sherraton Suites San Diego at Symphony Hall**

701 A ST

A warm and welcoming greeting awaits you at the Sherraton Suites San Diego at Symphony Hall. The all-suite hotel is built on the prestigious and historic San Diego Symphony Hall and centrally located in one of the premier areas of downtown San Diego. Well-appointed suites offer a spacious living room and comfortable bedroom, complete with the Sherraton “Sweet Sleeper Bed.” Amenities include high-speed Internet access, sofa beds, free local calls, and a free national newspaper on weekdays. $130/$160/$160/$160

**W Hotel San Diego**

421 WBT

The lobby — or “living room” — of this hotel might be the most chill spot in town, with enormous couches covered with pillows in soothing shades of blue and brown, and comfortable leather armchairs. Stacked on large coffee tables are various art books. It’s the perfect place to unwind after a long day. Upstairs is one of the W San Diego’s room unique offerings: three tons of heated sand, white cabanas, and a fire pit bringing the beach to the third-floor rooftop. It’s a sunny spot to relax during the day, a spectacular viewpoint at sunset, and a third-floor lounge and pay-per-view movie theater. $130/$160/$160/$160

**Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter**

701 A ST

Located next to Seaport Village and a short walk to the Gaslamp, downtown’s Westin Grand is the heart of downtown San Diego. The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter, located one block from the Gaslamp Quarter, and the Coronado Bay Bridge in the distance. Each room offers a sprawling work desk, three telephones, and a data port. The bathrooms have an abundance of white marble, luxurious vanity areas, and square garden tubs that are ideal for long and relaxing baths. $145/$195/$195/$195

**Westin Horton Plaza**

910 Broadway Cir

As part of the Horton Plaza shopping complex, the Westin is truly in the heart of downtown San Diego. The Westin Horton Plaza shares the adventurous exterior architecture of the adjacent plaza — catch a peak at the big blue obelisk in the courtyard out front — but inside it has a quiet elegance. In all rooms you’ll find such amenities as two telephone lines with call waiting, data ports and personalized voicemail, a hair dryer, iron and ironing board, TV with in-room movies, stereo/CD player, and a personal refreshment center. $140/$170/$170/$170

**Westin San Diego at Emerald Plaza**

400 W Broadway

With its dazzling green silhouettes, the Westin San Diego at Emerald Plaza is a sparkling jewel on the San Diego Bay. There are thoughtful business amenities like an oversized desk with an ergonomic chair, high-speed Internet access, and cordless two-line telephones. The Westin does not live by work alone, so take a break and enjoy a spectacular view of the bay, downtown, or lushly landscaped Balboa Park, or just settle back into your bed with its comfortable pillow-top mattress. $140/$170/$170/$170

**Seaport Village**

849 W Horton DR

Seaport Village is San Diego’s waterfront landmark set among three distinctive plazas designed to capture the ambience of Old Monterey, Victorian San Francisco, and traditional Mexican. Stroll on charming winding paths and watch ships sail across the bay while you explore their one-of-a-kind shops, looking for that perfect treasure, a unique souvenir, or just the right gift.

**Westfield Horton Plaza**

324 Horton PLZ

Horton Plaza was designed to resemble a European marketplace and to function like an amusement park for shoppers. There are more than 130 stores and shops including Macy’s, Nordstrom, and Mervyn’s, several restaurants, and a multiscreeen movie theater. Open Mon–Fri, 10 AM–9 PM, Sat 10 AM–8 PM, Sun 11 AM–7 PM.

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**ANNUAL MEETING NEWS**

May 2007 RSN • 9
Emory Funds Religion Projects in Its Strategic Plan

Laurie L. Patton, Emory University

In September 2006, Emory University awarded $6.4 million to a working group of more than 40 faculty to begin a series of groundbreaking research and curriculum projects. The “Religions and Human Spirit” initiative is part of a wide-ranging university strategic plan. It is linked with two others, “Race and Difference” and “Global Health,” under a larger umbrella — “Confronting the Human Condition.” Other initiatives are based in scientific areas of strength, including “Computational and Life Sciences,” “Neuroscience, Mind, and Society,” and “Preventive Health.”

The strategic plan was a competitive process in which a series of focus groups met throughout 2005–2006 to deliberate the academic strengths of Emory that were particularly relevant to its academic mission of courageous inquiry and ethical community. Led by co-convenors Carol Newsom and Laurie Patton, the religion focus group drew upon the resources of the 60 faculty in the Graduate Division of Religion (GDR), drawn from the Department of Religion and the Candler School of Theology. We also included more than 250 faculty in other parts of the university who have named religion as one of their major research interests. Finally, we included the Emory research centers involved in the study of religion and society, including the Center for the Study of Religion, and the MARIAL center for the study of myth and ritual in American life.

In a grass roots process of deliberation, we identified research and teaching topics in religion that Emory faculty could shape more fully in the future. After the year of discernment, we agreed upon six areas in which the study of religion at Emory could contribute significantly to the larger common good: Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding; Religion and Health; Contemplative Studies; Religion and Science; Religion, Society, and the Arts; and the Emory Arts. GDR has funded these six areas for the next five years. In the current year, we are engaged in developing intellectual directions, strengthening research, and developing curricular. Our hope is that this collaborative, cross-disciplinary work will help reshape the debate in the study of religion and maximize the study of religion’s contribution to the human spirit and common good.

Finally, and most importantly, the graduate faculty in religion are developing a doctoral concentration in religion, conflict, and peacebuilding. When development is complete, students in any of the GDR’s present courses of study will be able to concentrate their work in religion and peacebuilding in dialogue with their particular course of study, whether Buddhism, ethics and society, theological studies, or another area.

The Emory Initiative in Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding (EIRCP) involves faculty from the GDR, the School of Theology, the Department of Political Science, and the Law School. This initiative builds on already existing projects to develop a global center for the study of conflicts involving religion. After hiring a director next year, we will be hosting two or three postdoctoral fellows, scholar/activists who are intensely engaged in centers of conflict around the globe. As Professor Elizabeth Bounds, co-convenor of the initiative, and Tom Flores, our first postdoctoral fellow, have emphasized, the center will be unique in its combined focus on global issues and local concerns.

Operationally, the university will host a regular “summit” of world religious leaders — the first of which will take place October 21, 2007. His Holiness The Dalai Lama is the keynote speaker, and other speakers include Rabbi David Rosen, Sister Joan Chittister, and Abdullah Al-Naim, among others. Locally, faculty have also developed an “Atlanta Initiative” project that involves studies of local communities in Atlanta. The focus here is on the role of religion among torture survivors in immigrant communities; the effects of public policy on religious communities in poor areas of the city; and the development of a truth and reconciliation commission concerning lynching in the South. We will continue to develop this network between Emory and NGO’s that work in urban and rural contexts on issues of religion.

The project in religion and reproductive health seeks to outline the productive as well as destructive intersections between reproductive decisions and religious influence. As Carol Hogue, professor at Rollins and director of the project, writes, “There is a crisis in contraception among adults in the U.S. To begin to understand its root causes and recommend appropriate medications, a team of Emory scholars representing the fields of ethnography, religious studies, epidemiology, and public health policy are collaborating to examine the religious, cultural, political, and historical context of this crisis.”

Finally, Karen Scheil of the Candler School of Theology and Mimi Kiser of the Interfaith Health Program are building a strong curricular emphasis in faith and health. The program seems to us to be religious and cultural inquiry among health professionals and health literacy among religious professionals. An important part of this work is a certificate program in faith and health, in which enrollment has already grown from 8 to 36 students.

