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FOCUS

on
Changes in Faculty
Demographics

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

October 2008

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2008

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<i>March</i>	December 15
<i>May</i>	February 15
<i>October</i>	June 15

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2008 Member Calendar

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

October

Religious Studies News October issue.

October 13. Annual Meeting Job Center pre-registration closes.

October 15. Submissions for the January 2009 issue of *Religious Studies News* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

October 30. Regionally Elected Directors meeting, Chicago, IL.

October 30. Executive Committee meeting, Chicago, IL.

October 31. Fall Board of Directors meeting, Chicago, IL.

October 31. Chairs Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

November

November 1. Research Grant Awards announced.

November 1–3. Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. The AAR Annual Meeting, the world's largest gathering of scholars of religion, anticipates some 5,000 registrants, 200 publishers, and 125 hiring departments.

November 3. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. See the *Program Book* for day and time.

November 14. New program unit proposals due.

December

Journal of the American Academy of Religion December issue.

December 12–13. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

December 15. Submissions for the March 2009 issue of *Religious Studies News* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2009 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 the Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/Meetings/regions.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. *In the Field* is a members-only 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/In_the_Field/submit1/asp.

Job Postings. A members-only publication, *Job Postings* lists job announcements in areas of interest to members. Issues are available online from the first through the last day of the month. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/jump/jobpostings. RSN

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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*), theological education (through the annual *Spotlight on Theological Education*), 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,

We hope that this issue of *Religious Studies News* finds you enjoying the beginning of another semester.

We are very happy to announce that during the summer the AAR received a \$400,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. This grant will allow us to offer four one-week summer seminars dealing with theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology. We encourage you to view the announcement of this initiative, which appears on the inside back cover of this issue.

This issue's Focus section deals with various changes in faculty demographics, the role of contingent faculty, faculty unions, and a survey of AAR student members.

Of particular note in this issue is the printed announcement of our two candidates for the position of Vice President. The Vice President sits on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and the Program Committee, as well as being in line to be confirmed as President-elect and eventually President. This is your chance to cast your vote for a position of responsibility.

Also of note is a major white paper from our Teagle project — "The Religion Major and Liberal Education."

This issue also has many suggestions of places of interest, things to do, and sessions to attend during the Annual Meeting in Chicago next month. In preparation for it, the executive office staff has been working over the last several months attending to the myriad of details required to produce the *Program Planner*, the *Program Book*, plenary speakers, panels, sessions, workshops, and book exhibitions, with the view toward making this an enriching experience for all our members. We hope to see you in the Windy City!

Carey J. Gifford
Executive Editor



Dear Readers:

Please note that incorrect data was printed in the May 2008 *Spotlight on Teaching* issue, page vi, in Nikky-Guninder Singh's biography. The list of publications attributed to her is not accurate. Her publications actually include the following books: *Cosmic Symphony: The Early and Later Poems of Bhai Vir Singh* (2008), *The Birth of the Khalsa: A Feminist Re-memory of Sikh Identity* (2005), *The Name of My Beloved: Verses of the Sikh Gurus* (1995), *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (1993), *Sikhism: World Religions* (1993), and *The Guru Granth Sahib: Its Physics and Metaphysics* (1981).



AAR Annual Meeting Events Chicago, Illinois

Friday - October 31

Workshop on Teaching College Introductory Courses (Advance registration required) M31-208
1:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Location: CHT-Lake Huron

Saturday - November 1

Lunch Table Teaching Conversations
(Co-Sponsored with the AAR Teaching Religion Section - Advance registration required) M1-122
11:45 am to 12:45 pm
Location: PH Salon 12

Special Topics Forum: "If I Knew Then What I Know Now": Lessons for the First Year Teaching
(Co-sponsored with the Graduate Student Committee) A1-302
4:00 pm to 6:30 pm
Location: CHT-Conference Room 4C

Wabash Center Reception M1-401
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Location: PH-Red Lacquer Room

Sunday - November 2

Wabash Center and Louisville Institute Grant Writing Consultation (Co-Sponsored with the Louisville Institute) M2-202
1:30 pm to 5:00 pm
Location: CHT-PDR 7

Wabash Center Dinner for New Teachers
(Advance invitation required) M2-400
7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Location: CHT-Conference Room 4I

Monday - November 3

Teaching the History of Christianity
(Co-Sponsored with the History of Christianity Section) A3-207
Location: CHT-Conference Room 4F

Accepting Applications 2009-2010 Workshops Deadline - January 15, 2009

Workshops for

- * Pre-Tenure Theological School Faculty
- * Pre-Tenure Religion Faculty
- * Pre-Tenure Theology and Religion Faculty of African Descent

Colloquy on

- * Writing the Scholarship of Teaching in Theology and Religion

See web site for details

Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

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AAR Updates the Centennial Strategic Plan

Jack Fitzmier, American Academy of Religion

IN 2003, THE AAR's "Centennial Strategic Plan, 2004–2009" set out our mission statement, identified a series of goals for our organization (e.g., to promote research and scholarship in the field, to facilitate members' professional development, to contribute to the public understanding of religion, to encourage diversity within the Academy), and listed a set of strategic objectives to which we were committed (e.g., attract new members, clarify the identity of the AAR vis-à-vis other scholarly societies in religion, hold stand-alone Annual Meetings, enhance the international dimension of the AAR, and prepare for our Centennial Celebration).

Recently the AAR staff, working with AAR members, the Executive Committee, and the Board, have sharpened the mission statement, prioritized goals, reiterated objectives, and put in place concrete implementation plans that can be measured and assessed. We want to remind all of our

members of our central commitments and strategic objectives. These spring from our original "Centennial Strategic Plan, 2004–2009," and were approved by our Board as the "Updated Strategic Plan" in April 2008.

Our Statement of Purpose and Values

The purpose of the American Academy of Religion derives from two principal goals:

- 1) To promote understanding of and critical reflection on religious traditions, issues, questions, values, texts, practices, and institutions. To this end, we foster communication and exchange among teachers and scholars and the public understanding of religion.
- 2) To serve the professional interests of AAR members as students, teachers, and scholars.

The AAR is committed to promoting equity, responsibility, and democratic accountability within the academic study of religion and in the work of the AAR itself.


Our Near Term Objectives (to be accomplished in eighteen to thirty-six months)

- Facilitate membership development by increasing membership, members' satisfaction, and member participation.
- Enhance our Annual Meeting with a successful meeting in Chicago that will set the stage for the Centennial kickoff in Montreal; to use our "stand alone" status to develop the AAR's unique program.
- Foster international exchanges by building global connections and by positioning the AAR to be a resource to our international partners.

- Reimagine our governance structures to better suit our current situation, and in this seek an ideal balance among competing values.
- Celebrate the AAR's 100th anniversary with a fundraising campaign and special programming and events.
- Enhance the public understanding of religion with new programming.
- Experiment with and deploy new technologies in scholarly communication.
- Enhance the work of the AAR's ten regions.

The AAR has a bright future. As we plan our Centennial Celebration, look for more news about progress on our Updated Strategic Plan.

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AAR Officer Elections

A Message from the AAR Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is pleased to place two excellent names on the ballot this year for Vice President. We are grateful to each of them for their willingness to serve in 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 J. Hillerbrand, Chair
 Nominations Committee

- 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 2008 Annual Meeting.

Please vote online at www.aarweb.org. Paper ballots are only sent to those without e-mail addresses on file or by special request (please call 404-727-3059). Vote by Monday, October 20, 2008, to exercise this important 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 2009 and President in 2010. 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.

RSN

Call for Nominations

The Nominations Committee will continue its practice of consultation during the Annual Meeting in Chicago to begin the process of selecting nominees for Vice President and Student Director in November 2009. 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."



See page 5 for
 candidates' statements

Candidates for Vice President

Janet Gyatso



Janet Gyatso is Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies at Harvard University. Previously she taught for thirteen years in the Religion Department at Amherst College; before that she was an adjunct faculty member at SUNY, Stony Brook. She received a BA in Religious Studies, an MA in Sanskrit, and a PhD in Buddhist Studies, all from the University of California at Berkeley. From 2000–2006, she was president of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. Gyatso co-founded the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Group at the AAR, and currently co-chairs the Buddhism Section. At

Harvard, she was the first chair of the Divinity School's Standing Committee for the Study of Women in Religion; she is presently Director of Graduate Studies in the Committee for the Study of Religion. She has also initiated an effort to make the teaching of Buddhist ministry part of the Divinity School's Master of Divinity curriculum. Her books are *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*; *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*; and *Women of Tibet*. Gyatso has just completed a research year supported by NEH and ACLS, during which she wrote a book on the relations between Buddhist and medical intellectual culture in sixteenth through eighteenth century Tibet.

Statement on the AAR

LOOK BACK ON twenty years of membership in the AAR with considerable gratitude. The proliferation of units in the organization has helped me to understand my own areas of specialty in a new light. At the same time, my involvement in service has taught me about the institutional and intellectual issues that we all share in the study of religion. Together, these two kinds of experience have shaped my values and commitments deeply. Next year, we will celebrate the centennial of the AAR. I expect there will be a renewed sense of commitment to a common future throughout this organization's very varied constituencies.

We all know that the AAR is at a crossroads in its history. I feel strongly that *as an organization* it is critical that we work concertedly to foster broad consultation. It is imperative to include every segment of the AAR membership in its operations and decision-making. One example where our ability to process members' input will be crucial is in assessing both the practicalities and professional benefits of our new commitment to meet separately from, but at the same time and place as, the SBL each year. Our interorganizational communication has been greatly facilitated by the introduction of OP3. Making its perfection a high priority will help us to realize more completely the increasing call for cooperation between units, and for innovative kinds of sessions at our meetings.

Our operational structures in turn affect the way that the AAR serves the *larger field* of religious studies, both professionally and intellectually. One outstanding example of the former has been the awareness it has brought to issues facing women in the profession, as I myself witnessed as a member of the Status of Women in the Profession Committee in its early phases. As we continue to recognize new ways that the study of religion functions across the educational spectrum, new challenges demand our initiative. One very critical

area where we should provide leadership now is by giving professional support to scholars in adjunct teaching positions. More broadly, the AAR needs to articulate effectively the contributions our field makes to the intellectual life of contemporary universities.

New intellectual directions at our meetings impact the creation and sharing of knowledge at the very heart of the study of religion. The recent focus on international scholars and topics is particularly encouraging; we should continue this long-term. As our field continues to diversify, both in terms of the demographics of its practitioners and the kinds of topics it takes up, we have new opportunities to expand our understanding of religion in all of its own diversity. I believe that a central aim of the AAR should be to foster those kinds of interchanges that challenge us to speak not only to fellow specialists, but also to those in disparate corners of religious studies, as well as in disciplines outside our field altogether. As a specialist in Buddhist studies, I know how hard that can be, but I also know how productive it can be even just to try.

The larger the sights of our intellectual horizons, the better prepared we are to contribute the fruits of our work in the *public arena*. One very promising way we can capitalize on the increasingly international purview of what we study is to expand our cooperation with organizations for the study of religion abroad. This will bring an even more diverse set of scholars into the conversation. It will also provide access to those diverse perspectives for our own development as scholars. Such engagement informs us in critical ways when we are called upon to exercise our public voice. We provide historical perspective, but perhaps even more so, we model how ideas are exchanged, and how alternate points of view can both be honored for their specificity and yet appreciated for what they can teach us all. RSN

Kwok Pui Lan



Kwok Pui Lan is William F. Cole Professor of Christian Theology and Spirituality at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has published extensively in the areas of Asian feminist theology, biblical hermeneutics, and postcolonial criticism. She received her PhD from Harvard University (1989) and an honorary PhD from Kampen Theological University, the Netherlands (2004). Kwok's books include *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*; *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*;

Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World; and *Chinese Women and Christianity, 1860–1927*. She is co-editor of *Empire and the Christian Tradition* and *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion and Theology*. From 2000 to 2005, she was co-editor of the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* and has recently been asked to edit a major reference work on *Women and Christianity in four volumes*. She joined the AAR in 1985, has served as co-chair of the *Women and Religion* Section, and is currently co-chair of the *Theology and Religious Reflection* Section. As chair of the *Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession*, she was on the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee.

Statement on the AAR

THIS IS AN EXCITING and challenging time to study religion. On the one hand, religion has been on the public radar screen when people discuss American politics and global issues. Books on religion have made the *New York Times* bestseller list for weeks. On the other hand, surveys show that religious literacy remains quite low among the American public. Comments on religious matters in the media are made by a select few and are often reduced to sound-bites.

At the same time, within the discipline of religion, numerous changes are happening because of the self-reflexivity of the field's practitioners. Scholars have raised questions about categories, such as "religion," "world religion," as well as other basic concepts, and they have contested those assumptions and methodologies developed out of a colonial ethos under the dominance of a Christian paradigm. As we face globalization, migration, diaspora, multiple religious belongings, and hybrid religious identities, many have become aware of the need to reimagine the field in a postmodern and postcolonial world. AAR provides a stimulating forum and meeting place for teachers and students with diverse assumptions about and approaches to religion to engage in dialogue and cultivate friendships that are crucial for intellectual work.

AAR needs to promote understanding of religion in the public square through engaging scholars in other disciplines and savvy communications with the media. The contributions of international participants are invaluable if we want to develop a field of study that is global in outlook, multicultural in scope, and plurivocal in deliberation. For example, at this year's Annual Meeting, we will have opportunities to hear South Asian scholars report on the study and teaching of religion in their various contexts.

The future development of the field depends on our ability to continue to attract talented and bright students.

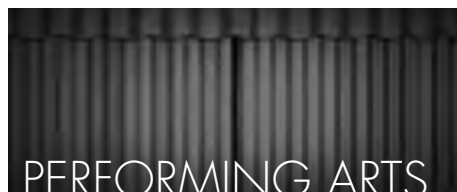
Graduates with a PhD in religion or theology need to be very creative in securing jobs and developing careers. AAR can play an active role promoting religious studies in higher education and in other professions. It is also important to reflect on the training and certification processes so that our graduates can be equipped for the changing needs of institutions of higher education and other career opportunities.

This fall at the AAR Annual Meeting in Chicago, we will meet as an independent gathering, separate from the SBL. The decision to hold independent Annual Meetings elicited conversations about AAR's identity and self-understanding, the relation of AAR to SBL and other scholarly societies, and the need to increase sessions to welcome new and diverse discourses and voices. In the past several years, we have seen a steady increase of new groups and consultations, wildcard sessions, shorter sessions on Sunday, and more forums for student members. Although the Board has decided to hold concurrent yet independent Annual Meetings with the SBL as soon as is feasible, I hope these important conversations and new practices will continue.

To remain a healthy and vibrant professional organization, AAR needs to periodically review its structure, decision-making processes, and overall programming. Feedback on Annual Meetings, regional meetings, international exchanges, professional services, and publications from members at different stages in their careers is crucial for AAR's continued success. Creative use of the AAR website can enhance communication about events, funding, publications, and resources, as well as facilitate networking of members who share similar interests. I have had the privilege of serving the AAR in various capacities, and my academic research and career development have been profoundly enriched by conversations and networking with AAR colleagues. RSN



Chicago is a bustling, energetic city that never stops no matter the season. It's a destination with world-class cultural attractions, diverse neighborhoods, and architectural wonders. Chicago is known for critically acclaimed restaurants, famous museums, first-rate shopping, adventurous nightlife, action-packed sporting events, and a thriving theater scene.



Chicago's theater industry pushes the envelope with cutting-edge performances on historic and state-of-the-art stages. The Chicago Theatre, Goodman, Bank of America Theatre, Cadillac Palace, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, and the Ford Center have made visiting downtown a must for theater lovers. Other distinctive stages, such as the Steppenwolf and The Second City, are woven among Chicago's various neighborhoods, solidifying the city's reputation as a world-class theater destination.



Once in Chicago, you never have to worry about finding a place to eat. Chicago features thousands of restaurants that offer culinary favorites to suit every taste, budget, and mood. Whether the preference is Chicago-style hot dogs or a burger, fried clams or smoked ostrich, pierogis or pizza, Chicago has it all. Soul food, Italian, Chinese, French, Japanese, Mexican, Asian, or Spanish . . . Chicago offers a virtual United Nations of eating choices. Ethnic neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Greektown, West Rogers Park, and Pilsen are among those offering tempting tastes from around the world. Chicago is also proud to be the home of award-winning restaurants and world-renowned chefs, as well as home to deep-dish pizza — one of Chicago's most important contributions to twentieth century culture.



Chicago is renowned for its diverse collection of museums that explore a variety of subjects, including history, art, African-American culture, astronomy, natural history, and much more. Those visiting Chicago should plan on spending time at Chicago's Museum Campus. This scenic park conveniently joins the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum, the Shedd Aquarium/Oceanarium, and the Field Museum of Natural History with easy access to all three locations.

The Shedd Aquarium offers one of the world's largest arrays of sea life, with more than 8,000 aquatic mammals, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and fish. After exploring the oceans, attendees can gaze up at the heavens in the nearby Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum. The Field Museum offers exciting displays of mummies, Egyptian tombs, Native American artifacts, and dinosaur skeletons. It is also the permanent home of Sue, the world's largest, most complete, and most famous Tyrannosaurus rex.

Of Special Interest in Chicago:

The Chicago History Museum is offering free admission to all AAR Annual Meeting attendees who show their meeting badge at the main visitor's desk. The admission includes the permanent exhibits and the Catholic Chicago exhibition. The first in a series of exhibitions to explore the contributions of the city's religious communities, the Catholic Chicago exhibition illustrates how the experience of being Catholic in Chicago has transformed over time. Examined through a historical context are several themes — the parish, education, worship, social action, and community celebrations — that will introduce and reveal the lives of Catholics, past and present. The Chicago History Museum is located at 1601 North Clark Street. Contact 312-642-4600 or www.chicagohistory.org for more information. Public transit directions are available on the museum's website.

The Chicago Humanities Festival (www.chfestival.org/index2.cfm) is an annual event that celebrates the arts, drama, literature, and history through a series of lectures and performances each fall. The nineteenth annual Chicago Humanities Festival's theme is "Thinking Big." Programming takes a broad and interdisciplinary look at human works, concepts, ideas, and yearnings of large scope and high ambition. Panels, film screenings, theater performances, and more will be occurring on the same days as with the AAR Annual Meeting. Tickets are \$5. Please visit www.chfestival.org for more information.

Other Chicago museums include the Chicago History Museum (the city's oldest cultural institution), McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum (Chicago's newest museum), the Museum of Science and Industry, the DuSable Museum of African-American History, the Art Institute of Chicago (one of the world's leading art museums), the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Photography.



Right down the street from the Annual Meeting hotels, Chicago's Millennium Park offers 24.5 acres of green space. It contains an outdoor performing arts pavilion, indoor year-round theater, restaurant, ice-skating rink, contemporary garden, public art, fountains, promenade area for special events, landscaped walkways, and green spaces.

Navy Pier is the city's lakefront playground and the state's most popular attraction, offering visitors a unique blend of family-oriented activities. It boasts the 150-foot-high Ferris wheel, a musical carousel, the Chicago Children's Museum, Wave Swinger ride in Pier Park, the 3-D Time Escape ride, a variety of restaurants, and the famed Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

The Chicago Cultural Center is described as a “neoclassical masterpiece” that features two art-glass domes and glittering mosaic walls. The many galleries in the Cultural Center exhibit contemporary art from around town and works from around the world.

Other Chicago attractions not to miss include Buckingham Fountain at Grant Park, the Hancock Observatory, and the Sears Tower Skydeck.



A visit to Chicago wouldn't be complete without a shopping spree. Shopping in Chicago first began on State Street with the opening of the original Marshall Field's Department store in 1852. Today, the former Field's flagship store is known as Macy's on State Street, and shoppers will find an outstanding selection of men's and women's apparel, an extensive housewares department, several fine restaurants, a food court, and a visitor center.

A shopping spree must also include a visit to the famed “Magnificent Mile,” which runs along Michigan Avenue from Oak Street to the Chicago River. Amidst department store giants such as Marshall Field's, Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bloomingdale's are hundreds of specialty stores and international boutiques. Oak Street, just west of Michigan Avenue, is a boutique shopper's dream.


An abundance of shopping can also be found at The Shops at North Bridge, Water Tower Place, the 900 North Michigan Avenue Shops, Chicago Place Shopping Center, Navy Pier, and “The Shops at the Mart,” located at Chicago's Merchandise Mart. Chicago neighborhoods such as Bucktown, Lakeview, and Lincoln Park also offer unique and diverse shopping opportunities.



Visitors from around the world come to Chicago, the birthplace of the modern building, to admire its architectural marvels. From historic landmark buildings to contemporary technological masterpieces, Chicago is built with the unique and innovative designs that have shaped American architecture. The city is a living museum of architecture thanks to the work of such greats as Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Helmut Jahn, and hundreds of others.

Chicago is home to the world's first skyscraper, designed by William Le Baron Jenney in 1885. Although the Home Insurance Building no longer stands, today's Chicago is also home to three of the world's ten tallest buildings, including the Sears Tower, which opened in 1974. Other city landmark buildings include the Chicago Cultural Center — completed in 1897 in the Beaux Arts style — Adler and Sullivan's 1889 Auditorium Building, and the Art Deco-era Chicago Board of Trade Building, designed by Holabird and Root in 1929.

To learn more about Chicago's acclaimed architecture, the Chicago Architecture Foundation offers more than fifty walking or bus tours, conducted by knowledgeable guides. An architectural boat cruise on the Chicago River, as well as self-guided and taped walking tours are also available. The architectural boat tour has been highly recommended by Chicago natives and tourists alike as one of the best Chicago tours around. For more information on this tour, visit www.architecture.org/tours.aspx.

Visit the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau's website at www.choosechicago.com for more great ideas of things to do in Chicago. 

