



RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

October 2007

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2007

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<i>October</i>	July 15

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2007 Member Calendar

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

October

Religious Studies News October issue.

Spotlight on Teaching Fall issue.

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

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

October 22. EIS preregistration closes.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.

November 15. Executive Committee meeting, San Diego, CA.

November 16. Fall Board of Directors meeting, San Diego, CA.

November 16. Chairs Workshop at the Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

November 16. Leadership Workshop at the Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

November 17–20. Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. Held concurrently with the Society of Biblical Literature, comprising some 11,000 registrants, 200 publishers, and 150 hiring departments.

November 19. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. See the *Program Book* for time.

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.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2008 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/members/dues.

And keep in mind throughout the year...

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for their Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/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/submit1.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/submitad1.asp. 

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RSN

RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

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/rsn.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

As we approach the Annual Meeting, we find ourselves in very busy times as reflected by this large October issue of *RSN*. October always brings news of and about the Annual Meeting, this year in San Diego. Registration forms, what to do, and features on the international focus on China are all inside. Additionally, don't forget to vote in our elections — the deadline is November 1. As always, we have a solid slate of candidates, but please let your voice be heard and vote on the future volunteer leadership of the AAR.

In Focus, we examine the complexities of "The Religion Major and Liberal Education." Supported by a Teagle Foundation grant, a working group has organized and is taking steps to eventually craft a "white paper" on the topic. This section discusses the project, and encourages all AAR members to get involved. There are so many contexts from which we all work — public or private institutions, large state flagships, small liberal arts colleges, departments, combined departments, programs within other departments, etc. — that we need to hear from you. At the Annual Meeting there are two opportunities for extended conversation — one is the leadership workshop on Friday, November 16, and another is a wildcard session scheduled for 1 PM Saturday, November 17.

A pioneer in the field, Letty Russell, died recently; President-elect Emilie Townes offers a wonderful tribute in a beautifully written piece.

Also in this issue is a *Spotlight on Teaching* titled "Diversifying Knowledge Production: The Other within Christianity." *Spotlight* guest editor is Zayn Kassam, who has produced for us an important issue written by a variety of learned authors.

This marks the last issue for which I will serve as executive editor and Shelly Roberts will serve as editor. We have enjoyed the opportunity to serve the Academy in this capacity. Carey Gifford and Stephanie Gray will assume our responsibilities. I hope you will submit any thoughts, letters to the editor, comments, and criticisms concerning *Religious Studies News* to Gifford at cgifford@aarweb.org. 

Kyle Cole

Executive Editor, *Religious Studies News*

AAR Officer Elections

A Message from the AAR Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is pleased to place six excellent names on the ballot this year for Vice President, Secretary, and Student Director. We are grateful to all of them for their willingness to serve the Academy in this way.

Once again, AAR members will be able to vote by electronic ballot. A paper ballot will be mailed to members whose e-mail addresses are not on file. Please know that we guarantee the privacy of your vote.

We expect a large number of our members to vote in this election. Please be among them.

Hans Hillerbrand, Chair
Nominations Committee

Call for Nominations

The Nominations Committee will continue its practice of consultations during the Annual Meeting in San Diego, California to begin the process for selecting nominees for Vice President to take office in November 2008. The committee takes seriously all recommendations by AAR members.

The following characteristics regularly surface in discussions of candidates for Vice President:

- (a) Scholarship: "represents the mind of the Academy," "international reputation," "breadth of knowledge of the field," "widely known."
- (b) Service to the Academy: "serves the Academy broadly conceived," "gives papers regularly," "leads sections," "chairs committees," "supports regional work."
- (c) General: "electable," "one the average member of the Academy will look upon with respect," "one whose scholarship and manner is inclusive rather than narrow, sectarian, and/or exclusive."

How to Vote

All members of the Academy are entitled to vote for all officers. The elected candidates will take office at the end of the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Please vote online at www.aarweb.org. Paper ballots are sent only to those without e-mail addresses on file or by special request (please call 404-727-3049). Vote by November 1, 2007, to exercise this important membership right.


Vice President

The Vice President serves on the Executive and Program Committees, as well as on the Board of Directors. She will be in line to be confirmed President-Elect in 2008 and President in 2009. During her tenure, the Vice President will have the opportunity to affect AAR policy in powerful ways; in particular, during the presidential year, the incumbent makes all appointments of members to openings on committees.

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for recording and verifying the official records of the meetings of the members, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. The Secretary serves a three-year term and is eligible for reelection to one additional three-year term.

Student Director

The Student Director is a member of the Board of Directors, representing the particular concerns and issues of AAR student members at large. In addition, the Student Director works with the Student Liaison Group and Graduate Student Committee. 



See page 4 for
candidates' statements



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.



Remember to register for the Annual Meeting before the rates rise on October 16.

Registration information can be found at www.aarweb.org/jump/am.

Candidates for Secretary

Michel Desjardins



Michel Desjardins is Professor of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, and past Chair of that department. His PhD in Religious Studies is from the University of Toronto (1987).

Professor Desjardins has published mainly in the area of Christian origins. He is currently engaged in a multi-year project on the intersection of religion and food across living traditions.

He is the recipient of teaching awards from the University of Toronto (1991) and Wilfrid Laurier University (2001), and is the only scholar of religion to have been named a 3M National Teaching Fellow (2001) by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher

Education, recognizing teaching excellence and educational leadership.

Professor Desjardins was a founding Board member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada. He also served as Secretary of the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion (1993–2000), the publishing arm of Canadian academic societies for the study of religion.

He became an executive member of the Eastern International Region of the AAR in 1990, and served as President of that region in 1991. From 1997 to 2003 he was a member of the AAR's Committee on Teaching and Learning, for which he developed, then managed, the Syllabus Project. Since 2004 he has served as a member of the AAR's Program Committee.

Statement on the AAR

I AM EXCITED by the possibility of serving as the Secretary of the AAR. Following is an overview of how I might fit that position.

Some of the traditional secretarial responsibilities are certainly part of the job description, i.e., accurately recording what is said in the Board meetings and in some of our Standing Committees. Having had two long terms as secretary in other academic organizations, I would welcome this responsibility. I find the role of secretary in some ways to be remarkably similar to my academic research, e.g., discerning what Matthew said about Jesus, or what Foucault wrote about sex, or what Sikhs tell me about the function of langar in their gurdwaras. That is to say, I love the challenge of understanding something and describing it; moreover, I find that the more experience I have, the better able I am to place things in context, and get it right. Or at least not get it completely wrong! In this case, I would bring to this position more than 20 years of involvement in the AAR, starting with the first meeting I attended in 1984, extending to my participation on various committees.

Getting it right is particularly important as the AAR continues to grow, especially as it moves to its first stand-alone meeting next year, amidst ongoing membership uncertainty and unrest over this issue. Active listening to all the voices, including those from our vibrant student base, is crucial to our future health. The secretary has an important role to play in representing the many voices that comprise the AAR, through our committees and elsewhere. I feel ready to take on that challenge, because of my previous AAR responsibilities, and also because of other experience I have had, including my work with two Canadian national groups that represent diverse constituencies. I remember, for instance, the Board meetings of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada in the mid-1990s, when we created a new organization out of the ashes of two previous academic lobby groups.

The newly constituted Board had many lengthy discussions concerning how to represent the voices of both humanists and social scientists, lobby the federal and provincial governments effectively, and manage the yearly academic meeting that is now attended by over 8,000 delegates from nearly 70 academic societies.

In addition to capturing and recording information, the AAR Secretary also contributes to committee discussions and will work closely with John Fitzmier, our new executive director. To make an informed choice in this election, you need to know a bit more about other matters that are dear to my heart.

I am actively engaged in both research and teaching. Trained as a biblical scholar, I have long been interested in anything and everything that sheds light on human constructions of religion. Currently I am keenly interested in finding ways to make sense of the ways in which food contributes to people's religious lives. I have recently done fieldwork on that topic in India, Cuba, and the Middle East, and this past summer I was in Indonesia. In addition, like many of you I am passionate about teaching, which includes learning with and from students, and from experts in instructional development. My current project is to work with my colleagues on embedding a teaching stream into our institution's doctoral program that would coherently integrate "teaching" and "research" throughout the four-year program.

The AAR is also dear to my heart, and it would be an honor to serve this society as its secretary. [RSN](#)

David C. Ratke



David C. Ratke is Associate Professor of Religion at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina. Ratke earned his BA in history from the University of Alberta (1985), MA in theology from the Graduate Theological Union (1992), MDiv from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (1993), and PhD (summa cum laude) from University of Regensburg (1998). His areas of research interest are public theology, the scholarship of teaching and learning religion, the relationship of religion to the liberal arts, ecclesiology, religion and culture, and religion and science. Ratke has published articles on ecumenical theology, Lutheran history and theology, contemporary systematic theology, teaching religion, and the relationship of faith and learning in higher education. He is the author of *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament* as

well as other edited volumes, and is on the editorial board of *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*. He currently serves on the AAR Committee for Teaching and Learning and has been active in the Nineteenth-Century Theology Group. Ratke's most recent AAR presentation was on teaching the introductory religion course.

Statement on the AAR

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY of Religion is a large and diverse organization. Its members teach in diverse fields, work in diverse disciplines, and are employed at diverse institutions. Nobody's background and experience could possibly be as diverse as the AAR. Nonetheless my background allows me to appreciate and value the richness of the AAR. I was born and raised in western Canada and maintain my Canadian citizenship. I earned my BA at a large, publicly funded institution of approximately 30,000 students; my MA was at a private ecumenical graduate school. I have an MDiv from a denominational seminary. My doctorate was at another large, public institution (University of Regensburg), but in another country (Germany). Finally, I teach in a small liberal arts church-related college.

Most AAR members come from one of these types of institutions: large, publicly funded universities, graduate religious programs, or church-related colleges. Moreover, the AAR, despite having "American" in its name, is arguably the premier organization in the world for scholars of religion. A significant number of scholars from other nations attend the AAR Annual Meeting. As a Canadian citizen who has been educated in three different nations, I like to think that I'm attuned to the needs of international scholars or at least that I'm willing to listen carefully.

As somebody who has benefited from publicly funded education, I like to think that I honor and appreciate the challenges of working and learning in those institutions as well as honoring the benefits they bring to a democratic society.

As somebody who works in a church-related, liberal arts college, I like to think that I understand the unique and distinctive contributions that such institutions bring to the academy, to their sponsoring religious bodies, and to the public square.

As somebody who was educated at a denominational seminary — and yes, I'm ordained — I like to think that I understand and value the place and contribution of those types of institutions in higher education.

Indeed, my involvement in the AAR and its Annual Meetings has opened my eyes in significant and profound ways to the eclectic nature of religious scholarship and teaching. Presenting papers and chairing panels has afforded me the opportunity to meet scholars that I might not have met otherwise. The sheer range of papers, panels, sessions at the Annual Meeting, and the variety of essays in the *Journal of the AAR* has pointed me to new insights that have enriched my teaching and my scholarship. I'm deeply appreciative for these opportunities and would work to extend it to others.

I think that one of the challenges for the AAR as it moves forward will be to find goals and a vision that all its members with all of their different contexts can believe in. As different as my church-related college is from a large, publicly funded university like the University of North Carolina, the religion scholar at that institution as well as at institutions all over the world shares a common commitment with me: being a scholar of religion.

The AAR, I think, will be pulled in many different directions. Its challenge will be to discern common goals to work toward. I want to be part of that process of discernment. [RSN](#)

Candidates for Vice President

Sheila Greeve Davaney



Sheila Greeve Davaney is the Potthoff Professor of Theology at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. She is the author or editor of 11 volumes including most recently *Historicism and Pragmatic Historicism*. Recent edited volumes include *The Pragmatic Century* (with Warren Frisina) and *Identity and the Politics of Scholarship in the Study of Religion* (with Jose Cabezon). Her scholarly work has focused on historicism, pragmatism, and feminist thought.

Davaney has served on the AAR's Board of Directors, chaired the Long-Range Planning and Development Committee and Regions Committee, and served on the Finance Committee, the Nominations Committee, and Search Committees for editors of JAAR. She was, for eight years, the

Book Review Editor of JAAR. She chaired the Theology and Religious Reflection Section of the Academy for six years. Davaney is an Editor of Blackwell's Religion Compass Journal. She has been elected to the American Theological Society. Davaney co-directed the Ford Foundation-supported project "The Study of Religion in a Global Context." Currently she is the Director of a new web-based forum, Religion Dispatches, bringing scholarly voices into the public arena. At Iliff, she has directed the MA Program and the Joint PhD Program with the University of Denver.

Statement on the AAR

THE AAR STANDS at a momentous point in its history. The study of religion is more relevant than ever today. Every major issue confronting our world is deeply intertwined with religious beliefs, practices, histories, and communities. Moreover, the AAR is about to embark upon its most significant new direction since its founding — an independent Annual Meeting — which signals a new identity for the Academy. The role of elected officers will be crucial as the Academy makes these transitions and positions the AAR to play a greater role in the creation and dissemination of knowledge about religions. There are many areas that require strong leadership today. In particular, I will focus my attention on the following issues:

I. The Annual Meeting

The move to an independent meeting offers the AAR new possibilities. It also presents the following challenges:

1. **Finances.** The independent meeting will introduce new uncertainties concerning AAR finances. The AAR's elected leadership must work with the staff and Board to respond to these financial realities through proactive actions including cultivation of new members, foundations, publishers, etc. The financial well-being of the Academy remains the primary responsibility of its leaders.
2. **Programming.** An independent meeting provides expanding program options, a more workable size, and the potential for new conversations. The most important task will be to ensure that our new meetings are the most exciting and efficient possible. Central ways that presidents can contribute to this include appointment of broadly representative committees, clear communication about emerging opportunities, and cultivation of cross-disciplinary conversations concerning broad shifts in the study of religion.
3. **Collaboration** with other scholarly organizations. While not meeting annually with SBL, we nonetheless need to repair relations with our long-term scholarly partner. Importantly, there is also now an

opportunity to build closer institutional relations with other scholarly organizations including SSSR, MESA, and IHST.

II. Centennial Strategic Initiatives

The AAR has adopted a Centennial Plan to chart its priorities from 2004–2009. I would devote particular attention to enhancing the internationalization efforts of the AAR and supporting the increased diversification of the Academy, especially in leadership roles.


As Director of the AAR Project on "The Study of Religion in a Global Context," the importance of greater international participation in AAR meetings, increased scholarly exchanges, and deeper intersocietal engagement became ever clearer to me. The work of the International Connections Committee deserves strong support if the AAR is to continue to be a world leader in the study of religion. We must engage international scholars and seek funds for extending our efforts in this area.

I am also deeply committed to the strategic initiative of diversifying AAR leadership. The AAR has become more diverse in the last two decades. But the Board and leadership remain less than fully representative of the Academy as a whole. I am committed to broadening such representation both through appointments to committees and in working to increase the diversity of new scholars.

III. Transparency

There have been strong reactions, both positive and negative, to the move to an independent meeting. But no matter where we come out on the decision, most members have been confused about how it was made. We must implement transparent processes that include the input of our constituencies and model democratic discussions and decision making.

IV. Public Outreach

The study of religion has never been more important than now. It is imperative that we seek ways to disseminate and make available the knowledge produced by our members in ever more accessible and publicly effective ways. The public outreach of the Academy should be a central priority in the coming years. 

Ann Taves



Ann Taves received her BA in Religious Studies from Pomona College in 1974. After completing a year of medical school, she left to pursue the study of religion, entering the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1978. She joined the faculty at the Claremont School of Theology in 1983, teaching there and at the Claremont Graduate University for 22 years. Since 2005, she has been the Virgil Cordano OFM Professor of Catholic Studies and Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Her scholarly interests include the history of modern religious thought, theories of religion, and the history of Christian practice with a focus on the interplay between religious experience and psychology. Her publications include *The Household of Faith* (Notre Dame, 1986) and *Fits, Trances, and Visions* (Princeton, 1999). The latter won the 2000 Association of American Publishers Award for Best Professional/Scholarly Book in Philosophy and Religion. She is currently at work on two books. *From Mediums to Mystics* will offer an alternative narrative of the rise of the psychology of religion. *Experiencing Religion: Studies in Cognition, Culture and Personality* deals with questions of method in the study of experiences deemed religious.

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Statement on the AAR

THE AAR and the study of religion are in transition in several ways. As an organization, we are still working through the logistical and administrative effects of the decision to meet independently of the SBL. As a discipline, we have engaged in several decades of serious self-critique, and there are signs of interest in rebuilding in new ways. While religion has arguably been of continuing interest to the general public, it is now a topic of renewed interest throughout the academy, on both ends of the political spectrum, and in the media.

In light of these transitions, my aims would be as follows:

1. To work with the Board and executive director on unresolved issues of governance and logistics that emerged in the wake of the decision to meet independently of the SBL. As the current president has indicated, there are a number of practical matters having to do with meeting dates, rates, and locations, and whether or how often meetings should be coordinated with the SBL that still have to be worked out. I support the current president's interest in considering how the AAR compares with similar organizations in terms of governance, particularly as it relates to input from the membership regarding major decisions. I would want to work with the Board and executive director to ensure continuity in working out these issues as thoughtfully and responsibly as possible.
2. To foster conversations within the discipline that look forward in light of decades of diversification and internal critique and do so while building stronger relations with other disciplines, especially in the social and natural sciences. We have made tremendous strides in terms of making the AAR more inclusive and more globally aware. While our ties to cultural studies and some of the social sciences are strong, our ties to the natural sciences are comparatively weak. Scientific advances in cosmology, evolutionary theory, and especially brain research, are regularly discussed in the media and excite widespread public interest.

While the growth of science and religion studies in recent years has been truly astounding, relatively little of this work is presented at the AAR. Foundations have been funding research and conferences; popular books — often by scholars without training in religious studies — have been garnering public attention. In the context of the AAR, however, we have not critically engaged this work as fully as we might, either in terms of plenary speakers, program units, or initiatives that would increase our familiarity with the natural sciences. This is an area of study that the AAR needs to engage more fully if we want to stay on the cutting edge of scholarship and influence broader social trends and policy decisions arising out of research in this area.

I would bring considerable familiarity with disparate groups within the AAR to these tasks. Having taught in a theological school associated with a cluster of liberal arts colleges and a private graduate university for over 20 years before moving to a religious studies department in a public university, I have first-hand experience of the spectrum of institutions in which we are employed. I have served the AAR in a number of capacities over the past 25 years, including section co-chair, unit steering committees, AAR committee work, and unit reviews. I have been involved with various ATS (Association of Theological Schools) initiatives and have served or am serving on the executive committees of smaller organizations associated with the study of religion, such as the IACSR (International Society for Cognitive Science and Religion). 

Candidates for Student Director

Annie Blakeney-Glazer



Annie Blakeney-Glazer is a doctoral candidate in Religion and Culture at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She received a BA in English from Michigan State University (2001) and an MA from UNC in Religion and Culture (2004). Her Master's thesis investigated how the works of Deleuze and Guattari might assist Foucauldian investigations of religious phenomena. Annie has served as AAR student liaison for the past two years. While holding this position, she organized information sessions for entering graduate students, conference paper proposal workshops, and mock presentations. She has presented papers at AAR national and regional conferences, as well as Popular Culture conferences. At UNC, Annie held several teaching and research positions, most recently teaching a course entitled "Introduction to Religion and Culture: American Evangelicals and Sports in the 20th Century." She is currently writing a dissertation on this topic, exploring Christian athletic organizations in post-World War II America. Her project focuses on gender as an important evangelical and sporting category and queries the relationship between conservative Christian gender logic and the growing presence of evangelical Christian sportswomen in the male-dominated athletic world.

Statement on the AAR

FOR THEIR FIRST assignment in my class last semester, I asked my students to attend a sporting event and look for religion. Their findings were as diverse as the competing definitions of religion developed by scholars. Some pointed to bodily practices like kneeling in prayer, pointing up after a score, or making the sign of a cross as evidence of religious devotion. Some highlighted the intensity of crowd elation as a way to compare fan excitement and religious experience. Still others looked to sports as character-building enterprises that resemble religious training in ethics and morality. This small example demonstrates that today's undergraduates are more than willing to connect religion and popular culture, and are increasingly adept at doing so. In my myriad conversations with students, I noticed that they do not see religion and culture as distinct entities but instead as interlocking and important methods of self-awareness.

How does this relate to the AAR? An important emphasis in recent scholarship and teaching is interdisciplinarity. We are encouraged, if not required, to be historians, anthropologists, cultural theorists, textual critics, sociologists, and more. And while interdisciplinarity can illuminate exciting connections and new avenues for study, it can also cause anxiety about disciplinary boundaries. Definitions of "religious studies" are vague and various, and students and faculty are likely to find their work more closely aligned with those in other departments than with those down the hall from them. What will religious studies look like in the future? How can the AAR both expand the boundaries of the field and preserve the security of our discipline?

During my two years as student liaison, I noticed graduate students in my department increasingly concerned with the state of the job market. The employment survey data in the March 2007 *Religious Studies News* caused considerable anxiety

for those of us thinking of entering the job market in the coming years. This is something the AAR must address. Are religious studies departments producing more PhD candidates than the job market can handle? What can we do about this discrepancy? If the academy in general is becoming more interdisciplinary, how can the AAR encourage interdisciplinarity without losing its identity or blurring the boundaries of the field beyond recognition? I hope that in serving as student director, I will have an opportunity to foster discussion on these issues.

The AAR currently provides excellent resources for graduate students. For example, the Syllabus Project and *Openings* are great assets for students as they contemplate professionalization. The Syllabus Project demonstrates the diversity of the field and numerous opportunities within it for innovation. However, for many of us, *Openings* is a reminder that the field changes slowly and that traditional teachers are often in demand. The AAR, as the professional organization for scholars of religion, is in a position to address the challenges of pursuing a career in religious studies today.

As students comprise nearly 30 percent of AAR members, student interests are vital to the continued relevance of the AAR. In addition to job market anxieties, graduate students are concerned with the ethics of the interview process; how to keep up with researching, teaching, and publishing demands; adequately preparing for conference involvement; offsetting costs of conference attendance; and the particulars of negotiating a split AAR/SBL conference. As the researchers, teachers, publishers, clergy, administrators, and professionals of the future, graduate student anxieties arguably represent the field as whole, and their concerns must be taken seriously as the AAR continues to grow and change. Past student directors have done much to foreground these issues, and I hope to continue this important work. [RSN](#)

Nichole Renee Phillips



Nichole Renee Phillips is a doctoral candidate in Religion, Psychology, and Culture in the Graduate Department of Religion (GDR) of Vanderbilt University. She received her AB in Biochemistry and Religion from Wellesley College (1993), and an MDiv from Harvard Divinity School (1999). Her master's thesis entitled "Brands Plucked Out of the Burning: An Analysis of the Healing Narratives of Three Antebellum Black Women," received honors.

Nichole has served as an AAR student liaison and as the GDR representative to the Student Committee on Personnel and Policy of Vanderbilt Divinity School. She holds memberships in the Person, Culture, and Religion Group (PCR) of the AAR, the Society for Pastoral Theology, the Society for the Social Scientific Study of Religion, and other scholarly organizations. She has presented papers at regional meetings of the AAR and has held teaching fellowships and research assistantships. Her dissertation project continues the ethnographic research she conducted as a student participant of the "Religion and Politics" Project for Vanderbilt's Center for the Study of Religion and Culture and will focus on mourning practices and death rituals in the West Tennessee community where she is presently doing fieldwork.

Statement on the AAR

IN *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*, British pastoral theologian Elaine Graham (1996, 32) queries: Is postmodernity a successor phase to modernity; a collapse and negation of the project of modernity; or a critique and revision of modernism, drawing out ambivalences and contradictions present at the heart of Enlightenment thinking? Although I will not presently venture a response, Graham's series of questions provoke me to consider features of the postmodern condition. Such characteristics have become fundamental to my vision of leadership in the twenty-first century, and thus, my perception of a "postmodern" Student Director.

One hallmark of a "postmodern" student director is sensitivity to context. For the past two years, I have realized much of my "interculturality" — a term, coined by Ghanian and Afro-British pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey, which identifies persons as influenced by and birthed out of different contexts — working as student liaison at Vanderbilt University. This role has sharpened my awareness of the responsibilities and demands of being a student director who encourages increased communication between students, knows what is happening in the field of religion, and can envision changes that are needed for the betterment of the student population being served.

Having the opportunity to engage doctoral students in the Graduate Department of Religion as well as the Vanderbilt Divinity School community, I have come to recognize and appreciate the concerns of both. Those concerns include opportunities for intellectual engagement with more senior scholars, career development, AAR's visibility and access to the student community, and funding for travel to national and regional meetings. This last issue will potentially become the source of increased economic hardship for students with separate 2008 AAR/SBL meetings. A student director must advocate for more forums dedicated to teaching students the skills needed to navigate the academy, such as getting proposals accepted, developing mentor/mentee relationships, pres-

entation skills, et al. That director can also advocate for increased opportunities for junior professors and senior graduate students to present papers nationally, for the design of a space for on-line interinstitutional networking between students, for the teaching of skills needed by a technologically savvy professoriate of religion, and for discussion of the relationship between religious institutions, the Academy, and society. These are some, among many, of the issues I would seek to address if elected as student director.

Another trait of a "postmodern" student director is a willingness to listen to the voice of the "Other," i.e., students who are not part of the majority in their religious affiliations, ethnicities, gender, race, sexual orientations, or career goals. A student director needs to be open to "difference" because "difference" can enrich an organization. For instance, when asked how the AAR/SBL makes a "difference" in her life, a dissertation-stage student replied:

"Careers are an important element of the AAR/SBL. One of the most helpful sessions I attended was that on alternative careers in religion. Since I plan to pursue library work, I am interested in support for those of us who might not be seeking full-time teaching work but are interested in continuing our own research and writing. I think the AAR/SBL would be well-served to support those following alternative career paths."

Pastoral theologians Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Herbert Anderson (1995, 105) remind us that regarding humanity, "at stake is . . . the question of the human capacity to live with difference among persons in a planet that continues to shrink."

For the next two years, the AAR will need a student director who is a "bridge builder" — an empathic listener who is able to work on developing linkages where there are none and who sees the value in strengthening connections that already exist. I believe the interdisciplinary nature of my studies and the intercultural character of my service as a student have equipped me to be that bridge builder, that is, AAR's "postmodern" student director. [RSN](#)



SAN DIEGO WAS RECENTLY RECOGNIZED AS THE NATION'S TOP CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS DESTINATION, PROMPTING THE SLOGAN "COME FOR THE CONVENTION, STAY FOR THE VACATION." BOASTING 70 MILES OF BEACHES, 92 GOLF COURSES, AND OVER 100 CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS, VISITORS TO SAN DIEGO LOVE TO EXPLORE THIS URBAN PLAYGROUND. CONSIDER ATTENDING THE ANNUAL MEETING AND STAYING TO ENJOY THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY IN SUNNY SAN DIEGO.