The Emory Initiative in Contemplative Studies (EICS) includes faculty from the Graduate Division of Religion and the Medical School. EICS brings together a major commitment from the Medical School to launch a major outreach program in meditation in Emory college freshmen. Based on last year’s pilot phase, it is apparent that the meditation training increased a personality domain known as cooperativeness. Increased scores on this domain are strongly linked with reductions in depression, personality disturbance and impulsivity. Based on a very preliminary analysis of data gathered the past year, we believe that meditation training may optimize stress system functioning — confirming a primary study hypothesis. We hope to conduct long-term follow-up to evaluate whether these types of interventions early in college have long-lasting emotional and physiological benefits.

Under the leadership of John Dunne (Department of Religion), faculty are also focusing on the development of an Encyclopedia and Research Data Base of Contemplative Practices. As Dunne states, “Contemplative practices literally transform body and mind, yet we have often neglected to ask questions not only about the practices that make such practices possible, but also the specific techniques and theories that inform such practices. We hope that the encyclopedia will provide a Web-based, interactive dictionary and occasional manual for use by humanists and scientists alike.”

The Emory Initiative in Religion and Sexuality (EIRS) involves faculty from four departments in the College, the Law School, and the School of Theology. This initiative has already hosted a series of groundbreaking conferences and international summer seminars on religion and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. Along with the PhD Foundation, the Pacific School of Theology, and Candler School of Theology, religion scholars at Emory are taking on the issues of sexuality and in a newly constructive way.

Through the strategic plan funding, Woodruff Library has already developed the largest LGBT archive in religion in the country.

Emory Initiative in Science and Religion (EIRS) brings together faculty from medicine, theology and religion, ethics, and philosophy. This initiative will galvanize Emory’s considerable resources in these fields. In addition to creating at least two new faculty positions and two postdoctoral fellowships in science and religion, it is unique in its focus on major educational outreach projects. Thus far, it has addressed such tough issues as stem cell research, abortion, and euthanasia.

David Lynn of the Chemistry Department writes, “Technological advances have collided with our sociological world view at many points throughout human history and we are now experiencing one of those great challenges. Accordingly Emory University, through the Religions and the Human Spirit Initiative, has created new learning venues that exist at the interface of science and religion. By bridging across institutional barriers and unifying with our communities, we will be uniquely positioned to reach consensus.”

Finally, the Emory Initiative in Religion, Society, and the Arts (EIRSA) aims to develop a new Emory curriculum that focuses on learning about religion through object-based learning. In turn, they wish to use that form of learning to teach a major course through podcasts in several Atlanta communities. Catherine Howett Smith of the Carlos Museum writes, “Performing and visual arts will continue in the tradition of expression and reaction to religion, both through organized, ritual practices and deep, personal visions. EIRSA will highlight the work of over 250 Emory faculty members whose scholarship relates to religion in some way. The initiative will facilitate interdisciplinary connections and develop university and community programs that put Emory in the forefront of discussions of religion’s expression and experience in the world.”

Through public and university programs related to religion and art, dance, music, literature and more, EIRSA will create links across the university for the benefit of students and the Atlanta community. Through the use of technology, it will help faculty engage even more actively in interdisciplinary and interfaith discussions in Atlanta.

Tying these several “Religion and Human Spirit” sub-initiatives together is a single, university-wide seminar in which research and project results are shared and refined. The seminar is convened by Laurie Patton and Mary Elizabeth Moore (our new co-convenor of the initiative replacing Carol Newsom). Named “Religion and the Common Good,” the seminar asks participants and presenters to focus on how and why their studies might contribute to the common good. This gathering provides a venue in which each project of the strategic plan can be discussed with attention to its contribution to the study of religion and to public good in society. Through the seminar contributes to the new interdisciplinary culture of Emory, one based on shared research, action-reflection, and a shared understanding that the university must be part of larger public discourse.
In December, the Religion Newswriters Association conducted an online poll of its members, who identified the following as the top ten religion news stories of 2006. One hundred forty-nine people, or 55 percent of its membership, responded.

1. Muslims in a number of countries react violently to publication of Muhammad cartoons in Denmark and other European nations. Scores of both Christians and Muslims are killed in riots in Nigeria.

2. Pope Benedict XVI angers Muslims by including in a speech a centuries-old quote linking Islam and violence. He apologizes and later smooths the waters for relations when the General Convention elects a presiding bishop who supported the consecration of a U.S. gay bishop, which conservatives oppose as unbiblical.

3. The Episcopal Church riles conservatives when the General Convention elects a presiding bishop who supported the consecration of a U.S. gay bishop, which conservatives oppose as unbiblical.

4. Charismatic leader Ted Haggard resigns as president of the National Association of Evangelicals and is discredited as pastor of the huge New Life Church in Colorado Springs after allegations surface of gay sex and methamphetamine use.

5. Candidates backed by the Religious Right suffer a series of defeats in the fall elections, with many voters citing morality as one of the strongest motivators in the way they cast their ballot.

6. Religious voices grow louder for peace in Iraq, but by year’s end experts fear the spread of sectarian tensions throughout the Middle East. Conflicts between Sunni and Shiite Muslims increase, and the Israeli incursion in Lebanon aimed at curbing attacks by Hezbollah touches off major strife within Lebanon.

7. The schoolhouse shooting deaths of five Amish girls in Berks Township, Pennsylvania, draws international attention on the Amish community’s ethic of forgiveness after some Amish attend the killer’s funeral.

8. (tie) The release of the film The Da Vinci Code adds to the previous buzz about Dan Brown’s novel. Religious critics, who say the book portrays traditional Christianity as a fraud, are divided over whether to boycott the film or hold discussion groups. Controversial plot lines include Jesus marrying Mary Magdalene and conceiving a child.

8. (tie) Same-sex marriage bans pass in seven of eight states that hold referenda on the issue during midterm elections. Arizona becomes the first state in

Editor Named to Oxford Monograph Series

President Jeffrey Stout recently appointed Ted Vial as a series editor for the AAR/Oxford University Press monograph series, Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion. The appointment came after a national search to replace James Wertz (Villanova University) at the conclusion of his term.

“Late in 2005, James Wertz indicated that due to the press of other duties, he would not accept a second term as editor of the Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion series,” Francis X. Clooney, chair of the Publications Committee, told RSN. “By the end of the summer of 2006 the committee had received a significant number of applications from around the United States and abroad; through consultation among its members, the committee narrowed the search to three candidates, who were interviewed at the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. While the range of candidates was impressive and all three finalists excellent, we were delighted to select Ted Vial as our choice for the new editor, and grateful that he accepted our offer to take up this important work.”

Ted Vial is Associate Professor of Theology at the Iliff School of Theology, where he teaches courses on historical theology and theory and method. His book, Liturgy Wars: Ritual Theory and Protestant Reform in Eighteenth-Century Zurich, was published by Routledge in 2004. Titles of recent essays include “How Does the Cognitive Science of Religion Stack Up as a Big Theory? A la Hume?” (Method & Theory in the Study of Religion), “Schleiermacher and the State” (Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher), and a contribution to the forthcoming Teaching Ritual (AAR/Oxford), edited by Catherine Bell.

He is on the steering committees of the Nineteenth-Century Theology Group, the Schleiermacher Group, and the North American Association for the Study of Religion. Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion invites self-conscious reflection on the study of religion from any number of critical perspectives. “This series is where many books of theology, and of theory, find a natural home. I am particularly interested in books that show the mutual shaping of theology and theory, and books (of theology or theory or both) that also contribute to our understanding of how the field of religious studies has been shaped and is being shaped,” Vial stated. “I am delighted to work with Frank Clooney, Oxford University Press, and the other fine editors of the AAR’s series. It is an exciting and important time in the study of religions.”