Annual Meeting Performances and Exhibitions

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



Wicker Park Grace's Stations of the Cross (A2-407)


Sunday, 8:30–9:30 PM

Across time and cultures, artists have wrestled with spiritual meaning, negotiating the

intersection of tradition and lived experience. Members of Wicker Park Grace, an alternative congregation in Chicago's arts-focused Wicker Park neighborhood, have created Stations of the Cross, imbuing an ancient form with modern spirituality. This session will showcase the Stations and feature comments from some of the artists.

Salem Baptist Church's Gospel Choir (A2-408)

Sunday, 8:30–9:30 PM

From Thomas Dorsey to the Staple Singers, Chicago has long been a capital for gospel music. That music has rich roots in the city's churches and popular culture. A choir from Salem Baptist Church, one of the city's biggest and fastest-growing congregations, will offer a sampling of gospel's vitality and diversity. 

Reel Religion

Please see the *Annual Meeting Program Book* for more information.

Haro Hara! Pilgrimage to Kataragama, Sri Lanka (A31-106)

Friday, 9:00–11:00 PM

This film chronicles the journey of a group of pilgrims down the war-torn east coast of Sri Lanka. The film documents the pilgrims as they meet with holy men, perform never before recorded religious acts, and proceed peacefully through areas plagued with conflict, on their way to Kataragama, the site of a multireligious festival in Southeast Sri Lanka.

A Son's Sacrifice, Ichthus, and Mouseholes (A31-107)

Friday, 9:00–11:00 PM

A Son's Sacrifice follows the journey of Imran, a young American Muslim who struggles to take over his father's halal slaughterhouse in New York City. On the holiest day of the year, Imran must lead a sacrifice that will define him as a Muslim, an American, and a son.

In order to unlock the secret of an ancient code of *Ichthus*, the protagonist Jonas finds himself searching for clues in his childhood haunt, a humble fishing village in the Philippines, casting his net into the hidden regions of a parable.

Mouseholes treats the dying and death of filmmaker Helen Hill's beloved grandfather, followed by his envisioned resurrection to join predeceased aunts at a tea party in heaven, and finally by the concluding rumination on the possibility of opening a channel of communication with him metaphorically through enabling mouseholes.

A Purple State of Mind (A1-403)

Saturday, 9:00–10:30 PM

In this film, Christian Craig Detweiler and skeptic John Marks are reunited for several conversations on religion and politics, to reflect on the cultural and religious divide in the United States (“red” versus “blue”), and the possibilities of moving beyond the impasse.

Nobody Knows: The Untold Story of Black Mormons (A1-404)

Saturday, 9:00–10:30 PM

This film addresses the history of black Mormons, their little-known legacy, the effects of the Civil Rights movement, and how it was a pivotal force in the church's releasing its restrictions on the priesthood for blacks.

On the Road with the Red God (A2-405)

Sunday, 8:30–10:00 PM

Every 12 years, impassioned devotees pull a 65-foot-tall unwieldy chariot in the Kathmandu Valley, its rider an enigmatic god worshipped by Hindus and Buddhists, on a month-long journey preceded by abundant ritual and animal sacrifice. But the festival is an arena of gritty reality, where participants vie for everything from a share of ritual meat to status and proximity to the god.

Karunamayudu (A2-406)

Sunday, 8:30–10:30 PM

Karunamayudu (Telugu for “Man of Compassion”), also known by its Hindi title, *Daya Sagar*, may well be India's most widely recognized and commercially produced Jesus film. Like many Indian films, it reflects without slavishly copying its Western predecessors, blending biblical narrative with local conventions to present a cinematic Christ for India.


Madarrpa Funeral at Gurka'wuy (A3-400)

Monday, 8:00–10:00 PM

This film gives a sensual account of how the Aborigines handle the emotional complexities of death and mourning in their mortuary rituals. Finely depicting the cycle of songs and rituals that are performed at a child's burial, the film visualizes the subtle and complex symbolic meanings that the mortuary rituals have for members of the Yolngu.

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter . . . And Spring (A3-401)

Monday, 8:00–10:00 PM

This Korean film portrays the story of a Buddhist monastery, which floats on a lake in a pristine forest, and the monk who passes through the seasons of his life from childhood to old age. The passage of time brings slow learning and understanding through death, suffering, and redemption, and ultimately shows that the cycle goes on. 

Sessions with a Focus on South Asia and South Asian Scholarship

THE INTERNATIONAL Focus of the 2008 Annual Meeting is on South Asia and South Asian scholarship. The AAR has invited thirteen prominent South Asian scholars as our special guests, and their participation is noted below.

A31-106

Haro Hara! Pilgrimage to Kataragama, Sri Lanka
Friday, 9:00-11:00 PM

A1-103

Globalization and South Asian Religions: Redefining the Discourse beyond Diaspora
Saturday, 9:00-11:30 AM

A1-202

The New Nun's Movement in Buddhism: Challenges, Debates, and Promise
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

Featuring Premakumara De Silva, University of Colombo

A1-206

The Divine Child in South Asian Religious Traditions
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A1-207

Competing Social Imaginaries in South Asian Islam: Perspectives on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Reformist and Revivalist Movements
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A1-209

Hinduism in Africa: Adaptation and Integration
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A1-215

Moral Anthropology in South Asia
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A1-230

Contemporary 'Ulama: Approaches to Reform, Critique, and Dialogue
Saturday, 1:00-3:30 PM

Featuring Muhammad Khalid Masud, Council of Islamic Ideology

A1-306

Women's Leadership and Monastic Organization in Theravada Buddhism
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

A1-309

Dissent, Tradition, and Rights: Religion, Modernity, and Planetary Life in South Asia
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

Featuring:
Vandana Shiva, Navdanya Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology

Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo

Ashis Nandy, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

A1-329

Heterogeneous Tantras in Practice: A Simulated Engagement of the Scholarship of David G. White
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

A1-336

Framing Issues in Sikh Studies
Saturday, 4:00-6:30 PM

A2-107

Possession among Christians in India: Issues of Authenticity, Authority, and Identity
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM

A2-121

Grammar and the Gods: When Metaphysics and Language Rules Collide
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM

A2-128

The Power of Place
Sunday, 9:00-11:30 AM

A2-200

Art, Aesthetics, and Performance
Sunday, 1:00-2:30 PM

Featuring:
Ira Bhaskar, Jawaharlal Nehru University
M. A. Jayashree, University of Bangalore

A2-208

Buddhism in the South Asian Context: What Can Newars Teach Buddhist Studies?
Sunday, 1:00-2:30 PM

A2-217

Indo-Judaic Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Current Trends and Future Trajectories in the Comparative Study of Hinduisms and Judaisms
Sunday, 1:00-2:30 PM

A2-221

Categories and Trajectories of Modernity in the Late-Colonial Religious Milieu
Sunday, 1:00-2:30 PM

A2-251

Religion and the Environment in South Asia: A Discussion with Vandana Shiva
Sunday, 3:00-4:30 PM

Featuring Vandana Shiva, Navdanya Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Ecology

A2-259

The Study of Religion in South Asia: The State of the Field
Sunday, 3:00-4:30 PM

Featuring:
Uma Chakravarti, University of Delhi

Muhammad Khalid Masud, Council of Islamic Ideology

Golam Dastagir, Jahangirnagar University

Premakumara De Silva, University of Colombo

M. A. Jayashree, University of Bangalore

K. Srinivasan, Vivekananda College

A2-280

Categories and Emotion in the Study of Tantra
Sunday, 3:00-4:30 PM

A2-300

Comparative Theology and the Interreligious/International Encounter
Sunday, 5:00-6:30 PM

Featuring:
Dominique-Sila Khan, Institute of Rajasthan Studies

K. Srinivasan, Vivekananda College

A2-313

Complicating Indian Christian Identities Amid Competition, Conflict, and Colonialism
Sunday, 5:00-6:30 PM

A2-320

Colonial Secularism, Religious Fundamentalism, and the Codification of Law in South Asia
Sunday, 5:00-6:30 PM

A2-328

Modern Buddhist Yoga: Ancient Traditions in the Contemporary Global Context
Sunday, 5:00-6:30 PM

A2-405

On the Road with the Red God
Sunday, 8:30-10:00 PM

A2-406

Karunamayudu
Sunday, 8:30-10:00 PM

A3-100

The Influence of Religion on Women's Legal Rights in India
Monday, 9:00-11:30 AM

Featuring:
Flavia Agnes, Majlis Centre for Rights Discourse

Monmayee Basu, University of Delhi

Uma Chakravarti, Delhi University

A3-108

Islam as Discourse: Identity Construction in Medieval and Modern South Asia
Monday, 9:00-11:30 AM

Featuring Dominique-Sila Khan, Institute of Rajasthan Studies

A3-128

Body and Medicine in Indian and Chinese Religions
Monday, 9:00-11:30 AM

A3-211

The Role of Miracles and the Miraculous in Creating and Sustaining South Asian Religions
Monday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A3-223

New Religions in South Asia
Monday, 1:00-3:30 PM

A3-312

Caste, Dalits, and Christianity
Monday, 4:00-6:30 PM

A3-325

Sufism and Society in South Asia
Monday, 4:00-6:30 PM

A3-329

South Asian Religions, Health, and Medical Issues
Monday, 4:00-6:30 PM

Kudos to Co-sponsors

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

Lafayette College

Muhammad Khalid Masud, Council of Islamic Ideology

Missouri State University

Premakumara De Silva, University of Colombo



Future AAR Annual Meeting Dates and Sites

- 2008 — Chicago, IL
November 1-3
- 2009 — Montréal, QC, Canada
November 7-10
- 2010 — Atlanta, GA
October 30-November 2
- 2011 — San Francisco, CA
November 19-22
- 2012 — Atlanta, GA
November 3-6

Annual Meeting Leadership Workshop

Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know

KRISTA TIPPETT, the host of Minnesota Public Radio's popular *Speaking of Faith* program, will open the Academic Relations Committee's annual Leadership Workshop during the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Chicago on Friday, October 31.

The daylong workshop, "Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know," will explore the common goal of religion courses: that all students learn to think seriously about the ways religion impacts public life and their role as citizens.

"Even though this objective is not always articulated and may be submersed in more specialized concerns, it is always an underlying goal," said Fred Glennon, chair of the Academic Relations Committee.

In this workshop we will investigate what this goal entails and then invite participants to consider how the curriculum they oversee addresses (or could address) it; how the mission and culture of their institution shapes this objective; and how it might contribute to assessment of their program's effectiveness.

"Exchange of experience and ideas will be central to the day's work," Glennon said.

The interactive workshop will feature several speakers, panelists, and breakout sessions. Following the opening introduction by Chester Gillis, Georgetown University, Tippet will open with a discussion of "Educating Students for Public Life."

"We are fortunate to have Krista Tippet address this topic," said Kyle Cole, AAR director of professional programs. "She brings a front-line perspective to the topic of religion and public life."

After questions and answers, a panel discussion will follow, addressing "How does the goal that all students learn to think seriously about the ways religion impacts public life and their role as citizens interact with the mission and culture of your institution?" The concluding plenary will concentrate on a principal question: "How should this goal be assessed and how do you assess it?"

The workshop will expand a specific area addressed by the Teagle Foundation-funded "The Religion Major and Liberal Education," which guided the theme of last year's Leadership Workshop. "Assessment issues and student learning have been highly cited as potential workshop topics by past workshop participants," Glennon said. "I'm very happy for the Academy that we can explore these areas and offer such a rich workshop topic."

Colleagues in your institution, such as chairs, other faculty members, faculty being developed to assume leadership responsibilities, and deans, may be interested in attending this workshop. Chairs may want to bring a team of faculty or send a designated faculty person.

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants, and last year's workshop filled up long before the Annual Meeting. The cost for the workshop is \$100, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a book on the topic.

The topics for past workshops have been:

- 2007 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty – Honest Conversations
Leadership Workshop – The Religion Major and Liberal Education
 - 2006 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Personnel Issues: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
 - 2005 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Enlarging the Pie: Strategies for Managing and Growing Departmental Resources
 - 2004 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Being a Chair in Today's Consumer Culture: Navigating in the Knowledge Factory
 - 2003 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair
 - Summer 2003**
Chairs Workshop – The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building and Sustaining Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands
 - 2002 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department
 - 2001 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Evaluating and Advancing Teaching in the Religious Studies Department
 - 2000 Annual Meeting**
Chairs Workshop – Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department
- We look forward to seeing you in Chicago!
- The Academic Relations Committee: Fred Glennon, chair, Chester Gillis, L. DeAne Lagerquist, Steve Young, Rosetta Ross, Edwin David Aponte, and Kyle Cole, staff liaison.



TAKING RELIGION(S) SERIOUSLY: WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

Featuring Krista Tippet, host of *Speaking of Faith*

Friday, October 31, 2008 Chicago, IL

The goal of the workshop is that all students learn to think seriously about the ways religion(s) impacts public life and their role as citizens. This may be a common goal of religion courses offered at all sorts of institutions; however, this objective is not always articulated and may be submersed in more specialized concerns. In this workshop we

explore what this goal entails and then invite chairs to consider how the curriculum they oversee addresses (or could address) it, how the mission and culture of their institution shape this objective, and how it might contribute to assessment of their program's effectiveness. Exchange of experience and ideas will be central to the day's work.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Legal issues, conflicts, and life cycles will be addressed for individual, department, and administration concerns.

9–9:15	Introductions	10:15–11	Panel discussion: How does this interact with the mission and culture of your institution?	1:15–2	Assessment of your institution: Addressing the question — How should this be assessed and how do you assess it?
9:15–9:45	Educating students for public life	11–12	Break-out session	2–3:30	Plenary session on objectives and assessments
9:45–10:15	Break-out session	12–1:15	LUNCH		

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.

TO REGISTER

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

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 \$100.00.

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)	

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

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

**Register online** (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/meetings/annual_meeting/current_meeting

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

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

A Conversation with Vasu Narayanan Concerning Religious Studies in South Asia



Photo taken by John Freeman, University of Florida

Vasudha Narayanan is Distinguished Professor of Religion and Director, Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra), at the University of Florida. She is a past president of the AAR (2001–2002).

RSN: Dr. Narayanan, thank you for taking the time for this interview. How would you describe the state of religious studies in South Asia?

Narayanan: Many areas and topics that AAR members study in departments of religious studies are investigated in other departments in India. If one were to look at these studies in Indian universities, or see the avalanche of paper proposals submitted whenever there is a conference on “religion”

in India, it would appear that the study of religion is very strong in Indian universities. For instance, when the call for papers for the International Conference on Religions and Cultures in Indic Civilization (held in December 2003 and 2005) went out, there were literally hundreds of proposals. More recently, scholars from Belgium have organized conferences on “Rethinking Religion in India.” And almost every week, we get book catalogs from India with books on religion written by scholars in Indian universities.

If one considers a few indicators like these, one may be tempted to say that religious studies is thriving. However, for reasons that we will discuss soon, these studies are done by scholars in the context of other fields and there is no separate department of “religion.” And so, it would be difficult to say that religious studies is flourishing when one could argue that it is not even alive; indeed, does not even exist formally in universities. One should also keep in mind the enormous strides made by other academic fields and disciplines in the last two decades in India. We all know that India has been at the cutting edge of information technologies. These areas have boomed — as have the areas of commerce, management, etc. And so, while one may say that a great deal has been going on in the last few years in topics connected with the study of religion, we have to put it all in perspective.

RSN: Yes, we’ve noticed that the study of religion in South Asia many times is done in other fields such as law, philosophy, gender studies, and social sciences. Please explain further.

Narayanan: Indeed, yes, as you will see from the affiliations of the visiting scholars from South Asia this year, almost every department except religion is represented. There are many reasons given as to why religion is not a field of study in India, but the reasons themselves have been contested. A historical reason that is often stated is that when the British created the university systems in undivided India (that is, what is now India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) around 1857, they modeled them after the curriculum at the University of London (Certainly this is true in structure — for instance, there are several undergraduate colleges around a city, all affiliated with a university system). Since there was no formal religious studies department there, none was started in India. However, many others believe that in the post-Independence period, the term “religion” did not have a positive connotation; in popular imagination, the word became identified with “communalism” or tensions between religious traditions. It is probably also true that the study of religion did not figure high in the priorities of the political leadership — under Prime Minister Nehru — in the 1950s.

Having said that, one could argue that there have been millennia of studies in and about religion in India. The understanding of religion is certainly different in many cultures and in the subcontinent, religion, culture, business, performing arts — all seem to combine into a seamless whole, depending on one’s perspective. The term “religion,” therefore, becomes a catch-all for many subjects there (as it does, sometimes, in our academy!) but in some circles is identified with belief structures and theology (which, in many universities is “Indian philosophy”). Some scholars now think that “religion” in India is still seen with Western templates and they are struggling against it; others have adopted those templates and exult in them. Bottom line — the diversity of scholarship is as diverse as the Indian population itself.

that the university would offer “MA in Comparative Religion and Philosophy with specialization in Saiva Siddhanta Studies, MA in Comparative religion and Philosophy with specialization in Christian Studies/Jainology Studies, MA in Islamic Studies.”

There is some unease with what the term “religion” or “Hinduism” covers — many Hindus may not have a clear understanding of the belief structures of the sectarian schools or their philosophies; but they would have a ritual and embodied understanding of their heritage, and feel and act their ways through their traditions. And so, when the Vice Chancellor of Madras proposed — this was during the post-centennial celebrations of the university — a study of the religious traditions of India, many chairs were endowed and new programs were started. They have tended to focus on specific sectarian schools such as “Vaishnavism” (1984), “Saiva Siddhanta” (1983), or religious traditions such as “Islamic Studies” (2002), “Christian Studies” (1993), or “Jainology” (1983). But there is no department of Hindu studies there. Many of these, like “Christian Studies,” began as endowment chairs (in this case, endowed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Madras/Mylapore) fairly early (1993) and then became full-fledged departments after a major reorganization in 2003. Several of these departments now come under the umbrella “School of Philosophy and Religious Thought.”

Another area where there has been a sharp focus in the last decade is the drawing of lines between what is called the “secularist” or “pseudo-secularist” approach and the “nationalist” positions, at least in rhetoric. A good many scholars are right in the middle, but one frequently hears voices from the ends of the spectrum. Also, in some universities at least, there are debates on “religion” and “Hinduism” being colonial constructs.

RSN: It seems that now would be a good time to expand AAR relationships with scholars in South Asia. The AAR could encourage scholarly exchanges, attendance at conferences in the region, and field research. Would you agree with that? Why or why not?

Narayanan: Oh, absolutely. I think we should all go to conferences in other countries and do field work there if our budgets permit it. We get new perspectives on how others do religious studies, how they imagine the field, and the historical contexts of academia in their culture. It could be the most enriching part of one’s scholarly career. The depth would add a new dimension on how we transmit knowledge of “religious studies” in classrooms. Just a study of India would give us a notion of what they mean by “philosophy,” the ways they “religion” (I’m using it awkwardly as a verb here!), and the ways they understand the academic study of this field. And our South Asian guests this fall, in turn, would understand the complexity and diversity of how religion is studied in a secular country like the United States. I believe it was Frederick Streng who once quoted an African proverb: “Those who never visit, think their mother is the only cook.” Just a step here to go beyond “curry in a hurry” — there is a whole world of country cooking and haute cuisine out there — both for our guests to try in Chicago, and for us to try in India.

RSN



University of Victoria

Centre for Studies in Religion & Society

Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

2009/10 Visiting Research Fellowships

The CSRS invites applications for visiting fellowship appointments at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia.

Topics: Scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both contemporary and historical. Applications from all disciplinary backgrounds are welcome.

Eligibility: Canadian and international scholars; emeritus scholars; new scholars; scholars on sabbatical leave from their regular academic appointments.

Value: Private office space with computer and wireless Internet on the scenic UVic campus; library privileges; a congenial retreat-like setting; enhanced opportunities for research networking and stimulating scholarly exchange.

Deadline: 31 January 2009

Applications: Please submit two (2) copies of the project summary, CV, two letters of reference, and the names and addresses of two additional referees to Dr. Paul Bramadat, Director, Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2, Canada.

Further information: www.csr.s.uvic.ca

“There are many reasons given as to why religion is not a field of study in India, but the reasons themselves have been contested.”

RSN: Have there been any changes in religious studies there since you came to the United States?

Narayanan: Yes — I came to the United States in 1975, and at that time there was very little awareness of “religious studies” in India. A handful of universities now offer courses in “comparative religion.” The University of Madras, for instance, now offers graduate degrees in this area. The call for applications last April, for instance, said

Especially for Students

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
2008 ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAMMING
CHICAGO, IL

Saturday, November 1

A1-138
ATLA Graduate Student Luncheon: Careers Beyond the Academy
11:45 AM-1:00 PM

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and American Theological Library Association

RSVP at www.aarweb.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/RSVP/ATLA/main.asp

A1-302
Special Topics Forum

"If I Knew Then What I Know Now": Lessons for the First Year of Teaching

3:30-4:00 PM

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

A1-407
Student Members' Party

9:30-11:00 PM

Don't forget your free drink ticket!

Sunday, November 2

A2-137
Mentoring Luncheon
11:30 AM-1:00 PM

Sponsored by the Status of Women in the Profession Committee and the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee

This luncheon is by reservation only. Details are online at www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/Program_Book

A2-202
Special Topics Forum

1:00-2:30 PM

"Bringing Sexy Back": A Town Hall Meeting for the AAR Student Community

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee

CHECK OUT THE AAR 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 refreshing beverage and conversation. The Lounge will be located in the Chicago Hilton Towers, Private Dining Room (PDR) 7.

*All event locations are available in the online *Program Book* at www.aarweb.org and onsite in the *Program Book*.