Golf

With over 90 courses located throughout the region, San Diego has quickly become a golf lover's delight. Named "One of the Top 50 Golf Destinations in the World" by *Golf Digest*, the region has a variety of courses that showcase stunning San Diego views. The destination also plays host to two PGA tour events: the Buick Invitational at Torrey Pines and the Accenture Match Play Championship at La Costa. To find the perfect course, go to www.signon-sandiego.com/sports/golfguide/.

Beaches

A trip to San Diego just isn't complete unless you've combed the beautiful beaches. A perfect combination of fresh air and warm water, the gorgeous shores offer the ideal setting for surfing, kayaking, or soaking up the California sun. To find the best beach for you, see www.signonsandiego.com/feature/42/.

Seaport Village

Whether whiling away a whole day or just stepping out for an hour, these 50-plus diverse shops and 17 unique eateries will more than satisfy. Alongside four miles of tree-lined, bayside paths you'll find all sorts of entertainers doing their thing. Bands, singers, dancers, magicians, whatever. Come explore Seaport Village's sprawling tropical grounds and find everything under the sun.

Plaza del Pasado in Old Town San Diego

Experience a taste of San Diego's rich history — in more ways than one — at Plaza del Pasado. Located in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, Plaza del Pasado is a salute to the simpler and more sanguine lifestyle of old San Diego's pioneering residents. At your leisure, explore the four-acre historic park with its many museums, shops, and restaurants. Taste traditional Mexican cuisine, browse for one-of-a-kind merchandise at the charming international shops, or simply relax in the open courtyard soaking up San Diego's endless sunshine, festive ambience, and historically rich atmosphere.



Gaslamp Quarter

The historic Gaslamp Quarter is the city's hottest dining and entertainment center. Several city blocks feature a variety of restaurants serving everything from traditional steaks to eclectic ethnic fare, all just seconds away from the convention center.

San Diego Zoo

Long recognized as one of the best zoos in the United States, the San Diego Zoo features animals from around the globe. They have created numerous habitats housing tigers, sun bears, and apes, among many others. Don't miss the new Monkey Trails and Forest Tails exhibit, a naturalistic home to more than 30 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. You'll also want to visit the giant panda research station and the Polar Bear Plunge exhibit. The San Diego Zoo is open every day of the year, including all holidays.

San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park

A visit to the Wild Animal Park is like magically stepping from the hustle and bustle of Southern California into the mysteries of exotic, faraway lands. Try the Journey into Africa Tour, designed to give you a glimpse of the amazing diversity found in Africa, the second largest continent on Earth. You'll see eye to eye with wildlife and get a new appreciation for just how huge a rhinoceros or Cape buffalo is. Also consider the Kilimanjaro Safari Walk and the Hidden Jungle. [RSN](#)

Annual Meeting Countdown

Important Dates

- ☑ Mailing of the Annual Meeting badge materials to all preregistered attendees began in **mid-September**. Materials include your name badge and drink ticket. Contact Experient Registration & Housing at aarsblreg@experient-inc.com if you did not receive your materials.
- ☑ Third-tier ("regular") registration rates go into effect on **October 16**, so register early to get the best rate.
- ☑ **November 17–20** is the Annual Meeting in San Diego! Check www.aarweb.org/jump/am for up-to-date information about the meeting.

Checklist for your arrival at the Annual Meeting

- ☑ **Name Badge Holders.** If you received your name badge by mail, all you need to do is swing by the Registration area in the San Diego Convention Center to pick up a name badge holder. Then you are ready to attend sessions and visit the Exhibit Hall.
- ☑ **Onsite Registration.** If you did not receive your badge materials or need to register, visit the AAR & SBL Meeting Registration counter.
- ☑ **Annual Meetings At-A-Glance.** Pick up a copy of the Annual Meetings At-A-Glance booklet. This booklet shows the updated program and room locations for all sessions. Updates or changes will be marked by gray shading. This is an invaluable addition to your Program Book!
- ☑ **Book of Abstracts.** Interested in a session's topic? Want to learn more before heading to the session? Check out the Book of Abstracts, located in the bins near registration, for more information.
- ☑ **Tote Bag.** Tote bag tickets were mailed with the name badge materials. Tote bags are available while supplies last.
- ☑ **Find-A-Friend.** Visit the Find-A-Friend boards in the Registration area to find whether your colleagues are attending.
- ☑ **AAR Member Services.** Visit the AAR Member Services desk if you have any other questions.
- ☑ **Enjoy the meeting!** [RSN](#)



Photos courtesy of the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Sessions with a Focus on Chinese Scholars and Scholarship

King of Masks (A16–402)

Studies of World Religions in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (A17–101)

Dignāga in China (A17–113)

Rituals in Indian and Chinese Cultures (A17–125)

San Diego Chinese Historical Museum Walking Tour (A17–131)

Chinese Scholarship on the Dunhuang Manuscripts: New Perspectives on Buddhism (A17–205)

The Power of “Religion” in China (A17–212)

Self-Representation/Misrepresentation: Muslims in the Chinese Cultural Context (A17–309)

Performing Harmony: Interpreting Daoist Ritual (A17–326)

The Revenge of Han Xin: A Daoist Mystery (A17–405)

Regional Religion, Local Society, and Ritual Practice: A Consideration of Patrice Fava’s film *The Revenge of Han Xin: A Daoist Mystery* (A18–114)

Tibetan Religion in China: Past and Present (A18–124)

The Problem of Evil in Neo-Confucianism (A18–211)

China’s “Isms”: Studies in the Production of Difference and Unity (A18–212)

Electronic Resources for the Study of Chinese Religions: Reflections on Current and Future Impact and Directions (A18–264)

Decoding Dunhuang: Material Culture and Religious Worlds along the Silk Route (A18–271)

The Reformed Presence in China: New Perspectives on Mission (A18–325)

Christianity in Chinese Society (A18–328)

Chinese Dancers? (A18–405)

Daoist Studies in China (A19–100)

Establishing “Authority” and “Legitimacy” in Twentieth-Century Chinese Buddhism: Modernity in the Reinvention of Tradition (A19–103)

Confucianism: What Is at Stake in It as a Religion? (A19–214)

Daoism, Medicine, and Healing (A19–225)

Sacred Space in China: Past and Present (A19–227)

Making Sense by Comprehending Sensibility: A View of Chinese Religions (A19–300)

New Perspectives on Chinese Religions (A20–104) [RSS](#)

Trilogy in a Century: Religious Studies in Mainland China

Chen Xia, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China



Chen Xia is a research fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. She teaches the course “The Sacred in China” for CIEE Study Center at Central University for Nationalities. Her specialty is religions in China and Chinese philosophy. She has authored and co-authored several published books and contributed more than 40 papers to various journals. Her current projects include *Daoism and Ecology*, *the History of Philosophical Daoism*, and *Laozi’s Political Philosophy*.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES in China started in the early twentieth century as the country began to seek ways to modernize. Thinkers and revolutionaries at that time introduced Western Enlightenment ideas into China and emphasized that getting rid of traditional culture, including religion, was a precondition for modernization. Religious studies in China therefore had a strong antireligious element from the beginning, as religious ideas were a target for revolutionaries. In order to criticize religion, they studied it, investigating and critiquing its nature and function. Furthermore, those inside China’s various religious traditions naturally began to produce new theologies in response to these attacks. Besides these two groups, there were also scholars like Tang Yongtong, Chen Yinke, Chen Yuan, Hu Shi, Wang Ming, and Chen Guofu who were outside the radical movements focused on the study of scriptures, religious doctrines, and the history of China’s various religions. The main focus of their research tended to deal more with Buddhism and Daoism as these two faiths have had the greatest impact on China. Their contributions were mainly in the fields of historical, textual, and evidential studies of religions.

Religious studies were almost wholly suspended in China during the years 1949–1976. The only purpose of studying religion was to wipe it out. After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, all kinds of academic work became inseparably linked to the party, and were conducted under the guidance of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Many academic fields were viewed as having, and therefore contributing to, the party spirit. Academic studies became monistic and politicized.

In 1963, Mao Zedong issued an edict on religious matters. He said that a critique of theology was essential to write good global history, and to grasp the history of literature and philosophy. The positive effect of Mao’s instruction was that he recognized the historical importance of religion, and this led to the creation of the Institute of World Religions at Chinese

Academy of Social Sciences. It was China’s first professional institute for religious studies. The disadvantage, however, was that Mao stipulated religious studies must be guided by Marxism, in other words by atheism. The purpose of religious research was to criticize.

Furthermore, due to the political pressures of the time, “criticism” lost its original meaning and became associated with catchphrases such as “absolute denial,” “fierce attacks,” and even “completely sweeping away.” Such critique of theology went beyond academic studies of theism and atheism, calling instead for a political movement to destroy religion. Scholarly critics stressed the need for the political overthrow of religion, which was, in Marx’s words, the opium of the people — an especially loaded phrase in China. During this period, there were no courses about religion in universities, no professional journals, and almost no new books on religion published. As an independent discipline, religious studies withered in mainland China.

After the Cultural Revolution, also known as the “ten years of turmoil,” China restored the right to freedom of religious belief. Religious worship was once again permitted, albeit under officially approved religious bodies, and monks and nuns were able to resume an openly religious life. In recent years, religious observance grew in popularity in Mainland China, partly due to the disorder of social values and crisis of belief wrought by the Cultural Revolution. The rebirth of China’s religions, and their rapid development, led to an urgent need to study them.

Under the new policies of reform and opening up to the outside world, the minds of religious scholars were equally freed, and open to facing up to their subject matter. These changes provided the conditions for the recovery and development of religious studies in the 1980s. Chinese scholars no longer understood Marxist ideas of religion one-sidedly and dogmatically.

A reflection of the new mood can be found in the early 1980s debate on the meaning of Marx’s saying that “Religion is the opium of the people,” a debate that was jokingly called the Opium War. To grasp the supercharged nature of the subject for Chinese scholars, one need to remember it was China’s defeat in the two Opium Wars that forced the country open to foreign influence and led to its decline under pressure from the West and Japan. Questioning the appalling nature of opium was not easy, and the debate was a timid one, but nonetheless significant. Scholars attempting to emerge from the ideological world of the Cultural Revolution put forward two different objections to the radical left stance. One group argued that such sayings by Marx shouldn’t be understood as his main point and lead to the absolute denial of religion. Regarding religion only as a drug meant that religious believers were no different from drug dealers or drug addicts. If religion was equivalent to opium, it should be wiped out, just like opium. This was the ideological background for the radical left.

The second line of argument was that Marx did admit religion’s anesthetic function. It was that opium was seen in Europe as a medicine to relieve pain at the time when Marx wrote his famous phrase, so the drug had some positive connotations back then. These scholars also held that the spiritual opium of religion did not need to be wiped out. The radical left

stance had other ideological resources. Between the two sides, a lot of ink was spilled over the difference between harmful drug and pain-reliever. This debate was positive. Despite their differences, both sides were opposed to attempts to equate religion with reactionary politics. This was helpful for the policy of freedom of religious belief, and for attempts to better understand the function of religions.

Instead of understanding religion as opium, scholars’ consensus is to regard it as culture. In the late 1980s, influenced by the intense popular interest in culture, scholars of religious studies began to take the view not only that religion was culture, but also that a nation’s religion was an important part of its culture. Though such notions were hardly original, they broke the association of religion with reactionary politics that had led it to be valued negatively. The understanding of religion as culture helped to further emancipate the mind, and to encourage people to understand religion more broadly. Religion is approached not only from the perspectives of philosophy, politics, and ethics; it is viewed from the angles of economics, literature, art, etc. This shift largely widened the field and involved scholars from many disciplines.

Today, while Chinese and Western scholars share many issues in common, religious studies in China are more likely to be concerned with typically Chinese beliefs. These include the relationship between Confucianism and religion, and between religion and imperial politics, as well as the adaptation of various religions within China. Since China today views itself as a socialist country under the leadership of the Communist Party which is atheistic in nature, the question of how religion coordinates with socialism has also become an important one. Furthermore, traditional religious beliefs face contemporary pressures. Conflicts have arisen between the demands posed by traditional beliefs and life in a fast-growing economy, or the need for population control, such as the one child policy.

China’s restored religious activities are also changing under the influence of Western culture, and of foreign religions spreading in China. The environment for traditional religions is also being transformed by the collapse of the kinship towns, and of whole villages and communities. Urbanization has prompted Chinese peasants to leave their hometowns, and their religious beliefs may appear in another guise as a result. Christianity in China and the mutual relationships and adaptations between Christianity and its Chinese believers is another topic that needs to be researched. These multiple social changes pose new tasks for researchers. They require new methods and approaches in humanities and social sciences besides the traditional textual and evidential studies.

Under these new circumstances, the field of religious studies has been making encouraging progress. Chinese scholars of religious studies are mainly from the humanities, not from the theological spheres or the churches, so the field has greater independence from religious beliefs. In recent years, scholarly books have been written, such as *A General Survey of Religious Studies* edited by Lu Daji, and *Principles in the Study of Religions* edited by Chen Linshu and Chen Xia; foreign-language religious classics

See **XIA** p.16

Plenary Addresses



The Covenant with Black America (A17-132)

Saturday, 11:45 AM-12:45 PM

Tavis Smiley, Los Angeles, CA

From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, as a broadcaster, author, advocate, and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be an outstanding voice for change. *Newsweek* profiled him as one of the "20 people changing how Americans get their news" and dubbed him one of the nation's "captains of the airwaves." Smiley hosts the late-night television talk show *Tavis Smiley* on PBS and radio show *The Tavis Smiley Show* on Public Radio International, making him the first American ever to simultaneously host signature talk shows on both public television and public radio. He also created the Tavis Smiley Foundation, whose mission is to enlighten, encourage, and empower black youth, as well as Tavis Smiley Presents, a subsidiary of The Smiley Group, Inc., that brings ideas and people together through symposiums, seminars, forums, and town hall meetings. In addition, he has authored ten books and made publishing history when a book that he edited, *The Covenant with Black America*, became the first nonfiction book by a black-owned publisher to reach #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list.



Presidential Plenary and Awards Ceremony: The Folly of Secularism (A17-404)

Saturday, 7:45-9:00 PM

Jeffrey Stout, Princeton University

Jeffrey Stout is the author of *The Flight from Authority*, *Ethics after Babel*, and *Democracy and Tradition*, as well as co-editor of *Grammar and Grace: Reformulations of Aquinas and Wittgenstein*. He is now working on a sequel to *Democracy and Tradition*, tentatively titled *Walking in Our Sleep*. Stout's interests include theories of religion, religious and philosophical ethics, philosophy of religion, social criticism, political thought, modern theology, and film. He is a contributing editor of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*.



Islamic Feminism (A18-226)

Sunday, 3:00-4:30 PM

Isobel Coleman, Council on Foreign Relations

Isobel Coleman, Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy and Director of the Women and Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations, will be interviewed by Zayn Kassam, Pomona College. Coleman's forthcoming book, *Paradise beneath Her Feet: Islamic Feminism in the Middle East*, examines the role of women in bringing reform to the Muslim world — specifically in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and

Afghanistan — and in determining whether these societies can transition to functioning democracies with modern economies. She holds a DPhil in international relations from Oxford University and was an adjunct professor at American University. Zayn Kassam is the author of *Introduction to the World's Major Religions: Islam*. She has published several articles, has lectured widely, and is working on a book on gender issues in the Muslim world. Nelly Van Doorn-Harder, Valparaiso University, will preside. The program includes substantial time for questions from the audience.

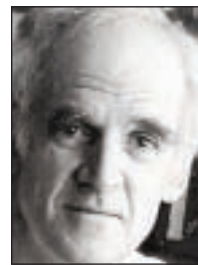


How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left (A18-402)

Sunday, 7:15-8:15 PM

Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University

Nicholas Wolterstorff received his BA from Calvin College in 1953 and his PhD in philosophy from Harvard University in 1956. Before taking up his current position as Noah Porter Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale, he taught for 30 years at his alma mater, Calvin College. After concentrating on metaphysics at the beginning of his career, he spent a good many years working primarily on aesthetics and philosophy of art. In more recent years, he has been concentrating on epistemology, philosophy of religion, and political philosophy. In fall 1993 he gave the Wilde Lectures at Oxford University, and in spring 1995 he gave the Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews University. He has been president of the American Philosophical Association (Central Division) and of the Society of Christian Philosophers.



Religious Mobilizations (A18-403=M18-125)

Sunday, 8:15-9:15 PM

Charles Taylor, Northwestern University, McGill University

Charles Taylor, Northwestern University and McGill University, is the 2007 Templeton Prize winner for his long-standing efforts to examine the role of spiritual thinking in modern society. His work is a standard in philosophy, theology, and the social sciences, and it provides a map of the central issues of debate in the historical development of the understanding of the self and the relations between the religious and the secular. Taylor argues against the idea that the rational movement that began in the Enlightenment renders morality and spirituality as anachronisms. Problems such as violence and bigotry can only be solved by considering their secular and spiritual dimensions, and wholly depending on secularized viewpoints leads to fragmented, faulty results. Taylor insists that a narrow, reductive sociological approach wrongly denies the full account of how and why humans strive for meaning. His latest book, *A Secular Age*, was published by Harvard University Press.



Making Sense by Comprehending Sensibility: A View of Chinese Religions (A19-300)

Monday, 4:00-6:30 PM

Mu-Chou Poo, Academia Sinica

Mu-Chou Poo was born and educated in Taiwan, received a BA in history from National Taiwan University in 1975 and PhD in Egyptology from Johns Hopkins University in 1984. He is a Research Fellow at the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, and adjunct professor at the Graduate Institute of Religion, National Cheng-chih University, Taipei. He has taught as visiting professor at UCLA, Columbia, Grinnell, and Hong Kong Chinese University. Research interests include society and religion in ancient Egypt and China. Recent research takes a comparative approach to ancient history and religion. He has published both in Chinese and English. Major English publications include *Wine and Wine Offering in the Religion of Ancient Egypt* (Kegan Paul International, 1995); *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (State University of New York Press, 1998); and *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and China* (State University of New York Press, 2005).



Welcoming the Stranger: Why Immigrants Are More Than a Luxury (A19-400)

Monday, 7:15-8:45 PM

Ernesto J. Cortés Jr., Austin, TX

Ernesto J. Cortés Jr. serves as southwest regional director of the Chicago-based Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), and has worked to organize communities in the poor neighborhoods of Texas and throughout the Southwest. In 1974, Cortés moved to San Antonio, his native city, where he founded the Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), the well-known and highly effective church-based grassroots organization. Possessed of a deep respect for the dignity of the people he seeks to help, he adheres to what he calls the "iron rule" of community activism: Never do for others what they can do for themselves. Rather than seek to impose an outsider's view of what a community needs, he helps citizens to organize into trusting relationships and to develop the tools they need to exercise power on their own behalf. Ernesto Cortés has successfully translated his passion for justice into helping the politically disenfranchised of all races and faiths discover their political strength. [RSN](#)

Sponsor a South Asian Scholar in 2008

Next year's Annual Meeting international focus is South Asian contributions to the study of religion. The International Connections Committee is soliciting partnerships with departments and institutions for co-sponsoring specific scholars of religion from South Asia, to lecture at the co-sponsoring institution as well as participate in the Annual Meeting. Co-sponsorship will allow your department to hear from these fine scholars while they are already in the United States.

To co-sponsor or for more information, please contact Kyle Cole at kcole@aarweb.org. [RSN](#)

Kudos to Co-sponsors

The AAR congratulates the following institutions for their generous co-sponsorship of Chinese scholars. Such support immeasurably strengthens the international dimension of our Annual Meeting.

College of New Jersey

Zhihua Yao, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Columbia University and the University of Chicago

Xin Yu, Fudan University

Humboldt State University and Indiana University, Bloomington

Weichi Zhou, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Lafayette University

Yen-zen Tsai, National Chengchi University

University of Pennsylvania

Xiang Chu, Sichuan University

Harvard University and Princeton University

Chunwen Hao, Capital Normal University [RSN](#)

Leadership Workshop Examines Religion Major

THE ACADEMIC RELATIONS Committee (ARC) is co-sponsoring a workshop at the AAR Annual Meeting in San Diego this year to address the relationship between the liberal arts and the religion major. The workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” is part of the two-year Teagle Foundation-funded project of the same name. The working group on the project, led by Timothy Renick of Georgia State University, is co-sponsoring the event with ARC.

The Friday, November 16 workshop will bring together a distinguished group of experts to lead a daylong and interactive discussion of the religion major. Through plenaries, panels, and breakout sections, participants will explore and share challenges, best practices, success stories, and failures.

“There are central questions that most of us face on a daily basis regarding the nature of the religion major; just what are we trying to accomplish and why?” Renick said. “Unfortunately, we rarely have time to pause and consider the answers. The workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to engage in an extended discussion about the religion major.”


Renick will lead the workshop and the committee has secured Stephen Prothero, chair

of the Religion Department at Boston University, as keynote speaker.

Joining Renick and Prothero are Dena Pence, Executive Director of the Wabash Center, Richard Carp, Appalachian State University and ARC member, and the members of the working group for the project. A preliminary agenda is printed below in the registration form.

“Some of the topics on the agenda include the challenges to conceiving of and establishing a major in religion, the nature of the major amid different institutional contexts and missions, and the connection between the religion major and other departments and programs,” Renick said. “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. I hope that the workshop can provide a forum for this continuing discussion.”

The cost for the workshop is \$75, which includes the entire day of sessions and lunch.

This leadership workshop is one of two workshops the Academic Relations Committee approved for the 2007 Annual Meeting. A chairs workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations,” is also being offered. 

New Program Units

Exciting sessions are on offer at the Annual Meeting by the following new program units.

Qur'an Group

The Qur'an and Interpretation (A17-317)
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

The Qur'an and Cultural Translation (A19-223)
Monday, 1:00-3:30 PM

Buddhism in the West Consultation

New Perspectives on Buddhist Modernism in the West (A17-324)
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

Mormon Studies Consultation

Teaching Mormon Studies: Theory, Topics, and Texts (A17-227)
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

North American Hinduism Consultation

Creating (and Sustaining) North American Hinduisms (A18-127)
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM

Hindu Texts in North American Contexts (A18-224)
Sunday, 1:00-2:30 PM
Co-sponsored by the Yoga in Theory and Practice Consultation

Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Consultation

Native American, U.S. Latino, and Mexican Pentecostalism in the North American Borderlands (A19-230)
Monday, 1:00-3:30 PM

Research Sites, Opportunities, and Problems in Borderlands Pentecostalism (A17-122)

Saturday, 9:00-11:30 AM
Co-sponsored by the Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group

Religion and Cities Consultation

The Religion Factor in Urbanization and the Structure of Cities (A18-129)
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM


Religion and Migration Consultation

Creative Crossings: Religious Transmutations in Latin America and the Caribbean (A17-318)
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM
Co-sponsored by the Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group

Religion on the Move: Migration, Displacement, and Identity (A18-130)
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM

Space, Place, and Religious Meaning Consultation

Spatial Constructions of Religious Identity across World Traditions (A17-229)
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

Sacred Space in South Asia: Sites of Vision, Sites of Experience (A20-124)
Tuesday, 9:00-11:30 AM
Co-sponsored by the Sacred Space in Asia Group 



THE RELIGION MAJOR AND LIBERAL EDUCATION Friday, November 16, 2007, San Diego, CA

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).

PAYMENT INFORMATION


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


Credit Card (check one):


☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____
CID* _____
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/jump/am

 **Register by Fax:** 330-963-0319

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

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 daylong, interactive discussion of the religion major. Through plenaries, panels, and breakout sessions, participants will explore and share challenges, best practices, success stories, and failures. The workshop is part of a two-year joint AAR/Teagle Foundation project to study the religion major.

LEADERS AND PANELISTS WILL INCLUDE:

- Richard Carp**, *Interdisciplinary Studies, Appalachian State University*
- Dena Pence**, *Executive Director of the Wabash Center*
- Stephen Prothero**, *Chair of Religious Studies, Boston University, and author of Religious Literacy*

- Timothy Renick**, *Chair of Religious Studies, Georgia State University, and principal investigator for the AAR/Teagle initiative on the Religion Major and Liberal Education*
- Working Group Members**, *AAR/Teagle initiative on the Religion Major and Liberal Education*

PRELIMINARY AGENDA:

- Introduction:** Why Religious Studies?
- Establishing the Religious Studies Major:** Stories from the Trenches (interactive session)
- Religious Studies across the Curriculum:** The Interdisciplinary Nature of the Major (panel discussion)
- Lunch**
- The Major in Different Institutional Contexts/Different Models for the Major** (interactive session)
- What Has Worked? What Has Not?** (panel discussion followed by a break-out session)
- Summary:** What Have We Learned — as a Discipline and Today?

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.

Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop

Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations

THE ACADEMIC RELATIONS Committee is co-sponsoring its chairs workshop with the Committee on the Status of Racial & Ethnic Minorities in the Profession during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego on Friday, November 16, 2007.

The daylong workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations,” will deal with issues of recruiting majors as well as 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 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 doctoral programs and administration at the Fund for Theological Education; Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Brite Divinity School; Edwin Aponte, Lancaster Theological Seminary; and Fumitaka Matsuoka, Pacific School of Religion, are all scheduled to address attendees.

The workshop will then move to breakout sessions led by Aponte; De La Torre; Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary; and Akintude Akinade, High Point University. The workshop will conclude with all speakers in conversation with the participants in a panel discussion.

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

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

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. [RSN](#)

Wildcard Sessions

Wildcard sessions are one-time sessions proposed by individual AAR members on topics outside of the Annual Meeting program unit structure. This year, the AAR is pleased to add 14 wildcard sessions to our program.