Address inquiries and submissions to the series editor:

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Editor’s Note:

Information for this article was provided by RNA Extra Online, the newsletter of the Religion Newswriters Association.

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Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology Announced

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and the Henry Luce Foundation, Inc., have named seven scholars from ATS member schools as Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology for 2007–2008. Selected on the basis of the strength of their proposals to conduct creative and innovative theological research, the fellows will engage in year-long research in various areas of theological inquiry.

The 2007–2008 fellows constitute the 14th class of scholars to be appointed since the inception of the program in 1993, bringing the total number of Luce Fellows to 98. The program is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, honoring the late Henry Luce III.

At the conclusion of their research year, the fellows will gather at the annual Luce Fellows Conference to present and critique their work and to discuss with both current and past Luce Fellows how their work may impact the life of the church and the broader society. They will also present their findings for publication in popular religious journals.

The 2007–2008 fellows, their institutions, and projects are:

### Lewis O. Ayres, Candler School of Theology of Emory University
*The Giver of Life: The Spirit and the Christian Life in Nicene Theology*

Ayres proposes to spend 2007–08 finishing a book that will focus on the exegetical strategies through which Nicene theologians redescribed traditional actions accorded the Spirit as the act of one who possesses the full power of God. Through such strategies Nicene theologians show how locating the Spirit in a fully Trinitarian context shapes our understandings of Christian life.

### Hans Boeomsa, Regent College
*Renown and the Quest for a Sacramental Ontology*

Boeomsa plans to investigate whether and how a sacramental view of reality lies at the heart of the two-pronged approach of the French Catholic school of nouvelle theologie: its critique of the dominant mode of neo-scholastic theology and its resourcement of the Trinitarian of the Church Fathers and the Middle Ages.

### William Patrick Brown, Columbia Theological Seminary
*The Seven Ways of Creation: A Field Guide to the AncientCosmologies of Scripture for a Scientific Age*

Brown seeks to engage the creation traditions of Scripture with the natural sciences and, thereby, to discern anew their distinctly theological and ethical import for contemporary readers. More broadly, this study will investigate how biblical theological and scientific understanding can be viewed as interrelated yet distinct domains: the faith seeking understanding of theological inquiry and the understanding seeking (further) understandings of scientific investigation.

### Mark S. Burrows, Andover Newton Theological School
*Untamed Wisdom: Poetics of Doxie and the Renewal of Theology as an Art*

Burrows believes there is a crisis of confidence in the historical authority of the Christian tradition, and thus a shaming of intellectual and spiritual foundations long constructed around scriptural narrative and religious rituals and symbols. One of the significant responses to this crisis in theological scholarship has been the attention to the relationship that theology has or might have with the arts. He seeks to contribute to this engagement by pointing to the role poetics plays in such collaborative work.

### Amy M. Hollywood, Harvard University Divinity School
*Acute Melancholia: On Loss, Mourning, and Mysticism*

Hollywood will carefully juxtapose medieval Christian mystical texts in which union with Christ is understood as a form of melancholic loveickness with modern theological, psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer accounts of mourning and melancholia.

### Jennifer Wight Knust, Boston University School of Theology
*Lone Trees, Lone Women: A History of Jesus, an Adolescent, and the Gospel of John*

Knust explores the intersection of identity production and sacred text by focusing on one tale in particular, the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). A close study of the transmission and reception of this exceptionally popular and yet extraordinarily unstable tale invites a reappraisal of the multiple ways that confessing Christian communities work with and through texts to envision what it means to be the faithful people of God.

### Maura A. Ryan, University of Notre Dame Department of Theology
*Health, Development and Human Rights: New Directions for Christian Bioethics*

Christian bioethics has begun to take on a global health perspective focusing attention on the relationship between health and persistent poverty, the effect of international economic systems on access to care, the role of the environment in health promotion, the impact of political conflict on health and healthcare delivery, and the effectiveness of transnational partnerships for the promotion of health-related initiatives. This project shows that an adequate and responsive global bioethics must engage debates within contemporary development theory as well as discourses and movements related to international human rights.

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### AAR Research Grant Program

**DO YOU KNOW THAT**
you could receive up to $5,000 in research assistance from the AAR? Since 1992, the AAR has awarded over $500,000 to members for individual and collaborative research projects.

The application deadline is August 1st of each year. For application information and eligibility requirements, see www.aarweb.org/grants.

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**2006–2007 RESEARCH GRANT WINNERS**

#### COLLABORATIVE

- **Edward L. Carns,** Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, et al.
  *Religious Discourses in the Metropolis: African American Religious Discourses in the Twentieth Century*

- **Sahira B. Sherif,** Morehouse College
  *Religious Games and Style: Exploring the Serious Side of Play*

- **Jeo. Bagri,** Southern Methodist University
  *The Spirit of Empire*

Collaborator: **Néstor Míguez,** Instituto Superior Evangelico de Estudios Theológicos, and **José M. Sorg,** Methodist University of Sao Paulo

#### INDIVIDUAL

- **Linda L. Barnes,** Boston University School of Medicine
  *Chinese Religious Healing in America: A Social History, 1849–2004*

- **Wendy Cady,** Boston University
  *Paging God: Religion in the Hall of Medicine*

- **Heidi Campbell,** Texas A&M University
  *Exploring How Religion Shapes Media Use & Interaction in a Global Information Society*

- **Francois Genet,** University of Toronto
  *Organization and Analysis of Digital Editions of Tibetan Religious and MedicalCanon*

- **E. More Godish,** Princeton University
  *Holy Sex: Christians and the Sexual Revolution, from the Essay Reports to True Love Waits*

- **Kalani Molani,** Bucknell University
  *Emissaries Hinduism: Raja Ravi Varma and the Visual Canon*

- **Donald S. Padilla,** Jacksonville State University
  *The Anti-Heretical Efforts of Peter Venezio: An Investigation into the Lived Religion of the Medieval Italian Layman*

- **Magda H. Reik,** University of Southern California
  *Judaic Race and Religion: Pierre Crabrof and African American Muslims in Early Twentieth-Century Cairo*

- **Suda Mendez Uddin,** University of Vermont
  *Playing or Praying? The Cherokee Ancestor Ceremonial Complex and the Performance of Cultural Identity*
Sustainability and the AAR

AAR Initiatives to Address Sustainability

IN THE PAST couple of months, concerns about the environment and the human condition have spurred sustainability issues into everyday conversation, and the AAR is — and has been — involved in taking steps to contribute to a more sustainable future. Sustainability is classically defined as “the ability to provide for the needs of the world’s current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.”

Several AAR members have been active on this front for quite a while. Pioneers such as John Cobb, Rosemary Ruether, Larry Rasmussen, and Sallie McFague have studied religion and ecology issues for decades. The AAR’s Religion and Ecology Group began in 1993, and is now led by John Grim and David Barnhill. Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker are co-directors of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, and together organized a series of ten conferences on world religions and ecology at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School.

Now it looks as if the fruits of their labor have borne fruit, and the AAR is poised to lead the way in leveraging the potential of religious studies to develop a cross-sector action plan for Sustainability. AAR’s Religion and Ecology, a working group formed within the U.S. Partnership for Sustainable Development, has been instrumental in shaping the Midwest Regional conference to be eco-friendly and the Annual Meeting. And that is the tip of the iceberg for the Annual Meeting, as the tip of the iceberg for the Annual Meeting is the terrain for the Annual Meeting Committee.