Absentee and Early Voting

THE AAR RECOGNIZES that its Annual Meeting falls this year on the weekend before the United States Election Day on Tuesday, November 4. As this election is an important one for our country, and so many AAR members are politically involved, we want to minimize any conflict between attending the Annual Meeting and performing our civic duties. As such, we are not holding sessions on Tuesday, November 4. We do however recognize that many of our members may be staying in Chicago on the night of November 3 and returning home on Election Day. Given the uncertainties of travel, we would encourage those members to investigate the possibilities of absentee voting and early voting, which are options in many states. To aid in this endeavor, below is a comprehensive list of the websites for secretaries of state and election boards in each U.S. state and the District of Columbia.

Alabama www.sos.state.al.us	Kentucky www.sos.ky.gov	North Dakota www.nd.gov/sos
Alaska www.elections.state.ak.us	Louisiana www.sos.louisiana.gov	Ohio www.sos.state.oh.us
Arkansas www.sos.arkansas.gov	Maine www.state.me.us/sos	Oklahoma www.ok.gov/~elections
Arizona www.azsos.gov	Maryland www.elections.state.md.us	Oregon www.sos.state.or.us
California www.sos.ca.gov	Massachusetts www.sec.state.ma.us/index.htm	Pennsylvania www.dos.state.pa.us/dos/site
Colorado www.elections.colorado.gov	Michigan www.michigan.gov/sos	Rhode Island www.sec.state.ri.us
Connecticut www.sots.ct.gov/sots/site	Minnesota www.sos.state.mn.us/home/index.asp	South Carolina www.scvotes.org
Delaware elections.delaware.gov	Mississippi www.sos.state.ms.us	South Dakota www.sdsos.gov
District of Columbia www.dcboee.org	Missouri www.sos.mo.gov	Tennessee www.tennessee.gov/sos/index.htm
Florida www.dos.state.fl.us	Montana sos.mt.gov	Texas www.sos.state.tx.us
Georgia sos.georgia.gov	Nebraska www.sos.state.ne.us/dyindex.html	Utah elections.utah.gov
Hawai'i hawaii.gov/elections	Nevada sos.state.nv.us	Vermont www.sec.state.vt.us
Idaho www.idsos.state.id.us	New Hampshire www.sos.nh.gov	Virginia www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms
Illinois www.elections.state.il.us	New Jersey www.state.nj.us/state/elections	Washington www.secstate.wa.gov
Indiana www.in.gov/sos/index.html	New Mexico www.sos.state.nm.us	West Virginia www.wvsos.com
Iowa www.sos.state.ia.us	New York www.elections.state.ny.us	Wisconsin elections.state.wi.us
Kansas www.kssos.org	North Carolina www.sboe.state.nc.us	Wyoming sos.wy.state.wy.us

Don't Let Time Get Away from You!

Register for the AAR Annual Meeting Job Center by October 13. The Job Center is an efficient way for candidates and employers to communicate and participate in job interviews. Those who register by the deadline will receive the full benefits of the Center.

EMPLOYERS:

Unlimited use of the interview hall

Placement of job advertisement in the Annual Meeting edition of *Job Postings*

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 Job Center, see www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter.

Get your passport for 2009 at the 2008 Annual Meeting!

PLANNING TO COME to the 2009 AAR Meeting in Montréal? As of February 2008, all United States citizens must have a valid passport in order to travel to Canada. A passport station, hosted by the United States Post Office, Chicago District will be set up in the Chicago Hilton Towers Hotel to accept new and renewal passport applications.

Getting a passport was never so easy! For new passports, please bring your birth certificate or naturalization certificate and a current driver's license or state ID. New passports cost \$100. If you need to renew, bring your old passport. Passport renewal will cost \$75. Passport photos will be available onsite for \$15. Only personal checks and money orders will be accepted. You will receive your new passport by mail after the Annual Meeting. RSN



Registration and Housing for 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal to Open Early!

Early Bird registration and housing for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal will open on October 31, 2008. Both registration and housing will be open on this date at www.aarweb.org. Computers will be available in the Cyber Café and the AAR Booth in the Exhibit Hall of the Chicago Hilton Towers Hotel for AAR members to preregister during the 2008 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The rates for the Early Bird registration will be \$125 for regular members, \$60 for students, and \$85 for retired members. Early Bird registration will run through the dates of the 2008 Annual Meeting and will close on Tuesday, November 4. Registration for tours and workshops will be available beginning April 1, 2009. Members who have preregistered for the meeting will be sent an e-mail giving them the opportunity to add these to their registration. RSN

Québec: A Unique Religious Culture in North America and the World

Richard Foltz, Concordia University

Though the 2008 Annual Meeting in Chicago is right around the corner, planning for the 2009 meeting in Montréal, Québec, is under-way. Several local scholars have agreed to write articles about the special flavor and challenges of religion in Montréal and the province of Québec. This article is the first in the series.

Richard Foltz is Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at Concordia University, Montréal. A specialist on Iranian civilization who has also written extensively in the areas of environmental ethics and animal rights, his most recent book is L'Iran creuset de religions: De la préhistoire à la République islamique (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007).

THE CANADIAN PROVINCE of Québec stands apart from the rest of North America in its history, its language, and in its religious culture. Officially French-speaking and historically Roman Catholic, following the so-called "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s, which rejected nearly four centuries of control by the Catholic church, Québec society is now the most secular on the continent, and according to sociologist Michael Adams, the most liberal in terms of its social values (Adams, 2004). Québec now has the lowest rate of church attendance in North America, and empty church buildings have been converted into condos, art galleries, community centers, and offices, as well as into mosques and temples.

Québec has always been a pluralistic society, as first French, then English, Irish, and other European settlers came to dominate lands occupied by a variety of indigenous groups. In recent decades a new challenge has been posed by the influx of immigrants from non-Western and non-Christian cultures, who have attempted to find their place in Canada's "cultural mosaic" — a model that differs from the "melting pot" ideal of the United States in that immigrants are encouraged to retain and celebrate their distinct cultural identities. This officially endorsed pluralism occasionally runs into problems, however, especially when religious norms of immigrant communities clash with the secularist ideals of the majority culture.

The Québec government has attempted to defuse such tensions through the application of "reasonable accommodation," defined in labor law as "the obligation of employers to change some general rules for certain employees, under the condition that this does not cause 'undue hardship.'" According to this principle, the demands for special treatment by some religious groups should be met, to the extent that they do not impinge on the values of Québec's society. Typical issues have been allowance for prayer times and holidays, certain types of dress, and restriction of contact between men and women. Requests for such accommodations have come mainly from Muslims, but also from Jews, Sikhs, and others.

Controversies have arisen from the granting of accommodations to religious groups, which many see as a threat to the secular values of Québec society. In 2007, the Québec government appointed two well-known scholars, Charles Taylor and Gérard Bouchard, to head up a commission to investigate the practice of Reasonable Accommodation in the province and provide a report of recommendations. The commission toured the province for a year holding public forums and submitted its report in May 2008. It lay much of the blame for tensions on non-immigrant Québécois, calling on them to be more tolerant of cultural differences. Clearly, even such an extensive project as the one undertaken by the Bouchard-Taylor commission will not be sufficient to resolve the issue, and Québec will continue to be a dynamic test case for the building of a healthy, religiously pluralistic society.

Montréal is the second most important center of higher education in North America (after Boston), in terms of total student population, funding generated by research, and the role of education institutions in the local economy. The city boasts

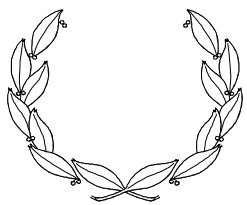
four major universities: two English-language institutions, McGill and Concordia, and two French, the Université de Montréal and the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM). All have large and active religion departments, each with its own distinctive approach and strengths. Because the provincial government encourages and facilitates cooperation and integration of programs between the universities, students benefit from an extraordinarily high level of faculty and institutional resources and flexibility in creating their own programs of study. A joint PhD is offered by the religion departments of Concordia, UQÀM, and the Université Laval in Québec City, featuring a unique year-long seminar taught by faculty from the three universities. Faculty and students from over twenty junior colleges (Cégeps) add to the exceptionally rich and lively community of religion scholars in Montréal and the province of Québec.

The Annual Meeting of the AAR, to be held in Montréal in November 2009, will provide numerous possibilities for attendees to learn more about the unique and dynamic religious culture of Québec. These will include a workshop/seminar on the history of Québec, a keynote address, and several specialized panels addressing such topics as "The Quiet Revolution Forty Years Later," "First Nations of Québec," "Religious Diversity in Québec," "Reasonable Accommodation," "History of Catholicism in Québec," and "Multiculturalism in Québec." More information about Montréal, the province of Québec, and special programs planned for the 2009 meeting will be available at the 2008 meeting in Chicago.

Bibliography:

Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values* (Toronto: Penguin, 2004). RSN





In Memoriam

Catherine M. Bell, 1953–2008

Catherine M. Bell, Emerita Professor of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University, an internationally recognized authority on ritual and Chinese religions, died May 23, 2008, at age 55, after years of battling illness. Her seminal work, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, published in 1992 and soon considered a classic, won the 1994 American Academy of Religion Best First Book in the History of Religions award.

In response to news of Bell's death, Barbara DeConcini, the AAR's executive director at the time of the award, noted that "from the time she burst on the scene with *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* in the early 1990s, Catherine was a bright, shining star in our field's firmament. Her prodigious contributions to our field and to the AAR — as scholar, teacher, and all-around good citizen — speak to her brilliance and generosity. That she accomplished so much even in the face of grinding and relentless physical suffering attests to her outsized spirit and courage."

Bell served the Academy in various capacities, chairing the Ritual Studies Group from 1992 to 1994, serving on the steering committee of the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group from 1994 to 1997, and on the *JAAR* editorial board from 1999 to 2005. She was also a featured author for AAR panel discussions, and in 2007 edited a book called *Teaching Ritual*, for the AAR's Teaching Religious Studies Series.

Mary McGee, who served on the Ritual Studies Group Steering Committee when Bell was its chair, and is now chair herself, described her as an "influential colleague and generous mentor," who "stayed actively involved in the group, encouraging the work of younger scholars and helping to integrate awareness of ritual studies across the field of religious studies. Her vision of the field and influential scholarship helped reenergize the Ritual Studies Group at a critical juncture within the AAR's history."

Donald S. Lopez, Distinguished University Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, University of Michigan, whose time on the Ritual Studies Group's steering committee also coincided with Bell's, called her "an exemplar of the scholar of religious studies: very smart, tough-minded, historically grounded, theoretically adept, never rancorous, always generous."

Bell served, too, on the editorial boards of the journal, *Religion*, and the *Journal of Chinese Religions*. And she served as a contributing editor for the *Journal of Ritual Studies*. She "made deep and fundamental contributions to the theory of ritual practices, challenging established positions and charting her own visions of the field," said the journal's co-editors, Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, who called her work "an inspiration for current and future thinking on the topic."

In addition to *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Bell authored, in 1997, another book, *Ritual: Dimensions and Perspectives*.

Dennis E. Owen, then a professor of religion at the University of Florida, writing in *Religious Studies Review*, described it as "a rich and detailed interdisciplinary analysis of the nature and functions of ritual."

Bell spent twenty years on the religious studies faculty of Santa Clara University, until illness forced her to retire in 2005. Since 2000, she had been the department's chair and, since 1998, the Bernard Hanley Professor of Religious Studies.



“From the time she burst on the scene with *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* in the early 1990s, Catherine was a bright, shining star in our field's firmament. Her prodigious contributions to our field and to the AAR — as scholar, teacher, and all-around good citizen — speak to her brilliance and generosity.”

Paul Crowley, the current chair, commented that "Catherine set a high bar for us, not only in academic achievement and intellectual brilliance, but in collegial grace and loyal friendship. She had a marvelous, wry sense of humor. In addition to bringing national prominence to our department, she was a deeply dedicated mentor to our students. In her lifetime, she was a towering figure here at Santa Clara, and she remains so. She has left a lasting legacy." The department is recognizing her contributions to the field next year with colloquia on her writing and later with a conference on topics on which she focused her life and work.

Diane Jonte-Pace, Santa Clara's vice provost for undergraduate studies — reflecting on Bell's self-description as taking a "visceral pleasure in solving problems" — commented that "indeed, she did have an uncanny ability to perceive the real issues and the larger picture, and to rearrange pieces in creative and meaningful ways." Jonte-Pace went on to note that Bell "saw texts as ways of shaping communities, ways that groups define and organize themselves. She not only created relationships through texts. She also theorized the ways that the social is inscribed in texts and that texts can function to structure and transform the social."

Bell received her PhD from the University of Chicago. In a recent edition of the *History of Religions* journal, Wendy Doniger, Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions, University of Chicago, writes, "No one who knew her will ever forget her. She was even more

luminous in person than in print. I will always remember her as she was at her PhD qualifying examinations in 1983, performing brilliantly and joyously, glorying in her command of the materials and in her skill at parrying the fiendishly difficult questions posed by Joe Kitagawa, thinking out loud with panache and imagination, her eyes shining, her golden hair flashing as she turned from one conversation partner to the other, her beautiful face illuminated by her radiant smile as she caught everything we threw at her and tossed it back with effortless skill."

Bell wrote in 1999 for friends "captures her spirit beautifully — it's literary, playful, and quite profound. It's about life, death, and love, beginnings and endings, and the desire for change. Time and the millennium become a kind of metaphor in this text for the presence of death in the midst of life." Bell wrote:

*The time is
upon us for a
millennial shift*

*To mark the moment
we offer this gift*


*If it be more
beginning
or end*

*I cannot
presume to
suggest or
pretend*

*But whether
welcomed or
welcomed not*

*Tis a moment
of time not
soon forgot . . .*

*Time is what binds
us and tears us apart*

*But for every
ending we
can attempt
a new start.* 

In addition to the AAR award, Bell garnered many more awards, including the University of Chicago Divinity School's 2005 Alumna of the Year and several Santa Clara awards: a 1996 Brutocao Award for Curriculum Innovation; a College of Arts and Sciences 1998 Beyma Research Award; and a 2002 President's Recognition Award for her scholarship and teaching.

That Bell would win awards regarding teaching would be no surprise to McGee. "Many of us who celebrated Catherine admired her devotion to teaching," McGee said. "Catherine was deeply concerned about the rituals of the classroom, and one always came away from a conversation with Catherine having learned more about not only what we teach but how we teach."

Bell received fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Mellon Foundation and multiple fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, her last in 2007 for a project she was unable to finish — *Believing: Assuming Universality, Describing Particularity in the Study of Religion*.

She is survived by her husband, Steven M. Gelber, Professor of History, Santa Clara University, her mother, Blanche Coogan, and her siblings, James Bell, Linda Whalen, Daniel Bell, and Edward Bell.

And she is survived by her words. Not just those she wrote as a scholar, but also those she wrote as a friend. As Jonte-Pace noted at a memorial service for Bell, some Shakespearean-style verse from a play that

AAR Honors Journalists for In-Depth Reporting

MANYA BRACHEAR of the *Chicago Tribune*, Lee Lawrence of the *Christian Science Monitor*, and Mohamad Bazzi, former Middle East bureau chief at *Newsday*, won the 2008 American Academy of Religion Awards for Best In-Depth Reporting on Religion.

Brachear won the contest for journalists at news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation or on the Web; Lawrence for journalists at news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation; and Bazzi for opinion writing.

The annual awards, given out since 2000, recognize “well-researched newswriting that enhances the public understanding of religion,” said John R. Fitzmier, Executive Director of the AAR.

Brachear submitted articles on the Jewish New Year and interpretations of the story of Abraham; the potential political challenges for Barack Obama as a member of Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ; debate over a revised edition of the Reform Jewish prayer book; a Catholic man’s pilgrimage to 365 churches in 365 days; and megachurch Willow Creek Community Church and its business model for surveying member satisfaction. “Newsy, ambitious, diverse. And she almost called the biggest issue (so far) of the Democratic presidential primaries with an early profile of Trinity UCC,” said a judge. “A well-written and well-researched entry,” added another judge.

Lawrence submitted articles from a series on military chaplains. She was embedded with United States troops in Iraq and Afghanistan for three months and covered the day-to-day life of Army and Navy chaplains as they navigated such issues as suicide, baptism, family separation, patriotism, interfaith dialogue, and the mentoring of foreign military clergy. Said one judge, “This ambitious series on military chaplains . . . shows how effective it can be to approach a major news event from the often-overlooked religion angle. There is wonderful clarity in the writing. . . . Good use of detail and a smooth narrative flow bring the chaplains and their world to life.”

Bazzi, writing for the *Nation* and *Newsday*, submitted opinion articles on Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr’s struggle for power within Iraq’s Shiite community; the possibility of civil war in Lebanon between Muslim Sunnis and Shiites; and how the United States should respond to the statements of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Bazzi’s “focus on politics and religion in the Middle East provides insight into some of today’s most vexing topics,” commented one judge. “The opinions are clearly stated and well supported,” said another, noting the articles are a “must-read for anyone trying to understand the political situation in the Middle East.”

Yaroslav Trofimov of the *Wall Street Journal* placed second in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. “This entry’s portrait of religious issues in other countries was unusually comprehensive and an excellent read. The ease with which this reporter handled the difficult task of overseas reporting for American readers shows skill and a trained eye for the good story,” said one judge. Another judge highlighted the entry’s “vibrant detail and effective quotes.”

G. Jeffrey MacDonald of the *Christian Science Monitor* placed second in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. MacDonald “showed a good eye for a story — in particular, an excellent profile of Pastor A. R. Bernard, a significant figure who had not gotten due media coverage,” said one judge. The articles are “well-sourced and thoughtful,” noted another judge, adding “the pieces on financial investments are particularly strong.”

William McKenzie of the *Dallas Morning News* placed second in this year’s opinion writing contest. “The writer has a knack for making complex subjects accessible. Despite the weighty topics, the pieces display a light touch, drawing in readers who may not think they want to read about theologians or pastors,” remarked one judge. “Perceptive commentary . . . written about in a very accessible way,” said another.

Adam Parker of the *Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC) placed third in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. Parker “did an exceptional job with several stories that many writers have tried to do. The summary of the turmoil in the Episcopal Church was filled with detail and context that did not overwhelm the story. The coverage of the Catholic sex scandal effectively localized a national story,” said a judge.

Brad A. Greenberg of the *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles* placed third in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. “These stories pop! The writer’s easy style masks the depth and breadth of the reporting,” said one judge. Greenberg’s “enthusiasm for exploring Jewish life . . . comes through to the reader and makes for some delightful pieces. There is a sense of humor and curiosity behind the articles,” commented another.

Robert Sibley of the *Ottawa Citizen* placed third in this year’s opinion writing contest. “These pieces are the intellectual equivalents of comfort food for rainy days,” said a judge, highlighting Sibley’s “elegant prose” and erudition. “The lively, thorough article on the thirtieth anniversary of the release of *Star Wars* was an exceptionally good exploration of the role of religion in popular culture,” added another judge.

Each contestant submitted articles published in North America during 2007. 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 more than 100,000 circulation included Cecile Holmes, a professor of journalism at the University of South Carolina and a former reporter for the *Houston Chronicle*, and Jeffrey Weiss, a reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*. The judges for the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation and for the opinion writing contest included Paul Moses, a professor of English at Brooklyn College and a former Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for *Newsday*, and Diane Winston, a professor of journalism at the University of Southern California and a former reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*. 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’s Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion. RSN

2008 AAR Newswriting Contest Winners

News Outlets with Circulations over 100,000:

- First Place: Manya Brachear, *Chicago Tribune*
- Second Place: Yaroslav Trofimov, *Wall Street Journal*
- Third Place: Adam Parker, *Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC)

News Outlets with Circulations under 100,000:

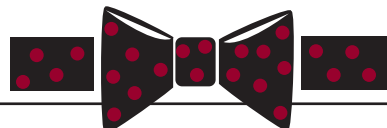
- First Place: Lee Lawrence, *Christian Science Monitor*
- Second Place: G. Jeffrey MacDonald, *Christian Science Monitor*
- Third Place: Brad A. Greenberg, *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*

Opinion Writing:

- First Place: Mohamad Bazzi, articles published in the *Nation* and *Newsday*
- Second Place: William McKenzie, *Dallas Morning News*
- Third Place: Robert Sibley, *Ottawa Citizen*

Read some of the award-winning articles at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Journalism_Awards

Doniger Wins Marty Award



WENDY DONIGER, a scholar whose eloquent analyses of the meaning of myths in culture has captivated scholars and the public alike, will receive the Martin E. Marty Award at the Annual Meeting in November.

The Martin E. Marty Award recognizes extraordinary contributions to the public understanding

of religion. The award — which has recognized Robert Bellah, Andrew Greeley, John Esposito, and Diana Eck, among others — is given to someone whose work resonates with the public as well as with scholars, and whose work is known through a variety of media.

Doniger, one of the world’s foremost scholars of Hinduism, is a well-known author, editor, translator, teacher, blogger, lecturer, and commentator who is equally incisive whether she is discussing current movies or ancient civilizations. She has been widely praised for groundbreaking work that includes the books *The Woman Who Pretended to Be Who She Was*, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*, and a new trans-

lation of the *Kamasutra*. Her research is cross-cultural and includes literature, law, gender, and psychology. Her work has sometimes generated controversy; she has been occasionally assailed — literally, had an egg thrown at her — and threatened by people who accuse her of distorting Hinduism.

Doniger is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School, where she has taught since 1978. She also teaches in the Departments of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, among others.

The annual Marty Forum at the Annual Meeting promises to be a lively conversation. Doniger will be interviewed by Laurie Patton, a scholar who has worked closely with her. Patton, the Charles Howard Candler Professor and a Professor of Early Indian Religions at Emory University, will interview Doniger from 1:00–2:30 PM on Sunday, November 2, 2008.