- Radical Life Extension: Implications for Eschatological Visions of the Religions (A17–202)
- The Religion Major and Liberal Education (A17–230)
- Restorative Justice and the U.S. Penal System (A18–201)
- Islamicate Apocalypse: Textual, Historical, and Methodological Considerations (A18–203)
- The Holy Child: Traditions of the Infant and Child Jesus (A18–225)
- The Place of the Practitioner in the Academy (A18–250)
- Theological Readings of Economics (A18–251)
- Horizons in Religious Studies: Theorizing Hip-Hop (A18–305)
- Liberation Theologies at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Between Sex, Gender, Class, and Race (A18–306)
- Martin Luther and the Lutheran Theological Tradition: Current Issues (A18–307)
- Southeast Asia: Transforming Religion and Religious Identities (A18–308)
- The Holy Child Jesus and Charism: Foundations and Evolutions of a Contemporary Tradition (A18–329)
- Is Humanism a Dead Topic in the Study of Religion? (A19–302)
- Religious and Theological Reflection upon Musical Meaning (A19–328) [RSN](#)



AN ANNUAL MEETING CHAIRS WORKSHOP Friday, November 16, 2007, San Diego, CA

Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations

Leader:	Miguel A. De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology	Breakout Session Leaders:	Akintunde Akinade, High Point University; Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary
Panelists:	Edwin Aponte, Lancaster Theological Seminary; Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Brite Divinity School; Sharon Watson Fluker, Fund for Theological Education; Fumitaka Matsuoka, Pacific School of Religion		

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Legal issues, conflicts, and life cycles will be addressed for individual, department, and administration concerns.			
9–9:15	Welcome – Miguel A. De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology	11–11:45	Recruitment of Faculty of Color – Edwin Aponte, Lancaster Theological Seminary
9:15–10	Recruitment of Majors – Sharon Watson Fluker, Fund for Theological Education	11:45–12:30	LUNCH
10–10:45	Reality of Faculty of Color – Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Brite Divinity School	12:30–1:15	Retention of Faculty of Color – Fumitaka Matsuoka, Pacific School of Religion
10:45–11	BREAK	1:15–2	Break-out sessions: Helping pretenured – Edwin Aponte, Lancaster Theological Seminary
		2–2:15	BREAK
		2:15–3:45	Panel discussion with four major speakers
			Think through institutional citizenship & mentoring – Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary, and Akintunde Akinade, High Point University

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/jump/am.

Name		
Department		
Institution	Serving as Chair since	Number of faculty in department

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).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- ☐ **Check:** (payable to “AAR Annual Meeting,” memo “Chairs Workshop”)
- Credit Card (Check one):**
- ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number	Expiration Date
CID*	
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

For more information, contact Kyle Cole, Director of College Programs, at kcole@aarweb.org, or by phone at 404-727-1489.

The Chairs Workshop is arranged by the Academic Relations Committee of the American Academy of Religion, chaired by Fred Glennon.

Registrants for the workshop will receive the *AAR Career Guide*, which will be sent prior to the workshop.

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

Register by Fax: 330-963-0319

Register by surface mail:
AAR Chairs Workshop
c/o Experient
2451 Enterprise PKWY
Twinsburg, OH 44087
USA

Reel Religion

Please see the *Annual Meeting Program Book* or the Program Highlights page at www.aarweb.org/jump/highlights for more information.

Jesus Camp (A16-401)

Friday, 7:30-9:00 PM

This documentary film provides a window into life at the Pentecostal youth camp Kids on Fire and by extension also portrays some of the most controversial religious and political aspirations of evangelical Christians in America today.

King of Masks (A16-402)

Friday, 7:30-9:00 PM

This touching and provocative film, set in a remote part of China during the 1930s, tells the story of an elderly street performer who makes a marginal living by plying a unique craft of mask-making which has passed from father to son for generations.

The Revenge of Han Xin: A Daoist Mystery (A17-405)

Saturday, 8:30-10:00 PM

The Revenge of Han Xin: A Daoist Mystery documents a sacrificial ceremony as it is performed today in central Hunan province. It is based on a local epic of Han Xin's revenge against the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, Gaozu.

Magnolia (A17-406)

Saturday, 9:00-10:30 PM

Sponsored by the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group

Magnolia's moving portrayal of 24 hours in San Fernando suburbia is an unlikely theological gem, drawing out biblically epic themes of sin, regret, hope, reconciliation, and redemption.

Water (A18-406)

Sunday, 8:30-10:00 PM

Sponsored by the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group

Based in 1938 India, *Water* tells the story of the second-class status of widows in Hindu society, delving into the notions of oppression, cultural norms, and Hindu practices.

Renewal (A19-401)

Monday, 8:30-10:00 PM


Sponsored by the Religion and Ecology Group

This documentary will present dynamic profiles of people acting out of deep, religious conviction to reduce environmental degradation and build more sustainable communities.

The Mormons (A19-402)

Monday, 8:30-10:00 PM

Sponsored by the Mormon Studies Consultation

The Mormons is a four-hour exploration into the richness, the complexities, and the controversies of the Mormons' story as told through interviews with members of the church, leading writers and historians, and supporters and critics of the Mormon faith. 

Annual Meeting Performances, Exhibitions

THE AAR is showcasing the following performances and exhibitions during this year's Annual Meeting.

Chinese Dancers (A18-405)

Sunday, 8:30-10:00 PM

Join us for an exciting evening featuring a Los Angeles Chinese folk dance troupe. Dancers will perform and information in the dances and their religious connotations will be available.


Golden States of Grace: Prayers of the Disinherited (A18-404)

Sunday, 8:30-10:00 PM

How do those on the margins of society find faith, sanctuary, and community? Through *Golden States of Grace: Prayers of the Disinherited*, a photo-documentary and traveling exhibit hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "a veritable United Nations of spirituality," social documentarian Rick Nahmias sums up three years of work documenting 11 different marginalized groups, across 8 faith traditions. From the elderly to the executable, from sex workers to refugees of genocide, from the rural poor to recovering addicts, *Golden States of Grace* artfully looks at religion from the bottom up, smashing stereotypes and asking questions about who "belongs" in our society and houses of



"Challah," from *Golden States of Grace*. Photo courtesy of Rick Nahmias.

worship. Nahmias will present a multimedia program created exclusively for this event, combining images, audio, and music from the project, as well as insight into how the body of work came together logistically and creatively. There will be a question and answer period following the presentation. For more info please visit goldenstatesofgrace.com. 

Religion on Display in San Diego

Daoist Ritual

AAR and SBL attendees are cordially invited to rare, public performances of Daoist ritual at San Diego State University. The performances, featuring Daoist priests from Taiwan, will draw from the Offering (jiao) ritual for universal harmony and from the Pacifying the Dragon (anlong) rite for the establishment and dedication of sacred space.

Sunday, November 18 at 10 AM (Offering ritual) and 2 PM (Pacifying the Dragon ritual), with public reception to follow. Visitors welcome throughout the day. Scripps Cottage, San Diego State University (maps and directions at www.cal.sdsu.edu/contact/maps.htm). From the Convention Center, take the Blue Line trolley northbound to Old Town, switching to the Green Line eastbound to SDSU (trolley map and schedule at www.sdcommuter.com/Rider/Information/trolley/trolleymap.asp). For more information, contact Julius Tsai, San Diego State University, 619-594-5185, jtsai@mail.sdsu.edu.

Maya: Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth

Discover the art and architecture of the ancient Mayan people at the Museum of Man.

San Diego Museum of Man – Balboa Park, 1350 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101; 619-239-2001. Admission: \$8 for adults, \$6 for students/seniors/military w/ID, \$4 for ages 6-17, kids under 6 and members free.

Contemporary Israeli Photography

Perfectly timed to complement the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, Ordorver Gallery has teamed up with the San Diego Natural History Museum to present Contemporary Israeli Photography. Through the eyes of top Israeli photographers we are allowed an intimate view of Israel's religious rituals, ancient architecture, and the faces of its people. The cost of admission to the museum grants access to this cultural destination, and although admission to the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit is separate, select images from its photography section are also being featured

in the Ordorver show, where all artwork is available for purchase.

San Diego Natural History Museum, 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101; 619-232-3821. Admission: \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$6 for students, military, and youth ages 13-17, \$4 children ages 3-12, free for children 2 and under and for members.


The Swallow (La Rondine)

San Diego's Lyric Opera breathes life into the inspired operetta from the composer of *Madame Butterfly*. Devised in 1913 by Italy's most famous living composer of the day, *The Swallow* endures as the only operetta written by the great Giacomo Puccini. Unfolding in three acts and transpiring in a demimonde of 1870s Paris, *The Swallow* tells the tale of love and loss, departure and return — like the perennial homecoming of the swallow.

North Park Theatre, 2891 University AVE, Ste. 1, San Diego, CA 92104; 619-239-8836. November 9-18, 2007, 7:30 PM evening shows, 2:30 PM matinees. Admission: \$30-\$50.

"Picturing Eden"

The contemporary artists featured in "Picturing Eden" examine the many facets of paradise, from a place of contemplation and restoration to a site of loneliness and despair. The exhibition is organized in four sections: Paradise Lost, Paradise Reconstructed, Despairing of Paradise, and Paradise Anew. By looking at the notion of paradise and the garden through the photographic lens, "Picturing Eden" highlights original lost innocence, the ongoing significance of a humanistic, culturally charged environment, and its place in the history of art.

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego Downtown, 1001 and 1100 Kettner BLVD, San Diego, CA 92101; 858-454-3541. Tues-Sun 10:00 AM-5:00 PM; Thursday 10:00 AM-9:00 PM. Admission: \$4-\$6; children under 12 and military free. 

Future AAR Annual Meeting Dates and Sites

2007

November 17-20
San Diego, CA

2008

November 1-4
Chicago, IL

2009

November 7-10
Montreal, QC

2010

October 30-
November 2
Atlanta, GA

2011

November 19-22
San Francisco, CA

Please renew your membership now, and consider making an additional contribution to the AAR's Academy Fund. Membership dues cover less than 30 percent of programs and services.

Renew online at www.aarweb.org/renewal.

Or contact us at
TEL: 404-727-3049
E-MAIL: membership@aarweb.org.
Please see the membership page, www.aarweb.org/membership.

Eating and Drinking in San Diego

PRICE GUIDE (FOR AVERAGE ENTRÉE):

\$ = up to \$10 \$\$ = \$11–20
\$\$\$ = \$21–30 \$\$\$\$ = \$31 and over

EATING

Aqua Blue 734 Fifth AVE

The sister restaurant of Bella Luna, Aqua Blue specializes in Pacific Rim cuisine and seafood with Asian influences. \$\$\$

Bondi 333 Fifth AVE

Bondi, a restaurant serving authentic Aussie cuisine and beer, is the creation of an Australian exchange student who wrote the business plan for the restaurant as a course assignment while studying in the United States. \$\$

Cine Cafe 412 K ST

A popular city cafe boasting made-to-order sandwiches and large cups of coffee. \$

Dussini Mediterranean Bistro 275 Fifth AVE

An intimate steakhouse and Italian restaurant located on the site of the former Old Spaghetti Factory. \$\$

Fillipi's Pizza Grotto 1747 India ST

A San Diego tradition for more than 50 years, family members of the restaurant's original founders continue to serve Italian favorites at Fillipi's Pizza Grotto. \$

Greek Islands Cafe 879 W. Harbor DR

A charming cafe on the water's edge, Greek Islands Cafe touts outdoor dining, imported beers and wines, and free sunsets. \$

Greystone Steakhouse 685 Fifth AVE

Greystone is a multilevel steakhouse serving prime-aged meat, seafood, and pasta. \$\$\$\$

Harbor House 831 West Harbor DR

The Harbor House serves fresh fish, shellfish, premium steaks, and local draft beers. They offer informal dining upstairs and on the outside decks as well as tablecloth/quiet dining downstairs. Come and enjoy the great city and harbor views.

House of Blues 1055 Fifth AVE

Known for its soulful food and soulful music, the House of Blues serves dinner nightly, and it offers a gospel brunch with a Southern-style buffet and gospel choir every Sunday. \$\$

Los Panchos de Charley 431 E ST

Authentic Mexican dining and live entertainment that has been a part of the San Diego community for almost 30 years. \$\$

Moose McGillicuddy's 535 Fifth AVE

Originally established in downtown Waikiki, Moose McGillicuddy's offers a relaxed atmosphere and a variety of sandwiches and burgers. \$

DRINKING


Dublin Square Pub 554 Fourth AVE

An authentic Irish pub with a variety of beer and live entertainment.

Henry's Pub 618 Fifth AVE

A friendly bar and restaurant with nightly entertainers, Henry's Pub attracts an eclectic crowd of regulars in both board shorts and business attire.

Red Circle Cafe 420 E ST

Designed to reflect a past-era Russian vodka bar, Red Circle Cafe serves Mediterranean cuisine and specialty cocktails. 

Drew University presents
**The Seventh
Transdisciplinary
Theological Colloquium**

**Planetary
Loves**
postcoloniality,
gender, & theology

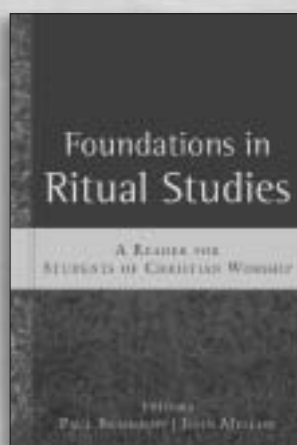
with
**Gayatri
Chakravorty
Spivak**

November 1-4, 2007
Drew University
Madison, NJ

For more information:

<http://depts.drew.edu/tsfac/colloquium/2007/index.html>

Noteworthy Releases in Religious Studies from Baker Academic



FOUNDATIONS IN RITUAL STUDIES

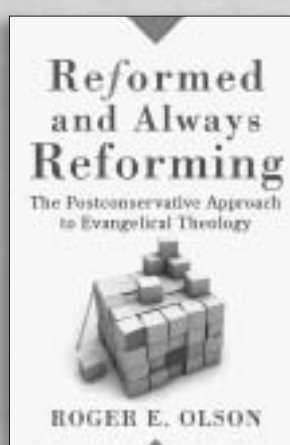
A READER FOR STUDENTS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh, editors

9780801034992 • 224 pp. • \$22.99p

"This collection of essays gathers together some of the classic texts in ritual studies. Every student and professor of Christian worship will want to have this book as a reference in their library."

—**Judith M. Kubicki**, Fordham University



REFORMED AND ALWAYS REFORMING

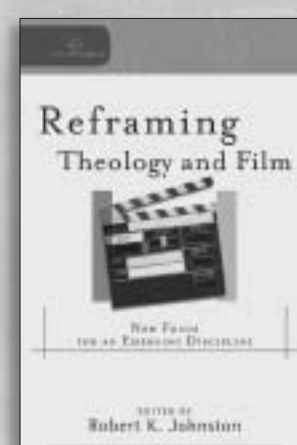
THE POSTCONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

Roger E. Olson

9780801031694 • 240 pp. • \$19.99p

"Olson has become a major interpreter of American evangelical theology and an advocate of a postconservative approach. What we have lacked is a clear guide to this perspective within evangelicalism. In his new book, Olson

sets forth a genuinely evangelical theology that rejects modernity and fundamentalism. . . . Anyone interested in a truly gospel-oriented theology will benefit from engaging with his arguments."—**Alan G. Padgett**, Luther Seminary



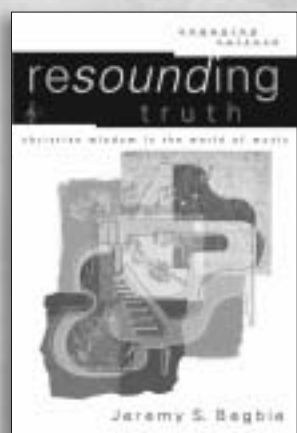
REFRAMING THEOLOGY AND FILM

NEW FOCUS FOR AN EMERGING DISCIPLINE

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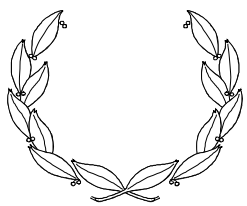
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In Memoriam

Letty Mandeville Russell, 1929–2007

Emilie Townes, Yale Divinity School

LETTY MANDEVILLE RUSSELL, one of the world's foremost feminist theologians and longtime member of the Yale Divinity School faculty, died Thursday, July 12 at her home in Guilford, Connecticut. She was 77. As noted in her 1999 festschrift, *Liberating Eschatology*, her influence on contemporary theology is "monumental" and she had an "uncanny ability to articulate a vision of the church that is radical in its feminist-liberationist critique but that nonetheless remains anchored in the historic traditions and communities of the Christian church." Also a leader for many years in the ecumenical movement, she remained active in ecumenical circles until her death, working for the World Council of Churches and the World YWCA. A global advocate for women, Russell was a member of the Yale Divinity School Women's Initiative on Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa and was co-coordinator of the International Feminist Doctor of Ministry Program at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Russell was one of the first women ordained in the United Presbyterian Church and served the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City from 1952–68, including ten years as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Ascension. She joined the faculty of Yale Divinity School in 1974 as an assistant professor of theology, rose to the rank of professor in 1985, and retired in 2001. In retirement, she continued to teach courses at Yale Divinity School as a visiting professor.

Margaret Farley, the Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics emerita at Yale Divinity School and a friend and colleague of Russell for three decades, said, "She leaves a legacy of wisdom, integrity, and indomitable hope. Voices will rise from women and men throughout the world to bear witness to her gifts to them, not the least of which is her gift of faithful friendship. There is perhaps no other feminist theologian who has been more dedicated to ecumenical, interfaith, and international theological dialogue. Hers has been the influence not of imposition but of partnership. Yet her work has challenged everyone, not only because of its substance but because of her own commitment to making the world both more just and more hospitable."

In her last major public address in May 2006, "Encountering the 'Other' in a World of Difference and Danger," at the annual Paul Tillich Lecture at Harvard University (where she was a member of the first class of women to be admitted to Harvard Divinity School in 1955), Russell remained unequivocal in denouncing injustices. Displaying her usual wide range of sources from James Luther Adams, Audre Lorde, George Lakoff, Paul Tillich, and George Webber (among others), Russell questioned the postmodern use of the Other, saying, "In my perspective there are no 'others,' for all are created by God; no one is an *other*." For Russell, the action of *othering* is the radical misuse of difference. Ultimately, said Russell, "Our struggle is to overcome the fear of differ-

ence and to break the bars that keep us apart. [Others] want what we want. They want to work, they want to change the social structure. They want hospitality with justice."

Past AAR president Peter J. Paris noted that he could "think of no one who has done more in helping to develop and promote the work of African and African American women theologians than Letty Russell. She has gained immortality in their eyes and has made an indelible mark on the lives of all who knew her including myself. Most important, she embodied all the best moral and spiritual virtues so much needed in our contemporary world. Thus, we are all diminished by her departure."



Letty Mandeville Russell

In 1999, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bestowed Russell with its Women of Faith award, and Union Theological Seminary in New York named her a Unitas Distinguished Alumna. She was recognized as a distinguished alumna with the Rabbi Martin Katzentein Award from Harvard Divinity School in 1998. Wellesley College named her the first recipient of its Emmavil Luce Severinghaus Award for Work in Religion in 1986.

At Yale Divinity School, Russell's influence extended far beyond the confines of the classroom. She was the inspiration behind the creation of the school's international travel seminar program where students travel to countries, frequently impoverished ones, for direct encounters with the realities of religion on the world stage. Yale Divinity School dean Harold Attridge said that, through the travel seminar, Russell's "legacy of commitment to a universal vision of engaged theology will continue as a vital part of Yale Divinity School."

Russell's deep commitment to justice-making globally in ecumenical dialogues and theological education was noted by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Reverend Dr. Samuel Kobia, and noted Asian feminist theologian Kwok Pui-lan. For Kobia, Russell's books "centered around her theological and ecclesiological vision of the church as inclusive and justice-seeking

community." Kwok said that Russell was instrumental in founding Pacific, Asian and North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry (PANAAWTM) in 1984 and for 13 years served with Shannon Clarkson as the coordinator and fundraiser for the group. "Letty was a wise mentor and beloved colleague for many Asian Christian women. She exemplified what solidarity in global sisterhood means. . . . Letty never retired. As she said, she just rewired. Even cancer could not slow her down. She was still traveling to teach the DMin program and finishing other work between chemo during her last year. Her passion for life and her dedication to mending God's creation is inspiring."

"Letty was a rare person who actually lived what she preached and expected others to do so as well. . . . I feel responsible — responsible to carry on a small piece of her amazing vision for a just world."

— KATE M. OTT,
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Attridge joins them in noting that Russell "was a beloved member of the YDS community who inspired generations of students with her passion for the Gospel's message of liberating justice and her practice of warm hospitality. Through her prolific scholarship and her active engagement with major issues in the life of the global Christian community, she made dramatic contributions not only to feminist theology but also to the overall revitalization of the church in our day." M. Shawn Copeland, an African-American scholar and associate professor of systematic theology at Boston College, said, "Letty Russell has been the towering feminist theologian of her generation. She devoted her theological career to making it possible for women in various parts of the world to do theology, to dialogue and to collaborate with one another, and with all women and men of good will in mending creation. The seeds she has sown have flowered and will bear fruit for years to come."

Her insistence that theological work focus on the mending of creation grew out of her experiences in East Harlem where her ministry focused on equipping her predominantly black and Latino/a congregation to claim their voices as leaders in the parish and the community. The international dialogues and conversations of which Russell was both a creator and participant in Africa, Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand,

the Philippines, Singapore, Switzerland, and Taiwan were models of deep constructive theological engagement that takes seriously partnership based on a thoroughgoing commitment to genuine mutuality in the household of God.

Perhaps no better place to understand the impact of Russell's work is the incredible role she played as mentor to literally hundreds of men and women in theological education and the church. Kristen Leslie, associate professor of pastoral care and counseling at Yale Divinity School and representative of a younger generation of scholars, commented, "Letty's international scholarly work was matched by her significant teaching and mentoring of students and colleagues. As both her student and then her colleague, I recognize the world has been changed by Letty's willingness to speak truth to power." Recent Union Theological Seminary doctoral graduate and Yale Divinity School alumna Kate M. Ott wrote, "Letty was a rare person who actually lived what she preached and expected others to do so as well. . . . I feel responsible — responsible to carry on a small piece of her amazing vision for a just world. If we indeed inherit our mother's gardens, those of us who are daughters and sons of Letty's teaching and mentoring have the phenomenal task of nurturing a global landscape, rooted deep in biblical tradition, bearing fruit of a mended creation. The world is different because Letty is gone from it. By the guidance of her spirit, my hope is that the world will continue to be different through our work."

Russell graduated with a BA in biblical history and philosophy in 1951 from Wellesley College, and she was among the first women to receive an STB from Harvard Divinity School, in theology and ethics, in 1958. She earned an STM from Union Theological Seminary in New York in Christian education and theology in 1967, and two years later received a ThD in mission theology and ecumenics from Union.

The author or editor of over 17 books, her book *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretations of the Church* and her co-edited work *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* characterized her commitment to feminist/liberation theologies and to the renewal of the church. In 2006, she co-edited a book with Phyllis Trible of Wake Forest University entitled *Hagar, Sarah and Their Children: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives*.

Russell was born in Westfield, New Jersey, in 1929. She was predeceased by her sister, Jean Berry of New Jersey, and her former husband, the late professor Hans Hoekendijk. She is survived by her partner, Shannon Clarkson; her sister, Elizabeth Collins of Salem, Oregon; 7 nieces and nephews; 14 great-nieces and great-nephews; and 1 great-great niece. In addition, Russell felt that her wider family included generations of feminist and womanist activists and scholars around the world. She believed and lived that freedom is coming. [RSN](#)

BRIEFS

Templeton Research Lectures grants awarded

Johns Hopkins University and Boston University were recently selected as the 2007 recipients of the Templeton Research Lectures grants. The universities will receive up to \$500,000 to promote science and religion conversations.

Stephen Gross, an associate professor at Johns Hopkins, will lead the "Evolution, Cognition, and Culture" project, which will explore the explosion of interdisciplinary research in the cognitive science of religion and its implications — specifically for religion, public policy, and the general understanding of evolution, cognition, and culture.

"Researchers are only just beginning to understand the complex interactions among evolution, cognition, and culture; and religious belief and practice has provided some of the most fertile ground for thinking about these matters," Gross said. "This exciting interdisciplinary work not only promises to shed light on the role of religiosity in human lives, but also offers a particularly fruitful site for reflection on the place and limits of a scientific understanding of ourselves."

Robert Neville, a professor of philosophy, religion, and theology, will head the Boston University grant. The "Religious and Psychological Well-being" project will investigate four topics: religious experience, character development, meaning construction, and therapeutic models/spiritual places.

"The grant provides the opportunity to formalize the interdisciplinary connections we have been building informally over the years," Neville said. "Few problems at the interface of psychology and religion are as intriguing as the integration of psychological and spiritual models of 'well-being,' and a better understanding of this has immediate application in practical help for people seeking well-being."

Bill J. Leonard receives service award

At its annual meeting each year, the Baptist History and Heritage Society presents its most prestigious award, the W. O. Carver Distinguished Service Award. On June 8, at Campbellsville University,



Campbellsville, Kentucky, the society presented the 2007 award to Bill J. Leonard, dean and professor of church history at Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Leonard has had much influence on the Baptist History and Heritage Society. As a longtime member, he has participated as a speaker at the society's annual meetings, written articles for Baptist History and Heritage, and authored society publications.

Leonard earned a BA degree from Texas Wesleyan College, an MDiv from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Boston University. He served as professor of church history, associate dean, president of the faculty association, editor of *Review and Expositor*, and W. W. Brooks Professor of American Religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville,

Kentucky; and at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, he was chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy.

In 1996, Leonard joined the faculty of Wake Forest University with joint appointments in the Divinity School and Department of Religion, and in 1999, he was named the founding dean of the Wake Forest University Divinity School.

Leonard is the author or editor of 15 books, including *Word of God Across the Ages: Using Church History in Preaching*; *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention*; and *Baptist Ways: A History*. His most recent book, *Baptists in America*, was published in 2005 by Columbia University Press. He has also authored more than 400 articles, published in a variety of journals, periodicals, and books.

Guggenheim names 2007 Fellows

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation recently announced its 2007 fellowship winners, which include five AAR members. The foundation, which was established in 1925 by Senator Simon Guggenheim, offers fellowships to scholars, artists, and scientists to assist them in their scholastic and artistic endeavors.

Decisions are based on the recommendations of hundreds of advisers, and this year's fellowship winners include 189 individuals selected from almost 2,800 applicants for awards totaling \$7,600,000.

The following AAR members received fellowships:

Catherine Anne Brekus, associate professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, studying evangelicalism and the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century America

David Frankfurter, religious studies and history professor at the University of New Hampshire, examining Christianization in late antique Egypt

Susan Ashbrook Harvey, religious studies professor at Brown University, researching Biblical women and women's choirs in Syriac tradition

Michael L. Satlow, associate professor of religious studies and Judaic studies at Brown University, studying Jewish piety in late antiquity

David Gordon White, religious studies professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, researching Indian yogi 200 BC–2000 CE.