The idea of working with disciplinary associations follows sustainability movements on campuses across the United States and Canada. The difference is that while colleges and universities can make institutional changes that often have great impact on their campuses, it is in the actual disciplines (through their courses) that we can have a greater impact.

The AAR, in participating with the other associations, is beginning to organize the various sustainability efforts within religious studies and theology, and asking members to join in whatever possible. A task force was formed when the White House decided to declare a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to begin on January 1, 2005. The partnership hopes to develop a cross-sector action plan for a U.S. Decade for Sustainable Development.

Meeting Room and Hotel Accommodations:

• Require that all Annual Meeting locations work with Annual Meeting locations to reduce their environmental impact, and how we can minimize the impact of the Annual Meeting.

• Request that all Annual Meeting locations work with Annual Meeting locations to be eco-friendly and the Annual Meeting.

• Require that the headquarter hotels for annual meetings offer the option not to change bed linens, such as towels and sheets, unless requested by the person in the room.

• Offer water stations outside the meeting rooms for attendees to use during the meeting.

• Require that the hotels and outlets use reusable utensils instead of disposable utensils whenever possible. Using 1,000 disposable plastic teaspoons consumes over 10 times more energy and natural resources than manufacturing one stainless steel teaspoon and washing it 1,000 times, according to the Environmental Defense Council.

Reduce consumption by:

• Continuing AAR’s current practice of donating leftover food from Annual Meeting receptions and lunches to local homeless shelters.

• Serving buffet lunches instead of boxed lunches (i.e., a cardboard container with a premade sandwich, chips, etc.) in order to reduce consumer waste.

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An Emerging Alliance of Religion and Ecology

Look for the Focus on the Religion Major and Liberal Education.

IN THE PAST couple of months, concerns about the environment and the human condition have spurred sustainability issues into everyday conversation, and the AAR is — and has been — involved in taking steps to contribute to a more sustainable future. Sustainability is classically defined as “the ability to provide for the needs of the world’s current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.”

Several AAR members have been active on this front for quite a while. Pioneers such as John Cobb, Rosemary Ruether, Larry Rasmussen, and Sallie McFague have studied religion and ecology issues for decades. The AAR’s Religion and Ecology Group began in 1993, and is now led by John Grim and David Barnhill. Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker are co-directors of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, and together organized a series of ten conferences on world religions and ecology at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School.

Now it looks as if the fruits of their labor have borne fruit, and the AAR is poised to lead the way in leveraging the potential of religious studies to develop a cross-sector action plan for Sustainability. AAR’s Religion and Ecology, a working group formed within the U.S. Partnership for Sustainable Development, has been instrumental in shaping the Midwest Regional conference to be eco-friendly and the Annual Meeting. And that is the tip of the iceberg for the Annual Meeting, as the tip of the iceberg for the Annual Meeting is the terrain for the Annual Meeting Committee.

The idea of working with disciplinary associations follows sustainability movements on campuses across the United States and Canada. The difference is that while colleges and universities can make institutional changes that often have great impact on their campuses, it is in the actual disciplines (through their courses) that we can have a greater impact.

The AAR, in participating with the other associations, is beginning to organize the various sustainability efforts within religious studies and theology, and asking members to join in whatever possible. A task force was formed when the White House decided to declare a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to begin on January 1, 2005. The partnership hopes to develop a cross-sector action plan for a U.S. Decade for Sustainable Development.

Meeting Room and Hotel Accommodations:

• Require that all Annual Meeting locations work with Annual Meeting locations to reduce their environmental impact, and how we can minimize the impact of the Annual Meeting.

• Request that all Annual Meeting locations work with Annual Meeting locations to be eco-friendly and the Annual Meeting.

• Require that the headquarter hotels for annual meetings offer the option not to change bed linens, such as towels and sheets, unless requested by the person in the room.

• Offer water stations outside the meeting rooms for attendees to use during the meeting.

• Require that the hotels and outlets use reusable utensils instead of disposable utensils whenever possible. Using 1,000 disposable plastic teaspoons consumes over 10 times more energy and natural resources than manufacturing one stainless steel teaspoon and washing it 1,000 times, according to the Environmental Defense Council.

Reduce consumption by:

• Continuing AAR’s current practice of donating leftover food from Annual Meeting receptions and lunches to local homeless shelters.

• Serving buffet lunches instead of boxed lunches (i.e., a cardboard container with a premade sandwich, chips, etc.) in order to reduce consumer waste.

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Education for a Sustainable Future: The Role of Religious Studies and Theology Education

Debra Rowe, U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development

Debra Rowe is the Higher Education Co-Chair and President of the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development (www.uspartnership.org). The U.S. Partnership has sector teams for: higher education, K-12, business, faith, and youth. She is also Senior Fellow at the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (www.auldf.org). National Co-coordinator of the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (www.heasc.net) and Senior Adviser for the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (www.aashe.org). Rowe helps higher education associations and institutions integrate sustainability into mission, curricula, research, student life, operations, and community partnerships. She was the energy and sustainability consultant to the National Science Foundation-funded National Science Database Library (Electronic Environmental Resources Library). Rowe has been professor of energy technology for over 26 years at Oakland Community College.

RSN: Why is sustainable development important?

Rowe: From the 1987 Brundtland Commission, the most common definition of sustainable development is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In 2003, Dr. Rolf Jucker further illuminated the idea: “Sustainability is achieved when all people on Earth can live well without compromising the quality of life for future generations.”

The vision of sustainable human society resides in the simultaneous and synergistic creation of economic growth and equity, conservation of natural resources and the natural environment, and sustainable social development. It is often visually represented as follows:

1. Economy
2. Society
3. Environment

The three components of sustainable development.

RSN: Why should educators in North America care about sustainable development?

Rowe: There is an urgent need for us to care and educate ourselves about sustainable development. The extent to which we, the people of the United States, adopt and embrace the principles of sustainable development may determine the quality of life that our country and all humanity enjoys in the decades ahead. As 5 percent of the world’s population, we consume 25 percent of the world’s resources. Ecosystems depend on to provide clean air, water, food, and other essential resources are degrading and climate change is occurring. The Earth simply cannot tolerate billions of people following the path we chose.

Now, as responsible educators, we must demonstrate new paths to economic, environmental, and community health which do not compromise our future. Many U.S. citizens do not know that:

• We are exceeding the carrying capacity of the planet. (www.myfootprint.org)
• The ecosystems are degrading. (www.worlddebris.org/topics/nature)
• We can cost-effectively reduce human suffering and environmental degradation now while building stronger economies.
• Education is key to creating necessary behavioral and policy changes. Sustainable living, consumption, and investment behaviors can be learned, and unreasonable policies and regulations can be revised to create a future that supports actions for a sustainable future.

RSN: Why should those in religious studies care about sustainability?

Rowe: At its core, sustainability is about the reduction of human suffering. It is about human rights, social justice, and respect for the life-supporting ecosystems on which we all depend. This is the first generation whose decisions will determine the habitability of the planet. The decisions of today’s students will help decide whether the future is one of scarcity and more human suffering or sustainable abundance and less suffering.

Religion has played a key role in the global and historical human dialogue about morality, human rights, and social justice. Many religious traditions have stories of creation and concerns for human suffering, morality, human rights, and social justice. These themes can be explored by students as commonalities among the religious traditions, particularly in “Introduction to World Religions” and “Comparative Religions” courses.