The AAR Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion encourages nominations for future award recipients. You may nominate online at the AAR website, www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards. RSN

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 website at www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching_awards.

AAR Honors Five 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 site, 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

Leor Halevi. *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society*. Columbia University Press, 2007.



Constructive-Reflective

Mark C. Taylor. *After God*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.



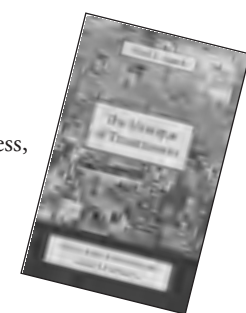
Historical

Benjamin J. Kaplan. *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.



Textual Studies

Wendi L. Adamek. *The Mystique of Transmission*. Columbia University Press, 2007.



Best First Book in the History of Religions

Emma Anderson. *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert*. Harvard University Press, 2007.



Glennon to Receive Excellence in Teaching Award

Eugene V. Gallagher

FRED GLENNON, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Faculty Development at LeMoyne College, will receive the Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. A scholar of Christian social ethics, Glennon teaches courses on comparative religious ethics, "Ethics from the Perspective of the Oppressed," and religion and healing, among others.

In addition to his own scholarly work, Glennon has written several essays on teaching, including "The Learning Covenant: Promoting Freedom and Responsibility in the Religious Studies Classroom"; "Service Learning and the Dilemma of Religious Studies: Descriptive or Normative"; and "Experiential Learning and Social Justice Action: An Experiment in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning." Glennon is the chair of the AAR Academic Relations Committee and has been a member of the Teaching and Learning Committee. He has also served on the Steering Committee of the Academic Teaching of Religion program unit.

Students express their appreciation for Glennon's commitment to discerning their individual strengths as learners, his subtle and deft guidance of discussions, his ability to promote critical thinking through judicious questioning, and his unflagging energy and enthusiasm. Students describe his passion for learning as highly contagious, and colleagues observed that he has drawn many students into religion majors and minors. Students particularly value his ability to connect practical experiences outside the classroom, such as service learning, with both classroom discussions and more theoretical topics.

Colleagues praise Glennon's "self-awareness of himself as a teacher [and] his vision of creating a community of scholar-learners with his students," his ability to make the study of religion important and valuable to his students, and his ability to promote students' sense of responsibility for their own learning. They also note with approval his ability to generate continuing interest in the study of religion from the students in his general education courses. Both in the academy and on his own campus, Glennon is a strong advocate for effective teaching, and is particularly effective at helping

newer teachers find their distinctive teaching voices by encouraging them to take risks in the classroom in order to engage students, and by supporting sustained reflection on the practice of teaching.



At this year's Annual Meeting, participants will again have the opportunity to engage in conversation with the Excellence in Teaching Award winner during a special session, scheduled from 1:00–2:30 PM for Sunday, November 2. The session is sponsored by the Committee on Teaching and Learning and will be chaired by Eugene V. Gallagher. Prior to the Annual Meeting, Glennon will post some of his teaching materials on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Teaching_Awards and they will serve as the basis for the session.

Fred Glennon is an impressive example of dedication to the craft of teaching, especially for his intense commitment to engaged pedagogy and the ethical dimensions of teaching. 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, Patricia O'Connell Killen, and Stacy Floyd-Thomas — he demonstrates the resourceful, creative, and fully engaged teaching found among so many members of the Academy. The Teaching and Learning Committee greatly appreciates the opportunity to review and learn from the materials submitted by the candidates for consideration and acknowledges the commitment, ingenuity, and energy that they devote to teaching about religion.

The Teaching and Learning Committee encourages colleagues to send letters of nomination for this significant award to Jessica Davenport, Associate Director of Professional Programs at the American Academy of Religion, jdavenport@aarweb.org.

The guidelines for this award are on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Teaching_Awards.

RSN

Religion and the Arts Award Winners



Alison (left) and Betye (right) Saar

Betye and Alison Saar

IN MULTIPLE MEDIA, prints, collage, assemblage, sculpture, and installation, Betye Saar (b. 1926) and Alison Saar (b. 1956) push the boundaries and categories of art and religion. With works in the collections of the finest arts institutions and museums, the two have been hailed as "conjure women of the arts." Each one practices a synthetic art, creating material shape for persistent spiritual and cultural questions of identity, ethnicity, race, religion, and gender. Betye Saar's *Liberation of Aunt Jemima* (1972) has

acquired virtual iconic status. The shrines and altars she creates explore mysticism and voodoo as well as racial and sexual politics. Alison Saar's installations, objects, and sculptures pursue relations among spiritualities in African cultural diaspora. Each one of these women might be justifiably hailed as an insider artist for persuasively, creatively bringing personal encounters with visionary, vernacular, and "outsider" arts of many cultures to public attention.

RSN

Membership Corner

Providing information to help you navigate your membership!

AAR Membership Categories, Dues, and Discounts

There are three membership categories — professional, student, and retired. The dues for the professional and retired categories are based on annual income. There are 11 income levels. Student members pay a flat rate of \$30. Professional members who hold current membership in the Society of Biblical Literature are eligible for a 20 percent discount. Retired members receive an automatic 20 percent discount. Members who live outside the United States and make less than \$15,000 per year pay a flat rate of \$15.



Membership in the AAR provides you with a spectrum of opportunities to both enrich your professional life and contribute to the field.

- ✓ Connect with scholars in the field by attending the Annual and Regional Meetings at deep discounts.
- ✓ Search for fellow members using the Membership Database online.
- ✓ Attend professional development workshops specially designed to assist you at every level of your career.
- ✓ Help to shape the AAR by volunteering to serve on committees, task forces, and other leadership groups.
- ✓ Answer the urgent call from journalists, public policy makers, and your fellow citizens who rely on our community to foster the public understanding of religion.
- ✓ Gain access to AAR print and online publications like the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (JAAR), *Religious Studies News* (RSN), and the monthly e-bulletins for the latest scholarship and news.

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\$105,000 - \$119,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175	<input type="checkbox"/> \$140	<input type="checkbox"/> \$140	\$30,000 - \$40,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$48	<input type="checkbox"/> \$48
\$90,000 - \$105,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	\$20,000 - \$30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45	<input type="checkbox"/> \$36	<input type="checkbox"/> \$36
\$75,000 - \$90,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$135	<input type="checkbox"/> \$108	<input type="checkbox"/> \$108	Under \$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
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THE BOOK CORNER

WELCOME to a new feature of *RSN*: The Book Corner. In each October and May issue, we will feature books that have recently been published by Oxford University Press in the various AAR/OUP book series. The books featured in this issue were published between January and June 2008. For more books published in the various series, visit www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books.



Jeffrey L. Richey, ed. *Teaching Confucianism*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

If forecasters are correct in labeling the twenty-first century “the Chinese century,” teachers and scholars of religious studies and theology will be called upon to illuminate the history, character, and role of Confucianism as a religious tradition in Chinese and Chinese-influenced societies.

Although routinely included in courses on Asian and world religions, Confucianism has been the subject of much controversy both within the academy and in Chinese communities for over 100 years. Theorists have debated whether and how it is “religious,” while historians have struggled to interpret archaeological finds and other evidence that suggest the existence of not one, but many “Confucianisms” from ancient times through the present. Philosophers have argued about Confucianism’s place in intellectual life, and theologians have engaged Confucianism as a rival, predecessor, and partner to Christianity. The one point on which all seem able to agree is that a grasp of Confucianism is crucial for an informed understanding of East Asia’s past development, present situation, and future prospects. But how does one teach a subject with so few established norms?

The essays in this volume address the pedagogical challenges of introducing Confucian material to non-East Asian scholars and students. Informed by the latest scholarship as well as practical experience in the religious studies and theology classroom, these essays are attentive to the needs of both experts in Confucian studies and those with no background in Asian studies who are charged with teaching these traditions.

ISBN: 978-0-19-531160-0



DeAngelis, Gary D., and Warren G. Frisina, eds. *Teaching the Dao de Jing*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

The *Dao de Jing*, a highly enigmatic work rooted in ancient Chinese cosmology, ontology, metaphysics, and moral thinking, is regularly offered to college and high school students in religion, philosophy, history, literature, Asian studies, and humanities courses. As a result, an ever-expanding group of faculty with very different backgrounds and training routinely confront the question “How should I teach the *Dao de Jing*?”

Written for nonspecialists who may not have a background in ancient Chinese culture, the essays collected in this volume provide up-to-date information on contemporary scholarship and classroom strategies that have been successful in a variety of teaching environments.

A classic text like the *Dao de Jing* generates debate among scholars and teachers who ask such questions as: Should we capitalize on popular interests in the *Dao de Jing* in our classrooms? Which of the many translations and scholarly approaches ought we to use? Is it appropriate to think of the *Dao de Jing* as a religious text at all? These and other controversies are addressed in this volume.

ISBN: 978-0-19-533270-4



Murphy, Michael Patrick. *A Theology of Criticism: Balthasar, Postmodernism, and the Catholic Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

A number of critics and scholars argue for the notion of a distinctly Catholic variety of imagination, not as a matter of doctrine or even of belief, but rather as an artistic sensibility. They figure the blend of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical assumptions that proceed from Catholic belief constitutes a vision of reality that necessarily informs the artist’s imaginative expression. The notion of a Catholic imagination, however, has lacked thematic and theological coherence. To articulate this intuition is to cross the problematic interdisciplinary borders between theology and literature; and, although scholars have developed useful methods for undertaking such interdisciplinary “border-crossings,” relatively few have been devoted to a serious examination of the theological aesthetic upon which these other aesthetics might hinge.

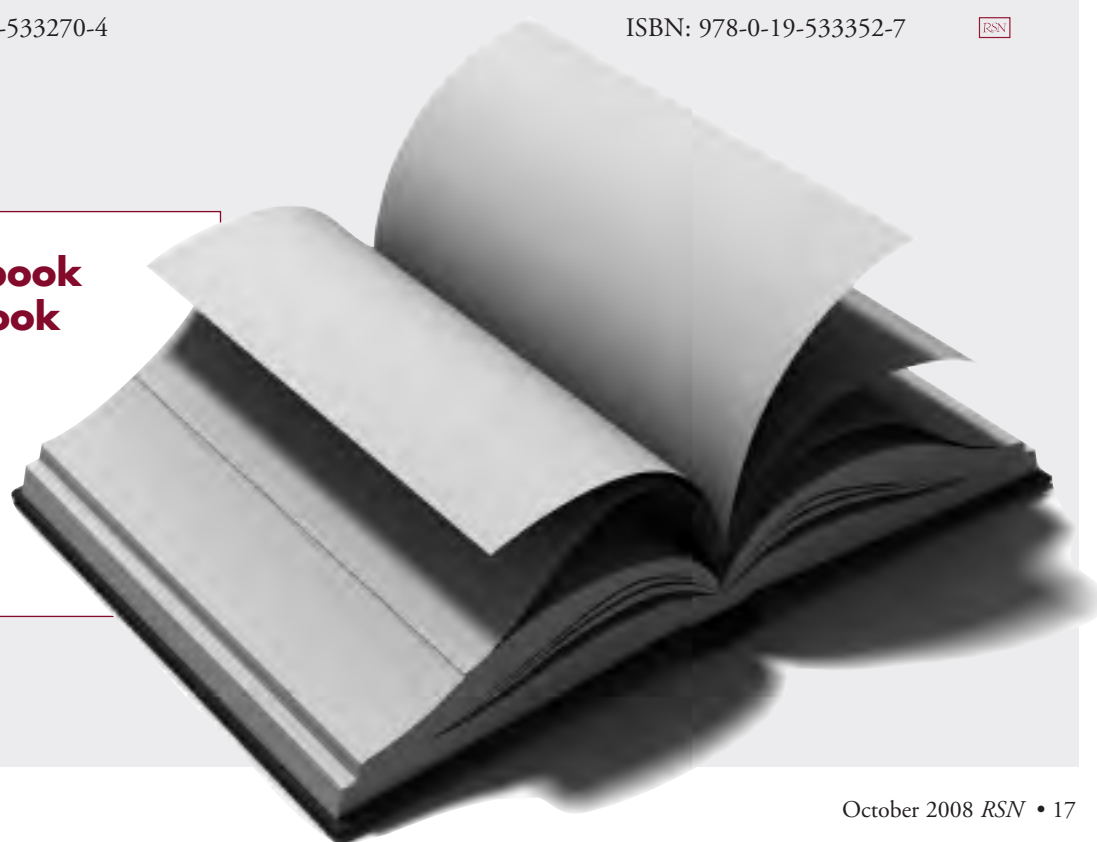
The author proposes a new framework to better define the concepts of a Catholic imagination. He explores the many ways in which the theological work of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988) can provide the model, content, and optic for distinguishing this type of imagination from others. Since Balthasar views art and literature precisely as theologies, the author surveys a broad array of poetry, drama, fiction, and film, and sets them against central aspects of Balthasar’s theological program. In doing so, the author seeks to develop a theology of criticism.

ISBN: 978-0-19-533352-7



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Go to www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books/proposals.asp to find more about our five different book series and to get information on how to submit your proposal.



Terrence W. Tilley named President of Catholic Theological Society of America

Terrence W. Tilley, chair of Fordham's Department of Theology, was installed as the 63rd president of the Catholic Theological Society of America at the society's 2008 convention on June 8, 2008. In this position, Tilley hopes to improve the communications between theologians and bishops, and to help to integrate a new generation of theologians into the society.

"New patterns of relating theology to the life of the faith are emerging," Tilley said, explaining his decision to establish "Generations" as this year's convention theme. "Younger theologians — meaning those who either entered the field or were born after the Second Vatican Council — have neither the baggage nor the ballast that their older colleagues have."

The author of many scholarly books and articles, Tilley came to Fordham in 2006. He has also taught at Georgetown University, St. Michael's College, the University of Vermont, Florida State University, and the University of Dayton, where he chaired the Department of Religious Studies. A native of Milwaukee, he earned his bachelor's degree at the University of San Francisco in 1970 and his doctoral degree at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, in 1976.

Charles S. Prebish to Head Religious Studies Program at Utah State University

Charles S. Prebish has been named head of the Religious Studies Program at Utah State University (USU). Prebish has been a part of the program since 2006 and holds the Charles Redd Chair in Religious Studies. He is a well-known Buddhist studies scholar who taught at Pennsylvania State University for more than thirty-five years. Prebish joined the faculty at USU in January 2007. He has published nineteen books and more than fifty scholarly articles and chapters, and is a leading pioneer in the establishment of the study of Western Buddhism as a subdiscipline in Buddhist studies.

Are you interested in the latest happenings in the field of religion? Would you like to post an announcement of an event, award competition, or other news of importance in the field?

If so, please visit *In the Field*, for news of events and opportunities for scholars of religion published online by the American Academy of Religion.

Visit this link for more information:

www.aarweb.org/Publications/In_the_Field.

Mary Elizabeth Moore Named Dean of Boston University School of Theology

After a nine-month search, Boston University's oldest school has a new dean. Mary Elizabeth Moore, a professor of religion and theology and director of the Women in Theology and Ministry Program at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, will assume her duties as dean of the School of Theology beginning January 1, 2009. She will succeed Ray L. Hart, a School of Theology professor of religion and theology, who was appointed dean ad interim in 2003, following the resignation of Robert C. Neville.

Willem B. Drees Selected as the Next Editor for Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science

The Joint Publication Board of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* has announced the appointment of Willem B. Drees as the journal's next Editor-in-Chief. Drees is Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics and outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies of Leiden University. He is author of seven books, the editor or co-editor of twenty books, and has lectured widely in Europe and the United States. *Zygon*, founded in 1966, is an academic journal exploring the interactions between religious convictions, science, and technology in the modern world.

New Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism at Saint Mary's College of California

Saint Mary's College of California recently announced the opening of the Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism, a research center that will explore issues of religious pluralism in political culture and public policy. The center will provide forums for representatives of various religious orientations, including academics and activists from across the political spectrum, in an effort to find common ground on specific issues in the public square. The first project to be undertaken by the center is the Prison Religion Project, which will work toward the development of a model policy to accommodate religious diversity in prisons. Barbara A. McGraw has been named the director of the center. McGraw is a professor of social ethics, law, and public life, and the author of *Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground: Public Religion, Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America*; lead co-editor of *Taking Religious Pluralism Seriously: Spiritual Politics on America's Sacred Ground*; and co-author of *Many Peoples, Many Faiths: Women and Men in the World Religions*.

Sir John Templeton, Famed Philanthropist, Dies on Tuesday, July 8

Sir John Templeton, the legendary fund manager and philanthropist, died in a hospital in the Bahamas on Tuesday, July 8, at the age of 95. The cause of death was pneumonia. Templeton contributed a sizable amount of his fortune to his foundation. In 1972, the Templeton Foundation began awarding the Templeton Prize for Progress toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities. The foundation,

which is now run by his son John Jr., gives its honorees a financial prize of \$1.6 million, the largest single annual financial prize given to an individual for intellectual merit. Templeton, a devout Presbyterian, was a trustee on the board of Princeton Theological Seminary, the largest Presbyterian seminary, for 42 years and served as its chair for 12 years.

Call for Papers: Darwin's Impact on the Humanities and Social Sciences

Call for Papers for a symposium on "150 Years of Evolution: Darwin's Impact on the Humanities and Social Sciences" to be held at San Diego State University on November 20–22, 2009. Papers should address the impact of Darwin's ideas in the humanities and social sciences, especially religious studies. Both disciplinary-specific and broadly interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged. Submit abstracts of no more than 500 words to mark.wheeler@sdsu.edu no later than November 30, 2008. Accepted papers must be completed by the date of the symposium to be included in a volume of published proceedings. Accepted papers will be announced February 1, 2009.

Call for Papers: Religion and Buildings

The *Australian Religion Studies Review* (www.aasr.org.au/aasr_review.htm) is a leading journal of the Pacific region dealing with all aspects of the academic study of religion. It is fully refereed and published by Equinox Press three times a year (April, September, and December). Issue 23.1 (2010) will cover the topic of "Religion and Buildings," guest edited by Jennifer Clark, University of New England. This issue will explore the relationship between buildings and religious expression. Topics may include, for example, architecture, design, and interior decoration of buildings used for religious purpose; disputes over property; theological argument tied to place; the symbolic representation of religious buildings; renovation for liturgical renewal; church planning and church planting; renovation and reuse of religious buildings; shared space; religious expression in the absence of a building; local church history; religious buildings and multiculturalism; and preserving the heritage of religious buildings. Completed articles should not exceed 8,000 words. Submission deadline is July 2009. Early submissions are welcome. Please contact Jennifer Clark, jclark1@une.edu.au, for further details.

EBSCO Publishing and American Theological Library Association Announce Digital Archives

EBSCO has partnered with the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) to provide new collections of historical monographs and serials in digital format. The collections will contain more than 29,000 monographs covering religion and theology. The majority of the monographs are from 1850 through 1923, with the earliest one dating back to 1322. The monograph collections are estimated to include 7.5 million pages of content. With each collection, researchers can view all of the typography, graphics, and drawings as they were originally presented.

Online Bibliography of Theology and Peace

The Institute for Theology and Peace (ITHP), a research institution of the Catholic Church, has published the eighth edition of its *Online Bibliography Theology and Peace*, at www.ithpeace.de/bibl. The bibliography contains 159,000 titles, and use of it is free of charge. The Institute (www.ithpeace.de) was established in 1978 and is actively engaged in research projects on peace ethics. It publishes the series *Theologie und Frieden* (*Theology and Peace*) and *Beiträge zur Friedensethik* (*Contributions on Peace Ethics*), has a library, and documents the literature comprehensively. The emphasis of the documentation is on individual disciplines within theology. Literature from the fields of philosophy, political science, research into peace and conflict, international law, and history is taken into consideration if it appears to be relevant to questions of peace ethics. For further information, contact Johannes Schloessinger at schloessinger@ithf.de.

New Online Journal

Religion Compass is an online-only journal publishing original, peer-evaluated, state-of-the-art surveys of current research from across the entire discipline. The journal guides students, researchers, and nonspecialist scholars through the accumulating body of literature, and navigates the field by laying out the territory, describing divisions and subdivisions of religious studies, and identifying the major issues within those sections. Fields covered by *Religion Compass* include African Religions, Ancient Near East, Buddhism, Christianity, Indian Traditions, Islam, Japanese and Chinese Traditions, Judaism, Religion in America, New Religions, and Theory and Method. For further information, go to www.religion-compass.com.

Association of Theological Schools and Luce Foundation Name Seven Faculty Members as 2008–2009 Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology

Selected on the basis of the strength of their proposals to conduct creative and innovative theological research, the seven Fellows (below) will engage in year-long research in various areas of theological inquiry. The 2008–2009 Fellows constitute the fifteenth class of scholars to be appointed since the inception of the program in 1993, bringing the total number of Luce Fellows to 105. The program is supported by a grant from The Henry Luce Foundation, honoring the late Henry Luce III.