Online guide probes rise of religion on campus

According to a 2007 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey, 83 percent of American college students are affiliated with some denomination or religion, and nearly four in five say they believe in God. Evangelicalism — often in the form of extra-denominational or parachurch campus groups — has eclipsed mainstream Protestantism. Catholicism and Judaism, too, are thriving, as are other faiths.

To make sense of the plethora of faith communities on today's college campuses, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), with support from the Teagle Foundation, has published an online guide, "The Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates" (<http://religion.ssrc.org/reguide/>), which was derived from a series of essays it commissioned from leading authorities in the field of religion and American higher education, as well as from a review of current scholarship.


The guide presents the perspectives of leading thinkers such as Alan Wolfe, director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College; journalist Diane Winston, who has co-edited a major work on religion in urban centers; and Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow, an authority on religious diversity. Consisting of eight sections and opening with a preface by SSRC president Craig Calhoun, it examines basic questions such as whether or not the college experience affects students' religious beliefs and how religion should be incorporated into the college curriculum. It also addresses the current situation on college campuses: How do Evangelical students engage with college life? How open can professors be about their own religious beliefs? Finally, it provides some much-needed historical perspective, tracing the origins of America's many religious colleges. Designed to be read online, the guide also features an annotated bibliography with links to key references.

Gillis named to Georgetown Catholic Studies Chair

Georgetown University recently announced the appointment of Chester L. Gillis, theology professor and a member of the AAR's Academic Relations Committee, as the first Joseph and Winifred Amato Chair in Catholic Studies and the founding director of the Program on the Church and Interreligious Dialogue, a new initiative of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

"This is an important appointment," said Jane McAuliffe, dean of Georgetown College and a past AAR president. "Gillis brings a rich background in the theology of religious pluralism to this significant university initiative in Catholic studies."

Gillis began his tenure as the Amato Chair on July 1. The funding for this chair is provided through a gift from Joseph and Winifred Amato of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Gillis has served on the Georgetown faculty since 1988 and was chair of the Department of Theology from 2001 to 2006. He holds degrees in philosophy and religious studies from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and earned his PhD from the University of Chicago. His research interests include comparative religion and contemporary Roman Catholicism. 

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Annual Meeting Survey Ends October 15

September 2007

Dear AAR Members and Friends,

In the spring of 2003, the Board of the American Academy of Religion decided to hold some of the Academy's Annual Meetings independently from the Society of Biblical Literature. Both organizations have contracts committing them to meet at different times from 2008 to 2010 and again in 2012, and would face six-figure fines if they broke the contracts. The AAR and the SBL have agreed to meet simultaneously in San Francisco in November of 2011, but independently — meaning, most importantly, that they will not be collaborating on the production of a single program book.

The decision to meet independently was a controversial one, and many members continue to express concerns over the content of the decision, the way in which it was reached, or the AAR's governance structure. The Board of Directors is addressing these concerns in two ways.

First, the Board has convened a Governance Task Force, which we shall co-chair, to review the structure and functions of the AAR Board and, where necessary and appropriate, to recommend changes. Our aim is to insure that the AAR conducts itself democratically.

Second, the Board wants to invite our members to say in detail what considerations they think the Board should take into account when deciding on future Annual Meetings and how much weight each of the considerations should have. For this reason, the Board decided at its spring 2007 meeting to conduct a survey of our members. The survey has been designed with the assistance of professionals who are familiar with such instruments.

It is a survey, not a referendum, because the issues are too complicated to be reduced to a single question. In 2003, the big yes-or-no question was about meeting independently. Today, planning for future meetings by our Board and Executive Staff has been complicated by the emergence of three clusters of logistical challenges:

1) *Dates and Rates*. Moving away from our traditional meeting time — the weekend before Thanksgiving — poses logistical problems. Some of the dates contracted for future meetings conflict with national election days. Many members, whose institutions take a Thanksgiving break, may, on the new plan, have to use parts of two teaching weeks to attend the independent Annual Meeting.

Costs may rise. Hotels are keen for our Thanksgiving-week convention business, but rates earlier in the fall are more competitive. How do members feel about all of this?

- 2) *Impact on AAR Services*. Meeting independently will have an impact on some of the functions served by the Annual Meeting. Some of our book exhibitors have told us that they cannot afford to attend both the AAR and the SBL Annual Meetings. With the AAR and the SBL no longer planning to run the Employment Information Service jointly, some members are concerned that this will disrupt their searches or force some job candidates to make difficult choices about which meeting to attend. Others have expressed concerns about the fate of additional meetings, related scholarly organizations, and school receptions that count on attendance from both AAR and SBL members. How strongly do members feel about these issues?
- 3) *Simultaneity*. In its spring 2003 meeting the Board decided to meet with the SBL on some future occasions and to consider meeting with other professional societies at times, as well. But with what other professional societies should we consider meeting? And in the long run, how often should we aim to meet with the SBL in the way we are planning to meet in San Francisco in 2011 — independently but in the same city on the same weekend?

It is clear that the Board will need to take all of these issues into account when deciding on future meetings. The Board needs your help to make sure we have all of the relevant considerations in view and to determine how much weight each of the various considerations should be given. The survey will be available online from September 15th until October 15th. To take the survey, go to

www.aarweb.org/Members/Surveys/Annual_Meeting/

The results of the survey will be discussed at the November meeting of the Board and will then be made public. Our hope is that all members will take the seven to ten minutes that will be required to fill out the survey and submit it. The higher the response rate, the easier it will be for the Board to take members' views into consideration, as we wish to do.


Sincerely,

Jeffrey L. Stout, President
Emilie M. Townes, President-elect 

XIA, from p.8

have been translated, and popular books about religion published. Religious studies institutions have been set up in social science academies and in universities such as Beijing University, Nanjing University, Sichuan University, People's University, Central University of Nationalities, etc. Professional journals like *Studies in World Religions* and *Religious Studies* are also being produced.

In 1979, the Chinese Association of Religious Studies was established. Religious studies now draws on different disciplines. After experiencing decades of hardship, religious studies in China is growing and flourishing. In the new century, it has become a promising field of study.

Thanks to the papers "The Retrospect and Prospect of Modern China Religious Studies Over the Last Century" by Lu Daji in *Jiangsu Social Science* 2002 (3), and "Religious Studies in China for One Hundred Years" by He Guanghu, *Academic Forum* 2003 (3). Thanks also to Mary Hennock at 1-on-1 Mandarin, Beijing. 

New AAR Task Forces

The AAR Board of Directors has approved the creation of four new task forces.

Governance Task Force

Chairs: Jeffrey L. Stout, Princeton University, AAR President

Emilie M. Townes, Yale Divinity School, AAR President-Elect

Charge: The Governance Task Force will study the adequacy of the current AAR by-laws and governance practices and make recommendations to the Board concerning how the AAR and its regions might organize and govern themselves so as to best serve their members. The objective of the task force is to achieve the ideal balance among the following values: representation of the membership as a whole, representation and protection of women and minorities within the profession; representation of the regions; the expertise required to fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board; the ability of the Board to conduct its business efficiently; and the need to give members of the AAR ample opportunity to influence and contest important decisions made by the AAR Board and staff.

Job Placement Task Force

Chair: Deanna A. Thompson, Hamline University

Charge: In consultation with the relevant standing committees, this task force is charged: 1) to review the full experience of the placement process for candidates

and to recommend improvements in EIS and other aspects of the process; 2) to review current graduate program reporting on graduates and to create guidelines for best practices regarding public disclosure of placement records; 3) to create a list of recommendations for how graduate programs in religion can realign their curricula to respond to current (and future) job placement realities; and 4) to investigate how the AAR might best assist people being trained in religious studies to prepare for and find jobs outside of religion and theology departments, seminaries, and divinity schools.


Status of LGBT Persons in the Profession Task Force

Chair: Melissa Wilcox, Whitman College

Charge: This group recommends policies and good practices to assure the full access and academic freedom of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered persons within the Academy and develops programs to enhance their status in the profession.

Sustainability Task Force

Chair: Sarah McFarland Taylor, Northwestern University

Charge: The Sustainability Task Force fosters attention to the issues associated with sustainability throughout the AAR. This group makes proposals to the Academy for initiatives for contributing to teaching about sustainability and for developing best practices for conducting sustainable meetings and regional meetings. 


AAR Goes to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Humanities Funding

IN MARCH, the AAR and 36 other associations involving higher education cosponsored Humanities Advocacy Day, an annual event in Washington organized by the National Humanities Alliance (NHA).

The AAR, along with other members of the NHA, is advocating a budget of \$177 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities in fiscal year 2008. This figure would restore NEH appropriations to their peak reached in 1994 and would represent an important step forward in restoring NEH funding to its historic levels. The NEH is the largest funder of humanities programs in the United States.

The AAR also supports FY 2008 funding of \$12 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The NHPRC is the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration and for the past three years has received only minimal funding for staff to administer current grants, after which the program would be terminated.

The AAR participants were board members Frederick Denny of the University of Colorado, Boulder (emeritus) and Stacy Patty of Lubbock Christian University, member Scott Collins-Jones of Princeton Theological Seminary, and AAR staffers Steve Herrick and Shelly Roberts. They met on Capitol Hill with congressional staff from Colorado, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Texas. In addition, Denny represented the AAR at the NHA's annual meeting held the day before.

As of the *RSN* copy deadline, the House of Representatives has approved bills funding NEH at \$160 million for FY 2008 and NHPRC at \$10 million. The full Senate has yet to vote. 

Utah State University Launches Religious Studies Program

Charles S. Prebish and Norman L. Jones



Charles S. Prebish holds the Charles Redd Endowed Chair in Religious Studies at Utah State University. Previously, he taught at the Pennsylvania State University for 35 years. He is the author or editor of 19 books, and more than 50 refereed articles and chapters. He is the founding Co-Editor of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* and the *Journal of Global Buddhism*. Between 1996 and 2006 he was the Co-Editor of the Routledge "Critical Studies in Buddhism" series which has published more than 60 titles on various aspects of Buddhism. He was an officer in the International Association of Buddhist Studies and co-founded the Buddhism Section of the American Academy of Religion. He has held the Numata Chair of Buddhist Studies at the University of Calgary and a Rockefeller National Humanities Fellowship at the University of Toronto. He was recently honored by his colleagues with a "festschrift" volume titled *Buddhist Studies from India to America: Essays in Honor of Charles S. Prebish*.




Norman L. Jones is Professor and Chair of History and Director of Religious Studies at Utah State University, where he has taught for 29 years. He came to USU after taking degrees at Idaho State University, the University of Colorado, and Cambridge University. He has held visiting fellowships at Harvard University, the Huntington Library, the Folger Library, the University of Geneva, and Oxford University. Fascinated by the connections between ideas and behavior, he chose to study the Reformation because those interactions are more obvious in that era than in some others. His books exploring the relationship between religion and culture in early modern England include *Faith by Statute: Parliament and the Settlement of Religion, 1559*; *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England*; *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s*; and *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation*. He teaches a range of courses on Medieval and Reformation history, as well as the history of Christianity.

Since the Religious Studies Program began with courses already in existence in the university curriculum, it graduated its first major, Trevor Alvord, a 26-year-old student from Ogden, in May 2007. Alvord came to USU because of the Folklore and Religious Studies Programs. He has said, "I think religious studies will be the best thing that's happened to Utah State in a long time. The community here is so passionate about religion, and this will add an academic level to it."

Because religion is such a profoundly sensitive issue in Utah, Gary Kiger, dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and university president Stan Albrecht sought and received much input from the local religious communities and surrounding universities prior to beginning the movement to launch the Religious Studies Program. Virtually everyone was enthusiastic and supportive of the endeavor, leading Kiger to remark, "Utah State is the perfect place for a religious studies program. We have the credibility, the resources, and the reputation." So far, he has been correct. Enrollments have been packed to the limit for religious studies courses, and the demand for future courses is overwhelming. The unit has already gained many majors, and students enrolled in the university's honors program have chosen to select religious studies courses as part of their curriculum.

Although the new program has its two endowed chairholders as its current core fac-

ulty, additional funding is currently being sought to provide additional endowed chairs in Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, Islamic studies, Hindu studies, and Christian studies. Because religious studies regularly draws on faculty from within the disciplines of sociology, languages, art history, English, philosophy, history, psychology, and anthropology, the university already provides a wide range of courses in these disciplines, staffed by a group of nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars, including such individuals as Norman Jones, Richard Sherlock, Richley Crapo, and Bonnie Glass-Coffin. Utilizing all facilities and faculty currently available to it, the Religious Studies Program is offering an incredibly balanced and comprehensive study of religion.

Hardy Redd, trustee of the Charles and Annalee Redd Foundation and a 1961 Utah State graduate has said, "A well-educated person ought to have a basic understanding of each of the world's religions. Historically, the religious impulse to believe in a supernatural or divine being and to construct a purpose for human existence is found in all peoples throughout all of recorded history. This impulse is deeply felt by many today, both for good and ill. A religious studies program will begin the process of asking why we believe and act as we do." To that end, we hope that Utah State University's new Religious Studies Program will continue to be an exciting place of inquiry, learning, and sharing. 

IN THE SUMMER 2004 issue of *Utah State Magazine*, Jane Koerner wrote, "When history department chairman Norm Jones and his colleagues proposed a religious studies program for Utah State University, one skeptic after another said the idea would never fly in a state where politics mirrors deep religious fault lines. They were wrong." The Religious Studies Program was approved by the university's Institutional Board of Trustees on April 8, 2005, and opened its doors to students for the fall semester 2006.

On its way to official status, in addition to internal planning, Utah State University consulted well-known religious studies scholars: Robert Orsi, chair of the Committee for the Study of Religion at Harvard University; Peter Kaufman, from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina; and Jan Shipps, a USU alumna and emerita professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

The Religious Studies Program, which is the first such degree program in the Intermountain West, was enhanced by a number of generous endowments. Initially, a \$1.5 million gift from the Charles and Annalee Redd Foundation established the university's first chair in religious studies and first appointment solely in religious studies. The Charles Redd Chair in Religious Studies was quickly augmented by the Leonard J. Arrington Chair in Mormon History and Culture, sponsored by more than 45 donors. In addition, a \$600,000 gift from the Tanner Charitable Trust has provided the new Religious Studies Program with an endowment for purchasing library materials to support its curriculum.

In 2006, the Charles Redd Chair was filled by the appointment of Charles S. Prebish, a

well-known Buddhist studies scholar who had taught at the Pennsylvania State University for more than 35 years and had recently been honored by his Buddhist studies colleagues with a "festschrift" volume titled *Buddhist Studies from India to America: Essays in Honor of Charles S. Prebish*. Prebish joined the faculty in January 2007. The Leonard Arrington Chair was filled by Harvard-educated Philip Barlow, a Utah native and LDS Church member who has carved out a highly productive career at Hanover College in Indiana, where he has taught since 1990. Barlow joined the USU faculty for the fall 2007 semester. By accepting the Arrington Chair, Barlow becomes the first person in a public institution to be specifically hired to study the history and culture of Mormonism.

The interdisciplinary religious studies major consists of 36 credits, 9 of which are earned by taking three required courses: "Religion and Culture," "Introduction to Religious Studies Methodology," and a "Religious Studies Capstone" seminar. The remaining 27 credits are earned by taking new and existing courses in three areas: Cultural Inquiry, Scientific Inquiry, and Doctrinal Inquiry. In addition, a religious studies minor is being offered, consisting of 15 credits, and requiring the first two of the three required courses listed above for the major. It is expected that students completing the religious studies major will understand the influence upon culture and the influence of culture upon religion; analyze the influence of religious value systems on individuals; apply appropriate methods of research and argumentation to questions concerning religion and culture; communicate their findings in clear, well-reasoned writing; and express cultural literacy concerning the major religions of the world.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES BALL STATE UNIVERSITY MUNCIE, INDIANA

Tenure-track position available August 22, 2008, in East Asian Buddhism.

Major responsibility: teaching load of six courses per year (3/semester). Typical teaching duties include two sections per semester of "Introduction to Religion and Culture," and one upper-level survey course (e.g., "Religions and Cultures of East Asia" or "Buddhism") or a topic in the candidate's area of competency or expertise. The departmental focus is Religion and Culture, especially the modern period. **Minimum qualifications:** earned doctorate in religious studies or comparable discipline with specialty in East Asian Buddhism by August 20, 2008; competency in one or more of the following: popular religion, performance studies, ethnography, gender studies, religion and social theory, and cultural studies; depth and breadth of training in religious studies expected along with ability to conduct research in appropriate languages (e.g., Chinese or Japanese). **Preferred qualifications:** experience mentoring undergraduate students; experience in diversity issues; dedication to teaching and research.

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, graduate school transcripts, three letters of recommendation writing sample, and a brief statement of teaching philosophy and research interests to: Dr. Jeffrey Brackett, Search Committee Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Review of applications will begin September 15, 2007, for initial screening at November AAR. (www.bsu.edu/religiousstudies)

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies seeks to attract an active, culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber. Ball State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.

AAR Honors Journalists for Best In-Depth Reporting

JENNIFER GREEN of the *Ottawa Citizen*, Jason Byassee of the *Christian Century*, and Robert Sibley of the *Ottawa Citizen* have won the 2007 American Academy of Religion Awards for Best In-Depth Reporting on Religion.

Green won the contest for journalists at news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation or on the Web; Byassee for journalists at news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation; and Sibley for opinion writing. The awards recognize well-written, well-researched news writing that enhances the public understanding of religion.

Green submitted stories on the Saint John's Bible project; the split in the Anglican Church over same-sex unions and gay clergy; conservative faith and public discourse in Canada; a Baylor University scholar and the repercussions of expressing his views on Southern Baptists; and how Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered by some Muslims. The judges highlighted Green's "thorough reporting, good writing and interesting choice of topics," calling her a "gifted journalist" with an "impressive set of entries."

Byassee submitted stories on emergent churches; Protestant theologians converting to Catholicism; the meaning of social justice to hospitality workers; prison ministries and the lives of prisoners; and a Hispanic immigrant seeking sanctuary in a Methodist church. "An excellent body of work," said the judges, noting Byassee's "confident tone about a wide variety of

topics." Said one judge, "This writer has an enormous amount of talent and a reporter's keen eye for detail, the good quote and the added insight that makes readers keep reading."

Sibley, who placed second in last year's contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation, submitted opinion articles from a series on faith, nihilism, and wonder; and from a series marking the fifth anniversary of September 11, which included essays on intellectuals in the aftermath of September 11 and on multiculturalism. The judges called Sibley's work "deeply informative," noting that "each piece is solid and thoughtful," and praising him for illustrating "the essential voice of religious studies scholars in general coverage of religion."

Jennifer Garza of the *Sacramento Bee* placed second in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. "Lively, engaging writing," said the judges, commenting on Garza's "good sense for the news" and "strong use of the newspaper 'profile' that takes readers into a setting and hears the reporting with a sense of that environment." Summed up one judge, "This writer takes the reader to the scene in every article."

G. Jeffrey MacDonald of the *Christian Science Monitor* won second place in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. The judges said MacDonald "confronts a wide variety of challenging topics head-on and with excel-

lent writing skills," and offers "serious exploration of American religion." His stories have "good perspective, a strong sense of character and color," remarked one judge.


Asra Q. Nomani, a freelancer based in Morgantown, West Virginia, placed second in this year's opinion-writing contest. "This writer's works all deal with aspects of Islam, but in such a way, and with such authority, that they become relevant to non-Muslim readers as much, if not more, than to Muslim readers. A valuable service," said the judges, who praised her entries as "well-written with great perspective and depth."


Omar Sacirbey, a freelancer based in Boston, placed third in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. "Like few other newspaper writers today, this author has taken readers into the world of American Islam in wondrous detail. The stories flow, and the quotes ring truth," remarked one judge. "Insightful coverage . . . takes readers below the surface and behind the scenes," noted another.

Adam Parker of the *Post and Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina), placed third in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. The judges were impressed with Parker's entries, saying his "strong reporting and varied sourcing" made his work "stand out." One commented that the "terrific writing draws the reader into each subject's world."

Kevin Eigelbach of the *Cincinnati Post* placed third in this year's opinion-writing contest. One judge said of his work, "Pithy and to the point. An entry illustrating how religion and religious studies relate to so many facets of life." Another remarked, "With verve and an admirable talent for economy, this writer's columns pack a punch — and a lot of information — into a short space."

Each contestant submitted five articles published in North America during 2006. Names of contestants and their news outlets were removed from submissions prior to judging. Each of the first-place winners receives \$1,000.

The judges for the contest for news outlets with over 100,000 circulation included Gayle White, a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and Larry Witham, author and former reporter for the *Washington Times*. The judges for the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation and for the opinion-writing contest included David Gibson, author and former reporter for the *Star-Ledger* (Newark, New Jersey), and Cecile Holmes, a professor of journalism at the University of South Carolina and a former reporter for the *Houston Chronicle*. Ronald Thiemann, a professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, served as the third judge on all three contests. Thiemann is a member of the AAR Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion. 



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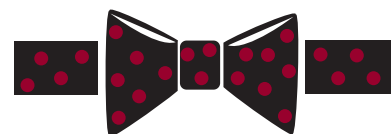
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Bellah Wins Marty Award



ROBERT NEELLY BELLAH — sociologist, moralist, communitarian, and Episcopal deacon — will be honored at the Annual Meeting as the recipient of the Martin E. Marty

Award for the Public Understanding of Religion.


As award winner, Bellah will be featured at the Marty Forum on Sunday, November 18 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM, where he will be interviewed about his work by Randall Balmer, the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Religion, Barnard College, Columbia University.

The Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion chose Bellah from nominations submitted earlier this year. Awarded annually since 1996, the Marty Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the public understanding of religion. The award goes to those whose work has a relevance and eloquence that speaks not just to scholars but to the broader public as well.

Bellah is the Elliot Professor of Sociology Emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught sociology of religion and was the director of the Center for Japanese and Korean Studies. Educated at Harvard where he taught for 10 years, Bellah moved to Berkeley in 1967 and served there until 1997. He has done cross-cultural work on religion in Japan and in American society.

Bellah is best known for his seminal essays "Civil Religion in America" (1967) and "Religious Evolution" (1964). He won the Sorokin Award from the American Sociological Association for *Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial* (1975) and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (1985). His other publications include *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* (1957); *Beyond Belief* (1970); *Emile Durkheim and Morality and Society* (1973); *The New Religious Consciousness* (1976); *Varieties of Civil Religion* (1980); *The Good Society* (1991); *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation* (2003); and most recently, *The Robert Bellah Reader* (2006).

Besides being a prolific scholar, Bellah also won the Harbison Award for Gifted Teaching from the Danforth Foundation. In 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded Bellah the National Humanities Medal for raising "our awareness of the values that are at the core of democratic institutions and of the dangers of individualism unchecked by social responsibility."

The Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion enthusiastically solicits nominations for future recipients. Nominees need not be AAR members or academics. Nominations can be made online at www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/marty_award. 

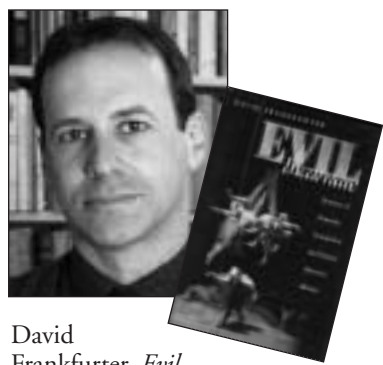
AAR Honors Eight Authors in Its Annual Book Awards

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY of Religion offers Awards for Excellence in order to give recognition to new scholarly publications that make significant contributions to the study of religion. These awards honor works of distinctive originality, intelligence, creativity, and importance — books that affect decisively how religion is examined, understood, and interpreted.

Awards for Excellence are given in four categories: Analytical–Descriptive, Constructive–Reflective, Historical, and Textual Studies. Not all awards are given every year. More than one book may win an award in a given category. In addition there is a separate competition and prize for the Best First Book in the History of Religions. For eligibility requirements, awards processes, and a list of current jurors, please see the Book Awards rules on the AAR Web page, www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/book_awards.

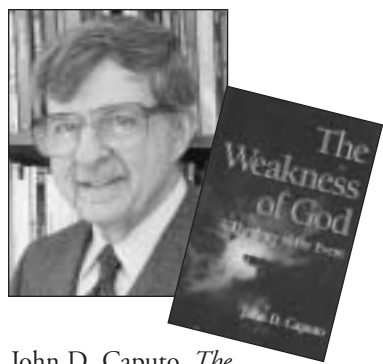
The AAR is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the Awards for Excellence in Religion and the Best First Book in the History of Religions:

Analytical–Descriptive



David Frankfurter. *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Satanic Abuse in History*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

Constructive–Reflective (Co-winners)



John D. Caputo. *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*. Indiana University Press, 2006.



John Clayton (deceased). Compiled by Anne Blackburn and Thomas Carroll. *Religions, Reasons, and Gods: Essays in Cross-cultural Philosophy of Religion*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Studies in Religious Traditions, 2006.



Historical (Co-winners)

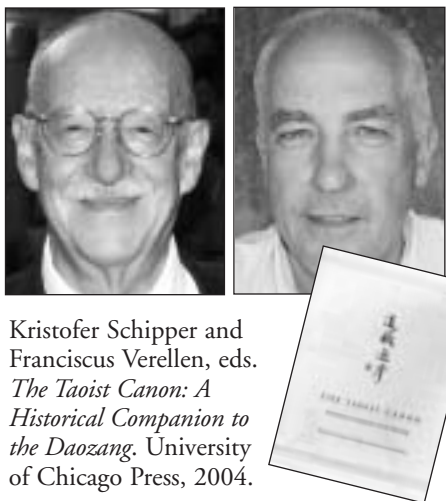


Catherine Albanese. *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion*. Yale University Press, 2006.



Caroline Walker Bynum. *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

Textual Studies



Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds. *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*. University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Best First Book in the History of Religions

Leela Prasad. *Poetics of Conduct: Oral Narrative and Moral Being in a South Indian Town*. Columbia University Press, 2006.

Floyd-Thomas to Receive Excellence in Teaching Award



STACEY FLOYD-THOMAS will receive the Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Floyd-Thomas is Associate Professor of Ethics and Black Church Studies at Brite Divinity School, where she has taught since 2002. She has also taught at Virginia Tech. At Brite she has taught courses on Christian Social Ethics, Contemporary Theological Ethics, Feminist Theology and Ethics, and African American Experience in Social Ethics, among others.