Religious studies can make important and unique contributions to sustainability education for all undergraduates on college campuses, as it plays such an important role in liberal education. Religion courses could easily engage students in the sustainability issues of this generation, and help them think about and practice the necessary behaviors and actions for a sustainable future. (There is a lot of activity already occurring regarding the “greening” of the theological curriculum.) Religion professors don’t need to know the answers, but they do need to know the questions they bring into their courses; raising the issue for discussion can be fruitful. The core question is “How can we use what we are learning to help create a better, sustainable future?”

RSN: What is the role of U.S. higher education in creating a sustainable future?

Rowe: There is enormous potential within U.S. higher education. Some of the key statistics are illuminating:

• 4,096 colleges and universities
• 14.8 million students
• U.S. higher education expenditures are greater than the GDP of all but 25 countries in the world.

Students need to know that their daily decisions affect the quality of life people around the globe. By making more thoughtful decisions, students can help create a better world. Through real world expressions of spiritual values in assignments, religion educators can engage students to help colleges and universities and the larger society change operational, curricular, and policy norms. Students can learn and practice via such assignments how to be more environmentally responsible and socially just.

The goal is to engage students as effective change agents in our sustainability challenges. Students can learn, for example, that their purchasing choices can support either immoral, unsafe, and slave-labor conditions or fair-wage and safe working conditions, for oftentimes the same price or only pennies more per product. Students can learn stories about how collective action is powerful, such as:

• The recent corporate Nike story, where students refused to buy Nike brand shoes until Nike committed to monitor implementation of a new no-sweatshop policy;
• The Campus Climate Challenge, where students are working with campus administrations to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change (www.climatechallenge.org);
• The collaboration of science and religions to get action on climate change.

A list of sustainability-oriented campus activities, learning outcomes, and change agent skills that can be included in any course are available at www.resourcesdatabase.org. Educators can also utilize the book 147 Strategies for Teaching Sustainability from Arwood Publishers. Researchers can focus on religiously existing and potential contributions to sustainability.

RSN: What is already occurring in the United States in terms of education for a sustainable future?

Rowe: There is a national trend to infuse sustainable development behaviors, practices, and curricula throughout higher education institutions. HEASC, the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (www.heasc.net), has been formed to catalyze education for a sustainable future in curricula, operations, purchasing, planning, research, student life, investments, and community partnerships. Fourteen national higher education associations have joined HEASC. These associations represent facilities directors, business officers, college and university planners, trustees, purchasers, residential housing, student affairs, campus activities, campus bookstores, and college and university presidents.

Twenty national disciplinary associations have also been networking and collaborating for a sustainable future. Their working groups are focusing on infusing sustainability into curricula, professional development, standards, cross-disciplinary projects, legislative briefings, and ways to educate the public about how to help create a sustainable future. AAR is part of this network.

RSN: What can interested members do?

Rowe: Many things:

• Become more educated about our sustainability challenges and possible solutions;
• Include information on sustainability efforts in courses, including the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (www.nrpe.org), and social justice, human rights, and social welfare initiatives;
• Join in on the national efforts to: create a learning community in sustainability and religion develop curricular and professional development materials for the AAR, including textbook revisions to include sustainable work on standards that include sustainability principles for AAR and higher education volunteer to be part of the following interdisciplinary working groups:
  • public information campaign
  • legislation education
  • cross-disciplinary research.

You can send an e-mail to Kyle Cole, RSN Executive Editor, at kcole@faithweb.org to find out more about these efforts.

RSN: Where can we get more information?

Rowe: You can visit the following sites:

• Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education — www.aahhe.org
• Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future — www.udf.org
• United States Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development — www.uspartnership.org (click on "partner resources," then “higher ed and faith”).

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Until recently religious communities have been so absorbed in internal sectarian affairs that they were unaware of the magnitude of the environmental crisis at hand. Certainly the natural world figures prominently in the major religions: God's creation of material reality in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; the manifestation of the divine in the karmic processes underlying the recycling of matter in Hinduism and Jainism; the interdependence of life in Buddhism, and the Tao (the Way) that courses through nature in Confucianism and Taoism. Despite these emphases on creation, many religions turned from the tur- bulent world in a redemptive flight to a serene, transcen- dent afterlife.

The questions arise, then: If religions are willing to stand by and witness the withering of the earth, has not some- thing of their religious sensibilities become deadened, or at best severely reduced? Why have religions been so late in responding to environmental issues, and what are the obsta- cles to their full participation? Has concern for personal sal- vation or redemption become an obstacle to caring for cre- ation? Why has apocalyptic thinking come to interpret eco- logical collapse as a manifestation of the end time?

Some within religious communities, such as the cultural historian Thomas Berry, do acknowledge the critical nature of the present moment. The concern arising in some reli- gious and environmental circles is whether humans are indeed a viable species — whether our presence on the planet is sustainable. As the Greek Orthodox theologian Metropolitan John of Pergamon has written, the problem is not simply about creating a stewardship ethic in which humans “manage” the earth. Rather, he suggests that the current crisis challenges us to reformulate our ontology, our very nature as humans.

We need not deny the limits or the inordinate dimensions of religions as expressed in sectarianism and violence. Examples are evident throughout history as well as in con- temporary global conflicts. However, religions have also contributed to liberating movements for social justice and human rights. In that spirit, it is important to note that religions have changed over time, transforming themselves and their dogma in response to new ideas and circum- stances. Although Christianity had no ban against slavery, Christian churches in Britain and the United States came to embrace the abolitionist position. Many Christians became leaders in the abolitionist movement of the nineteenth cen- tury and in the civil-rights movement of the twentieth.

Given that history, we have reason to believe that as the moral dimension of the environmental crisis becomes ever more apparent, religions will energize and support a new generation of leaders in the environmental movement.

Indeed, many people recognize that religions, as enduring shapers of culture and values, can make seminal contribu- tions to the rethinking of our current environmental impasse. Religions have developed ethics for homicide, sui- cide, and genocide; now they are challenged to respond to biocide and ecocide. Moreover, the environment presents itself as one of the most compelling concerns for robust interreligious dialogue. The common ground is the earth itself, along with a shared sense among the world’s religions of the interdependence of all life. This shared sensibility and the extent of the environmental crisis present them- selves as a moment of enormous opportunity for coopera- tion around a common cause — the activation of flourish- ing human-earth relations.

A new scholarly field of religion and ecology is emerging, with implications for environmental policy as well as for understanding the complexity and variety of human atti- tudes toward nature. The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, for example, under the leadership of Dean James Gustave (Gus) Speth, has initiated an inter- disciplinary project on climate change that includes the role of religion and values. Many environmental-studies pro- grams in the United States are seeking to incorporate such a broad ethical approach into their curricula.

Scientists and policy makers are also recognizing the impor- tance of religious and cultural values when discussing the environment. The biologist E. O. Wilson, in his recent book, The Creation, urges cooperation between religion and science on environmental issues. The Stanford scientists Paul Ehrlich and Donald Kennedy have called for a major study of human behavior and values in relation to environmental protection and preservation.

The effort to identify religiously diverse attitudes and prac- tices toward nature was the focus of a major international conference series from 1996 to 1998 on world religions and ecology. Held at the Center for the Study of World Religions, at the Harvard Divinity School, it resulted in a ten-volume series of books, published by the center and dis- tributed by Harvard University Press. More than 800 schol- ars of religions and environmentalists attended, following to a continuing forum on religion and ecology that has grown to more than 4,000 participants. The series concluded in New York with conferences at the United Nations and the

American Academy of Religion
Religion and Ecology Group
www.religionandecology.org/call-for-papers.php
AA R, from p.13

• Reducing the number of one-time-use signs and trying to design signs so that they may be used for more than one year.