- Douglas E. Burton-Christie, Loyola Marymount University
- Margot E. Fassler, Yale University Divinity School
- Carole R. Fontaine, Andover Newton Theological School
- Arun Wayne Jones, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- Demetrios S. Katos, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
- Elizabeth Newman, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
- Allen D. Verhey, Duke University Divinity School

BRIEFS

2008–2009 Lilly Theological Research Grant Recipients

Congratulations to the following 2008–2009 Lilly Theological Research Grant winners:

For Faculty Fellowships:

- Ellen Jeffery Blue, Phillips Theological Seminary
- Elizabeth Margaret Bounds, Emory University
- Marion Sabine Grau, Church Divinity School of the Pacific
- Robert J. V. Hiebert, Associated Canadian Theological Schools
- C. Kavin Rowe, Duke University

For Theological Scholars Grants:

- Peter J. Gentry, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Johnny Bernard Hill, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- M. Jan Holton, Yale University
- Kevin Jung, Wake Forest University
- Michelle Lee-Barnewall, Biola University
- Martha L. Moore-Keish, Columbia Theological Seminary
- Caleb O. Oladipo, Baptist Theological Seminary, Richmond

- Thomas E. Reynolds, Victoria University
- José David Rodríguez, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago
- Angela Marie Senander, Washington Theological Union

For Research Expense Grants:

- Reginald David Broadnax, Hood Theological Seminary
- J. Kameron Carter, Duke University
- Michelle A. Clifton-Soderstrom, North Park Theological Seminary
- Don Sik Kim, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
- Ian Christopher Levy, Lexington Theological Seminary
- Karen Elaine Mason, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Pablo Polischuk, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Raymond F. Pendleton, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Dvadason N. Premnath, Saint Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry
- Scott Douglas Seay, Christian Theological Seminary
- Douglas Foster, Abilene Christian University
- Paul Blowers, Emmanuel School of Religion
- D. Newell Williams, Brite Divinity School
- Vitor Westhelle, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago
- Amos Yong, Regent University

Christianity Today Book Awards

Christianity Today has recently announced its 2008 book award winners. The awards serve to recognize outstanding volumes that shed light on people, events, and ideas that shape evangelical life, thought, and mission. This year, 49 publishers nominated 359 titles published in 2007.

Apologetics/Evangelism

There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind
Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese
HarperOne

Biblical Studies

The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition
Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd
Baker Academic

Christianity and Culture

Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite
D. Michael Lindsay
Oxford University Press

Christian Living

Caring for Mother: A Daughter's Long Goodbye
Virginia Stem Owens
Westminster John Knox

The Church/Pastoral Leadership

The Call to Joy and Pain: Embracing Suffering in Your Ministry
Ajith Fernando
Crossway

Fiction

Quaker Summer
Lisa Samson
Thomas Nelson

History/Biography

A Secular Age
Charles Taylor
Belknap Press

Missions/Global Affairs

Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity
Lamin O. Sanneh
Oxford University Press

Spirituality

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way
Eugene H. Peterson
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Theology/Ethics

Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music
Jeremy S. Begbie
Baker Academic

PSN

AAR Career Services

Visit the AAR's new Career Services webpage at www.aarweb.org/jump/careers for these services:



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Candidate CVs
Workshop Information
Employment Statistics
Articles Discussing Career Issues

Also see the ad on page 11
for information about the 2008 Job Center.

Sustainability Task Force Update

THE SUSTAINABILITY Task Force has been looking at ways to create a more sustainable AAR and to promote issues of sustainability within the study and teaching of religion. The task force is dedicated to making the AAR as sustainable as possible by looking into resource consumption and reduction at meetings and while traveling to meetings, workshops geared for infusing curriculum with sustainability issues, and working with publishers to offer updated textbooks with sustainability topics and printing them on recycled paper.

The task force asked the AAR Board of Directors to consider an ecological audit of the AAR and of the Annual Meeting. Sustainability Task Force Chair Sarah McFarland Taylor reported to the Board that the task force would be researching and pursuing options for a low-cost or donated comprehensive “environmental audit” of the AAR. There are a variety of organizations that specialize in assessing the environmental impact of nonprofit organizations and make recommendations for reducing their “ecological footprint.”

In the course of researching sustainability options, one common point has emerged. The chief environmental impact of the AAR as a whole comes from the greenhouse gases generated by our members’ travel to and from our Annual Meeting. In response, the task force is discussing several measures:

- Meeting when possible in major cities that enable more direct flights rather than multiple connecting flights (reducing take-offs and landings);
- Choosing cities for the Annual Meeting with excellent public transportation (or very walkable locations) to minimize taxi and shuttle use (including regional meetings);
- Publicizing well the public transportation options for travel to the conference and within the conference city;

- Promoting ride-sharing to the conference and within the conference city;
- Reducing our use of products, such as plastics used for cups, badge holders, etc.;
- Working with hotels to provide more local sources of food and other reception fare (foods with fewer “fossil fuel miles” on them);
- Asking that task forces and committees meet face-to-face at the AAR Annual Meeting and then (when feasible) meet electronically through conference call or video conferencing instead of flying to Atlanta for meetings during the rest of the year; and
- Purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to offset greenhouse gases.

The purchase of RECs to offset greenhouse gas production is controversial, since there are those who argue that offsetting simply legitimates the production of these gases in the first place, rather than eliminating them altogether. However, for business travel, which will occur anyway, the consensus seems to be that implementing an offsetting program, on balance, is better than doing nothing and can actually contribute to environmental and social justice efforts in the communities these credits benefit.

The task force is recommending that a volunteer carbon offset option be included in the online registration page for future Annual Meetings. Members could be invited to follow a link to calculate their carbon emissions for travel to the conference and purchase RECs. This measure has already been implemented at the AAR Midwest Regional meeting, although it has not been linked to its registration page. A separate e-mail goes out from the Midwest Regionally Elected Director inviting members to purchase credits.

- The task force is also recommending conserving other resources, such as:
- Stationery/Paper — The AAR Executive

Office has already made huge strides in reducing paper use and moving toward more electronic means of communication. For the paper that the organization still consumes, the task force researched options for the purchase of more sustainable paper stock and found that the major paper supplier used by Emory University, where the office is located, is Mohawk paper. Mohawk is a water-marked, archival quality paper that is a 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper product, which can be used in virtually all Xerox machines and laser printers. Mohawk’s production plant is also 100 percent “carbon neutral,” offsetting its carbon emissions through the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits. The task force recommends that the AAR purchase its paper from Mohawk.

- Hotel Sustainability Requests — The task force recommends working with our partner hotels as much as possible to encourage them to implement sustainability measures as host hotels, including the following:
 - Providing guests a way to opt out of daily linen laundering by providing a sign placed on the bed or in the bathroom (or other comparable system);
 - Using compact fluorescent bulbs;
 - Using more environmentally sustainable cleaning products;
 - Providing a living wage to hotel domestics hired to clean and service rooms; and
 - Making sure that recycling bins are numerous and prominently displayed throughout the hotel.

The task force has called for more research paper awards at the regional level for work dealing with religion, environment, and sustainability. The AAR Midwest Region has gone ahead and endowed a paper prize in this area, and hopes other regions will follow with similar awards.

At the Annual Meeting this year, the task force encouraged the Program Committee to expand the Religion and Ecology program unit session limits, which was granted. It also successfully proposed South Asian environmental activist and author Vandana Shiva as a speaker for the 2008 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The task force’s first special session will be “The Greening of Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Beyond.”

There are several items the task force will be exploring in the next few years. One of the issues is to find ways of providing more local, bioregionally grown, sustainably produced food options for the Annual Meeting. Task force members are talking with the American Humane Society’s Sustainability in Food and Farming program and with VegAdvantage, a free service provided by vegetarian chefs who work with conferences, hotels, schools, universities, businesses, and other organizations to integrate more vegetarian options into menus, as well as more locally produced foods. VegAdvantage also works out all the logistics, which frees up conference planners to focus on other things.

Another project the task force is considering is the Sustainability Teaching Initiative. Task force members are exploring a variety of opportunities to create a series of workshops on teaching about religion and sustainability. Additionally, part of the initiative includes working with textbook publishers to include more sustainability content in their books and sponsoring a workshop or seminar for book vendors run by the “Green Publishing Initiative.” Committee member Laurel Kearns continues to work on the Greening Seminaries initiative.

The committee will also be building future links between AAR’s syllabus project website and the Forum on Religion and Ecology’s syllabus website.

RSN

AAR Goes to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Humanities Funding

IN MARCH, THE AAR and 34 other associations involving higher education co-sponsored Humanities Advocacy Day, an annual event in Washington, D.C., organized by the National Humanities Alliance (NHA).

A total of 94 humanities advocates representing 23 states and the District of Columbia visited 127 Senate and House offices. The AAR participants were board member Brian K. Pennington, Maryville College; member Charles B. Jones, Catholic University of America, and his son, Trevor; and AAR staff member Margaret Jenkins, Director of Development. John R. Fitzmier, the AAR’s Executive Director, represented the AAR at the NHA’s annual meeting held the day before.

The AAR, along with other members of the NHA, is advocating a budget of \$177 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in fiscal year 2009, an increase of about \$32 million over the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. The NEH is the largest funder of humanities programs in the United States. The AAR also supports fiscal year 2009 funding of \$12 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration.

As of the *RSN* copy deadline, the House of Representatives and the Senate had yet to vote on bills funding NEH and NHPRC for fiscal year 2009.

RSN

Oxford University Press Book Series Name Change

THE NAME OF the Oxford University Press/AAR book series formerly known as Texts and Translations has been changed to Religion in Translation. Religion in Translation seeks to make available to research scholars and classroom teachers alike significant primary texts in English translation, significant new secondary scholarship on religious texts, and reprints of major theoretical works in the field of religious studies. Given this broad mandate, we seek proposals from all areas of the discipline that will bring to an English-speaking audience texts of major importance to the world’s religious traditions; monographs that

open up specific texts to wider audiences; and new translations of classic works of secondary scholarship that are perennially relevant to the understanding of religious phenomena, values, ideas, and practices.

For further information on the series, please go to www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books/religionintranslation.asp.

To reach one of the two editors for this series, please contact either Anne E. Monius, Harvard Divinity School, anne_monius@harvard.edu, or Kevin Madigan, Harvard Divinity School, kevin_madigan@harvard.edu.

RSN

The Religion Major and Liberal Education — A White Paper

With the generous support of the Teagle Foundation, the American Academy of Religion's eighteen-month study of "The Religion Major and Liberal Education" featured the direct participation of over 300 faculty members and stakeholders on more than a dozen campuses.

The initiative's seed grant program funded studies and formal conversations regarding the major that were conducted on individual campuses. Over thirty proposals were submitted with grants awarded to ten institutions: Colorado Christian University, Eckerd College, Lafayette College, Louisiana State University, McHenry County College, University of Minnesota, University of New Mexico, Santa Clara University, Texas State University, and Wofford College.

A day-long leadership workshop on the topic of "The Religion Major and Liberal Education" was held at the 2007 American Academy of Religion in San Diego with twenty-five presenters and discussion leaders and over seventy-five registrants. A "wildcard" paper session at the same meeting featured five formal academic papers on the topic.

A special six-page section of *Religious Studies News* (October 2007) was dedicated to the initiative, with contributions from ten individuals.

The AAR–Teagle Working Group met in Atlanta (twice) and San Diego to discuss and digest the various reports, findings, and essays. The Working Group members would like to thank all of the participants for their invaluable contributions of time, energy, and ideas, and to offer special thanks to the Teagle Foundation for its generous support of this initiative. Under the leadership of Robert Connor, president, and Donna Heiland, vice president, the Teagle Foundation not only supplied financial resources in support of the project, but Bob, Donna, and Cheryl Ching gave generously of their time, experience, and wisdom.

The Religious Studies Major in a Post-9/11 World: New Challenges, New Opportunities

I. Opportunities

New Perceptions

These days, it is hardly news when a publication prints a retraction. When the retraction is for an eight-year-old *obituary*, though, people tend to stand up and to take notice.

As the 1990s came to a close, *The Economist* was so certain of the imminent demise of organized religion that it featured God's obituary in its final issue of the millennium.¹ The editors' perspective was clear, if myopic. Church attendance in much of Western Europe was in free fall. "The cynical, questioning, anti-authoritarian West," often led by college professors, had just completed a century of relentless (and frequently effective) attacks on religious belief. For politicians, intellectuals, and even some clerics, "religion was becoming marginal to public life . . . [and] faith an irrelevance in foreign policy." The U.S. Secretary of State at the time, Madeleine Albright, was of the opinion that any given world problem was "complicated enough without bringing God and religion into it."² And when Henry Kissinger published his 900-page, career-summarizing *Diplomacy* in 1995, the word "religion" did not even appear in the index.³ Religion was on the way out. Or so the defenders of the Enlightenment canon declared.

How times have changed.

A recent study reports that the proportion of the world's population that claims membership in the world's four largest religions — Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism — actually *increased* over the past century, from 67 percent in 1900 to 73 percent in 2005.⁴ The number is predicted to reach 80 percent by 2050. Last year, Harvard faculty engaged in a very public debate over the importance of the study of religion in the university's core curriculum, with the approved core featuring multiple references to religion (if stopping short of mandating its study).⁵ Former Secretary of State Albright recently has become a highly vocal advocate of the public role of religion, writing that the failure of Americans to understand other religions "poses one of the great challenges to our public diplomacy."⁶ And a few months ago, *The Economist* printed a retraction of its notorious obituary, declaring: "Atheists and agnostics hate the fact, but these days religion is an inescapable part of politics."⁷

Of course, those of us in the field of religious studies know that religion has always been an inescapable part of politics, as well as an inescapable part of economics, foreign policy, social mores, and domestic interactions. The waning years of the twentieth century were certainly no exception. While the reality has not changed in recent years, public perceptions doubtlessly have. World events have led Americans to a new appreciation of the importance of knowledge about religion and to a vivid awareness of the dangers that emerge when we fail to recognize religion as a potent source of motivation and behavior. In a world shaped not merely by 9/11 but by Iraq, Bosnia, Kashmir, and the West Bank — not merely by abortion, but by gay marriage, intelligent design, euthanasia, and stem cells — Americans increasingly accept the idea that we need better to understand the diverse range of religious phenomena. In one recent survey, over 80 percent of Americans responded affirmatively to the question, "Do you think people should learn more about religions other than their own?"⁸

"If we truly wish for students to engage the tremendous variety of human understandings of life, death, suffering, love, and meaning, there is perhaps no more direct path than through the study of religion."

In a sense, our jobs as scholars of religion became a lot easier on September 11, 2001. Suddenly, the arguments we had been making for years about the importance of understanding world religious traditions were being made by others: not merely by former Secretaries of State and magazine editors, not merely by the general public, but by college deans, provosts, and presidents — at times, even by our "cynical, questioning, anti-authoritarian" colleagues.

A Return to Liberal Education?

Concurrent with (if largely coincidental to) these changes in public perceptions of the importance of religious literacy, there emerged a new (or reemerged an age-old?) debate

about the quality of the education provided by American colleges and universities. In 2006, former Harvard President Derek Bok reported that American college students "improve far less than they should in such important areas as writing, critical thinking . . . and moral reasoning" and lamented that students often fail in "learning what they need to know to become active and informed citizens."⁹ In 2007, UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, after surveying over 100,000 college students, released a national study of students' engagement with issues of "meaning and purpose," categorizing "spiritual development as a core component of a liberal arts education."¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) was conducting a multi-year study of liberal education that concluded, "The world in which today's students will make choices and compose lives is one of disruption rather than certainty, and of interdependence rather than insularity."¹¹ It called for a widespread shift in the "focus of schooling from accumulating course credits to building real-world capabilities." In its influential 2007 report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, the AAC&U mapped out four essential learning outcomes for all American college students:

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**, "focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring."
- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**, including "critical and creative thinking," "inquiry and analysis," and "written and oral communication."
- **Personal and Social Responsibility**, including "civic knowledge and engagement — local and global," "intercultural knowledge and competence," and "ethical reasoning and action."
- **Integrative Learning**, including the synthesis and "application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems."¹²

For many of us in the field of religious studies, these "new directions" for American college students seemed anything but novel. The four essential outcomes embraced by the AAC&U outline themes that religious studies has been focusing on for decades: intercultural learning, engagement of big questions, critical thinking and writing, moral reasoning, and the application of all of these skills to new global contexts and lived behaviors. It is safe to say that few disciplines in the academy more centrally and more naturally address the AAC&U outcomes than does the field of religious studies.

At a time when leaders in higher education are increasingly asking students to engage the large

issues of life's meaning and to think critically and responsibly about their role in the world, religious studies offers unique opportunities. Other disciplines such as philosophy, literature, and the creative arts doubtlessly engage questions of ultimate meaning. Yet these endeavors are largely the province of the talented few: the philosopher, the novelist, the poet, the painter, the dancer. The rest of us are the audience. While, to be sure, we can learn to appreciate the creations of these artists and scholars, we remain observers. Religion, by contrast, is largely created by its adherents. Millions of worshipers and hundreds of thousands of local religious communities — through their prayers, rituals, devotions, and acts of charity; their conversations about scriptures; and their hierarchies and institutions — shape and are shaped by the religious meanings of their traditions. If we truly wish for students to engage the tremendous variety of human understandings of life, death, suffering, love, and meaning, there is perhaps no more direct path than through the study of religion.

Clearly, the field of religious studies now finds itself at a pivotal moment. An unprecedented confluence of world events, public perceptions, and educational insights has created exciting possibilities for the growth and reimagining of the field — possibilities that were unthinkable even a decade ago. The current moment presents important opportunities for the academic study of religion — and poses a series of challenges.

How we, as scholars of religion, respond to these challenges may well have much to say about the future of the discipline — not to mention the future of American public literacy about a broad range of religious phenomena.

II. Challenges

The Religious Studies Major in Transition

The religious studies major is in a state of flux. By most indicators, the field is growing, perhaps significantly. The number of religious studies majors increased by 22 percent in the past decade (to an estimated 47,000 students), with like percentage increases in the number of total courses offered, course enrollments, and faculty positions in the field.¹³ The number of religious studies majors at public institutions has grown even more rapidly, by 40 percent during the same period, signifying a sea-change in the field. What was once a major situated largely within liberal arts colleges and denominationally-linked institutions is now establishing a widespread presence at state universities. In the past five years alone, new degree programs or departments of religion have been proposed or established at the University of Texas, Ohio

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State University, Florida State University, Georgia State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, the University of North Carolina, Asheville, and Towson State University, among other public institutions. In part shaped by this trend, the number of religion degree programs that are housed in free-standing religion departments also appears to be on the rise, with the total now topping 50 percent.

New Global Emphases

What constitutes the religious studies major is also undergoing rapid change. The American Academy of Religion conducted comprehensive surveys of undergraduate course offerings in religion in both 2000 and 2005. The results are striking, if not surprising. The number of sections taught of courses in Islam and Hinduism each almost doubled during the five-year period; by most indications, courses in Christian Theology, Old Testament, and New Testament were all flat or down. Sections of Introduction to World Religions grew in number; sections of Introduction to the Bible declined.¹⁴ There is a very real shift occurring in the field of religious studies — not a shift away from the study of Western religions per se (indeed, courses in the Introduction to Western Religions were up significantly during the five-year period), but one away from the study of Christianity in isolation.

The eighteen-month-long, American Academy of Religion study of the religious studies major, supported by the Teagle Foundation and resulting in this White Paper, found much evidence corroborating these numbers — as well as evidence of challenges that have emerged amid the rapid change.

Rethinking the “Seminary Model”

At religiously-linked schools such as Colorado Christian University (Council of Christian Colleges and Universities) and Santa Clara University (Jesuit), efforts are underway to reconceive and to globalize the study of religion on campus. Colorado Christian provides a particularly interesting example of the transformation of the field. An evangelical university that “purposefully seeks to foster spiritual as well as intellectual growth,” Colorado

Christian has just added its first comparative course in world religions and seeks to establish a religious studies major. On a campus where “Christianity isn’t a religion, it’s a life,” such undertakings can be controversial. As Frank Ames reports, “Although many parochial institutions maintain high academic standards for students and appoint capable scholars and teachers to their faculties — and often succeed in providing excellent education — it is fair to say that religious commitment at times diminishes empathy toward the Other and awareness of the Self, which are essential in religious studies.”¹⁵ While Ames and his colleagues at Colorado Christian are currently negotiating the at times subtle lines between personal religious commitment and the scholarly study of religious traditions, they are convinced of the importance of the academic study of other religions amid a Christian devotional context.

At Santa Clara, the department is consciously involved in efforts to “explore the shape and function of theological studies in relation to other approaches to religion,” including political science, history, classics, women’s and gender studies, and environmental studies.¹⁶

Colorado Christian and Santa Clara are part of a larger movement in which departments and curricula in religious studies at public, private, and church-related institutions are gradually, persistently, and unevenly shifting from a “seminary model” for the study of religion (in which courses in Bible, Christian history, and Christian doctrine are seen as primary and courses on other religions and aspects of religion are deemed secondary or even unnecessary) to a comparative model (in which the focus is on promoting student understanding of the beliefs, practices, and histories of multiple religious traditions in a comparative context).

Faculty and Administrator Misperceptions of the Field

In the state system of Texas, another sort of transformation is underway. Between 1905 and 1985, almost all instruction in religion within the units of the Texas College and University System was performed by “Bible Chairs”: ministers nominated and paid for by various Christian denominations and often teaching from an explicitly devotional perspective. The practice was declared unconstitutional in the mid-1980s, but a perception that religious studies is indistinguishable from

religious practice remained in the minds of many administrators and faculty members across the state. The permission granted in May 2007 to the University of Texas, Austin to establish the first-ever Department of Religion within the state system represents a significant change in state policy.

But old perceptions die slowly: on one university campus in Texas, while 98 percent of the faculty agree that religion influences world events in significant ways, 10 percent of the faculty members are still of the opinion that religious studies courses are, by their very nature, unconstitutional.¹⁷ Such sentiments fly in the face of nearly unanimous legal consensus. As early as *Abington v. Schempp* in 1963, the United States Supreme Court declared the constitutionality of religious studies in the state setting. Speaking for the majority, Justice Thomas Clark wrote: “[I]t might well be said that one’s education is not complete without the study of religion Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment.”¹⁸ Despite such assurances, the concerns of some faculty members, in Texas and elsewhere, who fear that religious studies necessarily entails an encroachment of religious practice into the classroom can still present real obstacles to the development of the discipline in state settings.