Floyd-Thomas has written essays and presented papers on various teaching and curricular issues, including “Teaching to Transform: From Volatility to Solidarity in an Interdisciplinary Family Studies Classroom” and “Interdisciplinarity as Self and Subject: Metaphor and Transformation.” To support her efforts to improve and re-shape teaching at her own institutions and in the broader profession, she has received several grants, including awards to support interdisciplinary teaching and a grant to support “an African-American Dialogue Concerning the Influences of Blackness in Theological Education Teaching Practices.”

One colleague notes how Professor Floyd Thomas’s teaching “represents a delicate balance between forceful instruction and patient guidance” and commends her untiring search for more effective ways of teaching and more compelling modes of

bringing students into touch with necessary and interesting information.

A former student testifies to the continuing influence of her teaching by observing that “nearly every day of my life I encounter some phenomenon — an idea, a situation, an opportunity — that I am better able to handle because of the effectiveness of her teaching” especially because her teaching “stretched my sensitivity to ‘the other’ in human society.”

Her students and colleagues at Brite and Virginia Tech have recognized the quality and impact of her teaching by selecting her for awards that recognize excellence in teaching. Another colleague remarks that such “capacity to teach with excellence in two very different kinds of institutions” is impressive evidence of Floyd-Thomas’s ability and adaptability.

Floyd-Thomas is an excellent example of dedicated and innovative teaching, both in the classroom and beyond it. Along with the previous winners of the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award — Tina Pippin, Eugene V. Gallagher, William Placher, Janet Walton, Timothy Renick, Zayn Kassam, and Patricia Killen — she demonstrates the wide range of creative and deeply engaged teaching in the Academy.

The Committee on Teaching and Learning has been impressed by the fine candidates who have submitted materials for consideration; the commitment and energy that they bring to their vocations as teachers demonstrate the range, pedagogical sophistication, and intellectual vitality that members of the Academy bring to the teaching of religion.

Eugene V. Gallagher, Chair of the Committee on Teaching and Learning encourages chairs and colleagues to nominate faculty for this significant award. The guidelines for this award are listed on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Teaching_Awards.

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.

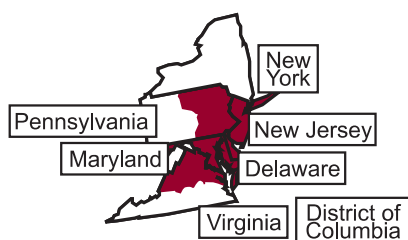
Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR Web site at www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching_awards.

Regional Meetings and Calls for Papers



Eastern International

Information on the 2008 Eastern International Regional Meeting is not yet available. For more information, please see www.aarweb.org/about_AAR/regions/eastern_international.



Mid-Atlantic

March 27–28, 2008
Hyatt Regency New Brunswick
New Brunswick, NJ

We cordially invite you to submit proposals for the 2008 AAR Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting at our usual northern venue in New Brunswick, NJ. While we welcome rigorous proposals in any area of the academic study of religion, this year we are especially interested in proposals that address the theme *Paradox as a Driving Force in the Religious Impulse*. In this vein, papers might address one of many classic religious issues such as theodicy, free will and divine authority, fatalism and hope, repeated final comings, petitionary prayer, time and timelessness, apocalyptic irony, holy warfare, love and law, unconditional covenant, prophetic irreverence, explanation by indirection, exclusive inclusivity, multiplicity and simplicity, flexible canons, and other ways in which religion embodies and draws energy from apparently conflicting aims and ideologies.

Our 2007 Baltimore conference included sessions on the academic study of religion, African religions, African-American religion, comparative and historical studies in religion, history of Christianity, philosophy of religion, religion and the arts, religion and psychology, religion and spirituality, religion in America, religions of Asia, religious ethics, religion and social science, study of Islam, study of Judaism, theology, and women and religion. You are also welcome and encouraged to propose new sessions, panel sessions, or paper sessions (see guidelines below).

Proposal Submission

Please send proposals by e-mail attachment to Natalie Houghtby-Haddon at drhsquared@gmail.com no later than **November 1, 2007**. You may submit no more than two proposals to the Program Committee. Since we review proposals as they arrive it is advantageous to send proposals as soon as possible.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Awards

As has become our custom, MAR–AAR will award \$200 to the most innovative proposal for a group session (or panel) dealing with peace issues or women's studies; the deadline for submission is **November 1, 2007**. To help foster graduate student participation, the Executive Committee of the MAR–AAR will again award the Robert F. Streetman Prize of \$200 for the best student paper presented by an AAR regional member. Those interested in the Streetman prize should submit their entire paper by **November 1, 2007**, and clearly indicate they are submitting the paper for prize consideration.

Preregistration

Online preregistration will be available in December. You will be notified when our preregistration is live. We hope you will take advantage of online preregistration since it saves a lot of on-site work for us!

Hotel Information

The Hyatt Regency New Brunswick will offer online hotel room registration as well. Again, we will notify you when the site is active. Alternatively you may call Hyatt at 800-233-1234 to reserve rooms. Please indicate that you are attending our conference. Discounted hotel rooms (\$129) will be held until **March 5, 2008**. Since the normal room rate is \$179 and only 40 discounted rooms have been reserved, we strongly encourage you to reserve rooms early.

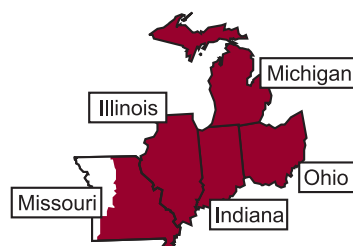
Submission Guidelines

1. Paper Proposals (250–500 words) should include full name, title, institution, phone number, fax number, e-mail, and mailing address. The proposal should state, as fully as possible, the proposal's purpose and how the argument will proceed. Provide enough context to show that you are aware of the basic literature in the field and summarize the argument of your presentation. An abstract of the paper (150 words) should also be included. Accepted abstracts will be posted online.
2. Proposals for a Panel Session should include abstracts (150 words) and contact information for each individual participant. A "panel" is a session with one announced theme and a list of participants who address that theme but do not present separate formal papers.
3. Proposals for a Paper Session should include the name of the designated session head and should include abstracts (150 words) and contact information for each individual participant. A session with separately arranged paper titles is considered a "paper" session.
4. If you have not presented a paper before a learned society you must send the paper you plan to present (12 pages max) by **November 1, 2007**. In your

cover letter please add any other information that may help us weigh your submission.

5. You will have approximately 35 minutes to present your paper (whether by reading it or by interactive discussion) and to respond to questions. Since the average person reads one double-spaced, 10-font page, without notes, in 2.5 minutes, your paper should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages. This will allow a few minutes at the end for questions. Please do not exceed this limit.
6. We regret that we cannot supply any audiovisual equipment due to prohibitive rental costs so please plan accordingly. In lieu of audiovisual equipment, consider bringing photocopied handouts to your session.

For ongoing updated information please consult our website at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Regions/Mid-Atlantic.



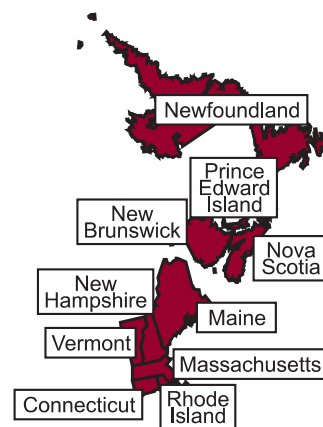
Midwest

April 4–5, 2008
Dominican Priory Conference Center
River Forest, IL

Our 2008 theme, "Religion and the State," is intended to solicit papers and panels exploring such topics as: legislation on religion; religious rights and freedoms; religion and national identity; challenges of globalization; religious justifications for state-sponsored violence; theocracies in historical and sociological perspective; reexamining Civil Religion; disestablishment and the New Christian Right; spirituality, politics, and the New Religious Left; religion in campaigns and elections more generally; and the role of religion in Presidential Decision 2008.

Papers/panels on other topics are of course also invited. Submissions should be made as early as possible, but before **December 15, 2007**. Younger scholars and students are especially encouraged to submit proposals and participate in the conference; senior scholars are encouraged to serve as session chairs and respondents. For further information, contact Vice President and Program Chair Tom Pearson at pearson@wabash.edu.

Online submissions only, please. Submit your response to the call for papers at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Regions/Midwest/Call/menu.asp.



New England–Maritimes

Instead of holding a NEMAAR regional meeting in 2007–2008, the region will co-sponsor conferences proposed and organized by regional members. Events for this coming year include:

"Jerusalem of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims — An Evening of Common Roots," organized by Richard A. Freund, Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies of the University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT. September 16, 2007. Contact: Richard A. Freund at freund@hartford.edu.

"On Black Religion in the American Diaspora," organized by Emilie M. Townes, Serene Jones, Yolanda Smith, and Diana Swancutt. Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, CT. April 3–5, 2008. Contact Emilie M. Townes at emilie.townes@yale.edu.

"The Wormy Corpus: Worms, Parasites, and the Body in Religion, Medicine, and History," organized by Brenda Gardenour and Misha Tadd. Boston University Department of Religion. April 19–20, 2008. Contact Misha Tadd at mishatadd@gmail.com.

We welcome proposals from regional members related to any of the following kinds of events.

For this year's call: Our goal is to sponsor events in different parts of the region, to benefit the greatest possible number of members. Such events will be organized by members and supported with regional financial and promotional assistance, provided that the event is open to any regional member. Faculty, and graduate students with a faculty mentor, are all eligible to apply. We have set a rolling deadline to make it possible to submit an application at any time. If you have an idea or inquiry and want feedback, please send it to regionally elected director Linda Barnes at linda.barnes@bmc.org. Applications should be sent to individuals listed in the call.

Co-Sponsoring Conferences: Instead of organizing a single annual regional meeting, which relatively few people attend, NEMAAR will function as a co-sponsor of conferences proposed by members around the region. NEMAAR's contribution will involve a) NEMAAR grants of up to \$800 to help support conference-related costs; b) assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best-practice planning schedules; and

FOCUS

ON

The Religion Major and Liberal Education

The Religion Major in Transition

Tim Renick, Georgia State University

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Darby Kathleen Ray, Millsaps College



Timothy Renick is Chair and founder of the Department of Religious Studies at Georgia State University. He is the recipient of the 2002 Outstanding University Teacher Award for the State of Georgia and the 2004 AAR Award for Excellence in Teaching. Renick is the Principal Investigator of the Teagle Foundation funded project, "The Religion Major and Liberal Education."

OUR JOB DESCRIPTION changed six years ago. Many of us in the field of religion had struggled for years to convince secular colleagues, skeptical administrators, and a suspicious public of the importance of educating undergraduates about religion, often to little avail. We were all familiar with the arguments against religious studies. Religion was too personal, too private. Scholars were too liberal, too critical. Departments of religion were a luxury, an anachronism, or a threat to church-state separation.

Until 9/11. On a single day, the conversation about religion changed in this country. Arguments we had been making for years no longer fell on deaf ears. In fact, they began to be made by others. The news media began to turn to scholars of religion on a daily basis to clarify the seemingly overwhelming complexities surrounding religious sects and movements. The *Times* of London urged U.S. universities to take steps to aid Americans "to become more reli-

giously literate so that they can [better] judge public policy issues." Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright wrote that a failure to understand other religions "poses one of the great challenges to our public diplomacy." In the face of oftentimes mystifying acts of religious violence globally, American colleges and universities increasingly turned to the academic field of religion for reason and insight.

The impact on the discipline has been profound. *Time* magazine has traced a large and widespread increase in enrollments in religious studies courses at the university level since September 2001. On many campuses, religion courses have emerged as the most popular electives. In not only private colleges but also state universities, courses in the field are increasingly required as a part of core requirements, thus impacting all aspects of undergraduate education. Several new degree programs have sprung up.

The Challenge to the Field

With the rapid growth of the major in religion, with the unique place it occupies in the modern academy, and with significant changes in the national and global context in which Americans view religion, there is a need for the field to reassess the relationship between the goals of the concentration and those of liberal education. The Teagle Foundation grant on "The Religion Majors and Liberal Education" provides a unique opportunity for members of the American Academy of Religion to engage in a sustained dialogue regarding our central role in shaping the religious and cultural literacy of the next generation of Americans.

There is perhaps no academic field more centrally involved in addressing essential learning outcomes involving not only intellectual and practical skills (such as critical inquiry, written and oral communication, and problem solving) but also the areas of personal

and social responsibility (including ethical reasoning and action, intercultural knowledge, and civic knowledge and engagement) than the field of religion. There also are few academic fields that are more diverse, with undergraduate programs of religion variously situated in liberal arts colleges, religiously affiliated colleges, research universities, and theology schools.

In 2000, the American Academy of Religion, with a grant from the Lilly Endowment, examined the present state of the field in its Census of Religion and Theology Programs. With a 79 percent response rate, the census revealed diverse conceptions of the major curriculum and a range of approaches to achieving what are, at times, very different learning outcomes. Some member programs have added requirements that students undertake coursework in world religions, non-Western religions, Islam, religious violence, or ethics. Others have begun to expect that students engage in study-abroad experiences or conduct fieldwork in local religious communities. Still others mandate that students engage in service learning as a component of their studies through internships in nonprofit, religious, and community organizations.

Despite the survey and the wealth of approaches it revealed, there has been little opportunity for a sustained follow-up discussion about the nature of the major, the effectiveness of various approaches in impacting student learning, and alternate steps that might be considered. There also has been little opportunity to disseminate information about the success or lack of success of approaches that have been tried by member institutions, leaving each institution, in effect, to reinvent the wheel. These steps are particularly crucial given the changes wrought on both the nation and the field by the events of 9/11. They also are crucial given the increasingly prominent role that undergraduate courses in religion play in shaping the cultural literacy of a broad range of Americans, from journalists and

See **RENICK** p.22

RENICK, from p.21

lawyers to government employees, business leaders, and clergypersons.

This project has, in one sense, a very simple goal: to promote a sustained public dialogue within the field concerning how the concentration in religion can serve the evolving goals of liberal education and the needs of American society. The project seeks to encourage broad and diverse participation within the AAR in considering the following questions:

1. How might we invigorate learning in the field in light of recent global events?
What is the role of the concentration in promoting intercultural knowledge and competence among students?
2. In a context of growing religious violence and radicalism, how can we encourage students to engage ethical issues in a way that is both academically rigorous and morally constructive?
3. How can we best create learning environments which encourage students to intelligently and critically engage the moral, religious, and spiritual issues central to humanity while in the major and throughout their lives?
4. How can the concentration enhance its role in promoting practical skills central to liberal education such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, and problem solving? How might the promotion of these outcomes within the major be integrated with achieving the personal and social outcomes outlined above?
5. In light of the growing number of institutions that require undergraduates to take courses in religion, what should be the shape of foundation or core courses in the field?

Multiple Opportunities for Participation

The project formally will extend almost two full years, from the initial convening of the working group in early 2007 to the AAR Annual Meeting in November

2008, when there will be a special open forum to discuss the completed White Paper. Ideally, the impact of the initiative will extend years beyond this initial period. All told, in addition to regular meetings of a distinguished and diverse “working group,” there will be a total of five significant public undertakings that the Teagle Foundation grant will make possible. All of these undertakings afford opportunities for participation by AAR members, and some are already underway.

First, a series of ten \$500 seed grants were awarded to individual institutions to promote the discussion of the religious studies majors on a diverse group of campuses. The call for these proposals went out in this publication and in the AAR e-bulletin this spring. Over 30 proposals were submitted, and members of the AAR’s Academic Relations Committee ranked the top 10. For those of us who read through the proposals, it is clear both that there are a large number of challenges facing our field — from difficulties getting programs started to growing pains as existing programs evolve into something new — and also a great deal of creativity, ideas, and enthusiasm in response to these challenges. The reports of the 10 institutions receiving seed grants will be integrated into the final White Paper.

Second, a daylong Leadership Workshop on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” will be held on Friday, November 16, in San Diego, the day before the official start of the 2007 Annual Meeting. The workshop will provide a forum for a sustained discussion of the goals of and the challenges to the major, as well as interactive sessions exploring what is working and what is not on individual campuses. The keynote speaker will be Stephen Prothero of Boston University, author of *Religious Literacy*. All signs point to this being the most popular AAR workshop ever, with over 40 people already registered, but seats are still available. We hope you can attend.

Third, a special paper session on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” will be held at the 2007 Annual Meeting [Saturday, November 17, 1:00-3:30 PM].

Five interesting perspectives on the major will be heard, with scholars representing church-related colleges, public universities, community colleges, and liberal arts institutions. Please attend the session and join in the dialogue.


Fourth, in spring 2008 and led by working group members, a White Paper will be written discussing the state of the religion major and outlining findings and best practices that have surfaced from the seed grants, workshop, and paper session. This White Paper will be distributed to all AAR members before the 2008 Annual Meeting.

Finally, at the 2008 Meeting, a special session will be held to discuss the White Paper and map out issues for AAR members to consider in the years ahead.

Why This Project?

Perhaps too often, our participation in the AAR serves to remind us of our differences — differences in institutional and religious affiliation, methodological approach, and disciplinary expertise. It’s clear, though, that there are certain issues that unite us. We all care about the religious literacy of our students. We all believe that what our discipline does is genuinely important. We all are committed to being better at what we do.

Through the support of the Teagle Foundation, the current project provides us resources to explore these common goals in a sustained fashion. It provides us with a context to learn from each other, both with regard to what is working and what is not. The project will only be a success, though, with your participation. I hope you will contact me (trenick@gsu.edu) or other members of the working group with ideas and suggestions, and I hope you will participate in the workshop, the paper session, and the various other forums we have planned.

Recent world events present our field with a unique opportunity to reconsider and potentially to redefine our roles and responsibilities. How we respond to this opportunity will not only shape the future of our profession but also the religious literacy of the next generation of Americans. 

The Religion Major and Liberal Education Working Group Members

Timothy Renick (Principal Investigator), Chair and founder of the Department of Religious Studies at Georgia State University and a member of the Teaching and Learning Committee of the AAR

Lynn Schofield Clark, Assistant Professor of Mass Communication and Director of the Estlow International Center for Journalism and New Media, Denver University, and author of *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural* (2005) and co-author of *Media, Home, and Family* (2004), editor of *Religion, Media, and the Marketplace* (2007) and co-editor of *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media* (2002)

Kyle Cole, Director of College Programs, American Academy of Religion

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, ordained American Baptist minister, Associate Professor of Religious Education, Claremont School of Theology, and author of *Hispanic Bible Institutes* and co-author of *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*

Gene Gallagher, Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies at Connecticut College, and Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee of the AAR

Mitch Leopard, CNN correspondent on international issues, MA in Religious Studies

Gene Lowe, ordained Episcopal priest, Assistant to the President of Northwestern University and Senior Lecturer in Religion

Darby Ray, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Millsaps College and Director of the Faith and Work Initiative, author of *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* (1998) and *Christic Imagination: An Ethic of Incarnation and Ingenuity* (forthcoming), and editor of *Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God* (2006)

Amna Shirazi, senior partner in the Shirazi Group, a law firm specializing in immigration law, and an undergraduate major in Religious Studies

Chava Weissler, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Department of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, author of *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (1999), and a teacher at Lafayette College, DeSales University, and Moravian College

Wildcard Session Features Papers on Liberal Education

As part of the project “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” a wildcard session has been scheduled for the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Diego. The session has a variety of papers addressing the evolving place of the religion major in the modern academy — from discussing influences of the institutional context upon the religion major to addressing how the religion major better prepares students to meet the needs of liberal education, the professions, and society.

Timothy Renick, Georgia State University and principal investigator for the project, will preside. Five papers will be presented:

- “The Religious Other and the Goals of the Liberal Arts” by Katherine Janiec Jones, Wofford College
- “For Sapiential Literacy: The Role of Religion at Public Colleges” by Anthony Mansueto, Collin County Community College
- “The Place and Purpose of Religion at a Church-Related College” by David C. Ratke, Lenoir-Rhyne College
- “A Reconnaissance of Religious Studies in Three Settings: Developing Discursive Values” by David Reinhart, DePaul University
- “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Religious Studies and the Community College” by Steve Young, McHenry County College

“The Religion Major and Liberal Education” is a two-year project to reassess the relationship between the goals and objectives of undergraduate concentrations in religion and those of liberal education. As such, the AAR wants to involve as many as possible in the conversation. You are encouraged to attend this session and the leadership workshop to discuss this important initiative.

Center for the Study of Law and Religion

From Silver to Gold:

The Next 25 Years of Law and Religion

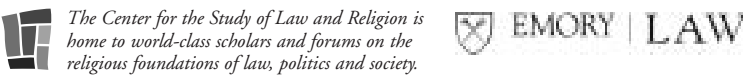
A Silver Anniversary Celebration

October 24-26, 2007, Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, Georgia

The world’s leading scholars will:	Themes they will address:
• Anticipate and articulate the hardest questions of law and religion to be faced during the next quarter century.	• Religious liberty, human rights, and church-state relations
• Formulate how these questions might be best approached and answered.	• Sex, marriage, and family life
	• Christian, Jewish, and Islamic legal studies

Conveners: **John Witte, Jr.**, Director, Center for the Study of Law and Religion
Frank Alexander, Founding Director, Center for the Study of Law and Religion

Seats are limited. Register at www.law.emory.edu/csrl/silveranniversary
Registration deadlines: early/September 21; late/October 21.
Free to Emory faculty, staff, students, and alumni/ae. Fees apply to non-Emory registrants.
For more information, go to www.law.emory.edu/csrl or call 404-712-8710.



The Religion Major and Liberal Education: A Conversation

The AAR's Working Group for The Religion Major and Liberal Education project believed a conversation among three scholars with deep ties to religious studies would help to illuminate the intricacies involved in the project. To demonstrate the complexities and commonalities of scholars in different academic positions, we are fortunate to publish this interview with Colgate University's Rebecca Chopp, Northwestern University's Eugene Lowe Jr., and Pomona College's Zayn Kassam.

RSN: In order to function as a contributing member to society, are there some central ideas and concepts that every undergraduate — regardless of major — should know about religion? If so, have these ideas and topics changed over the past generation?

Rebecca Chopp: More than ever, undergraduates need to master the basic assumptions and become handy with some of the skills involved in religious studies and in theological studies. Over the past generation religion has emerged as a significant force for societal, cultural and personal meaning. One of the many implications of 9/11 is that few Westerners can afford the luxury of thinking that religion will disappear or be reduced to the fringes of society. Secularization theses, once so popular in the academy, now seem largely irrelevant and dangerously outdated. Globalization has included the realization that religions are a real force in our contemporary period and we have to understand how meaning operates differently in different religions of the world. However, 9/11 and subsequent events are not the only reasons religion is alive and well on our campuses. Most undergraduate students, according to the HERI study "Spirituality in Higher Education," are "religious and/or spiritual" and are asking questions about meaning, practice, and community. More and more faculty in departments such as political science, physics, and geology and professional schools including law, medicine, public health, and business consider some aspect of religion as subject matter. The immigration of new religions in America is, as Diane Eck says, "marbleizing" our culture. Finally, some of the major ethical-political-cultural issues of our day, including the environment, stem cell research, and health care, require religious analysis and theological reflection. Undergraduate students need to know how to think about religions as cultural forces (the subject of religious studies) and they also need to know how persons internal to the religion act and believe (the subject of theological studies).

Eugene Lowe Jr.: Over the last generation, academic institutions and academic disciplines have engaged questions of diversity from a number of vantage points. Beginning with issues of access by underrepresented groups, colleges and universities also faced questions about diversity requirements in the curriculum and in student life programs. The study of religion, which from the beginning have exercised such a shaping influence on the development of American culture, provides an important opportunity for undergraduates to engage questions about values, diversity, community, and tolerance. While I do not anticipate a resurgence of interest in the idea of a core curriculum, I do think that an undergraduate education should include exposure to the ways in which the religious heritages of the United States generate both centripetal and centrifugal pressures on our quest for a common culture. Again, in the U.S. context, religion also provides a lens for focusing on issues of race, immigration, and social change. Since large numbers of public and independent institutions claim as part of their mission the education of effective citizens of a democracy, study of religion and U.S. culture provides a way of illustrating formative tensions in our national experience.

Zayn Kassam: Religions are sets of beliefs and practices that provide larger organizational frameworks within which to perceive as well as deal with questions of meaning and

existential realities. Their significance and meaning changes with each generation in response to and conversation with contextual factors: religions are dynamic. In the past, religion may have been construed as an essence that was comprised of unchanging beliefs, and a set of rituals that were cast in stone. Now we know that subjectivity and context alter how a belief is understood and that rituals similarly both structure a person's frame of reference and are themselves structured by the participant's subjectivity and context. The connection of religion to an observer's subjectivity and context suggests that while there is no aspect of that person's life that is not infused explicitly or implicitly with religious ideas, values, behaviors, and practices, at the same time, social, political, cultural, economic, and legal systems are themselves shaped by, in conversation with, expressed as, and interpreted within religious frames of reference, and all subjects, whether religious or not, live within these systems. Does this mean that everything boils down to religion? No. It means simply that religion cannot be compartmentalized: that in meaning making, regardless of what a specific religion's founders or sacred texts teach, religions both structure reality and are themselves understood according to context and subjective realities. And once religious ideas, values, practices, and modes of expression are institutionalized in systems, even if their connections to religion are lost to public memory, the systems continue to shape and be shaped by those living within those systems, whether these persons are explicitly religious or not.



Zayn Kassam is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Pomona College. She has won the Wig Award for Distinguished Teaching twice at

Pomona College, as well as an American Academy of Religion Excellence in Teaching Award. Her publications include the volume on *Islam in Greenwood's series*, *Introduction to the World's Major Religions* (2006). Her current research is on religion and the environment, and gender issues in Muslim societies.

RSN: Similarly, are there central skills that every undergraduate major in religion should possess? If so, have these skills changed over the past generation?

Chopp: As I suggested above, I think all students graduating in the twenty-first century need to understand the critical thinking skills offered by religious studies and theological studies. I think undergraduates need to understand how religions can be forces for good and evil and how religions are both social-cultural realities and individual constructs of meaning. Study of intellectual thought, aesthetic performance, ethical codes, and communal practices should be included in undergraduate study of religion.

Lowe: It seems that religious studies scholars are always asking questions about what we should study and how. This fact creates both intellectual dynamism and the danger of inclusive incoherence. A coherent undergraduate program in religious studies provides the opportunity for students to develop critical

methodological selfconsciousness about the data of religious experience and community. In the United States, I think this means a familiarity with the role of Christianity and the Bible in American history, and the ironies and paradoxes associated developing from a historically Christian culture, to becoming the most diverse religious country in the world, while maintaining a dominant identification with its Christian past. Over the last generation, as forces of economic, intellectual, and communications globalization have reshaped our worldviews, the field of religious studies has further expanded its reach. Now an undergraduate major needs also to have experience interpreting the ways in which religion and culture interact in settings outside the United States. I would further add that a religion major should develop basic competence in the interpretation of religious texts in at least one, and preferably two, of the major religious traditions.