• Providing exhibitors and exhibitor hall management the opportunity to recycle materials.

• Using recycled or organic cotton for tote bags. We are exploring the possibility of using a tote bag that is made of recycled plastic bottle containers and excess cotton from clothing manufacturing.

• Offering bins for attendees to place the plastic name badge holder at the end of the meeting so that they may be reused.

One of the heaviest areas of consumption is the energy used to get to the Annual Meeting, whether by plane, train, or automobile. The majority of meeting attendees fly to the Annual Meeting, which uses a great deal of jet fuel and expels several tons of carbon into the air. Several organizations offer travelers the opportunity to purchase carbon offsets in order to “buy back” the carbon used by the airplane. These organizations invest the money into programs such as wind power, tree plantings, and other activities that are designed to offset carbon dioxide emissions. Purchasing carbon offsets only adds $4–10 to the cost of a ticket to San Diego. AAR is exploring the possibility of giving members the opportunity to purchase carbon offsets during the Annual Meeting registration process.

We encourage you to consider ways you can help the AAR in its goal to “go green” at the Annual Meeting. The opportunities are many, including:

• Register for the Annual Meeting through the online registration system and housing system (reduces paper waste).

• Purchase carbon offsets when making travel arrangements.

• Use public transportation or mass transit options in your travel and during your stay in San Diego.

• Bring a mug from home to the meeting and reuse it instead of disposable cups.

• Bring your own name badge holder and reuse it year to year.

• Make use of the recycle bins.

Since planning for each Annual Meeting begins well in advance of the meeting date — contracts are established years beforehand — some of these initiatives will not go into effect for several years,” Jones said. “Others will be available at the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Diego.”

AAR seeks to work in partnership with our members, the host city, and the meeting vendors to explore solutions on how we can minimize our environmental footprint. The goal is to continue to provide quality meetings yet make them green. During this process, we welcome your suggestions. If you have an idea that you did not see listed above, please send it to annualmeeting@aarweb.org.

Without question, the primary motivator for the “green meeting” is Taylor, the Midwest AAR Regional Secretary. In the past five years, the region has taken incremental steps that have led to a fully-greened meeting, MAAR implemented a number of measures to reduce the ecological footprint of its conference and to offset carbon emissions by asking it members to consider the following:

• Bring a reusable beverage container.

• Reuse nametag holders from past/other meetings.

• Use public transportation to get to the hotel and to get around the host city — or to carpool with other members attending the meeting.

• Tell hotel housekeeping not to change the linens nightly.

• Turn off lights and equipment in session rooms when no other session follows.

• Purchase Renewable Energy Credits to offset conference travel.

Taylor says her area of expertise, Religion and Ecology, led her to initiate these ideas, “I have things like reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and artistic climate impact art on my desk,” she said. “Even if I wanted to ignore these things, the novelty of my research makes this impossible. So, as soon as I was elected the Midwest regional director, I set about planning a ‘greener’ annual regional conference. The conference center for MAAR agreed to serve organic, fair-trade, shade-grown coffee for a small fee. Taylor said the cost was minimal and MAAR was able to offset the costs on other materials it was not consuming.

“Ecological concerns are closely tied to social justice concerns, and the fair-trade coffee will help to support struggling farming families while the shade-grown approach is more bird friendly. These steps to conserve vital habitat and biodiversity,” Taylor said.

She said there was a groundswell of support for her ideas. After sending an e-mail outlining her proposal for green practices at the conference, her inbox was jammed with replies. “I cannot tell you how many of these notes started out with the word ‘Finally!’” she said. “In general, our membership seems to be pretty well informed about these issues and genuinely wants opportunities to be active in helping to solve environmental problems. We have jumped at the opportunity to ‘go green.’”

As the AAR moves into the sustainability forefront, great thanks are extended to the pioneers of this movement in religious studies and theology, and to the Religion and Ecology Group. Their efforts have given the AAR the foundation upon which to move these issues into the mainstream of educating all undergraduates and theological students about the importance of sustainability for a viable future. If you have additional ideas about how the AAR can encourage sustainability, please contact Kyle Cole at kcole@aarweb.org.

Some of the most striking examples of the intersection of religion and ecology have taken place in Iran and Indonesia. In June 2001 and June 2005, the President Mohammad Khatami, the government of Iran and the United Nations Environment Programme sponsored conferences in Tehran focused on Islamic practices and threatened legal sanctions against those who do not follow them. In Indonesia projects of tree planting and restoration work draw on the Islamic principle of maintaining balance (mitaaz) in nature. Students in Islamic boarding schools are taught such principles and are encouraged to apply the Islamic doctrine of trusteeship regarding the environment.

As those examples illustrate, a many-faceted alliance of religion and ecology is emerging around the planet, with attitudes and behaviors being reexamined with attention toward the future of the whole community of life, not just humans. This is a new moment for the world’s religions, and they have a vital role to play in the development of a more comprehensive environmental ethics. The urgency of this process cannot be underestimated, in fact, the flourishing of the earth community may depend on it.
Open Theology and Science Conference
Eastern Nazarene College
Quincy, Massachusetts
June 18 - July 6, 2007

Does God know the future?

DEBATES

Philosophical Debate
Thomas Flint vs. William Hasker       June 19th

Biblical Debate
Karen Winslow vs. Randall Tan         June 26th

Theological Debate
John Sanders vs. John J. Davis         July 3rd

LECTURES

Clark Pinnock on Open Theology         June 21st
Anna Case-Winters on Intelligent Design June 28th
John Polkinghorne on
Open Theology and Science             July 6th
(BEGINS AT 6 P.M., COST: $25)

SEMINAR AND EVENTS
CO-DIRECTORS
Karl Giberson
Thomas Jay Oord
Clark Pinnock

Debates and lectures begin at 7 p.m. (except where noted) and are located at Eastern Nazarene College’s Shrader Lecture Hall.

Debates and lectures are open to the public and free, except where noted.

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Dan Messier
(617) 847-5929
daniel.a.messier@gmail.com

FUNDED IN PART BY THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION
I GREW up on college campuses, with graduate students for babysitters. The eldest daughter of an academic psychologist, I looked forward to the faculty parties at my house, where my father’s colleagues asked me serious questions and listened to my answers. Long after my mother sent me to bed, I would sit at the top of the stairs listening to the witty banter down below. I loved academic even before I knew what it was called.

Still, I did not follow my father into college teaching, both because I lacked the gumption to pursue a doctoral degree and because I thought I could do more good in the church. So I went to Yale Divinity School, earned a master’s degree in 1976, and was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. No one could have convinced me then that my search for deep religious dialogue would lead me back to where I had begun.

Over the course of two decades, I served three churches. Two of them were big and urban, with lots of clergy members on staff and thousands of congregants. The third was a small parish in rural northeast Georgia, where I was the only paid minister, and where the chickens outnumbered the people. While I found plenty to love about the work, however, the ministry did not meet my expectations. I had thought I would spend a lot of time in a big leather chair, studying the Bible and theology when I was not writing sermons or counseling parishioners. I had thought that church members would share my curiosity about some of the more puzzling questions of faith, and that together we would both think and pray our way toward the light.