In some senses, what is happening in the Texas state system parallels the movements at Colorado Christian and Santa Clara — a transitioning of the religion major from a seminary to a comparative model. In Texas and other state-school contexts, though, the common fear faced is not that religious studies is not Christian enough, but rather that it might be too much so.

Evolving Interdisciplinary Efforts and Sub-fields

Amid already established programs of religious studies, the challenges are often of a different nature. At the University of Minnesota and Louisiana State University, efforts are underway to increase the interdisciplinary outreach of relatively small programs as a means of growing both curricular resources and institutional allies. In these settings, the size and scope of the religious studies major is growing, but largely through increased collaboration between core faculty and colleagues in cognate departments. The university appointment of a scholar in Hinduism, for instance, might be jointly shared between Religious Studies and Asian Studies. Gail Hinich Sutherland of Louisiana State observes, “This is going to mean that we probably have to leave the narrow textualists for seminaries and well-endowed private universities. No one wants to trade scholarly profundities for glib generalities but we must take note of the world we are preparing our students to inhabit.”¹⁹ This is not to say that textual studies is unimportant to students of religious studies. Still, in certain interdisciplinary- and area-studies settings, emerging perceptions of the public importance of religious studies are already shaping the nature and direction of the field, pointing the way to courses and faculty appointments in some sub-fields and not in others. Indeed, such directions may be partially responsible for the rapid nationwide increase in the number of courses in areas such as Hinduism and Islam but decline in the number of courses in Bible and theology.

Defining and Assessing the Major

The faculties of other established programs of religious studies are grappling with the chal-

lenge of assessment. Amid a national wave of assessment initiatives, programs are scrambling to find ways to fit the notoriously broad and ever-evolving field of religious studies into rubrics both literal and metaphorical. Of the thirty programs submitting “seed grant” proposals to the AAR–Teagle initiative on the religious studies major, fully one-half already offer some kind of capstone course/experience to their majors. Many other programs are contemplating adding such a capstone. But what should be the nature of such courses, how specifically do they contribute to assessment, and are there alternate models for assessment that might be more effective? Eckerd College, for example, blends comprehensive examinations in three fields with a substantial paper that together form the basis for an extended conversation between the student and the departmental faculty. Rhodes College has experimented with a model of faculty-student research collaboration.²⁰

Clearly, part of the challenge in developing assessment strategies for the discipline is the fact that there is continuing debate about the appropriate *content* of the religious studies major (though Section III of this report suggests that the depth of these debates may be exaggerated at times). Unlike a number of undergraduate disciplines that have accrediting bodies enforcing uniform content for the major or that spring from long-established disciplinary histories, religious studies is relatively new and evolving. Its strong interdisciplinary content complicates assessment further, as the major often straddles multiple departments. A final problem is the relative lack of reliable data collected by departments and the discipline about the career paths of students graduating with undergraduate degrees in religious studies.

Given that the content of the religious studies major is in flux and information about what students do with the major after graduation is incomplete at best, the tasks of defining the major and then assessing it represent continuing challenges across the discipline.

Growth in Community Colleges

At any given moment, 46 percent of American college students are attending community and two-year colleges.²¹ While courses in world religions, introduction to religion, philosophy of religion, Bible, and even Islam are increasingly common in these settings (over 40 percent of community colleges now offer coursework in the field), few of the instructors — often burdened by high teaching loads and no travel support — are members of the AAR. By one accounting, of a total AAR membership of 11,000, only about 100 members are on the faculties of community colleges. In light of the rapid increase in the number of religious studies majors at state universities, it is safe to assume that community colleges provide the training ground for many majors in the field. For the subset of community college students who do not continue on to four-year institutions, their community-college education might provide their only formal opportunity to take courses in religious studies (As Steve Young has poignantly pointed out, this subset features a disproportionately large number of military personnel who will take their newfound knowledge of religion — or lack thereof — overseas to apply in real-world situations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locales). In many cases, contact, let alone coordination, between the faculties of four-year institutions and those of the “feeder” community colleges in their areas is all but non-existent. How can

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We encourage you to attend
“THE AAR WHITE PAPER ON THE
RELIGION MAJOR: A FORUM”
at the Annual Meeting in Chicago

This interactive forum is from 9–11:30 AM
Saturday, November 1.

Check the *Annual Meeting
Program Book* for the location!

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the discipline better coordinate efforts between community colleges and four-year institutions to educate students in religious studies and to provide greater access to the discipline?

The challenges to the religious studies major are thus multiple: rapid growth, especially in public universities; a pronounced if uneven shift away from a seminary and toward a comparative model for the major; a range of misperceptions about the major and its goals on the part of administrators and colleagues; new, emerging subfields and interdisciplinary emphases; questions posed about the content of the major and its assessment; and the rapid and newfound growth of religious studies in community-college contexts.

The most common request made by the more than 300 faculty members who directly contributed to the AAR–Teagle initiative on the religious studies major was a desire for more frequent and more structured conversations in sorting through the various challenges that they face on a day-to-day basis. All of us, as scholars or religion, continually grapple with questions about the major: How should it be conceived? What is essential for our students to learn? How can we convey and assess these essential outcomes effectively? Indeed, those of us in the new and changing field of religious studies often do not appreciate how rarely some of these same questions are considered in other disciplines. Religious studies scholars have been exceptionally circumspect about the bases of the discipline (often because they have been compelled by skeptics to justify the field's existence), and doubtlessly individuals in the field have devised innovative responses to a host of challenges, but thus far most of these responses have been formulated on a local, ad hoc basis.

A signal contribution of the AAR–Teagle initiative has been to provide contexts and support for colleagues to compare their emerging articulations of the nature and value of a religious studies major, the substance and shape that it should have, and the multiple ways in which it contributes to broader institutional and educational objectives. The American Academy of Religion has a unique and critical role to play in sustaining and advancing these conversations, but there are things that all of us, as scholars in the field, can and must do. The remainder of this White Paper is dedicated to mapping out seven concrete actions that we, as scholars of religion, can take for studying, defining, and strengthening the religious studies major.

III. Actions

The American Academy of Religion will celebrate the centennial of its founding in 2009. In conjunction with this landmark, it is appropriate that the AAR and its members commit themselves to a series of actions for improving the major.

Studying the Major

The discipline of religious studies must begin to define, develop, and nurture practices and structures for sustained scholarly discussion of the undergraduate major. Towards this end, the AAR–Teagle Working Group makes the following two recommendations to the AAR Board:

1. **Starting with the 2009 Annual Meeting, the American Academy of Religion should inaugurate a consultation on “The Religious Studies Major” with the**

goal of integrating the section into the permanent structure of the Annual Meeting.

While the AAR Annual Meeting features hundreds of sessions each year, there is no continuing forum for the discussion of the scholarship of the major. Currently, multiple sessions focus on teaching and on strategies for individual courses, but we rarely pause as scholars to compare and engage ideas concerning the aim and content of the undergraduate curriculum in religious studies, as such. Adding a consultation on “The Religious Studies Major” would take an initial step toward filling this void. Individual sessions could focus on topics such as “The Capstone Course and Its Role in the Major,” “Building Interdisciplinary Bridges,” “Integrating the Major and the Goals of Liberal Education,” “Balancing Required Courses and Electives,” “Making the Case for the Major with Administrators,” and “The Challenge of Teaching Ethics in the Major.” The aim would be to provide a forum for scholars to share challenges, best practices, successes, and failures. Additionally, the creation of a consultation on “The Religious Studies Major” would provide an administrative structure for a continuing conversation that might be sustained in various settings (including regional meetings) throughout the year. This structure would also serve to support step 2, outlined below.

2. **Beginning in 2010 and continuing through 2012, the AAR should convene three annual, day-long workshops on the Religious Studies major, with each workshop focusing on a different theme related to the major.**

Colleagues across the discipline are grappling with a range of issues — from trying to establish the religious studies major amid hostile environments to re-conceiving long-entrenched curricula to address the evolving needs of a liberal education. Sharing best practices for the formulation, implementation, and assessment of learning outcomes; exploring the successes and failures of particular curricula for the major; and exploring the lines between serving students' academic and spiritual needs are all undertakings that demand give-and-take between participants over an extended period of time. The workshop model has proven highly effective in such contexts, not merely in allowing for dialogue but in helping to establish a core network of stakeholders and leaders in the discussion. There appears to be much enthusiasm for the workshop idea among the membership of the AAR: the day-long workshop on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” held at the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Diego drew record-enrollment, filling with over 75 registrants from almost 50 institutions. Contingent on the ability to secure outside funding to support the initiative, the Working Group recommends that the AAR “jump start” the scholarship of the major by holding a series of three annual “Leadership Workshops” on the major between 2010 and 2012.

Defining the Major

The discipline must continue to work to articulate the distinctiveness of the religious studies endeavor and to define the specific characteristics and value of the religious studies major. Towards this end, the Working Group makes the following two recommendations to the AAR Board:

1. **Beginning in 2009, the AAR should parallel its highly successful “Syllabus Project” web pages by launching a new web feature, “The Major Project,” compiling discipline-wide information on central aspects of the undergraduate major.**

The AAR's “Syllabus Project” collects almost 400 syllabi for dozens of different courses submitted by individual faculty members. In an ever-evolving field, it affords scholars of religion — new and seasoned alike — the opportunity to peruse the nature, details, and content of their colleagues' course offerings on a range of topics. It also allows scholars to locate and to network with colleagues in the discipline who are engaged in teaching projects similar to their own. The web pages featuring the “Syllabus Project” have proven highly popular among the AAR membership, becoming the second most visited pages on the entire AAR website.

It is proposed that in 2009 the AAR should launch parallel web pages dedicated to “The Major Project” and collecting data specifically on that nature of religious studies majors from a range of institutions. The AAR membership will be asked to submit descriptions of the major requirements, prerequisites, and rationales from their home institutions. They also will be asked to volunteer their own contact information so that they might serve as resources in response to any questions that might emerge. The goal here is simple but important: a free exchange of information. If faculty members on one campus are seeking a way to conceive (or to re-conceive) of major requirements, they will be able to turn to these web pages as a clearinghouse for ideas and approaches utilized by colleagues on other campuses. As a result of the Teagle-supported Leadership Workshop at the 2007 Annual Meeting, on the major, three dozen plans already have been collected in this effort.

2. **In light of a growing consensus about the characteristics of the religious studies major, the discipline and its members should work to distinguish the religious studies major from undergraduate majors in theology, history, philosophy, sociology, classics, and other distinct disciplines.**

The AAR–Teagle initiative on the religious studies major has revealed at least one important, and somewhat surprising, truth: despite the diversity of the field, there is emerging a strong and growing consensus about the basic characteristics of the religious studies major. In part prompted by recent world events and in part shaped by educational movements, religious studies programs in almost every setting — public, private, denominational, and secular — are converging upon certain core concepts as essential to the major. These concepts can be found in the directions taken by religiously-linked programs such as Santa Clara and Colorado Christian, in public university settings such as Texas and Louisiana State, and in liberal arts contexts such as Eckerd and Rhodes.

While setting these characteristics forth is, at best, a preliminary step in a larger discussion, it is nonetheless important that we do so — to assist our colleagues in their discussions with administrators who might otherwise blend the lines between the study of religion and its practice, to make clear to others and to ourselves the links between the discipline and the essential components of a liberal education, and to

avoid misrepresenting and mislabeling the major as something it is not to students and colleagues alike. In discussions with dozens of scholars who are seeking to establish or to refine undergraduate majors in religious studies, several common characteristics emerge. The religious studies major is, by its very nature:

- **Intercultural and Comparative:** The major explores more than one religious tradition and engages the phenomena of religion comparatively across and within cultures.
- **Multi-disciplinary:** The major promotes the understanding and application of a range of methodological and theoretical approaches to religious phenomena.
- **Critical:** The major teaches students to examine and engage religious phenomena, including issues of ethical and social responsibility, from a perspective of critical inquiry and analysis of both the other and the self.
- **Integrative:** The major applies theoretical knowledge of religious phenomena to lived, practical contexts, both historical and current.
- **Creative and Constructive:** The major employs knowledge of religious phenomena and the skills of religious studies in the solving of complex problems, including those raised in the personal and social engagement of issues of life, death, love, violence, suffering, and meaning.

There are obvious and strong affinities between the characteristics of the religious studies major and the AAC&U outcomes of liberal education, discussed in Section I. These links should be embraced and strengthened through our continued articulations of the major, the development of clear learning outcomes, and the implementation of robust assessment plans.

While there are many worthwhile manners by which students can study religion, not all such approaches are appropriately labeled a “major in religious studies.” The field of religious studies has rightly come to mean things distinct from the disciplines of history, theology, sociology, philosophy, and so forth. To persist in labeling either a degree that examines a single religion or one that explores multiple religions from a single methodological perspective a “major in religious studies” is to fuel confusion on the part of colleagues, administrators, students, and the public. It is also, by definition, to disassociate the major in religious studies from at least some of its core connections to the values of a liberal education.

Strengthening the Major

One clear challenge to efforts to improve the major in religious studies is the fact that the discipline and its members currently lack key data about certain central issues. A second challenge is that many of us find our programmatic assessment plans (as well as our knowledge of assessment, in general) to be in their infancy. Toward the end of addressing some of these deficiencies, the Working Group makes the following three recommendations to the AAR Board:

1. **Beginning in 2009, the AAR should assist in the coordination of several pilot studies on individual campuses dedicated to the tracking of religious studies majors after graduation and in the collection of data with regard to students' career paths.**

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As a prototypical course of study in liberal education, the undergraduate major in religious studies rightly makes no claim to being a professional degree. Its requirements and nature should not solely or even primarily be determined by their usefulness and applicability to the job market, per se. Such valid sentiments, however, do not mean that our responsibilities to our students end at graduation or that what we require in the major should not be informed by an awareness of the lives students will lead after college. Almost 50,000 undergraduates currently are majoring in religious studies in the United States. Yet most religious studies programs have only limited and anecdotal knowledge of what happens to students after their final classes. As one faculty member at Wartburg College put it, at present “it’s really more a matter of [students] keeping track of us than our keeping track of them.”²²

What have students found helpful about the religious studies major? What needs to be improved? Is the discipline equipping students with skills that they feel serve them well in life beyond college? Effective assessment clearly hinges, at least in part, upon student input, and there are rich insights to be mined from graduates who have gained the perspective afforded to them by life experiences and a little distance from their undergraduate studies. The discipline needs to develop a set of best practices for the tracking of undergraduate majors post-graduation, including models for overcoming the practical challenges in the process and examples of survey instruments that might be employed in various contexts. Contingent upon the securing of external funding for the initiative and perhaps in cooperation with the AAR Job Placement Task Force, beginning in 2009 the AAR should partner with a group of three or four institutions to pilot potential tracking techniques and survey instruments with an eye towards sharing effective models with the larger AAR membership.

2. Beginning in 2009, the AAR should coordinate several pilot programs designed to connect community-college faculty who are teaching courses in religion with colleagues in the field at four-year universities in the same geographical area. The goal will be to produce best practices for fostering effective collaborations between such faculties.

As the field of religious studies matures, it increasingly must address challenges that, in some instances, have been faced by other academic disciplines for decades. Twenty years ago, the number of community colleges offering courses in religious studies was likely nominal; today, over 40 percent of community colleges offer courses in the discipline. How faculties at two-year and four-year institutions collaborate to train students in religious studies will increasingly shape the health of the discipline in the years ahead. There is a need for scholars of religious studies to develop mechanisms that are effective in bridging the often deep institutional and bureaucratic chasms between two- and four-year schools and to establish common expectations, content, and goals for curricula in the major. In cases in which community colleges are not offering courses in religious studies, the faculties at neighboring four-year institutions might serve as critical resources for fostering awareness of the nature and importance of the discipline. Contingent on the

securing of external funding to support the initiative, in 2009 the AAR should begin to coordinate a series of two to three pilot programs connecting the faculties of established religious studies programs at four-year universities with the faculties at neighboring community colleges. The goal will be to develop and then to share with the AAR membership a series of best practices for productive collaboration in such contexts.

3. Starting with the 2009 Annual Meeting, the American Academy of Religion should inaugurate a consultation on “The Assessment of the Religious Studies Major” with the goal of integrating the section into the permanent structure of the Annual Meeting. In 2010, the AAR should add to the proposed “Major Project” web pages listing assessment plans from various institutions.

The argument that calls for increased collaboration and consultation among members of the AAR with regard to the nature and structure of the major also applies to the major’s assessment once it has been established. As we learn more about our students, their strengths and their weaknesses, we need simultaneously to establish structures that will promote a sustained dialogue on effective means of maintaining and refining what we do well and identifying and improving what we do less well. Establishing a consultation at the Annual Meeting is a first step in this direction. Sharing assessment plans and ideas through the AAR website provides another means of promoting dialogue and the exchange of ideas. As with the proposed “Major Project,” the goal of the accompanying Assessment web pages will be for colleagues from across the discipline to voluntarily submit the assessment plans from their home institutions and agree to serve as resources to others who might have questions or need advice.

Even collectively, the seven actions outlined in this section represent only a starting point for a much larger discussion of the religious studies major within the discipline. Through developing mechanisms for a sustained conversation about the major, defining the major more fully and carefully, filling gaps in our present knowledge about the major, and assessing it more robustly, the hope is that we, as scholars of religion, can foster a rich and productive dialogue that creates a genuine “scholarship of the major” in the years ahead.

IV. The Task Ahead

In 1999, precisely the time when *The Economist* was releasing its obituary of God, historian D. G. Hart was publishing an obituary of another sort. In *The University Gets Religion: Religious Studies in American Higher Education*, Hart presented a bleak picture of the future of academic study of religion, declaring it a “field in search of a rationale.” He concluded: “As religious studies strives to sever ties to communities of faith, it cannot do so without self-immolation.”²³

Like *The Economist’s* declaration of God’s demise, Hart’s prediction may have been premature. The last decade has seen rapid growth in the academic study of religion and, by many indicators, this growth has been spurred on by an emerging consensus, both public and academic, about what the scholarly study of religion entails and why it is important to students and society. If Madeleine Albright is correct that the failure of Americans to understand

world religious traditions “poses one of the great challenges to our public diplomacy,” then the members of the American Academy of Religion face an awesome responsibility in the years ahead. With almost 50,000 students majoring in religious studies in American colleges and universities at any given time (and with that number increasing rapidly), we, as scholars of religion, will play a significant role in shaping what the next generation of Americans knows, thinks, and does with regard to religion. Clearly, our efforts to improve the major in religious studies and to strengthen its links to the goals of liberal education are anything but purely academic.

Notes

- ¹ *The Economist*, December 23, 1999.
- ² See, for instance, Albright’s recollections in *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, May 19, 2006.
- ³ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- ⁴ World Christian Database, 2007; cf. *The Economist*, November 1, 2007.
- ⁵ For one summary, see Jeremy Caplan, “As Harvard Goes . . .,” *Time*, March 5, 2007.
- ⁶ Madeleine Albright. *The Mighty and the Almighty*. Easton Press, 2003.
- ⁷ *The Economist*, November 1, 2007.
- ⁸ Robert Wuthnow, “Religious Diversity in a ‘Christian Nation’: American Identity and American Democracy,” in Thomas Banchoff, ed., *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
- ⁹ Derek Bok. *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More*. Princeton University Press, 2006.
- ¹⁰ Higher Education Research Institute, “Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose,” 2006, www.spirituality.ucla.edu.
- ¹¹ *College Learning for the New Global Century: A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise*. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ All statistics in this paragraph are derived from the American Academy of Religion, Census of Religion and Theology Programs, 1996, 2000, and 2005.
- ¹⁴ American Academy of Religion, Census of Religion and Theology Programs, 2000 and 2005. The data supporting the changes cited in this paragraph refer to the number of sections offered of the particular course as a percentage of the total number of sections offered during each survey period.
- ¹⁵ Frank Ames. “Establishing the Religious Studies Major: Stories from the Colorado Christian University Trenches,” Leadership Workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” 2007 AAR Annual Meeting, San Diego.
- ¹⁶ Paul G. Crowley, “Religious Studies in a Jesuit Context,” *Religious Studies News*, October 2007, 24.
- ¹⁷ Rebecca Raphael, “Religious Studies in Texas: A Mission without a Major,” Leadership Workshop, 2007 AAR Annual Meeting, San Diego.
- ¹⁸ For a discussion of Abington and other constitutional cases, see Stephen Prothero. *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know — And Doesn’t*. Harper San Francisco, 2007, 127–129.
- ¹⁹ Gail Hinich Sutherland, “Report on the AAR/Teagle Seed Grant,” January 2008.
- ²⁰ Bernadette McNary-Zak, Rhodes College, Leadership Workshop, 2007 AAR Annual Meeting, San Diego.
- ²¹ Kay Randall, “No Average Student: Community College Students Not Your Typical Undergraduates,” www.utexas.edu/features/25/college/index.html, cited by Steven Young, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Religious Studies and the Community College,” Wildcard session on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the AAR, San Diego. All other statistics and quotations in the paragraph are taken from Young’s essay.
- ²² For a fuller discussion of these issues, see Darby Kathleen Ray, “Do You Know Where Your Students Are?: Tracking Undergraduate Religion Majors,” *Religious Studies News*, October 2007, 25.
- ²³ D. G. Hart. *The University Gets Religion: Religious Studies in American Higher Education*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, 10. 

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The Work of the Scholar/Activist Teacher

Rebecca Alpert and Traci West



This featured article is dedicated to the memory of Letty M. Russell (1929–2007), whose life was a pioneering example of how to bring scholarly and activist commitments together. Letty Russell was an architect and builder of feminist liberationist theology. She was one of the first women ordained in the United Presbyterian Church and subsequently a Professor of Theology at the Yale Divinity School. Her life's work at Yale began in 1975 and continued up until her death.