Eugene Y. Lowe Jr. is Assistant to the President of Northwestern University. He also holds faculty appointments in the Religion Department in

Northwestern's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Education and Social Policy, where he teaches courses in higher education administration and the history and philosophy of higher education. A historian of American religion, his writings about religion, race, and American culture have appeared in a number of books and journals, including the *Anglican Theological Review* and *Church History*. His book, *Promise and Dilemma: Perspectives on Racial Diversity and Higher Education* (Princeton University Press, 1999) is based on work sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. He received his AB in Religion from Princeton University and the MDiv and PhD from Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Kassam: While in the past every undergraduate major in religion might have been expected to identify the key beliefs and practices of the major religious traditions, which number about five or six, now every religious studies major should emerge with a sense of wonder at the sheer diversity of ways in which human beings are religious. Yes, of course, a student should know the central figures, the authoritative texts, the key rituals and observances, the organizing institutions, and the significant material and devotional forms of expression of the major world traditions. However, all of these must be related to the historical and cultural context in which they arose and a sense of the issues they were grappling with. In addition, and this is what makes the study of religion so exciting for me, seeking to understand how people have understood and found ways to be religious in connection with their existential realities through the ages up to the present time is what makes the study of religion not only fascinating, but also central to understanding human civilization. The image that comes most readily to mind is the one invoked by Salman Rushdie in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, in which the source stories generated by the ocean of stories continually interact with, meld with, infuses fresh life

into, and generate new stories that are related to the source story but also different in intriguing ways. What are the afterlives of the text? What happens when religions migrate through conquest or immigration? How does the context create a new story? How do humans make sense of tragedy? What kinds of stories are created to mobilize exercises in power? What are the shadows they create?

RSN: How can we know if we are effectively teaching these central ideas and skills to our students? How can we best show others that we have done so?

Chopp: The study of religion includes disciplinary practices and perspectives shared with the social sciences and the humanities. Almost all social science and humanities disciplines are impossible to assess in order to yield hard-core quantitative data. If the point of intellectual thought and spiritual practice in a religious tradition is wisdom gained over a lifetime, then assessment must be an eschatological event! Still and all, I do think we can assess whether or not a student has learned the basic facts of the study of religion as determined by a particular program: if she can think critically about religion and within a religious tradition (whether or not it is her own); if he can treat a religious event or practice from a multidisciplinary perspective, and if she can give an account of a religious event within a particular historical situation. I think assessment has to be shaped to fit each school. I have not seen evidence to suggest that we can have a "one size fits all" assessment that works for all programs of religion in all schools.



Rebecca S. Chopp was named President of Colgate University on July 1, 2002. Colgate's fifteenth president, she joined the college from Yale University where

she served as Dean of the Yale Divinity School. Prior to joining Yale, Chopp spent 15 years at Emory University, where she held the positions of Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. Chopp received her BA from Kansas Wesleyan University, her MDiv from St. Paul School of Theology, and her PhD from the University of Chicago. In recent years her research and publication have focused on changing structures and cultures of higher education, on the role of liberal arts in democratic society, and on religion and higher education. Chopp has written numerous books and articles in the area of women's studies, Christian theology, and the role of religion in American public life.

Lowe: I think a good test of our teaching is how students learn to take on and analyze questions that address experiences and values different from their own. In a time when accountability looms as an important question for many stakeholders outside colleges and universities, being able to explain and justify outcomes is important. We need to exercise caution here, and make clear that religious studies as a part of the academic humanities does not

See **INTERVIEW** p.26

Proposals Offer Insight into Complexities of Religion Major

EARLIER THIS YEAR, 31 religious studies departments submitted proposals to secure a “seed grant” to study their unique academic environment vis-à-vis the religion major and liberal education. The working group for the project, with advice from the Academic Relations Committee, selected ten programs to receive the seed grants, funded by the AAR through the Teagle Foundation grant it received for the Religion Major and Liberal Education Project. Here, we are reprinting portions of the grant proposals from some of those programs to give readers an idea of what is envisioned.

Religious Studies at the Community College

Steve Young, McHenry County (IL) College

Close to half of all American college students attend community colleges, and the bulk of these young men and women complete the majority of their general education requirements before transferring to a four-year institution. Approximately 70 percent of these transfer students will change their major at least once as an undergraduate. From this it follows that (a) community colleges are poised to play an important role in developing the pool of potential religious studies majors at four-year institutions, and (b) a large percentage of teaching about the academic study of religion that students ever receive as non-majors will occur in the community college setting.

McHenry County College in Crystal Lake, Illinois, contributes to this trend more today than ever before. Located in one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois, the college now serves a younger, more traditional student body. Since the mid-1990s, it has experienced a 64 percent increase in fulltime, associate degree-seeking candidates and a 47 percent increase in those students who plan to transfer to a four-year institution. Meanwhile, the Humanities Department has seen a 109 percent increase in annual credit hours. Most notably, “Philosophy 261: Religions of the World” — the cornerstone to building a larger religious studies program at MCC — has grown apace from 466 annual credit hours enrolled for in 1995–1996 to averaging over 1,000 credit hours each year from 2001 through 2006.

Yet in their first two years of college, most students at MCC are exposed to religious studies mostly and indirectly through other disciplines. For example, different aspects of Islam might be touched upon in an introductory course on the history of Western civilization, an English course on comparative literature, or even during art history class. More in-depth teaching — to promote intercultural knowledge, to engage the moral and spiritual issues central to humanity, or to invigorate more critical and constructive learning in light of recent global events — is not, however, offered in the core coursework most students will complete before transferring to a four-year institution.

The challenges for religious studies at MCC, therefore, are similar to those at many other community colleges. And attempts to identify and address these challenges should be useful for both MCC and potentially for other community colleges as well. The key challenges we face at MCC are as follows: few course offerings in religious studies; few faculty trained in religious studies; difficulty in finding qualified adjunct instructors; coordinating the interdisciplinary study of religion; addressing the appropriateness of religious studies at a secular educational institution given cultur-

al marginalization and privatizing of religion; identifying appropriate course offerings and linking them with Illinois Articulation Initiative and programs at four-year schools; and generating and sustaining sufficient enrollment for new courses in religious studies.

The religion major is central to a liberal education in America. Students must become more religiously literate to better understand the root belief systems of other cultures, the foundations of their own culture, and intelligently and ethically judge the pressing public policy issues of the day in a more global context. Community colleges can be decisive in offering religious studies courses to serve as a foundation to baccalaureate-seeking transfer students who will continue this field of study at a four-year institution. To that end, by fostering a sustained dialogue over the challenges listed above, and based on the popularity of the “Religions of the World” course thus far, the Philosophy Department hopes to explore the possibility of instituting a much broader religious studies program at McHenry County College.

Religion at Colorado Christian University: The Challenge

Jeffrey Mallinson and Frank Ritchel Ames, Colorado Christian University

The American Academy of Religion’s mission “welcomes all disciplined reflection on religion — both from within and outside of communities of belief and practice — and seeks to enhance its broad public understanding.” Colorado Christian University’s School of Theology is arguably located near the geographical epicenter of North American Evangelicalism. The challenge, in this context, is to help students and community members understand the tools of the academic study of religion to the extent that it can become appropriately self-critical, even within a community of belief and practice. This proposal solicits much-needed help toward creating a viable and respectable religion major despite the historic difficulties of such work within the evangelical academy. A seed grant would help our academic unit formulate a strong proposal for a religion major, complete with guidelines for preserving academic freedom and the integrity of scholarship alongside confessional restrictions. We believe this process will produce both a successful religion program as well as an interesting report to the American Academy of Religion regarding the unique challenges of a comparative religion program at a distinctly Christian institution, especially regarding programmatic emphases on the nature of fundamentalisms.

After careful planning and study, the School of Theology hopes to inaugurate a religion major. This will differ from those confessional institutions that use the term “religion” as an umbrella for a variety of dogmatic, historical, and textual studies within Christian theology. Rather, the religion program at Colorado Christian

University will train students in the methodologies and literature current in the top religion programs in the academy.

Oversight for curricular development will come from Jeffrey Mallinson, dean of the School of Theology. The primary faculty member to direct the process will be Frank Ames. . . . Planning will emphasize the role of the study of fundamentalisms, and strategies to ensure academic freedom within a confessional institution. Long term, our goal is to create a center for the understanding of American Evangelicalism within the movement, in order to provide students with the academic tools for productive and sensitive self-criticism.

Religious Studies in Texas: A Mission without a Major

Rebecca Raphael, Texas State University–San Marcos

No public university in Texas has an independent department of religion. Only one, the University of Texas at Austin, has a religion major. Attempts to establish majors and departments often meet with entrenched opposition at both the local and state level. The purpose of this project is twofold: first, to examine the barriers to the expansion of religious studies at Texas State University–San Marcos; and second, to explore what the American Academy of Religion can do to support religious studies in the absence of a major or department. Since the second most populous state is unlikely to support departments in the near future, the AAR should plan outside the department-centric model of religious studies in the liberal arts.

In 1999, the Philosophy Department hired Rebecca Raphael as the only religious studies scholar on the faculty of Texas State University. She revised courses formerly taught by local ministers, obtained normal academic funding for all of them, and became the coordinator of the department’s interdisciplinary minor in religion. Enrollment in the minor has increased sixfold, and average course enrollment has tripled. In spite of this demonstrated demand, the department’s proposals to establish a tenure line and to move toward a major have been consistently rejected by administrators. In fact, the religion minor remains the only minor in the university not supported by at least one tenure line.

During the 2007–2008 academic year, the principal investigator will organize two public panel discussions. One will bring biblical scholars and First Amendment specialists to campus to discuss academic study of the Bible in the state’s public high schools and universities. The other will initiate a dialogue on how a liberal arts curriculum, absent a religion major, can better address the urgent public need for better knowledge of the world’s religions. Speaker invitations will draw on experts familiar with the issues in Texas, e.g., Mark Chancey of SMU or Douglas Laycock of the University of Michigan School of Law. In addition, the principal investigator will conduct a survey of students and adminis-

Seed Grant winners:

- Colorado Christian University, School of Theology
- Eckerd College, Letters Collegium, Religious Studies discipline
- Lafayette College, Religious Studies Department
- Louisiana State University, Philosophy and Religious Studies Department
- McHenry County College, Philosophy Department
- University of Minnesota, Classics and Near Eastern Studies Department
- University of New Mexico, Religious Studies Program (Interdisciplinary)
- Santa Clara University, Religious Studies Department
- Texas State University, Philosophy Department
- Wofford College, Religion Department

trators to determine perceptions about religion studies. The survey and follow-up interviews will determine the relative importance of several factors (e.g., perceptions about constitutionality or the academic quality of the field) in obstructing development of a major. The results should also provide the AAR with insight into how to promote the study of religion in the absence of a major or a department.

Texas State University trains more public school teachers than any other university in Texas. The presence or absence of religious studies in its curriculum thus directly affects what prospective elementary and secondary teachers take into their future classrooms. Finally, the AAR still needs to attend to suspicion of religious studies, especially in the public university system of such a large and influential state as Texas.

Religious Studies in a Jesuit Context

Paul G. Crowley, SJ, Santa Clara University

Santa Clara, a Jesuit University in the heart of California’s Silicon Valley, is the oldest institution of higher learning in the State of California. Santa Clara is today a comprehensive master’s university with some 5,500 undergraduate students, most of whom are enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, the remainder in the Schools of Business and Engineering. As part of the Santa Clara Core Curriculum, all undergraduates take

See **SEED GRANTS** p.25

Do You Know Where Your Students Are? Tracking Undergraduate Religion Majors

Darby Kathleen Ray, Millsaps College



Darby Kathleen Ray is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Faith & Work Initiative at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. She teaches a wide range of courses including History of Christian Thought, The Meaning of Work, and Suffering, Tragedy, and Liberation in the Ancient World. She writes in the area of constructive theology. Her publications include *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* (1998); *Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God* (2006); and *Christic Imagination: An Ethic of Incarnation and Ingenuity* (forthcoming 2008).

and brain drain caused by such efforts; about the homogenizing and flattening of program types, expectations, and learning that can come about when we all march to the same drummer (or accreditation rubric, as the case may be); about the loss of risk-taking courses, teachers, scholars, and students.

“On the whole, it appears that assessment practices that can yield meaningful longitudinal information about the religion major are relatively rare in our field at this time. Given the increased emphasis on assessment in higher education, however, this situation is bound to change”

OUTCOMES. Assessment. Feedback loops. Like it or not, we in higher education have had to add these terms to our lexicon. Some of us are undaunted, even excited, by the new challenges and possibilities. We are genuinely curious to know how we're doing: We know what we're trying to teach, but what are our students actually learning? And what are they doing with that knowledge and skill set once they graduate? Are we preparing them well for their diverse postbaccalaureate lives in a complex, globalized world? We wager that answers to such questions will help us improve our teaching, our curriculum, and maybe even the reputation, vitality, and utility of our discipline. Others of us are not so sanguine. We worry about the time, energy,

Whatever our attitude toward the assessment wave, we are inevitably in its wake. Even those who register dissent about its motivations or methods might still benefit from considering this question: How does the fact that our students studied religion as undergraduates inform their post-baccalaureate working and living? (e.g., Do they tend to pursue discipline-related work? Do they employ a “religious studies” knowledge base or set of methodological tools in their professional or personal lives? Do they pay special attention to or


enjoy an agility in interpreting or interrogating “religion” as it presents itself in the complexities of today's world?)

I expect many of us would be interested to know this sort of thing about our students and, by extension, the long-term impact of our teaching. But are any of us actually asking the questions and considering the answers? What strategies of inquiry seem to work best, and what difference does the information make? My preliminary queries indicate that most departments track their majors (and minors, in some cases) only informally. We know what our graduates are doing because we bump into them at a homecoming football game or are asked to serve as references for them as they pursue a new trajectory. Often, and as a colleague at Wartburg College in Iowa notes, “it's really more a matter of [students] keeping track of us than of our keeping track of them.” They send us the occasional e-mail, invite us to keep up with their blogs, send us a wedding invitation, or drop by our office when they pass through town.

Increasingly, and often under the impress of accrediting bodies, religion departments are developing more formal tools. Most often, these take the shape of exit interviews for graduating seniors and brief surveys for alums. Seattle Pacific University, for example, sends surveys to religion major alums at two years and five years after graduation, while in Minnesota, the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University conducts a senior exit survey. An abiding concern in relation to such tools is the rate of response or overall number of responses, which can undermine the statistical significance of the data collected. On the whole, it appears that assessment practices that can yield meaningful longitudinal information about the religion major are relatively rare in our field at this time. Given the increased emphasis on assessment in higher education, however, this situation is bound to change. A key partner in the work of

tracking religion majors, says Chris Stanley of Saint Bonaventure University in New York, is an institution's alumni office. When contact information for graduates is out of date or difficult to access, tracking one's students becomes that much more arduous.

Based on my preliminary, unscientific review of the field, informal and formal strategies for keeping track of religion majors appear to produce similar conclusions. By and large, graduates of our programs have good feelings about the time they spent with us learning about religion; though they are not without complaint or constructive criticism, our alums feel like they were well served by their major. One trend many institutions report these days is an increase in double majors — students who major in religion because they're genuinely interested in the subject matter but who also accrue a “safer” (i.e., more marketable) major. The choice of the nonreligion major seems to depend in large part on the particular strengths, programs, character, and priorities of individual departments. Not surprisingly, undergraduate religion majors do a variety of things after graduation. It appears that up to one-third of them pursue religion-specific vocations, most often in the church or the academy; and roughly another third work in a human services field (social work, Peace Corps, counseling, nonprofit work, etc.). The final third engage in a wide range of pursuits, from medicine and law to arts administration and exercise physiology.

The time is ripe for considerations of whether and how best to track our undergraduate religion majors. My initial inquiries revealed a surprisingly high level of interest in the topic among my colleagues around the nation, most often motivated by the recognition that traditional anecdotal methods may well need to be augmented by more systematic and thorough approaches. 

SEED GRANTS, from p.24

three courses in the department, one of the largest units in the university.

We find that we are a unique department among Catholic and even Jesuit universities.

The department strongly identifies itself as a “religious studies” department, and offers courses in areas broadly defined as Theology, Ethics and Spirituality; Scripture and Traditions; and Religion and Society. . . . Several faculty and their courses make use of the department's own Local Religion Project, which connects local religious communities (Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, etc.) with academic projects in the classroom. In addition, faculty (and their courses) participate in various interdisciplinary programs on campus (Women & Gender Studies, Asian Studies, Catholic Studies, Ethnic Studies, Environmental Studies, the newly forming Islamic and Near Eastern


Studies, African Studies, etc.). And other departments, including Classics, History, English, and Political Science, offer some courses for the major. Finally, the department cooperates with the Bannan Institute and the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics in arranging for programming and cooperative efforts, including community-based learning and international immersion programs. . . .

While our program has proven successful, due in no small part to excellent teaching and scholarship, we are facing three challenges that are leading us to a review of the major: (1) a review of our departmental curriculum, including the “area” structure of the department, with a view toward deeper interdisciplinarity within the department; (2) an interest within the department to explore the shape and function of theological studies in relation to other approaches to religion; and (3) new Core Curriculum at Santa Clara, which will

emphasize assessment of learning outcomes more explicitly than the current system does.

Each of these challenges, in turn, will affect our major: (1) by stressing interdisciplinarity in a structured way; (2) by providing structures for focus and concentration within the major; and (3) by situating the major, or parts of it, within the Core Curriculum, and not alongside it. The portfolio in particular can be incorporated into new Core structures and receive a more rigorous and useful framing, especially for purposes of assessment.

The department will meet in early September for an all-day retreat to discuss item no. 2 above (the relation of theological to religious studies in the curriculum, including within the major). This departmental retreat will be followed by two meetings in fall quarter with representatives of interdisciplinary programs with which

our department interacts in order to discuss how reforms of our major curriculum might work in concert with their program objectives. By March 2008, the end of winter quarter, the department will produce a working model for the major based on these meetings, and on the completion of the department's own curricular review and new Core requirements, particularly those regarding assessment of the goals of the major. This leaves much work to be done, particularly the coordination of our major with the new Core Curriculum, but this would establish a foundation from which to work. 

INTERVIEW, from p.23

make simplistic claims about outcomes. Our goal is to illuminate and critically analyze central questions about the meaning in human experience across the ages and around the world.

Kassam: I'm not much interested in quantifying excellence, although I realize that it is necessary to do so for administrative purposes. What interests me is what goes on in the classroom, as that is our first point of contact with students. We are lucky in that the study of religion in the academy continues to evolve and continues to surface the many complexities associated with the study of religion, which now is no longer just the study of "essences," if I might use that term. We have been so greatly enriched through appropriating multidisciplinary approaches to the study of religions, bringing in the wealth of fields such as anthropology, political science, cultural studies, economics, fine arts, theater, music, philosophy, gender studies, ethnic studies, linguistics, literature, media studies, and others. So, effectiveness in teaching the central ideas and skills pertaining to the study of religion all depends on what is done in the classroom, as a first indicator. Religious studies are by and large a service department that

trains far more students than it produces majors, so showing how many students actually take religious studies courses, and how well they do in those courses, is one way to measure whether students are even being exposed to the skills necessary to read religion, let alone master such skills. That said, I prefer to take the longer view. Is the study of religion being mainstreamed into the larger academy sufficient that every student, regardless of major, feels they must take at least one course in religious studies? How is religion being factored into the theorizing being done in other disciplines? Education about religion is so critical, more so today than ever before, so to me the best indicator of effective teaching about religion is when you have opinion makers in society who can talk intelligently about religion. I'm afraid I don't think we are there yet.

RSN: What do you think is the greatest strength about the way our field currently trains its undergraduates? What is the greatest weakness?

Chopp: Our greatest strength is the incredible expansion of our field and the sheer creativity of the scholarship over the last 30 years. We have expanded the number of religions studied and the

tools with which we study them. We have begun to embrace seriously the diverse experience of men and women within any one religious tradition. We have also embraced studying popular religion as well as official religion. The greatest difficulty is that we are still too nervous about engaging our students in theological reflection — in understanding how and why persons create meaning within a religious tradition. Many of the undergraduates I talk with wish faculty members would be more open to this kind of discussion in and outside of the classroom.

Lowe: As a field that uses several disciplines and modes of analysis in the examination of ideas, practices, and texts, we are a diverse community of scholars. The more diverse we become, the more we are vulnerable to merely describing differences, and not taking the time to analyze and make critical distinctions and evaluations. The susceptibility across many traditions to terrorism is a case in point. We need to be able to point out ways in which religion is a "problem."

Kassam: Our greatest strength — and concomitantly, our most vulnerable area — is and will continue to be our faculty. Creative and innovative ways in teaching students how to engage with, think about, study, understand, and explore religion and ways of being religious have the greatest impact on what a student takes away from perhaps just that one class in one's entire career as an undergraduate. No matter how small the institution, and how low the numbers of faculty teaching religious studies, the quality of the faculty member matters. We need continually to pay attention to faculty development. In addition, it is clear to me that educational institutions have to make a concerted effort to include religious studies as part of their curriculum, and the field as a whole needs to be strengthened in that area. I also think that the move to include a lived understanding of religion in addition to the traditional text-based curriculum is a move in an enriching direction, and we need much more of that, whether through the incorporation of films, site visits, ethnographic accounts, and so forth. What we need much more of are study abroad programs that will allow students to participate in, observe, discuss, debate, experience, and add to the complexity of the variety of understandings of religions. We need to work with the study abroad programs at our institutions to see if there are ways that the study of religion could be incorporated into their programs. A third area is the study of languages. To be able to read source texts or newspapers in their languages of production is so critical to understanding the nuances of what is going on.

RSN: Harvard University recently has been in the news for revamping its undergraduate core curriculum. How do you see the needs and nature of liberal education evolving? Is this a good thing?

Chopp: After spending five years in a residential liberal arts college, I think that this type of school (not only Colgate, but others as well) should be the model for all undergraduate education. What I have learned from faculty members and students at Colgate about the evolution of liberal arts is three-fold: 1) Creative thought can and must be married to integrative thought. The twenty-first century may be about disassembling information but is always and everywhere about recreating. Synthesizing will be as important as the specialization of knowledge which has dominated since the 1950s; 2) Technology shapes not only to whom we convey knowledge but how we manage and produce it; and 3) The liberal arts, according to tradition and contemporary aspirations, teach the obligation of being a citizen-leader in society. To educate for leadership, which seems to be the requirement of the liberal arts in the twenty-first century, means formation of skills, values, and habits as well as the mastering of critical, creative, and integrative thinking.

Lowe: The idea of liberal education has been evolving for centuries. The Harvard effort, which is still a work in progress, is a reminder both that we should resist a simplistic consumerism in undergraduate education, and that it is very difficult to get faculty to agree about anything. The educational principle of "In loco parentis" — which is very out of favor — had some good things about it; one is that students should not be expected to know everything about what is good for them before they matriculate in college!

Kassam: Liberal education faces the challenge of striking a balance between traditional subjects and newer epistemologies that become increasingly relevant as societies change and new fields of analysis and knowledge open up. We need to bring the fields of religious studies and environmental studies to the attention of the intellectual community for, regardless of whether one is religious or concerned about global warming, one needs to understand the currency, the issues, and the ways in which each of these exercises significant power in creating and exacerbating the challenges of the 21st century and simultaneously, in providing the means to address them. RSN

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Research Briefing

The Role of Multicultural Festivals in the Creation of Hindu Discourses of Religious Self-Representation

Meritxell Martín-i-Pardo, *Sewanee: The University of the South*



Meritxell Martín-i-Pardo earned her PhD in the History of Religion at the University of Virginia in 2005. A research affiliate of the University of the South, where she taught for five semesters, she is currently teaching and conducting research in her native Barcelona. Her research on the formation of religious self-identity considers the intersection of social institutions such as public policy with diasporic Hindu worldviews.

MY PROJECT was to explore how the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Indian immigrants to Guadeloupe, French West Indies, in 2004 impacted Indo-Guadeloupean and Hindu discourses of religious self-representation. During my dissertation field research in 2002–03, I found that Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus expected that 2004 was going to be a year of recognition of their role and status on the island. They dreamed, for example, that Hinduism would emerge with the same status as Catholicism, the dominant religious tradition. They actively pursued these goals by planning events that would market Hinduism as a nonthreatening religion. My research in 2005 sought to examine whether the organizers' expectations were fulfilled and how the multicultural festivals and public religious rituals organized to commemorate the 150th anniversary had participated in the creation of new understandings of Hinduism in Guadeloupe.

My informants were delighted that I had returned "to study" them but clearly disappointed that my goal was to examine 2004 and its impacts. This puzzled me. When I had left Guadeloupe a year and a half earlier, 2004 was all that mattered to most of them. Now they avoided talking about 2004 and preferred to talk about the upcoming sugar cane harvest. Why were they choosing to talk about an annual event and avoid one that had occurred only once in 150 years?

After failing to get them to speak about 2004, I decided to see what I could find in the island's local archives. The records I needed, however, had not been microfilmed and I had to beg the island's newspaper to let me use their archival copies. As I took digital photos of the columns, I made notes of my first impressions of the headlines, articles, and advertisements. Typical headlines such as "Eloge de la diversité culturelle" or "Année de l'Inde: le métissage à l'honneur" revealed nothing of the hopes that Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had expressed to me in 2002–03.

Instead, they epitomized the local government's message: 2004 was characterized as the year in which diversity was celebrated without alluding to what this diversity was actually composed of. In other words, the local paper portrayed 2004 within the rhetoric of French multiculturalism, which allows the government to express the undeniable fact that France is made up of people who came from different places without really acknowledging a specific expression of that cultural difference. It dawned on me that during my first round of interviews, I had only asked about what had happened, instead of what had not happened, and guessed that that might explain my informants' evasiveness.

In my second round of interviews, I read some of these newspaper headlines to my informants (choosing articles that reported on an event I knew they had been involved with) and simply asked how they felt the articles portrayed the event. They started talking. Many could not stop talking. Most could not shake the feeling that their show had been stolen. Because the different Indo-Guadeloupean and Hindu members of the organizing committee had let their worldviews and hopes for 2004 interfere in their relationship during the planning months of the commemorative events, the local government had taken on the role of mediator. This role, many informants claimed, allowed it to control how the events of 2004 were portrayed. In this way, there had been a surplus of rhetoric. Because there was not a unified voice to speak for and represent their hopes for 2004, the commemorative events became an example of republican diversity instead of an opportunity for Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus to make self-identity claims.