Instead I spent most of my time essentially managing a small business, with all of the fiscal, physical, plant, and personnel issues that such a job entails. I also gave long hours to caring for people in crisis, and while those hours were well spent, there were few left over to ponder the questions that had led me into the ordained ministry in the first place. I read fiction for the 15 minutes each night that I could keep my eyes open. When church members and I chose topics for Christian education, we often chose something that made us feel more secure in our faith instead of those that might challenge our understanding of ourselves. Reluctantly I accepted the fact that my job had more to do with providing a safe place for parishioners to raise their children and strengthen their beliefs than it did with exploring the theological territory. Most people counted on me to provide answers and two to three times more. Then there was a lot of sense — who wants a provocateur teaching the 12-year-olds or tipping the canons during Bible study! — but at the same time, I found the life of my mind growing thin.

In 1997 I received a surprise telephone call from the president of Piedmont College, six miles down the road from the church I served. The college was establishing an endowed chair in religion, he said. Based on my experience, Piedmont was willing to consider me without a PhD. Was I interested in applying?

Three months later, after a great deal of soul-searching, I accepted the job. I swapped a pulpit for a blackboard, and a whole closet full of colorful church vestments for my father’s black academic gown. Most happily of all, I swapped my status as a master of divinity for membership in the department of humanities, which struck me as much more in line with my abilities.

Now, almost ten years later, I am still enamored with teaching undergraduate religion. Perhaps it is because this job description is so much clearer than my old one. Perhaps it is because I find late adolescents so touching and so funny. Perhaps it is because, as I love to learn, and teaching gives me endless opportunity to do that. Perhaps it is because I grew up on college campuses.

But I think the main reason I still love my job is that I have finally found a place where I can engage in religious questions that matter, with people who are as eager as I am to engage them. Before we ever read a page of our texts, we agree on some basic rules: All voices are welcome at the table. Everyone will be heard. If you do not agree with what you hear, you can still listen carefully before you respond. Civility toward others does not imply acceptance of their ideas. Relationships are at least as important as ideas. No one will be damned, at least in this class. The only dumb question is the one you do not ask.

While living with those rules is often a struggle, as students tend to respond to me, and to one another as well. Some struggle at first, students tend to respond to them, and to one another as well. Some experience, Piedmont was willing to consider me without a PhD. Was I interested in applying?

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Intelligent Design: Religion or Science?
Paul Rasor, Virginia Wesleyan College

NE OF THE difficulties courts often face in religious freedom cases is the slipperiness of the term “religion.” The First Amendment of the United States Constitution says, “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” When someone challenges a government activity as interfering with religious free exercise or as improperly promoting a religious message, a court must first determine whether the claim does in fact involve religion.

Sometimes this is easy. If a practice includes prayer or a sacred text, for example, no one is likely to argue the point. In other cases, however, the parties may disagree about whether a particular practice or belief is religious. Such a disagreement lies at the heart of the ongoing disputes over whether the theory of intelligent design (ID) should be taught in public schools.

Intelligent design’s basic claim is that the universe is so complex it must have been created by an intelligent being. School boards in several states have adopted or seriously considered proposals requiring ID to be taught in science classes, usually as an “alternative” to Darwinian evolution. While the political struggle around this issue in Kansas, Ohio, and elsewhere has been widely publicized, the most significant federal court decision on ID came from Pennsylvania. In October 2004, the Dover Area School District adopted a resolution stating, “Students will be made aware of gaps/problems in Darwin’s theory and of other theories of evolution including, but not limited to, intelligent design.” Ninth grade biology teachers were required to read a statement to their students that said, “Darwin’s Theory is a theory. . . not a fact.” The statement specifically named ID as an alternative, about which students were “encouraged to keep an open mind.” A group of parents challenged the Dover ID policy in federal court, arguing that it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. In a lengthy and carefully reasoned opinion issued on December 20, 2005, in the case of Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District, federal judge John Jones agreed, and enjoined the school district from applying the policy.

The central issue in the case was whether ID is a scientific or religious theory. Judge Jones gave several reasons for ruling that ID was a religious view. First, ID’s proponents acknowledged that in their view, the “design” is manifest in God. Second, there was a direct historical link between ID and creationism, which holds that the creation stories in the Book of Genesis (both of them) provide a historically factual account of human origins. Creationists have long sought to remove evolution from public school classrooms, and in the 1920s they persuaded several state legislatures to criminalize the teaching of evolution. The most famous of these laws was Tennessee’s, under which a science teacher named John Scopes was convicted in 1925 in the famous “monkey trial.” In 1968, however, in Everson v. Arkansas, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that these anti-evolution laws violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Following this case, creationists pushed for laws requiring that creationism and evolution be given equal time in public school science classes. In 1987, in Edwards v. Aguillard, the Supreme Court rejected this ploy, ruling that these so-called “balanced treatment” laws also violated the First Amendment.

The evidence in the Kitzmiller trial showed that ID was developed as a tactical response to these court decisions. The most compelling evidence was the revelation that the recommended ID textbook had used the term “creationism” in its earliest drafts. After the Supreme Court’s 1987 ruling, however, this term was systematically replaced with “intelligent design,” but the content was otherwise left unchanged. As Judge Jones said, this history shows that ID “is creationism relabeled.”

A third factor was the testimony of Dr. John Haught, Distinguished Research Professor at Georgetown, a highly regarded theologian who has written widely on the relationship of religion and science. Dr. Haught noted that ID is not a new scientific theory, as its proponents claim, but rather a religious argument for the existence of God that can be traced at least to Thomas Aquinas. In other words, ID’s central claim has been part of Western religious thought for nearly eight centuries.

Finally, it was abundantly clear that the school board’s purpose in adopting the ID policy was to bring a religious perspective into the science curriculum. This is precisely what the official endorsement of religion the First Amendment prohibits.

Several observations about this case may be made. First, Judge Jones did not rule that intelligent design was false, just that it was religion and not science. Its basic claim that our complex universe is the work of a designer, or God, was not put on trial. By the same token, the judge also noted that the theory of evolution neither conflicts with nor denies the existence of a divine creator. The science experts who testified during the trial supported this view. The popular view, and certainly the view of creationists and intelligent design advocates, is that evolution necessarily implies atheism. But that simply isn’t true.

Second, the Dover ruling does not mean that ID cannot be taught in the public schools at all. While the First Amendment prohibits public schools from promoting religion, it does not prohibit teaching about religion. Many observers, including the Supreme Court, have noted that religion is an important part of education today. Just as the Bible or other sacred texts may be included in history or literature courses, for example, ID might be taught in a course on comparative religions or the history of ideas. It just cannot be taught in biology class as a science.

If intelligent design is a perfectly respectable religious view, and if it could be included in other parts of the public school curriculum, why do its advocates insist that it be put in the science classes? This suggests that their real goal is not to promote intelligent design for its own sake, but rather to discredit evolution.

This raises an interesting question. If intelligent design is a perfectly respectable religious view, and if it could be included in other parts of the public school curriculum, why do its advocates insist that it be put in the science classes? This suggests that their real goal is not to promote intelligent design for its own sake, but rather to discredit evolution.

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Finally, I am concerned that this entire controversy perpetuates the belief that religion and science are fundamentally incomparable, that as modern human beings, we are forced to choose between faith and knowledge. These cases are widely reported in the media, and the image of religion we see is the image of the most theologically and culturally conservative religious group in the country, precisely the group who refuses to reconcile religion and science. The result is that even when they lose the legal cases, their dualistic worldview still forms the context for the story.