In May 2007, a group of activist scholars met for a consultation, "Teaching Scholars, Changing Models." The consultation was envisioned by Letty and those she mentored as a way to encourage the next generations of teachers and scholars to further Letty's passion: to envision a world in which we bring liberation and feminist/womanist practice into our classrooms and institutions of learning. Its goals were to develop transformative strategies for combining feminist/womanist activism and scholarship in academic institutions, encourage mentoring relationships between senior and junior scholars, build a network of the many scholars who want to work on educational transformation, and develop models of teaching to combine both social analysis and action for transformation. It was an opportunity for an intergenerational, interracial, and interfaith group to share transformative strategies with one another and an honor to be there with Letty Russell and move forward her vision.

We have selected comments from some of the participants and organized them to reflect differing dimensions of the practical and value-based wisdom we gained in terms of transforming our institutions and our individual classrooms.

We begin with two descriptions of activist, political work to create change for the sake of building good community within our own academic institutions, realizing that it will not always happen organically.

Letty Russell and Margaret Farley:



Forces for change in educational institutions can be creative or destructive; in either case, communities of learning will not flourish if they remain passive. For

five years, from 1995–2000, many faculty, students, alumni/ae, and friends of Yale Divinity School engaged in a struggle with the university central administration to retain the location and historical buildings of the divinity school. The struggle was not about "bricks and mortar," but about sustaining and improving place and space for shared study, life, worship, learning, and action. Against needless demolition, loss of historical integrity, and diffusion of community life, the struggle was for life-giving leadership and future transformative community strategies in theological education, providing service to church and society.

Letty Russell was Professor Emerita of Theology at Yale Divinity School, an international leader in liberation and feminist theological education, and the author of more than twenty books, including Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church.

Margaret Farley is Gilbert L. Stark Professor Emerita at Yale Divinity School, co-director of the All-Africa Conference: Sister to Sister, and the author or co-editor of seven books, including Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics.

Kate Ott:



Institutions are created and sustained by people — creating change requires matching strategy and intentionality with those who prefer to maintain the status quo. I worked with other Christian ethicists on a proposal to promote the adoption of policies and guidelines, such as flexible work policies and scheduling and childcare benefits, to foster family-friendly departments across the academy. As I encountered colleagues who were not sure about the appropriateness of such advocacy, this organizing work taught me how timid our society can be about collective action — rendering my convictions all the stronger. The doing of ethics is not confined to the classroom — it is meant to transform the classroom, the department, the field, and hopefully the world.

Kate Ott is the Associate Director of the Religious Institute, where she advocates for and educates about sexual and reproductive justice in faith communities.

The scholar-activists all agreed that "the devil is in the details" and described assignments that compel students to consider the lived applications of the texts and traditions they were studying. These assignments raise our hopes, but also our fears, as we try to encourage students to make changes. What follows are examples from the scholar-activists discussion of pedagogic strategies to foster activist learning in the classroom.

Emilie M. Townes:



My course, "Warrior Chants and Unquiet Spirits," focuses on the Christian protest tradition in historical and contemporary contexts through autobiographies and other writings. Course papers end by addressing one act the students will commit to doing in response to the challenge or comfort the authors present. I ask the students

to name the steps they will take to do so and to be concrete. Students are often tempted to list more than one thing. Many struggle with naming concrete actions and prefer to stay on theories or discuss why they struggle so much with what the author has raised. One hope is that students become more thoughtful; my fear is that the rampant individualism of society encourages them to live their lives in narrow and haunting spaces.

Emilie M. Townes is the current president of the American Academy of Religion and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology at Yale Divinity School.

Traci C. West:



In my "Sexual Ethics" PhD seminar, students are invited to examine examples from a controversial photography exhibit by Robert Mapplethorpe that includes homoerotic photographs of black males as well as black male/white male sexualized interactions. I fear reinforcement of heterosexist and racist

stereotypes, but hope for scrutiny of the criteria for morally and aesthetically appreciating human bodies and sexuality in public life. Students write down the issues of comfort/discomfort that surface for them based upon their own gender, race/ethnicity, and religious background. The class discusses those issues and how they inform our judgment about whether we consider these photographs to be art or pornography, and the public benefit, if any, of such an exhibit.

Traci C. West is professor of Ethics and African American Studies at Drew University Theological School.

Judith Plaskow:



I teach "Nature and Experience of Religion" to undergraduates. For each tradition studied, we read selections from scripture and then a text relating that tradition to the contemporary world. My determination to include Islam in the course, which I had not done before 9/11, was itself considered

a political decision stemming from my conviction that it would be irresponsible to teach this course in 2006 without including Islam. If we did nothing else all semester, it would be valuable for the students to own, open, and read parts of the Qur'an and experience some of its remarkable similarities to the Bible as well as its important differences. I hope students will leave the course with a more complex view of Islam. I fear that they will read their own preconceptions into the material.

Judith Plaskow is Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College and a Jewish feminist theologian.

Mary C. Churchill:



In "Indians and Allies: Approaches to Social and Cultural Issues Facing Native Americans," I employ the case method, which uses fictional scenarios of real issues in Native communities. I hope that students will move beyond their stereotypes to an empathic understanding of American Indians,

but I fear that the strategy might be dehumanizing or construed as endorsing appropriation. Students research Native and non-Native roles in preparation for role plays in which they explore a problem and possible resolutions. Students learn not only about themselves, their assumptions, fears, and strengths, but also about some of the concrete realities American Indians experience and the role of religious traditions for real people in living communities. The scenarios prompt students to see the inseparability of Native and non-Native peoples and problems.

Mary C. Churchill teaches in Women's and Gender Studies, Native American Studies, and American Multicultural Studies at Sonoma State University and she co-chairs the AAR Native Traditions in the Americas program unit.

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Anne Joh:



I have found that out of the assigned readings in "Introduction to Theology," the books that generated the most rage from many of the white students in my class are *Missionary Conquest* by George Tinker and *God of the Oppressed* by James Cone. I wanted students to examine why and where the rage came from. In order to tap into deeper analysis of their rage, the class broke into small groups that asked questions of how we can engage in "social relocation" to listen to what the scholars were saying and why they might be making those particular theological reflections. I believe that we learn best from one another through listening and what Gayatri Spivak refers to as "non-coercive rearrangement of desire." My hope is that through this learning from one another, our own desire for change emerges from within each person. My fear is that there is part of us that simply and willfully refuses to listen to the heart of the other.

Anne Joh is Assistant Professor of Theology at Phillips Theological Seminary and author of *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*.

The ongoing work of maintaining vitality and authenticity in activist-scholarly teaching requires a range of strategies for bridging the classroom-community divide. These strategies make a unique contribution to overarching learning goals.

Kristen J. Leslie:



Academic theories and classroom explorations are only as helpful as their ability to understand and reflect the specifics of lived human suffering. To introduce a wider notion of pastoral care that attends to the structures and causes of suffering, I invited students to join in my research and consulting at the United States Air Force

Academy. On the military base, we faced many new pastoral considerations and had lengthy discussions about transforming theologies and authoritative allegiance. After returning, we watched what happened when pastoral care was forced into a very public and political space, including my own testimony for the House Armed Services Committee on the matter of Christian proselytizing at the Air Force Academy.

Kristen J. Leslie, PhD, ordained in the United Methodist church, is the Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Yale Divinity School.

M. Shawn Copeland:

The market culture in which we live not only drains our humanity, creativity, and spirituality, but subordinates us to oppressive power arrangements. In the undergraduate core course "Person and Social Responsibility," conventional classroom work is combined with service or advocacy work in preselected field placements in: youth work (mentoring and tutoring), the correctional system, emergency shelters, literacy, international refugee centers, domestic violence, suicide prevention, and HIV/AIDS services. Such service or advocacy work provides students with up-close-and-personal contact with the breakdowns in United States society and helps them to grasp the impact of social oppression, social injustice, and social indifference on the lives of concrete human persons.

M. Shawn Copeland teaches Theology and African and African Diaspora Studies at Boston College.

Rebecca Alpert:



I assign students in a Women's Studies class to observe how race and gender function in their daily experiences so that they can see how such commonplace events are woven into the pattern of social discrimination by default. One assignment is to write a one-page descriptive narrative describing in detail an experience the student had

that involved race and gender. Students get a rich tableau of many ways their lives are defined by race and gender. They often comment that they never would have noticed or thought about the experience they described if they didn't have to for this assignment. They then analyze one of the events they describe so they can make connections between their lived experience and the systems of oppression we study in class.

Rebecca Alpert is Associate Professor of Religion and Women's Studies at Temple University and author of *Whose Torah? A Concise Guide to Progressive Judaism*.

Jung Ha Kim:



I think scholars often assume a fictive dichotomy between the academy and the community. The classroom may be a privileged space and time for both teachers and learners to consciously reflect and analyze what's going on, but not necessarily an isolated experience from everyday life that is deeply rooted in communities of belonging and accountability. In my course for graduate students on "Asian-American Experience," over half of the classes take place outside of the classroom. The community setting of the classes allows "leaders" from varying Asian-American ethnic groups to "eavesdrop" on class discussions and to participate by sharing their stories and community needs. We watch documentary films and discuss them together and engage in a "fish bowl" dialogical process of intentionally listening in on certain conversations, such as a group of Vietnamese elderly, after which we come together to address the issues that we heard.

Jung Ha Kim is a sociologist at Georgia State University and also works with the Pan-Asian Community Center.

Sometimes, no matter how hard we work at transforming them, the current structures and values of existing academic institutions are inadequate to achieve our goals. Innovative structures and strategies to link intellectual and activist work must be created, and we must broaden our thinking to involve others outside our immediate worlds in our efforts for change.

Shannon Clarkson:



Doctor of Ministry programs could benefit by including women from countries of the global south, expanding the horizons of both United States participants and global southern women. I participated in founding an International Feminist Doctor of Ministry in 1993. With its Asian women coordinators in Japan and Korea, we created guidelines to ensure the inclusion of women in countries of the global south and participants who do not want to be ordained. The advent of the Internet cafe and Internet discussion groups brought a sea of change in the program's administration. This technology has enabled instant submission of papers as well as collective justice work. A week does not go by without requests for response to a human rights issue one of the participants is facing.

Shannon Clarkson directs the International Feminist DMin program at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Janet Jakobsen:



Without connections to the world beyond the academy, scholars cannot realize the potential impact of their work, nor can they draw on external resources to support change within the academy. We could enhance the effectiveness of our scholarship and our activism by building more institutions that serve as hybrids, institutions

that are in the academy with access to academic resources and also operate at and beyond its borders. Hybrid centers or projects allow activists to enter, but on terms that are different than those of usual academic practice, enabling us to shift our work to make it more useful to activists who don't share our institutional paradigms. Bridge institutions allow for collaborative knowledge production between activists and academics, but we will have to create them ourselves.

Janet Jakobsen is the Director of the Center for Research on Women at Barnard College.

FOCUS

ON

Changes in Faculty Demographics

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What's My Job? Academic Citizenship and the Well-being of Schools, Departments, and Programs

Fred Glennon, Le Moyne College, glennon@lemoyne.edu



Fred Glennon is Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Faculty Development at Le Moyne College, where he teaches courses on religious social ethics, introduction to the study of religion, and religion and healing, and directs the Faculty Excellence Program. His research focuses on the ethics of poverty policy, the justice of labor markets, and teaching and learning for social justice. He is

co-author of Introduction to the Study of Religion (Orbis Books). He is currently chair of the Academic Relations Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the AAR.

EVERYONE AGREES that changes in higher education are having an effect on the work of faculty members, departments, and programs. A key change is the growth of the corporate model into academia and its corollary of moving away from hiring tenure-track faculty toward hiring contingent faculty (both full-time and part-time). In a recent book (*The Last Professors*, Fordham University Press, 2008), Frank Donoghue contends that higher education is coming increasingly under the management philosophy of the "casualization" of labor, the global norm practiced by employers everywhere, in which employees are paid more by the job than with the traditional salary, benefits, and job security to which academics have been accustomed. The same financial corporate values of lowering labor costs and the need for flexibility in the hiring process to reflect more efficiently changing demographics, interests, and programs now dominate most institutions of higher education. The new institutional reality is worse for those teaching in the humanities who have few connections to external funding sources or competitive options in the private sector. Donoghue contends, "We depend entirely on our home institutions not only to pay us a fair salary but to determine both the kinds of work and the amount of work we have to do (publishing, teaching, service, outreach) in order to earn that salary" (*Higher Education Updates*, June 11, 2008).

But what are the effects of such changes on the work of faculty members in departments and institutions? What does the traditional three-legged stool of publishing, teaching, and service look like today in light of these changes? What impact does the corporate model have on conceptions of shared governance, collaboration, collegiality, and representing the academy in/to the public? How does the growing percentage of part-time and temporary faculty

members in our institutions affect the service or "academic citizenship" requirements of the shrinking tenure-track faculty? What citizenship responsibilities accompany part-time and temporary faculty work? What responsibilities do tenure-line faculty members have toward part-time and temporary faculty as fellow citizens of our institutions?

These and other questions were the backdrop for the Special Topics Forum entitled "What's My Job? Academic Citizenship and the Well-being of Schools, Departments, and Programs," held at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Diego and sponsored by the Academic Relations Committee. The committee invited panelists to reflect on these themes on the basis of their backgrounds and experience: Mark Schwehn, Professor of Humanities at Christ College, Valparaiso University; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, former Dean and Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown University and now President of Bryn Mawr College; and Louis A. Ruprecht, Associate Professor and William Suttles Chair of Religious Studies at Georgia State University.

Mark Schwehn began the discussion with his concern over the concept of "job" in the title of the forum. He believes that most professors see their work as a career and profession, not a job. That is why he prefers the term "vocation." Vocation transcends the mundane activities of the work we do to provide a sense of meaning and identity. We not only choose our vocation, our vocation chooses us and defines in part who we are. So the first question he addressed is "What is my vocation? What is fundamental to it?" In Schwehn's view, our vocation is not a three-legged stool but a partial description of the manifold ways in which we teach. He suggests that we should focus on what we are good at and think of ourselves as teachers first, which is the fundamental component of our vocation as faculty members. In his view, the other two legs of scholarship and service are ways of teaching — we teach through our publications and through the various ways we serve the academy and the broader communities.

Second, Schwehn raised the question of responsibility — to whom should we turn for leadership in the academy? He suggests that we must look to ourselves and then to those we trust in academic leadership positions, who demonstrate responsibility and practical wisdom. He recognizes that there are many competing goods and demands in the academy these days coming from students, parents, administration, trustees, funders, and the public at large. At times, we must take responsibility for the whole; we need to stand up for the health of the academy in the context of these competing goods and demands.

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Third, what does citizenship look like in light of the growing number of adjuncts and contingent faculty? Schwehn contends that, in this context, senior faculty should assume more ownership of governance, while junior faculty should focus more on mission. Senior faculty need to protect junior faculty and the school from their lack of experience.

We need to develop junior faculty into the mission of the department and the institution so that they can develop their vocation as teachers and so that their teaching in all of its forms reflect that mission. He contends that this is true regardless of institutional setting — classroom teaching should look the same. This is not true, however, for shared governance. The deliberative task of departments, he suggests, is to think together about the best ways to live out our vocation. Teaching is a “corporate vocation.”

Although in his view we should consider our work as vocation, he recognizes that the changes taking place in the world and in the academy make this ideal more difficult. He asked those present to think about the following question: “To what extent have material and social conditions reduced our vocation to a job?”

The notion of changing conditions in the academy was central to Jane McAuliffe’s reflections. She noted that when she came into the academy there was a “Mr. Chips” model prevalent in the profession (see film *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* or James Hilton’s book by the same name): faculty stay at one institution throughout their career, are married to the job, and think of serving that institution in whatever capacity necessary. They were identified with their institutions. This is not true today. Faculty members have a difficult job in our institutions today, especially junior faculty members who have many other

responsibilities and expectations. Instead of the old model, McAuliffe sees in today’s faculty a movement towards “loyalty to the guild,” not the institution. There is a focus on “moving up the academic food chain.” In this new context, she worries especially about the post-tenure of faculty. Full professors have a difficult time moving beyond where they are and she suggests that this is due in part to a deficit in mentoring of faculty.

What we need, McAuliffe suggests, is a “new ideal” about what the role and life of the faculty member is within an institution. On the one hand, faculty members need a much broader perspective on their part. They need to be clued into the bigger issues facing the country and higher education. At the least, they should know the institution and the curriculum (especially the core curriculum). Faculty can draw on wider networks to build and enrich the life of the department and the college. Some of the larger issues for faculty to have conversation with include being conversant with globalizations and the changes that are happening in rapid fashion. The world is flat and students will compete with others around the globe in terms of work and careers. The liberal arts are more important now for students because many will switch their careers a number of times and a strong grounding in the liberal arts will provide the intellectual agility they need. Yet, the faculties in these areas need to be clued in on new technologies and communications media that are shaping the transmission of knowledge and instruction. Faculties also need to stay alert to the pressures being imposed on us: access and affordability, assessment (mandated from external institutions), the effects of rankings (on a more global level), ever-increasing regulation of higher education, and sustainability. Faculty need to work with the

institutions because students are more demanding. Because the faculty is the core of the institution, they must be leaders. At the same time, the institution needs to be more flexible to allow faculty to focus on their gifts and strengths, and this flexibility should be reflected in the rewards structure.

“Some observed that faculties are no longer self-governing bodies, a characteristic central to professional life. Instead, external forces are shaping the professoriate. There is a big difference between being a “professional” and being an “employee.” In the world of employer-employee relations, one participant observed, “Who pays the piper calls the tune.” The phenomenon of the University of Phoenix is an effect of this change and not a cause.”

The questions related to the impact of the growth of contingent faculty on academic citizenship were brought to the forefront by Louis A. Ruprecht, who indicated that a title for his reflections might be “Where the virtues of the polis meet the late capitalist academy.” As a person who struggled for ten years to find a permanent position in the academy, able to procure only one-year or multiple-year contracts, he noted that the three legs of the academic profession’s stool vary. For contingent faculty, the primary focus is on teaching more and there is little time (or desire) for institutional service and commitment. The tripod does not stand very well, he noted, when the legs are uneven.

Instead of the question “What’s my job?” Ruprecht asked, “What, no job?” He and others were oversold about the changes that were about to happen. Those expected to retire did not do it as quickly and, more importantly, institutions replaced them with contingent faculty (full-time and part-time). The late capitalist and corporate model of downsizing came to dominate. Retiring faculty members were not replaced. Institutions, this model tells them, operate more efficiently and cheaply with contingent faculty, whom he likened to “resident aliens.” Ironically, even though contingent faculty members do more teaching, which many would contend is the central role of our profession, they are not rewarded for their efforts. Contingent faculty members often feel that their work is structured as a job in the narrow sense, but that their labor is not fully recompensed. Moreover, they cannot be recognized as outstanding teachers because the teaching awards go to full-time, tenure-track faculty members.


Now that he is a full-time member of a faculty, Ruprecht understands more fully how demanding the service or academic citizenship requirements of the faculty are. They are very labor intensive and consume a great deal of time; yet

there is no consensus on what counts as “service.” While he does not advocate eliminating service and academic citizenship as a key element of the work of faculty, he wonders if the tripod is a legitimate metaphor for what we do anymore. In many ways, the tripod metaphor diminishes the teaching leg of the stool because the demands of scholarship and service take us away from teaching. Reminded of Socrates, he noted, “Free from the duties of the polis, one can be a teacher.” Instead, Ruprecht advocates for more democracy and diversity in determining how faculty members invest their time and energies in their institutions.

What followed was a lively discussion between the panelists and the audience. Is the academy corrupted by economic structures and the corporate model? Some observed that faculties are no longer self-governing bodies, a characteristic central to professional life. Instead, external forces are shaping the professoriate. There is a big difference between being a “professional” and being an “employee.” In the world of employer-employee relations, one participant observed, “Who pays the piper calls the tune.” The phenomenon of the University of Phoenix is an effect of this change and not a cause. For many the sense of “college” is gone and in its place is a feeling of isolated individualized workers in a knowledge factory.

Yet in this context, the need for faculty to affirm service and to take their rightful place as academic citizens of their institutions and communities becomes all the more important. As one participant observed, service is the “democratic work of the polis.” The political work of the faculty within the institution is what allows us to fight the corporate model. Moreover, the community outreach element of this service and the role that academics play as public intellectuals in centers, institutes, and the like enable the faculty to articulate such values as democracy, collegiality, and the cultivation of humanity, which challenge the narrowness of the economic and corporate models.

Some affirmed that perhaps we should think of the forms of engagement of faculty with their institutions and communities as more of a spectrum or continuum and less of a tripod. The stages in the career of the faculty play a significant role in the expectations of how they invest their time and energies in service and citizenship activities. Many departments “protect” junior faculty from the damage of service and citizenship for fear that too much time invested in service will take them away from the activities of scholarship and teaching that are the primary avenues for getting tenure and promotion.