I further discovered that while Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had not been able to claim their religious difference in 2004, Hindu discourses of self-representation did change. Ironically, the multicultural festivals that had been designed to highlight local Hinduism allowed Indo-Guadeloupean, Guadeloupean Hindu, and Guadeloupean audiences to discover the global context of Guadeloupean Hindu religious practices. For decades, Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had been bullied by Afro-Guadeloupeans because of their role in the history of the island's economy. In addition, because their religious practices involved animal sacrifice, Hindus were likened to sorcerers and Hinduism to sorcery. But this changed in 2004 when events such as the film festival allowed Guadeloupean audiences to become familiar, for example, with Hindu Bollywood piety (for example, that of Paro and Devdas) and understand Guadeloupean Hindu piety in a similar light. And, soon, many Guadeloupean stereotypes of Hindus and Hinduism became obsolete. While many of the worldviews of Guadeloupean Hinduism remain little understood amongst general Guadeloupean audiences, 2004 changed the way Hinduism was perceived. RSN



A Hindu officiant conducts a puja (an act of worship) at the Monument of the First Day on December 24, 2005. The monument, built at the port of Pointe-à-Pitre in 2004, commemorates the arrival of the *Aurélié*, the first convoy transporting Indian and Hindu immigrant labor to Guadeloupe on December 24, 1854.

Photo courtesy of Meritxell Martín-i-Pardo.



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In the Public Interest

Transformative Education in a Prison

Lawrence Mamiya, Vassar College



Lawrence Mamiya is the Paschall-Davis Professor of Religion and Africana Studies at Vassar College. The Vassar prison program derives from his activist background as a community organizer in Harlem, civil rights worker in the Southwest Georgia Project, and minister to young adults at the Glide Memorial Methodist Church during the Haight-Ashbury youth counterculture. He is best known as a co-author with C. Eric Lincoln of *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (1990). His more recent publications include co-author, *The History of the Riverside Church of the City of New York* (2004) and *River of Struggle, River of Freedom: Trends in Black Churches and Black Pastoral Leadership* (monograph published by Pulpit and Pew Research on Pastoral Leadership at the Duke Divinity School, Durham: 2006). He is currently working on a book on African-American Muslim movements.

THE VASSAR COLLEGE prison program began in fall 1979 at the Pre-Release Center of the Green Haven maximum security prison in New York State with planning sessions for dialogue groups on Friday afternoons between college students and incarcerated men. It grew out of class field trips each semester to local prisons to provide concrete illustrations of the concept of “institutional racism.” In prisons the racial inequalities were blatant: 85 percent of the incarcerated men were African American and Latino; 10 percent white; and 5 percent, other. Moreover, 99 percent of the prison guards and administrators were white. During the past 28 years of its continued existence, the prison program has become highly relevant since American society has been experiencing a “crisis of mass incarceration,” a 900 percent increase from 270,000 incarcerated persons in 1970 to more than 2.2 million at the present time. African-American and Latino families and communities have been greatly affected by this crisis.

The Pre-Release Center was created by the incarcerated men themselves as a result of forming a “think tank” that came up with new programs and ideas of reforming New York State prisons after the Attica Rebellion. Their reform ideas included college in prison programs, self-help groups for alcohol and substance abuse, opening the prisons to civilian volunteers, the use of peer counselors and a prerelease program that would provide four months of preparation for release prior to a person’s parole hearing. Our initial group discussions between students and incarcerated men started with the basic Group Transitional Preparation (GTP), covering topics the men

needed such as proper grooming and personal hygiene, how to apply for Social Security cards and driver’s licenses, how to create a resume, current events awareness, and role playing in job interviews and parole board hearings. As the program evolved, other discussion group topics included Domestic Violence, Fatherhood, Family, Communications Skills, Victims Awareness, and Changing Gender Roles in Society. The peer counselors became highly skilled teachers, effective at communicating and putting the students at ease. Students are also required to lead some of the discussions as well as do presentations on research topics. The last 20 minutes of every two-hour discussion group is set aside as a “free for all” where the students and the men can ask each other any questions they want to about each other’s respective environments.

“The level of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.”

— FYODOR DOESTOEVSKY

For the first 20 years of the program, Vassar students participated for a half unit of Field Work credit. As the program expanded in popularity, the prison began to place enrollment limits since at one point there were over 60 students per semester participating in the program. Professor Mark Cladis, now at Brown University, helped to run the program for ten years. The program was converted from Field Work to the Africana Studies Program, which provided an academic base and a Sunday evening class that met every third week from 5 to 7 PM on campus. The class shared pizza together, watched films on prisons, discussed their prisons experiences and required readings, and heard guest lecturers on writing in prison, women in prison, and public policy issues. The students were required to keep a detailed ethnographic prison journal about their feelings and thoughts of going to the prison, discussion groups, readings, films, and lectures.

In recent years the prison program has expanded to include the Otisville medium security prison and the Dutchess County Jail. Additional interested faculty members have been recruited to provide adult supervision at these prisons.

Religion in Prison

Religion is closely related to the establishment of prisons in the United States. The origin of the term “penitentiary” derives from its religious usage of doing penance and repentance while incarcerated. The Quakers of Pennsylvania and Auburn, New York, influenced the policies of the first state-run penitentiaries or prisons, which involved solitary confinement, working in silence, and reading the Bible. Religion as a principle for the reformation of character received a priority in the Auburn system. In fact the Auburn system also gave priority to using prison chaplains as counselors. In both plans, the Quaker emphasis on silence in worship became the undergirding principle for daily life among the incarcerated persons.

For a long period of time Christianity was the only religion recognized by prison officials. The turbulent decade of the 1960s led to lawsuits by members of the Nation of Islam that helped to pave the way for Muslims, Jews, and others to have their religious traditions and practices recognized. Anyone who has done volunteer work in a prison recognizes that there is a multiplicity of religious groups — including Protestant and Catholic groups, Rastafarians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Moorish Science, Five Percenters, Santeria, African Hebrew Israelites, etc. Over the years at Green Haven, Vassar students have participated in the Islamic Therapeutic Program (ITP) that used Islamic principles to deal with alcohol and drug abuse. They have also sat in zazen sessions with the members of the Lotus sangha, the first Zen Buddhist group established in an American prison.

Incarceration in a maximum security prison over a long period of time constitutes a major crisis that often brings a person to a crossroad in their lives. They must decide whether they are going to change and transform themselves positively, taking responsibility for their crime, and leaving the street life behind. Or they can choose to become worse — better at doing the negative things without getting caught. Since the prison experience involves this crossroad, a major choice point in life, many incarcerated persons seek some form of spirituality and discipline in making the change. This is the main reason there are so many religious groups. Even those who don’t wish to join an institutional religion will seek to construct some form of personal spiritual worldview for themselves that can help them through the transformation. Most incarcerated persons seek to transcend the harsh and brutal prison environment whether it is by writing poetry, doing art, singing, praying, or participating in a group religious ritual. Religious volunteers from the outside constitute the largest percentage of civilian volunteers in all prisons.

Vassar students have been fortunate because they meet and work with peer counselors who are in the process of positive self-transformation. These peer counselors, who lead the discussion groups, share their personal stories of changes they have made in their lives. Over the years, both students and faculty participants have reported that when working with oppressed people, the experience is so deep and powerful that it can provide opportunities for their own self-transformation — for changing views of the world and how they relate to people.

For the largely white, upper-middle-class Vassar students, the issues of race and class are sharply represented in the dialogue groups. For them and for the incarcerated men, the dialogue groups are often the first time that they have been able to talk to and learn from each other across race and class boundaries over an extended period of time.

Obviously, the students learn a lot about the prison experience and the criminal justice system in the United States and for some of them their participation has been a transformative experience. But the question is often raised: what do the incarcerated men get out of these discussions? First, since more than half of all incarcerated persons in New York State prisons do not receive any visitors from the outside, these college students are their only visitors and contact with the outside world. As community volunteers they also serve as a check on what is going on in state prisons. The recent trend towards using more and more “for-profit private prisons” has led to a rise in the beatings and abuse of incarcerated persons, poorly trained guards, poor food and health care, lack of programs, and of course no outside community volunteers. Second, the students also serve as resource persons about what is happening in the outside world, bringing in current events for discussion. They do research on topics like domestic violence, children of incarcerated parents, jobs, and housing resources in New York City, and share their findings with their group. Third, the men also appreciate the courage of the students and their willingness to come into a maximum security prison every week in spite of the attempts by corrections officers and other prison officials who often portray the incarcerated men as dehumanized savages and brutes. For most of the American public, prisons are “out of sight and out of mind,” the most neglected institutional sector of society. Finally, the students have also had the student newspaper publish the poetry and short stories that the men have written, giving them a voice in the public.

Since 1999, the 20th year of the program, Green Haven/Vassar Alumni/ae Reunions have been held annually, bringing back to campus the men who had been released, the Vassar alums that worked with them, community activists on prison issues in the Mid-Hudson Valley, and current students. Interested faculty and administrators are also invited. About 100 persons, 30 of whom are formerly incarcerated men and women, spend the first Saturday in April discussing prison, criminal justice, and public policy issues with speakers, panels, and workshops.

Transformative Education for College Students

While not all students have been profoundly impacted by the prison program, many have cited its influence in their decisions about future studies and careers. Publications such as the Vassar Quarterly and the Miscellany News have documented their stories. As an outstanding student athlete, Nancy Mezey ’84 had the men at Green Haven write a recommendation for her application for a Rhodes Scholarship. The Rhodes Board was deeply impressed by their recommendation and she made it to the final round until a West Point cadet won in her section. Nancy spent two terms (four years) with the Peace Corps in Mali. She went on to complete a PhD program in sociology and is teaching at Monmouth University. She is also doing volunteer work at the Taconic Women’s Prison.

See MAMIYA p.32

From the Student Desk

Exploring the Intersecting Spaces of Culture and Religion in Academia

Néstor Medina, University of Toronto




Néstor Medina, who has recently finished writing his dissertation, is a PhD candidate in religion/theology and culture at Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, at the University of Toronto. You may contact him at netto.medina@utoronto.ca.

ORIGINALLY BORN in Guatemala, I migrated to Canada 18 years ago, at the age of 22. Not long after my arrival I chose to pursue further education. As I attempted to integrate into my newly adopted society, I became acutely aware of my Guatemalan roots and culture. Although I always admired and enjoyed sharing life with people from other cultural backgrounds, this time it was different. It was not as if everything I did was perfunctory, paying little attention to the way I acted or what I did. In fact, it was the exact opposite. I lived according to the complex set of social rules and cultural codes of conduct that I had inherited from my original background, but in a different geographical context. I lived as a Guatemalan in Canada and began to change as I acquired new cultural symbols and codes. This became more evident when I began to engage questions concerning the role of culture in the study of religion and theology. I did not understand why, for some inconceivable reason, I could not think, function, or process information as most of my Anglo-European peers did. It was impossible for me to be as "objective" as the academy required. My concerns and questions about reality were different, and so was the manner in which I engaged them. It took some time, but I came to the realization that whatever I understood as culture was fluid and changeable; it was not something that I produced alone as an individual, separated from the community and society to which I belonged.

As a result of my newly found consciousness, and in the interest of understanding better the role of culture in all of my activities, I started questioning the epistemological bases and ways of framing and acquiring knowledge prescribed by the academy. I was tremendously enriched by the knowledge imparted to me by the European and Anglo-American authors with whom I interacted. But there was still a gap that needed to be filled. These authors, with very few exceptions, did not respond to some of the questions I was

asking, and their experiences did not resonate with mine. Although I found great affinity with writers from Guatemala (and Latin America) and other places, I realized that my context was also different from theirs and that they could only help me map out possible answers for my concerns. In the midst of this process, isolating and at times frustrating, I arrived at the conclusion that knowledge is culturally and contextually bound and constructed, and that every experience of reality is culturally conditioned.

I found this was particularly true in the study of religion and theology. Often, I encountered authors for whom religion could be studied simply as an academic intellectual exercise, playing a peripheral role in understanding people groups. But as I reflected more carefully, I concluded — oddly enough with the help of Antonio Gramsci and others — that culture is a medium for religion: religious beliefs and practices are intertwined to such a degree that faith expressions are cultural expressions. Every religious expression is colored by the rich process of socialization of people, which includes the passing down of religious beliefs, understanding of reality, and perceptions of ultimate realities. Religious symbols would not make sense without the rich infusion of meaning by the cultural group to which people belong. In the same way, I also learned that people are not passive subjects in this dynamic process of cultural construction and dissemination. Cultural groups are actively constituted collectives of people who reproduce, interact with, and challenge commonly held beliefs, cultural values, and principles. This internal dynamic and uneven relationship between the members of cultural groups creates new avenues for further cultural development.

In important ways, then, my initial migration into a different society allowed me to encounter and appropriate my own cultural lenses. I would not have been as keenly aware of some of the intricacies pertaining to my cultural reality were it not because of my own journey and experience as a former refugee and immigrant. At the same time, as I engaged these questions academically, I was launched into a process of self-discovery. Although I do not think the central role of culture in human activities is clearly defined in academia, my studies have helped me better understand and articulate my own experience. It is in this way that my own life experience and my studies of religion have together contributed to my formation as an academician. 

Student Liaison Group, Fall 2007

The Student Liaison Group (SLG) is composed of AAR graduate student members who are appointed or elected by their department to serve. Currently, the SLG is open to students enrolled in a PhD program. Student liaisons are a resource for students who need information about AAR's programs and services. They also report on the needs and activities of students to the student director and participate in efforts to expand student involvement in the Academy. If you would like more information about how your PhD program can be represented, contact Myesha D. Jenkins at mjenkins@aarweb.org. The next appointment period is January 2008.

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 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
 ESPECIALLY FOR STUDENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2007
A17-133

Career Alternatives Luncheon: Focus on Religion & Journalism
 11:45 AM-1:00 PM

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and American Theological Library Association

A17-200
 Special Topics Forum
Introduction to the AAR
 1:00-3:30 PM

A17-409
Student Members' Reception
 9:30-11:00 PM
 Don't forget your free drink ticket!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2007
A18-132

Student Teacher Luncheon
 11:30 AM-1:00 PM

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

STUDENT LOUNGE

The Graduate Student Committee will again host the AAR Student Lounge, Saturday through Monday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM. Stop by for a drink and conversation. The Lounge will be located in the San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina, Business Suite 2.

*Event locations will be available onsite in the *At-A-Glance* publication.

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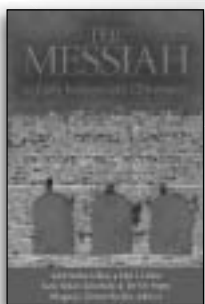
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MAMIYA, from p.28

Myriam Brulot '92 became a lawyer in Canada and is working with incarcerated First Nations men and women in Canadian prisons. Kaia Stern '96, who went to Green Haven three times a week, received a PhD in Ethics from Emory University, writing her dissertation on the more than 100 graduates of the New York Theological Seminary Masters of Professional Studies Program at Sing Sing Prison, the first academic study of this long-term program. She has also included a course on prisons in her teaching. After graduation, Sarah Fromm '02 wanted to combine her interests in women's studies and prisons. She applied for a job with the Women's Prison Association and is now deputy director of the organization. She spoke to our prison class and led our workshop on Women in Prison at the reunion.


Ron Armwood '02, an African-American Vietnam veteran and a member of a Special Forces "hunter-killer" team, became addicted to narcotics after he was wounded on a mission behind enemy lines and his team members injected him with morphine over several days to keep him quiet and manage his pain. He spent 27 years as a heroin addict in New York City but his survival skills kept him from being arrested. He eventually turned his life around, went to LaGuardia Community College, and transferred to Vassar. As a participant in the prison program for four semesters, he often said to himself that he could easily be one of the incarcerated men. He graduated with honors in urban studies and went to Columbia Law School. Ron is now a director of addiction services in New York City.

Amie Fishman '98 said, "In Green Haven, I had one of those moments when I felt the path of my life turn sharply." As an ethnobotany major, Fishman said her two semesters at Green Haven "has fueled all of my work since then. It just wasn't an option not to continue the work. As a white person coming

from economic privilege, I'd really never thought much about prison. Stepping into one was an amazing experience. It really broke my heart to see people who had great things to contribute to the world — and who had made some very bad mistakes — being denied the opportunity to contribute." After graduation, Fishman worked as a caseworker with San Francisco's nonprofit Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. She is currently working on appeals of death penalty cases in California.

"I needed to see the real-life workings of the criminal justice system. The Green Haven program is a great example of a well-rounded academic experience. It was touching. It hit me like a brick, and it changed my life," said Rob Hope '00. Hope recalled how easy it was to give up his initial pretenses with the men from Green Haven. Coming from a suburban Midwestern background, Hope at first thought he needed to "pretend like I knew what they were talking about. But the men were so nonthreatening; they were straightforward and encouraged honesty." After graduation, he worked for several years for the Vera Institute for Justice in New York City. He now works for nonprofit organizations focused on criminal justice issues on the West Coast.

David Jaeger '97 said, "Before my senior year, prisons were not on my radar screen. I got an insight into an institution that a lot of Americans trust but don't know much about." He has referred to the Green Haven program as his "antiracist education" at Vassar. Jaeger has been involved in fundraising, grant writing, and volunteer outreach for the Prison Book Program in Boston.

The Vassar College prison program has been an experiment in transformative education. It has created a model that can be replicated by other colleges and universities. The words of an incarcerated person named Brickhouse provide the most fitting conclusion to this article: "Service to others is the rent you pay for the space you occupy on this planet." 

REGIONAL MEETINGS, from p.20

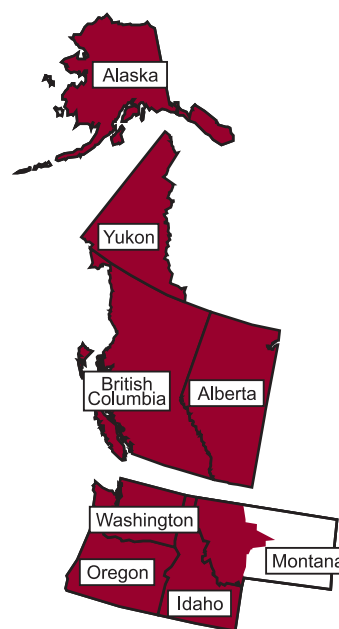
c) access to regional e-mailings to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Grove Harris at groveharris@post.harvard.edu, and should include a conference title, an abstract, a list of projected speakers, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAAR grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Rolling deadline.

Teaching Workshops: The topics of greatest interest to our members include course development and teaching skills. If you would like to organize a teaching workshop, NEMAAR will provide a) NEMAAR grants of up to \$800 to help support conference-related costs; b) assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best-practice planning schedules; and c) access to regional e-mailings to locate presenters and/or to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Barbara Darling Smith at bsmith@wheatonma.edu, and should include a workshop title, abstract, list of projected speakers and/or facilitators, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAAR grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Rolling deadline.

Salon Series: A lunch and/or dinner

series, held in different parts of the region, focusing on the work of regional authors (these can be works in progress). NEMAAR will provide a) grants of up to \$400 to help support related costs; and b) access to regional e-mailings to publicize the series. Proposals should be sent to Michael Hartwig at portamjh@comcast.net, and should include a title, abstract, list of authors and/or facilitators, schedule, contact person, and a budget that indicates how the NEMAAR grant will be used. If submitted by graduate students, a faculty mentor must be identified. Rolling deadline.

If you have an idea that is not listed here but that you feel is consistent with these goals, please send an inquiry! For a list of currently scheduled events, see the New England-Maritimes Region page at www.aarweb.org/about_AAR/regions/new_england-maritimes.



Pacific Northwest

(AAR/SBL/ASOR)

May 2-4, 2008

George Fox University
Newberg, OR

Submit a 150-word abstract for each proposed paper as well as *any equipment requirements* for your presentation by **January 19, 2007**, to the electronic paper submission

website for the PNW Region. Participants in the Pacific Northwest AAR/SBL and ASOR Regional Meeting must have the appropriate academic credentials and must be registered for the meeting to participate. Paper proposals (panels and special topics session suggestions are welcome!) not fitting into any of the categories below should be sent directly to Doug McGaughey, Willamette University, Salem, OR 97301, USA; dougmg@willamette.edu.

Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ASOR): All topics related to art and archaeology are appropriate. Emphasis on faunal and floral remains, depictions, etc., are welcome. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's online website to the chair, Gloria London, glondon@earthlink.net.

Asian and Comparative Studies: There will be a panel on religious violence and Japanese religions with a special focus on modern Japan since the Meiji Restoration. Papers on this topic are encouraged. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's online website to the chair, Nicholas F. Gier, University of Idaho, ngier@uidaho.edu.

Hebrew Scriptures: Papers are welcomed in any topic related to Hebrew Scriptures. Early proposals are especially solicited to assist in organizing 1) a panel discussion on a regional colleague's recent book; 2) a roundtable discussion on current regional research trends or

future directions for revaluing biblical studies in higher education; and 3) special topic sessions. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the chair, Heidi Szpek, Central Washington University, szpek@cwu.edu.

History of Christianity and North American Religions: Papers are welcomed in any area of History of Christianity and North American Religions. Proposals are especially solicited on the following themes: 1) Religion and social justice, with special interest in (but not limited to) papers addressing the Quaker church and its traditions of social activism; 2) Ecumenism (given that this year is the 60th anniversary of the World Council of Churches); 3) Religion, ecology, and greening religious communities; 4) Religion, politics, and elections; and 5) Topics related to early church history, including but not limited to ecumenism, social justice, and the relationship between church and state. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the co-chairs, Suzanne Crawford-O'Brien, Pacific Lutheran University, suzanne.crawford@plu.edu; and Priscilla Pope-Levison, Seattle Pacific University, popep@spu.edu.

Interreligious Dialogue with the Natural Sciences: Papers for this section should focus on conceptual dialogue with the natural sciences from the perspective of the traditions normally included under the academic discipline "history of religions." Accordingly, papers written from Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Chinese religious perspectives in dialogue with the natural on such broad topics as cosmology, evolution, stem cell research, ecofeminism, the relation between mind and body, the problem of suffering in light of the theory of evolution, the anthropic principle, and the problem of consciousness are especially welcome. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the co-chairs, Paul Ingram, Pacific Lutheran University, poingram@comcast.net; and Mark Unno, University of Oregon, munno@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

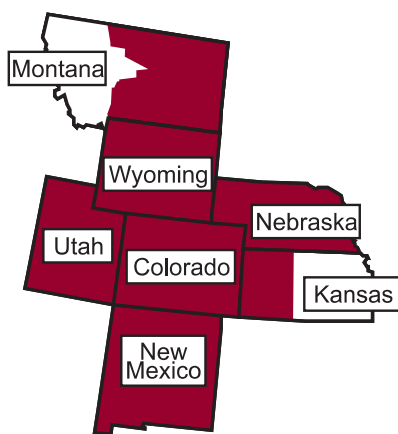
New Testament and Hellenistic Religions: We welcome papers reflecting the research endeavors of New Testament and Hellenistic Religions scholars in the Pacific Northwest, and we especially invite papers on fresh approaches to classic issues or new methodologies that contribute to meaningful biblical interpretation. For a second year, we invite papers for a special session involving "Literary and Theological Readings of the Fourth Gospel." Papers last year included Levinasian and Bakhtinian readings of John, and we welcome further interdisciplinary contributions along these lines. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the chair, Paul N. Anderson, George Fox University, panderson@georgefox.edu.

Religion and Society: All topics related to ethics, ethical decision making, particular ethical issues, and ethical methodology and theory are welcome. We especially would welcome papers on religion and the environment, peace issues, and ethics in storytelling. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the chair, Gary Chamberlain, Seattle University, gchamber@seattleu.edu.

Theology and Philosophy of Religion: While proposals for papers, panels, and book sessions on all aspects of the disciplines of theology and the philosophy of religion are welcome, proposals this year are especially solicited for sessions being anticipated on the following themes: 1) The French Connection: Critical Explorations of the Contributions and Influence of French

Thinkers in Contemporary Philosophical and Theological Discourse; 2) Reanalyzing Jung and Freud: Examining Intersections of Psychological Traditions with Philosophy/Theology; 3) Exploring the Trinity: Considering the Knowability of God and the Sacred; 4) Science New and Past: The Scientific Traditions in Philosophical and Theological Perspective; 5) A Feminist Era: Reflections on the Contributions of North American Feminist Letty Russell; and 6) Rerouting Philosophy: the Eastern Influences of "Western" Philosophical and Theological Discourses. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's on-line website to the co-chairs, Dennis Jowers, Faith Seminary, djowers@faithseminary.edu; and Mari Kim, Emory University, mkim08@emory.edu.

Women and Religion: AAR: We invite individual papers or panels on any aspect of the study of women and religion. This section especially welcomes proposals that facilitate cross-disciplinary and/or religious traditions in the study of women. Papers exploring feminist pedagogy are also welcome. SBL: We invite proposals on women in religious literature including, but not limited to, ancient Greek and Roman, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Asian religions. Papers exploring the connection between sacred texts and violence are especially welcome. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region's website to the co-chairs, Ardy Bass, Gonzaga University, bassa@gonzaga.edu; and Kendra Irons, George Fox University, kiron@georgefox.edu. If you would like to receive our e-mail newsletter, please contact us at the e-mail addresses given above.