But there is another view. Some of the most interesting developments in theology over the past several decades have involved the integration of science and religion. Many theologians today treat contemporary knowledge in the natural sciences, including physics and biology, not as theological heresies, but as fertile theological resources. Those of us who think of ourselves as religious people need not be afraid of science. Judge Jones’ opinion was so thorough and so persuasive that many school boards and state legislatures across the country rejected intelligent design proposals in its wake. Yet this does not mean that the opponents of intelligent design have won and that this particular front in the culture war is now settled. The struggle over evolution has been going on for 80 years, and it seems unlikely to disappear anytime soon.
AT RECENT AAR Annual Meeting, I was talking with one of my college professors about the experience captured by the cliché “The more you know, the more you realize you don’t know.” We began talking about how I, as a graduate student, often feel like an intellectual imposter: surely the moment will come when someone on my committee, or a student I have taught, or a reader of an article I have published will shine the light on my ignorance and unveil me as an imposter. To my surprise, my former professor and friend understood my feeling exactly. “Whitney,” he said to me, “I still wait for the day to come when a white van will pull up in front of the religion department, driven by the intellectual police who have come to take me away for being an imposter.” I was shocked! I thought it made perfect sense for me, as a grad student who still has much to learn in my field, to feel this way. But standing before me was a seasoned professor telling me that the feeling never goes away.

I took it upon myself at that moment to conduct an informal survey on the topic of feeling like an “intellectual imposter.” I spoke with students and professors at various stages in their careers and from various fields within religious studies and the humanities — from first-year graduate students to seasoned professors. Though the extent to which any one person felt it varied, sure enough, most of them had the feeling of being an imposter. Why, then, does no one talk about it? It seems that such a pervasive feeling should at least be a ballet point in any orientation for new doctoral students in religious studies, but this does not seem to be the case.

I have a hypothesis about the existence of both the feeling of being an imposter and the corresponding silence (in general) about this feeling. It goes something like this: the post-modern understanding of knowledge as evolving and “living,” and being formed in contextual, “epistemic” communities is now pervasive in the academy, but the old habit of thinking that knowledge is objective, unchanging, bare fact, and completely graspable still haunts us all in our daily academic lives. In other words, we live ideally in a community that understands the contextual and contentious nature of any knowledge claim and of the “gap” that exists between concepts/language and the reality/experience to which they refer. At the same time, we live materially/physically within institutions that demand we teach a certain body of knowledge, publish or perish, keep up with what is current in our fields of knowledge, and in general “show what we know.” How then do we exist and persist in this in-between space? On the one hand we know that what constitutes “knowledge” has a lot to do with interpretation from within bio-historical contexts and from those empowered by epistemic communities to judge what is and is not worthy of being called “good work.” On the other hand, we have to teach a body of knowledge to students in a course on “World Religions” or “The History of Christian Thought” and show to the wider public, already skeptical of the humanities and especially religious studies, that we actually do have something real to contribute.

I’m not really sure of the answer, but I think it might start with a discussion of the experiences of feeling like an imposter. Perhaps the emerging discourse surrounding the “intellectual as trickster” is a helpful starting point for this conversation. In other words, perhaps one of our functions as teachers and academicians is to point out the porous boundaries and precarious grounds upon which all knowledge claims stand in an attempt to show how, in the end, we must all act as “response-able” (indeed responsible) beings for those things that we hold as truths. After all, it is no new insight that all-knowing also involves ‘un-knowing.”

Whether we cling tightly to “traditional” interpretations or cautiously ourselves beyond the boundaries of traditional interpretations, we are all still interpreters and are, in the end, “response-able” for the interpretations to which we hold. At the very least, I hope that through acknowledging our feelings of being “imposters” we will be more humble in academic dialogues, which in turn might lead us to listen more to “other” perspectives rather than to hide behind knowledge claims as if they were not, somehow, contextual. With the recognition that all knowledge claims are made on “shifting grounds” by virtue of the way in which knowledge is produced and evolves in epistemic communities, one might claim that the true intellectual imposter is the one who refuses to acknowledge it.

THE PURPOSE of history is never simply to reflect a past world in the memory.” So wrote German theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) during a period in which he himself was intensively engaged in a number of projects on the history of Christianity and Protestantism. As he told the history of Protestant doctrine, Troeltsch explored and assessed models of Protestant identity and religious community with an eye to the cultural situation of his own time.

I was fascinated when I first discovered that classic doctrines about gender and the family occasionally caught Troeltsch’s attention. In my reading, these doctrines provided Troeltsch with opportunities for reflection on diverse Christian understandings of the relation between the individual and the community. At a time when Troeltsch and other intellectuals were grappling with questions about individual freedom and social cohesion in their own society, these doctrines were of more than merely historical interest.

My current research explores the political, rhetorical, and cultural dimensions of categories employed by Protestant theologians and other intellectuals in imperial Germany. I offer rhetorical analysis of categories that were commonly used in constructions of Protestantism — categories such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, individualism, patriarchalism, and religion itself. I show that categories central to work in systematic theology and church history were shaped by cultural debates about Protestant identity and German society during a time of rapid modernization.

In fall 2006, grants from the AAR, Carleton College, and the Wabash Center enabled me to focus on a new and exciting piece of my research: an exploration and analysis of scholarly writings by Ernst Troeltsch and Marianne Weber on conceptions of gender, equality, and the family in Christian history. During his years as professor of theology in Heidelberg (1894–1914), Troeltsch had regular discussions with Max and Marianne Weber, with whom Troeltsch and his wife shared a house. As Marianne Weber mentions in her biography of Max Weber, Troeltsch and the Webers discussed not only issues related to religion and sociology, but also more immediate concerns about the culture and politics of imperial Germany.

During this time Troeltsch and Marianne Weber each produced books that could be broadly classified as works in historical sociology. Each of these books in its own way dealt with questions of autonomy and community in various historical contexts. Marianne Weber’s 1907 book, “The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups” (published in various installments between 1908 and 1912). While this book focused broadly on the diverse forms of social organization and social doctrine in Christian history, it also contained significant sections on the “family and sex ethic” of various Christian groups. In several sections of his “Social Teachings,” Troeltsch footnoted Marianne Weber’s work, and also engaged in his own analyses of the history of Christian doctrines of the family. (Marianne Weber’s book also makes reference to Troeltsch’s work on the history of Protestantism, published in 1906).

In one section of my current work, I am exploring the ways Marianne Weber and Troeltsch portrayed the “gender ethic” of Stoicism, Jesus, Paul, medieval Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and modern Protestant groups. In particular, I am interested in how they employed abstract categories (such as “patriarchalism”) in ways that reflect their own attitudes toward modernization in imperial Germany. As they offered their respective historical analyses of, for example, Calvinist conceptions of the family and attitudes toward sex and gender,
PEARSON, from p. 20

Troeltsch and Marianne Weber (I argue) were exploring and evaluating contemporary questions related to the shape of German society in their own time. Although their respective books and footnotes (as well as other sources) indicate that Troeltsch and Marianne Weber had read each other’s work, there has been no research on their interchanges or on parallels in their scholarship. Indeed, relatively little research exists on Marianne Weber as an independent scholar. Recently this trend has begun to change, thanks to work by scholars such as Guenther Roth and Barbel Meurer. AAR funds supported release time and a valuable trip to Widener library, where I had access to sources on Marianne Weber and to recent work on the fields of sociology, history, religion, and Protestant theology in imperial Germany.

Through my project I hope to illuminate the political and cultural conversations that shaped Troeltsch’s historiographical categories and to help document the ways a leading intellectual woman shaped the discourse that would become central to the field of religious studies.
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