Rocky Mountain-Great Plains

(AAR/SBL/ASOR)
March 28-29, 2008
Denver Seminary
Denver, CO

The Regional Program Committee cordially invites you to submit proposals for papers and panels to be presented at the 2008 Regional Meeting in Denver, CO. The deadline for submissions is **November 1, 2007**. Each proposal should consist of a one-page abstract describing the nature of the paper or panel and sent as an e-mail attachment in MS Word format to helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu. Please be sure to include reliable contact information. If you require technological support for your presentation (such as Internet connection, or audio and projection equipment), you must request it with your proposal. Proposals are welcome in all areas of religious and biblical studies. The Program

Continued on p.34

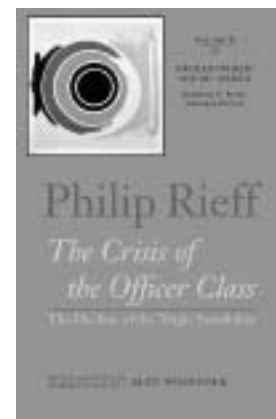
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The Crisis of the Officer Class
The Decline of the Tragic Sensibility

PHILIP RIEFF

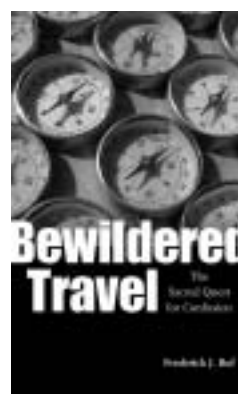
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Edited and with an Introduction by Alan Woolfolk



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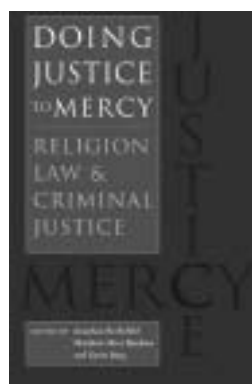
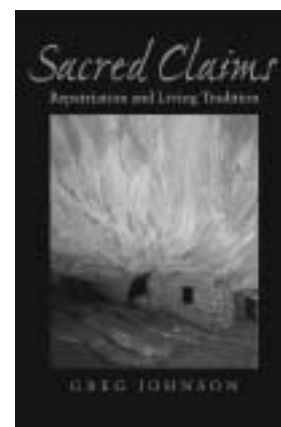
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—Joel Martin, University of Massachusetts, author of *The Land Looks after Us: A History of Native American Religion*

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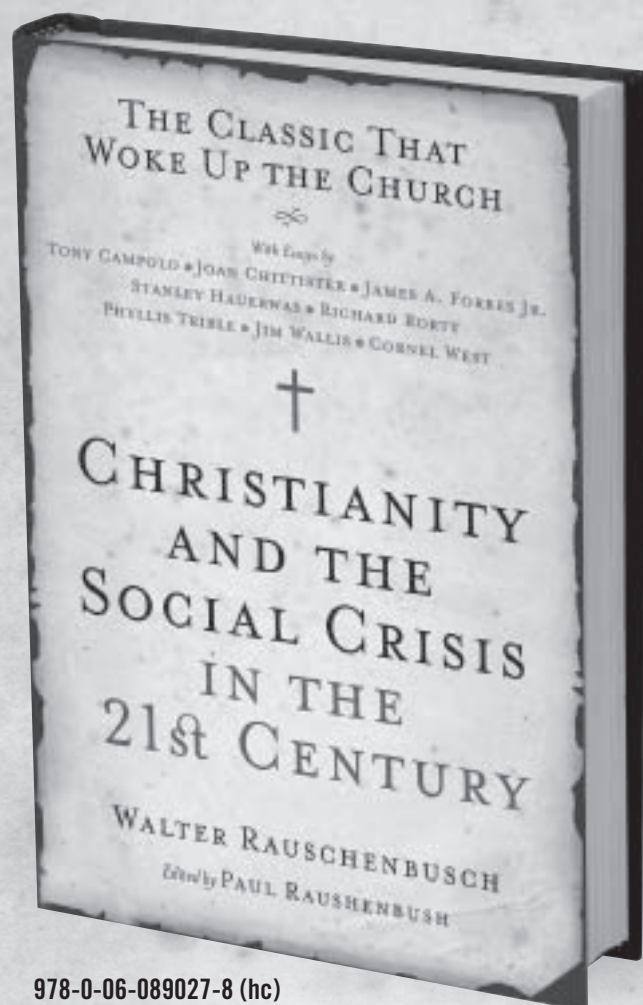
law and religion that yields a constructive approach, both theoretically and practically, to the complex role of mercy in our legal process. Authored by legal practitioners, activists, and theorists in addition to theologians and ethicists, the essays collected here are informed by timeless principles, and yet they could not be timelier.

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Continued from p.33

Committee also welcomes proposals for panels and thematic sessions in the following areas:

- Religion in the Public Square: Religion and Government
- Religion and Popular Culture
- Religious Rhetoric and Violence
- Women and Religion
- The Bible and Cognate Literature
- Comparative Studies in Religion
- Pedagogical Methods and Technologies
- Syro-Palestinian Archaeology

Only those proposals received by the deadline will be considered for inclusion in the program. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes, with a brief amount of time allowed for questions.

Student Paper Awards: Graduate students are encouraged to submit proposals. There will be awards for the best AAR and SBL student papers. The awards are presented during the luncheon on Saturday and carry a stipend of \$100 each. To be considered for the award, a student should submit a copy of the completed paper, along with an abstract, by **October 15, 2007**. (Papers not chosen for an award will be considered for the program.) A student's name and contact information should appear only on the cover page of the paper; student papers will be judged anonymously. The paper should be 12–15 pages double-spaced (for a 20-minute presentation). Please submit the paper as an e-mail attachment in MS Word format to helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu. Requests for supporting technology (Internet connection, projector, etc.) must accompany your proposal.

The Program Committee also invites undergraduate papers for the “Theta Alpha Kappa National Honor Society Undergraduate Panel.” There will also be an award for the best paper in the panel. Please submit a completed paper as an e-mail attachment to helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu by **October 15, 2007**.

Regional Scholars Award: The SBL offers a Regional Scholars award (\$1,000 plus national recognition as a Regional Scholar) for an outstanding paper presented at the regional meeting by a PhD candidate or recent PhD (four years or fewer). If you are interested in competing in the Regional Scholars competition, you must indicate so with your paper proposal. See the regional website for more information (www.rmcp.org).

Program Committee Meeting: The Program Committee will meet during the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, on Saturday evening, **November 17**, from 9:00–11:00 PM in the **San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina, Conference Suite 1**. All members of the AAR/SBL Rocky Mountain–Great Plains Region who are willing to serve on the Program Committee and review proposals are asked to notify Hélène Dallaire (helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu) or Rick Hess (rick.hess@denverseminary.edu), Program Co-Chairs, by November 1, 2007. Proposals and student papers will be sent as e-mail attachments to Program Committee members for their evaluation in early November. It is hoped that at least one faculty person from each of the participating schools in the region will serve on the Program Committee.

Please send all proposals and inquiries to: Hélène Dallaire, Denver Seminary, 6399

South Santa Fe DR, Littleton, CO, 80120, USA; W 303-762-6916; F 303-761-8060; helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu.



Southeastern

(AAR/SBL/ASOR/SE)
March 7–9, 2008
Marriott Century Center
Atlanta, GA

The following sections and program units invite members who wish to present a paper or coordinate a session to submit proposals (1–2 pages) or completed manuscripts to the appropriate section chairs by the call deadline, **October 1, 2007**. Each member is limited to one proposal.

Please use the proposal submission form available on the SECSOR website (www.secsor.appstate.edu). Proposals for joint sessions should be sent to all chairs.

Please note that unless otherwise indicated, papers must be of such a length as can be presented and discussed within 45 minutes.

Planned use of audiovisual equipment must be noted on the submission form.

Because of the very high cost of renting audiovisual equipment, presenters who wish to use such equipment must provide it themselves. SECSOR will provide a limited number of designated AV rooms with a screen, cart, and cords; however, presenters must bring their own projection, audio, and other AV equipment. So it is still necessary for program planners to know which presenters are planning to use AV equipment so they can be scheduled in appropriate rooms. It is imperative that we have all information concerning AV equipment on proposal forms. This allows us to plan “AV rooms” where sessions with similar needs can be scheduled. AV costs are based on a per room, per day basis. By blocking rooms, SECSOR can save substantially on conference costs. Thank you for your cooperation.

The copying of handouts is also the responsibility of the presenter.

All program participants must be preregistered for the meeting.

Suggestions for new program units or special speakers should be sent to SECSOR's executive director or to the vice president/program chair of the respective society (see list of regional officers below).

Consultation on Teaching Feminism/Womanism

The consultation invites proposals for 90-minute interactive workshops emphasizing practical aspects of womanist/feminist peda-

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Continued from p.35

(AAR) Women and Religion

Proposals on all themes will be considered, but the following themes are especially encouraged: 1) Woman and/as authority, or self-authorization; 2) Women writing theology; 3) Women and health (e.g., community health initiatives, mental health, disability, women healers, sexuality); 4) Women's communities; 5) A joint session with the Islam Section on gender and Islam. Submit proposals to co-chairs: Michelle Voss Roberts, Rhodes College, robertsm@rhodes.edu, and Emily Holmes, Emory University, eaholme@emory.edu.

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate students at institutions in the Southeast Region are invited to submit papers for the Undergraduate Session, sponsored by SECSOR. Open to all topics, the session will be composed of the papers considered the best submissions by an interdisciplinary committee. Students should submit completed papers that reflect original student research of an appropriate length for presentation (approximately 12 d.s. pages). No paper over 15 d.s. pages will be considered. One submission per student. Please include on the cover page contact information for the student and a faculty sponsor who has reviewed the submission. Electronic submission preferred. Send submissions by **December 15, 2007**, to chair Bernadette McNary-Zak, Rhodes College, mcnary_zak@rhodes.edu. Note: **Undergraduates may still submit proposals to other sections as well.**



Southwest

March 14–16, 2008
Marriott Hotel, DFW Airport
Irving, TX

The Southwest Commission on Religious Studies invites members of constituent organizations to submit paper proposals for the 2008 Regional Meeting. Proposals should be submitted to the person designated in each section. Please indicate if the proposal is being submitted to more than one section. Proposals may be submitted to more than one organization, but in order to accommodate as many people as possible, papers must not be read more than once during the meeting. Unless otherwise indicated, the deadline for paper proposal submission is **November 1, 2007**.

Arts, Literature, and Religion: In recent years scholars in religious studies and the humanities have examined works of popular culture that express spiritual experience and theological content, applying to that analysis the critical theories and tools of their discipline to elucidate the explicit and implicit religious

content of films, novels, television series, paintings, etc. Is this a valid scholarly exercise?

Papers are invited that explore this connection between popular spiritual expression and scholarly discourse: Are scholars of religious studies and/or the humanities qualified to examine popular culture? What are the aims of such examination? Is this just fun or legitimate scholarship? Who is the audience for such scholarly critiques? Is this scholarly attention to popular culture condescending or a manifestation of the postmodernist rejection of the distinction between high and low culture?

Presentations which address these questions in a creative way — illustration with reference to specific works, multidisciplinary collaboration, for instance — will receive preference in selection for panels comprising two or three papers, organized by approach, theme, or genre. Works in progress, experiments, or theoretical suggestions are also welcome. Please send proposals/abstracts that identify the topic and nature of the paper/presentation to Katherine Downey, The Hockaday School, kdowney@mail.hockaday.org or katherine-downey@sbcglobal.net.

History of Christianity: The History of Christianity section has an open call for papers. While all submissions in the field will be considered, papers in the following two areas are of special interest, as they reflect the 450th and 350th anniversaries of the accession of Elizabeth I and the death of Cromwell respectively. First, the hundred years from the time of Elizabeth to the end of the Commonwealth, a dynamic period in the history of Christianity; second, African-American Christianity, particularly the effect of the 1808 abolition of the U.S. slave trade and how its effects contrasted with Great Britain's 1807 abolitionist movement. Send proposals to Art A. Torpy, 3605 East Brookview DR, Waco, TX 76710, USA; (W) 254-235-4948; Art_Torpy@Baylor.edu.

Philosophy of Religion and Theology: Proposals are invited in all areas in philosophy of religion or in theology. Proposals involving multiple presentations or panel discussions (no more than three participants) focused upon a single topic, figure, or publication will be especially welcome (either have each panelist provide an abstract, which is preferred, or supply credentials of panelists). Proposals that feature interdisciplinary or interinstitutional participation, and that promise to stimulate productive discussion, will be favored. Proposals should be no more than two pages, with the title of presentation and some sense of the argument. Include a return address, contact number, and e-mail address. Please do not submit proposals as e-mail attachments; paste them into the body of the e-mail. Submit proposals to: Steve Oldham, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Box 8422 UMHB Station, 900 College ST, Belton, TX 76513, USA; (W) 254-295-4171; soldham@umhb.edu.

Ethics, Society and Cultural Analysis:

Proposals for papers or panel discussions are invited on any topic in ethics or cultural analysis, including: social ethics, environmental ethics, theological ethics, feminist/womanist ethics, philosophical ethics, the history of ethics, ethical issues in politics, sexual ethics, and the use of Scripture or tradition in ethics. Also of interest are reflections on capitalism and globalization, the use and impact of race-class-gender ethical analysis, constructive treatments of contemporary ethical issues, and pedagogical styles in ethics. Send proposals to: Melanie L. Harris, Texas Christian University, TCU Box 298100, Fort Worth, TX 76129, USA; m.l.harris@tcu.edu.

Comparative and Asian Studies in Religion:

The Comparative and Asian Studies in Religion section invites paper proposals on any topic concerning all aspects of Asian religious practice and thought, both historical and contemporary. However, papers in the areas of healing and medicine in Asian religions, Asian religions in America, women and Islam, and translations and interpretations in comparative perspective are of special interest. (Some overhead projectors and slide projectors may be available; if using a Power Point presentation, please make your own arrangement for a data projector). Please let me know if you have any AV needs. Proposals should not exceed 500 words and should include title, brief description, and an indication of the main arguments of the presentation (Word attachment via e-mail preferable). Send proposals to: Ivette M. Vargas, Religious Studies Department, Austin College, Sherman, Texas 75090, USA; (W) 903-813-2479; ivargas@austincollege.edu.

Theta Alpha Kappa: Student members of Theta Alpha Kappa chapters in the Southwest Region are invited to submit papers for presentation at the regional meeting. Open to all topics. One session will be devoted to the best papers. Submissions must come from the chapter advisor and include 1) the presenter's name and contact information; 2) the entire paper (preferred) or an abstract of the paper (acceptable); and 3) name of the school. Please include 4) the venue for which the paper was prepared (e.g., honors project, senior thesis, etc.). In the event that there are more proposals than can fit in one session, local chapter advisors may be asked to select the one best submission from their schools. Submit proposals electronically to: Nadia Lahutsky, Texas Christian University, n.lahutsky@tcu.edu.



Upper Midwest

(AAR/SBL)
March 28–29, 2008
Luther Seminary
St. Paul, MN

The program committee invites members of the societies to submit proposals for papers to be read at the regional meeting. To submit a proposal, please complete the web-based form at <http://umw-aarsbl.org/proposal.htm> by **December 15, 2007**. Proposals of undergraduate papers are made by members of the societies on behalf of their students by completing the form at <http://umw-aarsbl.org/>

undergrad.htm. The region only accepts proposals submitted through this website.

JOINT AAR/SBL SESSIONS:

Jewish Studies

The Jewish Studies section concerns itself with Jewish identity or identities. As such, submissions are welcome on all aspects of Jewish ontology and praxis as they relate to the questions of who is a Jew and what is Judaism. As elsewhere, this session's description remains broad to include interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological engagement.

Daniel Maoz, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON

Multicultural Perspectives on Theology, Religion, and Biblical Interpretation

This section seeks papers that address theology, religion, or the Bible from diverse racial, ethnic, and demographic perspectives in conversation with analysis of other forms of difference.

Priscilla Eppinger, Graceland University, Lamoni, Iowa

Teaching the Bible and Religion

This session welcomes proposals on topics that explore pedagogical issues specific to the teaching of the Bible or religion in undergraduate, graduate, or seminary settings. Analyses of educational theory, teaching practices, and the ways values affect teaching and learning are encouraged. In addition to papers, presentations may include opportunities to engage participants in activities or discussion.

Matthew Skinner, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Undergraduate Research

The Upper Midwest regional meeting includes undergraduate papers, reflecting the preponderance of undergraduate institutions in the region. Members nominate outstanding papers. Each institution is allowed up to two submissions.

Lori Brandt Hale, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

AAR SESSIONS:

Ethics

This section welcomes papers from both practical and analytical perspectives on the effect of faith in the lives of individuals (agent ethics) and the impact of religion on the common good (social ethics).

Mary Gaebler, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN

Historical Perspectives on Religion

This section seeks papers dealing with the social, cultural, intellectual, and institutional history of all religious traditions. Submissions using traditional historical or interdisciplinary methods are equally welcome.

Jim Kroemer, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Religions in North America

This section seeks proposals analyzing religious traditions, practices, and communities in North America from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives.

Murphy Pizza, UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

Religion and Science

This section welcomes papers that analyze the various ways that science and religion intersect; topics may include (but are not limited to) historical analyses, theological/religious reflection on the implications of scientific theories and methods, scientific theories of religion, and examinations of social and political forces that shape the intersection of science and religion in contemporary culture.

Greg Peterson, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

Religion and Ecology

Submissions are welcome on any aspect of religion and ecology study, including the role of politics, globalization, war, or legal decisions in the creation of and/or resistance to environmental degradation. Other topics within the field are encouraged.

Nancy Vitorin-Vangerud, United Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, MN

Religion, Art, and Culture

Submissions are welcome on all topics that examine the relationships between religion and cultural ideas, including but not limited to, music, literature, and all forms of art, as well as the ways in which religion shapes and is shaped by culture.

Larry Harwood, Viterbo University, La Crosse, WI

Religion, Gender, and Sexuality

Submissions are welcome on all topics that explore the intersections between religious ideas and constructions of gender and/or sexuality. This section consolidates the Women & Religion and Religion & Sexuality sections.

C. Neal Key, College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN

Philosophy of Religion Systematic Theology

This section invites papers that examine the interface between philosophy and religion, including both philosophical positions within religion and philosophy of religion more generally, as well as constructive theological work in dialogue with both historical traditions and aspects of the contemporary context.

Paul Capetz, United Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN

World Religions

Submissions are welcomed on any topics related to religious traditions other than Judaism and Christianity, or topics that involve comparative reflection on more than one religious tradition. This year, we particularly encourage papers that address pedagogical issues in world religions or comparative religion courses; approaches to ritual, sacred texts, and/or mysticism in Asian religions and/or Islam; and the relationship between globalization, politics, and world religions.

Mark Berkson, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN

Continued on p.38

Wabash Center

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www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu

AAR & SBL Annual Meeting Events

Friday - November 16

- Teaching Theology and Religion Editorial Board Meeting

Saturday - November 17

- Teaching Introductory Courses: A Wabash Center Workshop (9-3:30 p.m., Registration Required)
- Wabash Center Reception (GH-Ballroom CDE - 7-8:30 p.m.)

Sunday - November 18

- AAR and SBL Graduate Student Luncheon Meeting (Registration Required)
- Lunch Table Teaching Conversations (Registration Required)
- Annual Dinner for New Teachers (By Invitation)

Monday - November 19

- Open Consulting on Grant Writing (9-3:30 p.m., CC-28C)
- Wabash Center Religiously Affiliated College and University Faculty Lunch (Registration Required)

Registration Information

www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu

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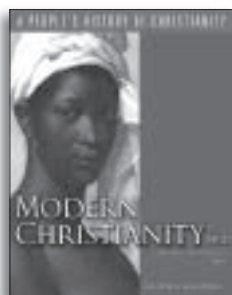
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Tenure-track position available August 22, 2008, in religion and culture with specialization in Bible and cultural critical theory. Major responsibility: teaching load of six courses per year (3/semester), undergraduate. Typical semester teaching duties include two sections of "Introduction to Religion and Culture," and one upper-level course in the candidate's area of expertise or competency. The departmental focus is Religion and Culture, especially the modern period. **Minimum qualifications:** earned doctorate in religious studies or comparable discipline with a specialty in Religion and Culture: Bible and Cultural Critical Theory by August 20, 2008; competency in one or more of the following — Bible and Film, Bible and Politics, Bible and Popular Culture, Art of Biblical Interpretation, Bible and Colonialism, Bible and Cultural Studies; depth and breadth of training in biblical and religious studies is expected along with the ability to do research; ability to teach "Introduction to the Bible." **Preferred qualifications:** experience mentoring undergraduate students; experience in diversity issues; dedication to teaching and research.

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, graduate school transcripts, three letters of recommendation writing sample, and brief statement of teaching philosophy and research interests to: Dr. Elizabeth Agnew, Search Committee Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Review of applications will begin September 15, 2007, for initial screening at November AAR. (www.bsu.edu/religiousstudies)

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies seeks to attract an active, culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber. Ball State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.

Continued from p.37

SBL SESSIONS:

Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

Exegetical studies of specific texts, theological or thematic examinations, and methodological proposals are welcome.

Paul Niskanen, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

New Testament

Exegetical studies of specific texts, theological or thematic examinations, and methodological proposals are welcome.

Jeannine Brown, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Daniel Scholz, Cardinal Stritch University, Wauwatosa, WI

Christian Apocrypha

Welcomes papers on extracanonical texts, as subjects of literary and philological investigation; as evidence for the history of religion, theology, and cult practice; and as documents of the sociosymbolic construction of religious communities.

Casey Elledge, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN

Religion in the Ancient World

General or specific studies of the practice of religion in the Levant from Canaanite through the Byzantine periods.

Glen Menzies, North Central University, Minneapolis, MN

Greek and Roman Religions

Proposals for papers on any aspect of the history of religions in Greek and Roman antiquity are welcome.

Philip Sellew, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Early Judaism and Judaic Studies

The Early Judaism and Judaic Studies section concerns itself with the literatures, histories, and cultures of ancient Judaism. The breadth of the section's description is intentional, an invitation to those in collateral fields to join in interdisciplinary interaction and scholarship regarding virtually any aspect of ancient Judaism.

Michael Wise, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN

Archaeology and Excavation Reports (sessions co-sponsored by ASOR)

All topics pertaining to the archaeology of the ancient Near East including excavation updates and summaries of work in progress.

Mark Schuler, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN

Multiple Submissions: (New policy) Scholars may submit only one paper proposal to one session of the Upper Midwest regional meeting. Subsequent submissions will be declined.

Questions and Other Topics: Questions about the upcoming meeting or the appropriate section for proposals should be directed to Deanna A. Thompson, Hamline University, 1536 Hewitt AVE, St. Paul, MN 55104, USA; dthompson@gw.hamline.edu. Proposals for papers or topics not listed in the call for papers are to be brought to her attention.

Notice to Graduate Students: The Upper Midwest region is pleased to announce the availability of travel scholarships in the amount of \$100 and \$250 for graduate students whose papers are accepted for presentation at the regional meeting. A limited number of these scholarships are available and they will be

awarded on a competitive basis. Details may be requested when making a paper proposal.



Western

March 29–31, 2008
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA

The program committee of the AAR/WR invites members of the AAR to consult the WECSOR (AAR/WR) website:

www2.sjsu.edu/wecsor/ for conference information and updates. You will be able to view the full text of the call for papers, as well as the conference theme, and you will find links to submit proposals to the various section chairs by **September 15, 2007**.

Please send proposals to specific sections listed on the WECSOR (AAR/WR) website. If you have questions about the program, please e-mail AAR/WR 2008 Program Chair Norris W. Palmer at npalmer@stmarys-ca.edu or WECSOR Secretary William Krieger at krieger@mail.uri.edu.

Theme: "Where the Mainstream Becomes a Trickle: The Complex Relation of Center & Periphery"

This year's theme is intended to foster exploration of the many ways in which center and periphery are related in all facets of the work we undertake: the fields we construct, the subjects we choose to study, the methodologies we employ, the ways in which we organize our professional guilds, societies, and journals, and so forth. Are some aspects of our studies truly central while others stand appropriately at the margins? What makes something central or peripheral to our interests and by what warrants do we justify such arrangements?

The AAR/WR program committee invites members of the AAR to submit proposals directly to the section chairs in their subareas of interest. Proposals for special sessions or panel discussions should be sent to Norris W. Palmer, 2008 AAR/WR Program Chair, npalmer@stmarys-ca.edu. Deadline for submissions: **September 15, 2007**.

AAR/WR Student Paper Competition: AAR/WR invites its graduate student members to submit their accepted papers to compete for first-, second-, and third-place awards. Awards will be given to the papers that present the most intellectually sophisticated and rigorous treatment of a topic related to the conference theme. All interested AAR/WR grad students who are attending the conference should send an e-copy of their finished papers to Jon R. Stone, President, AAR/WR at jrstone@csulb.edu. Deadline for submissions is no later than **January 15, 2008**.

Signs, Sighs & Significance

PENTECOSTAL & WESLEYAN EXPLORATIONS OF SCIENCE & RELIGION

March 13-15, 2008
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Cross



Smith

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Historical Studies	Ecumenical Studies
Science & Religion	Moral Theology
Pastoral Theology	Spiritual Formation

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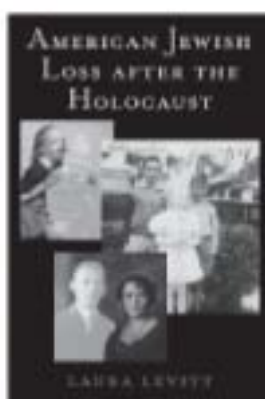
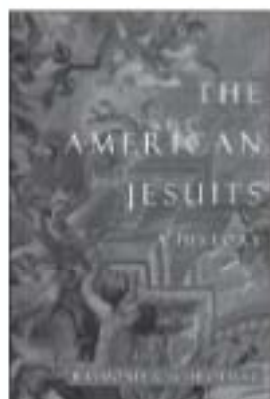
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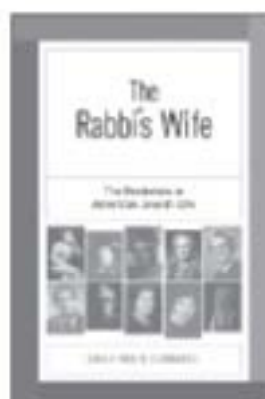
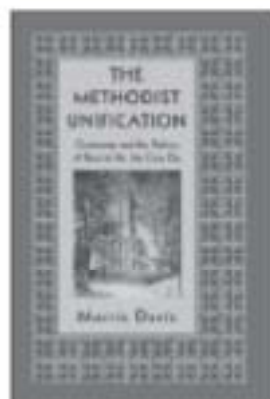
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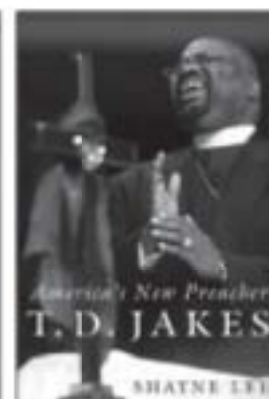
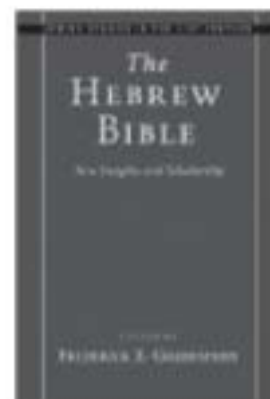
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