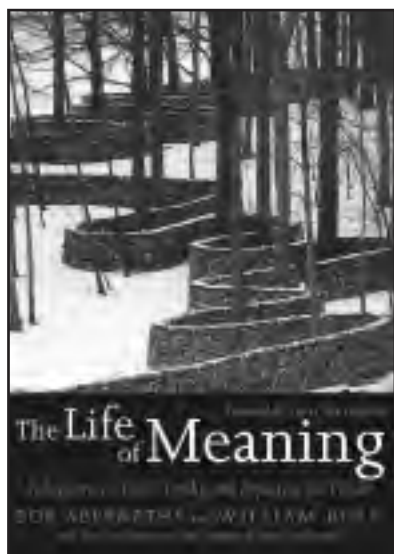
While this was an important concern, some felt that equally important was the need to help in the “formation” of new faculty members as academic citizens, perhaps as early as the graduate school (where they are often “socialized” to see their work primarily as scholarship). Some noted the irony in this socialization process: academics are trained as “solo” practitioners, but have to engage in “group” practice. Yet we are judged, in tenure and promotion processes, on being a “solo” practitioner. The implication is that, in addition to forming our junior colleagues for citizenship, we have to transform the “conservative” nature of current tenure processes to become more open and flexible to accommodate these changing realities and to place more value on the work of academic and institutional citizenship in all its forms. This would enable new faculty to develop the skills necessary to assume leadership positions in their departments, institutions, and communities, and to challenge the increasing dominance of corporate models in higher education. 

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Looking the Other Way? Accreditation Standards and Part-Time Faculty (2008)

Earl Henry (Music), Webster University

Editor's Note:

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WITH PURVIEW from Maine to Guam, the six different regional accrediting organizations provide their member institutions with guidelines for managing issues of educational integrity and long-term financial viability, and also study sensitive issues in higher education. Most of the regional accrediting organizations contain separate commissions that deal with different types of educational institutions (for example, K–12 schools, technical schools, and colleges and universities). This report treats the following entities: the Middle States Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (hereafter Middle States commission); the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (New England commission); the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (North Central commission); the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (Northwest commission); the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Southern commission); and two divisions of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges: the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (Western junior commission); and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (Western senior commission). The New England Association of Schools and Colleges has a separate commission, not included in this discussion, that accredits technical and career institutions.

According to their mission statements, accrediting organizations serve “the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning” (North Central) and by mustering an

authority that “defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence” (Middle States). As the Western senior commission phrases it, the goal of accreditation is to foster “institutional engagement with issues of educational effectiveness and student learning.” The influence of accrediting organizations is enhanced by the fact that accreditation is required for access to federal funds such as student aid.

There is no shortage of verbiage in the documents written by accrediting organizations to direct institutions of higher learning in their efforts to “assure educational quality, enhance institutional effectiveness, and foster continuous improvement” (Northwest). All of the organizations publish handbooks that explain and amplify their standards, requirements, and procedures. These documents range from twenty-eight pages (New England) to nearly two hundred pages (North Central). While repetition is legion, the seven handbooks studied, together with their supplementary publications, comprise nearly one thousand pages.

Since their founding, the regional accrediting organizations have confronted and established positions on many contentious issues in American higher education. To one extent or another, for example, agencies have issued guidelines to address faculty evaluation, academic freedom, diversity, distance learning, and intellectual property rights. With commissioners and evaluators trained and experienced in higher education, one might expect them to be in the vanguard of the debate over part-time faculty. They are not. While the AAUP, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers, among others, have documented the growth of non-tenure-track appointments and detailed the

Table 1: Definitions and Requirements for Public Identification of “Part-time Faculty”

Accreditor	Definitions and Requirements
Middle States commission	No definition or requirement for public identification; stipulates that “whenever used in these standards, the term ‘faculty’ shall be broadly construed to encompass qualified professionals such as third parties contracted by the institution, part-time, or adjunct faculty, and those assigned responsibilities in academic development and delivery.”
New England commission	No definition. “The institution publishes a list of its current faculty . . . distinguishing between those who have full- and part-time status.”
North Central commission	No definition or requirement for public identification.
Northwest commission	Part-time faculty are those “whose major responsibility is not related to the institution in question; [they are] customarily assigned one or two classes with class-related responsibilities only.” • “Catalogs and other official publications should be readily available and accurately depict . . . faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately).”
Southern commission	No definition.
Western junior commission	No definition. Catalogs and other official publications should “accurately depict,” among other things, “faculty (full- and part-time listed separately).”
Western senior commission	“Part-time or adjunct faculty [are those] whose major responsibility is not related to the institution in question. These faculty are customarily assigned one or two classes with class-related responsibilities only.” • The institution should have “publications that make clear the status (e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct) of each faculty member.”

ensuing deterioration of the profession, accrediting agencies have been largely silent. Most accreditors take no position on faculty who, whether full- or part-time, are off the tenure track — and the term “contingent faculty” appears nowhere in any of the standards documents.

Because accreditors do not address the whole spectrum of contingent faculty, the present

study is a survey of accreditation handbooks and selected statements relating to part-time faculty (“part-time” and “adjunct” are used synonymously in this document). Many of the guidelines and principles in accreditation handbooks are drafted in such general terms that, given an effective spin, virtually any topic or issue could be said to have been addressed. Often, handbooks refer to requirements for “the faculty” in ways that make it unclear whether full-time faculty or all faculty are meant.

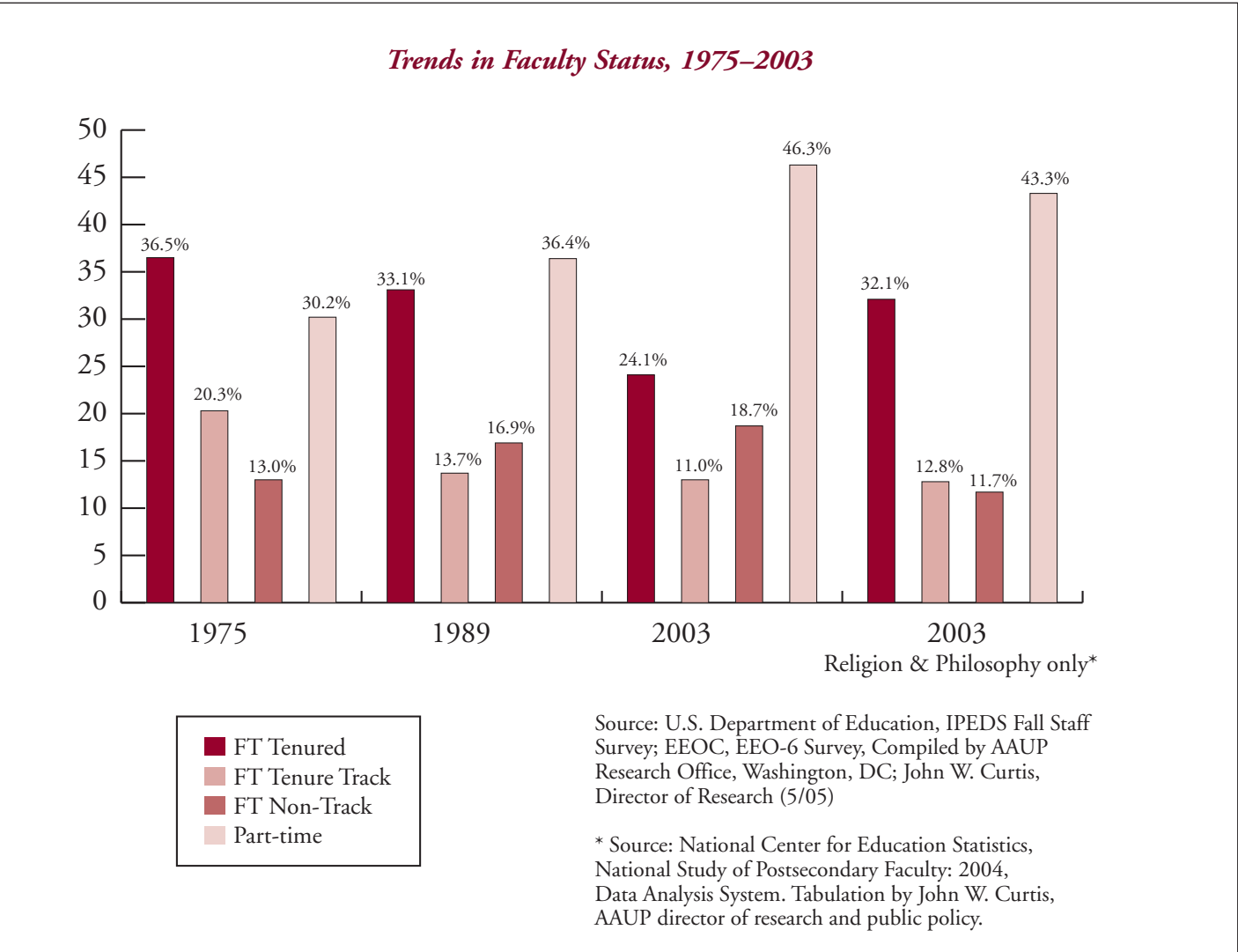
The statements explored in the following pages are those that touch directly on faculty employment status: definitions; qualifications, training, and evaluation; guidelines for faculty sufficiency; and academic freedom.

Definitions

While the existence of contingent employment in the academy is well documented, accreditors differ substantially in their recognition of full- and part-time faculty status (Table 1). Only two accreditors, the Northwest and Western senior commissions, provide true definitions of the term “part-time faculty.” The two statements are nearly identical, and both appear in the respective glossaries (and not in guidelines themselves). A part-time faculty employee, according to the Northwest commission, is one “whose major responsibility is not related to the institution in question.”¹

The New England commission takes a different tack, leaving the matter of definition to individual institutions. “Faculty categories (e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct),” writes the New England commission in its 2005 Standards for Accreditation, “are clearly defined by the institution as is the role of each category in fulfilling the institution’s mission and purposes.” The Middle States commission regards the term “faculty” as inclusive: “the term ‘faculty’ shall be broadly construed to encompass qualified professionals such as third parties

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contracted by the institution, part-time or adjunct faculty, and those assigned responsibilities in academic development and delivery.”²

Even when accreditors avoid the issue of contingent faculty in their standards guidelines, they may still require that statistics on faculty be separated into full- and part-time categories. The North Central commission, for example, fails to define categories of faculty anywhere in its 192-page *Handbook of Accreditation*, but mandates in an appendix that a “list of all full-time and part-time faculty [should be] available to the review team.” While likewise avoiding any distinction between full- and part-time faculty, the Western junior commission requires that listings of the two groups be separate in catalogs. And the Northwest commission asks that for the use of evaluation teams, “statistics [should be] available concerning faculty and administration characteristics, such as numbers of males and females, minorities, full-time and part-time faculty.”³

As used by some college and university administrations today, the term “part-time faculty” is a misnomer. A large percentage of those designated part-time are actually full-time faculty with part-time pay and few or no benefits. In its glossary definitions of “faculty,” however, the Western senior commission adds an instructive caveat: “Part-time or adjunct faculty [are those] whose major responsibility is not related to the institution in question. These faculty are customarily assigned one or two classes with class-related responsibilities only.” The definition used by the Northwest commission is nearly as limiting and also includes the phrase “one or two classes.”⁴ While we have no evidence that accreditors tally the number of courses taught by individual adjuncts, institutions that regularly employ part-time faculty to teach three or more courses clearly practice outside accepted standards for the Western senior and Northwest commissions.

Qualifications, Training, and Evaluation

Although accrediting commissions are reluctant to recognize differences between full- and part-time faculty, they are in general agreement that the latter group must be supported and integrated into the college or university community (Table 2). In assessing “Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability,” the Western senior commission asks for information and policy documents that address ways in which “part-time faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution.” The Northwest commission takes the most comprehensive position, suggesting that part-time faculty should be well informed not only about the institution, but also about their individual rights: “Employment practices for part-time and adjunct faculty include dissemination of information regarding the institution, the work assignment, rights and responsibilities, and conditions of employment.” The Middle States commission specifies that institutions relying on part-time, adjunct, temporary, or other faculty on time-limited contracts should write employment policies and practices that are as carefully developed and communicated as those for full-time faculty. The North Central commission simply asks institutions to describe how they “use” part-time faculty.⁵

As the numbers of part-time faculty have risen steadily over the past two decades, questions have inevitably arisen about the qualifications of individuals who work amid constant turnover and who are often appointed at the last minute. That part-time faculty should be qualified is self-evident; the Northwest commission, however, weighs in with a dedicated statement: “Part-time and adjunct faculty are qualified by

academic background, degree(s), and/or professional experience to carry out their teaching assignment and/or other prescribed duties and responsibilities in accord with the mission and goals of the institution.” Other accreditors are less energetic in separating the criteria for full- and part-time faculty qualifications (Table 3). The New England commission sums up the majority view by recommending simply that “all faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession.”⁶

At many institutions, tenure-track faculty build a record of interaction with peers and students, undergo rigorous evaluations by department and school committees, and conduct research or creative projects that are open to public scrutiny. Part-time faculty, on the other hand, may be evaluated solely on the basis of unsigned student course evaluations.⁷ Both the North Central and Northwest commissions acknowledge that part-time faculty should be evaluated. In an appendix, the North Central commission states that “policies related to the employment, orientation, supervision, and evaluation of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate teaching assistants” should be available to the evaluation team; a Middle States option for “Analysis and Evidence” is nearly identical.⁸

As AAUP general secretary Ernst Benjamin has written, however, the institution is the body that ensures that only qualified and effective adjuncts are hired and retained, and there is ample evidence that where parttime faculty are evaluated at all, methods are divergent and unreliable.⁹ None of the accrediting groups acknowledges that the evaluation of a tenure-track colleague is rather different from the professional assessment of a part-time colleague (who may be on campus only two or three hours a week). The Middle States commission asks for evidence that “criteria for the appointment, supervision, and review of teaching effectiveness for part-time, adjunct, and other faculty [are] consistent with those for full-time faculty.” Without mentioning faculty specifically, the North Central commission supposes that “the organization’s mission, vision, values, goals, and priorities should help it choose the self-study and evaluation processes that afford the greatest value.”¹⁰

Dependence on Part-Time Faculty

With 68 percent of college faculty holding non-tenure-track positions, an institutional dependence on contingent faculty might be expected to set off warning signals for accreditors.¹¹ As noted, accreditors generally do not distinguish between tenure-track and non-tenure-track full-time faculty. With regard to part-time faculty, only one agency offers direct guidelines (Table 4). The New England commission requires that “the institution avoids undue dependence on part-time faculty, adjuncts, and graduate assistants to conduct classroom instruction.” While the inclusion of the guideline is distinctive, exactly what constitutes “undue dependence” is left to the institution to determine. The Southern commission instructs that the use of part-time faculty should be “judicious.” In a rare reference to part-time faculty, the North Central commission holds “the organization” responsible for program integrity regardless of faculty status: “General education must be valued and owned by the organization whether its courses are created, purchased, or shared; whether faculty are full-time, part-time, or employed by a partner organization.”¹²

For other accreditors, instructional priorities are “valued and owned” by the faculty — whether their employment is full- or part-time. The

Table 2: Employment Policies and Requirements for Training and Integration of Part-time Faculty

Accreditor	Policies and Requirements
Middle States commission	Employment policies and practices for part-time faculty “should be as carefully developed and communicated as those for full-time faculty. The greater the dependence on such employees, the greater is the institutional responsibility to provide orientation, oversight, evaluation, professional development, and opportunities for integration into the life of the institution.”
New England commission	“Faculty categories (e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct) are clearly defined by the institution. . . . Should part-time or adjunct faculty be utilized, the institution has in place policies governing their role.” • “Institutions that employ a significant proportion of part-time, adjunct, clinical, or temporary faculty assure their appropriate integration into the department and institution and provide opportunities for faculty development.” • “All faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession.”
North Central commission	None.
Northwest commission	“Employment practices for part-time and adjunct faculty include dissemination of information regarding the institution, the work assignment, rights and responsibilities, and conditions of employment.”
Southern commission	None.
Western junior commission	None.
Western senior commission	Institutions should have policies “designed to integrate part-time faculty appropriately into the life of the institution.”

Table 3: Policies Specifically Addressing Qualifications and Evaluation of Part-time Faculty

Accreditor	Policies
Middle States commission	“Criteria for the appointment, supervision, and review of teaching effectiveness for part-time, adjunct, and other faculty [should be] consistent with those for full-time-faculty.”
New England commission	“The preparation and qualifications of all faculty are appropriate.” • “The institution has equitable and broad based procedures for . . . evaluation applying to both full- and part-time faculty.”
North Central commission	Accreditation guidelines request information on evaluation of part-time faculty (appendix).
Northwest commission	Part-time faculty should be “qualified by academic background, degree(s), and/or professional experience to carry out their teaching assignment and/or other prescribed duties and responsibilities.”
Southern commission	Institutions should report the qualifications of full- and part-time faculty.
Western junior commission	None.
Western senior commission	None.

Table 4: Policies Regarding Dependence on Part-time Faculty or Sufficient Numbers of Full-time Faculty

Accreditor	Policies
Middle States commission	The institution should have “a core of faculty with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution’s programs.”
New England commission	“The institution avoids undue dependence on part-time faculty.” • The institution employs “an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes.”
North Central commission	None.
Northwest commission	The institution “periodically assesses institutional policies concerning the use of part-time and adjunct faculty.” • The institution should employ “a core of full-time, professionally qualified faculty . . . adequate in number and qualifications.”
Southern commission	The number of full-time faculty members should be “adequate to support the mission of the institution.” • “The work of the core faculty may be supplemented and enhanced by judicious assignment of part-time faculty.”
Western junior commission	The institution should have “a substantial core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution.”
Western senior commission	The institution should have “an instructional staffing plan that includes a sufficient number of full-time faculty” and should employ “a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs.” • The institution should employ at least one full-time faculty member for each graduate degree program offered.

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Western junior commission states this position with clarity: the institution “relies on faculty expertise for quality of programs.” The Southern commission allocates responsibility in a similar way, saying that “the institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.” At least one accreditor holds institutions directly responsible if they choose to build programs largely on the backs of adjuncts. “The greater the dependence on [part-time] employees,” writes the Middle States commission, “the greater is the institutional responsibility to provide orientation, oversight, evaluation, professional development, and opportunities for integration into the life of the institution.” The Northwest commission advises a candidate institution to demonstrate “that it periodically assesses institutional policies concerning the use of part-time and adjunct faculty in light of the mission and goals of the institution.”¹³

While only the New England commission cautions specifically about a dependence on adjuncts, most accreditors recommend that institutions employ “sufficient” numbers of full-time faculty. The Western senior commission statement is typical of these relatively weaker guidelines. While avoiding a reference to adjuncts, it acknowledges the possibility of limits on part-time appointments: “The institution demonstrates that it employs a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever and however delivered.”¹⁴

A reference to “out-of-class” responsibilities in the New England commission handbook acknowledges that faculty do more than transfer knowledge in the classroom. Institutions using adjuncts who are hired only to appear for class and disappear thereafter may not fulfill New England’s requirement that there should be “an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential to the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes.” The Western senior commission insists that institutions should employ “at least one full-time faculty member for each graduate degree program offered.” Both the Western junior and Middle States commissions want a “core” of full-time faculty that is responsible to the institution. For the Northwest commission, the faculty must be “adequate for the educational levels offered, including full-time faculty representing each field in which it offers major work.” Likewise, the Southern commission requires an “adequate” number of full-time faculty “to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.”¹⁵

The North Central commission’s handbook includes neither a discussion of faculty status

nor a statement on institutional commitment. There are no written guidelines, in fact, precluding a faculty that is 100 percent part-time. Indeed, having accredited a for-profit institution (the University of Phoenix) as early as 1978, the North Central commission seems more comfortable than other accrediting agencies with a redefinition of higher education itself. Its commissioners, for example, see little need for old-fashioned, one-on-one faculty-student interaction: “Mentoring and advising, once thought to be primarily a faculty task, may now be found throughout an organization, particularly in the student services area.” Throughout its handbook, the North Central commission presents itself as receptive to a corporate model of higher education. In the introduction to one of four major accreditation criteria (“Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge”), the commission employs a term popularized in the late 1950s by corporate management strategist Peter Drucker: “Computers may have introduced the Information Age, but in a short time our definitional language for this new era began to include the term knowledge worker. The shift is as important as it is misunderstood.” While admitting that “knowledge worker” is a “jarring” term for some in the professoriate, the North Central commission feels confident that “the juxtaposition of these two words says something important to the academy and to students.” Those of us in the academy may rightly be jarred by the substitution of the term “knowledge worker” (an employee whose ideas are managed) for “professor” (one whose freedom to pursue individual research is protected by tenure).¹⁶

Academic Freedom

Rooted in the nineteenth century Humboldtian model, academic freedom is a sacred principle of American higher education that guarantees research and publication rights for individual professors. Each of the accreditors addresses these rights and protections in some way, although the focus and details of their statements vary (Table 5). Likewise, statements on the rights of part-time faculty range from unequivocal guarantees to casual inference. The New England commission statement is one of the more helpful for adjuncts in mandating that academic freedom be extended to all faculty “regardless of rank or term of appointment.” Although the Middle States commission lumps principles of academic freedom in with those related to “intellectual freedom” and “freedom of expression,” it also specifies that these principles should apply to adjuncts as well as full-time faculty, staff, and students. In a reference to academic freedom as affecting all members of the institutional community, the Western senior commission appears willing to afford rights to part-time as well as full-time faculty.¹⁷

While the Northwest commission provides a lengthy and detailed section on academic free-

dom, there is no mention of specific faculty categories. Other accreditors include generic statements and guidelines — some without reference to faculty in any category. While allowing individual institutions to define “academic freedom” for themselves, the Southern commission suggests that information on related campus issues along with their eventual resolution might be included in a self-study document.

The North Central commission talks about “freedom of inquiry,” asking member institutions to create a climate that “celebrates intellectual freedom.” The commission is alone, however, in excluding from its handbook any reference to the term “academic freedom.”

Recent Action

Accrediting commissions provide at least one useful tool for measuring their diligence in enforcing standards. Agency websites or newsletters include sections disclosing “recent actions” (petitions for candidacy, initial accreditation, continuing accreditation, and the like). The content of these public disclosures runs the gamut from a list of actions presented without commentary to detailed report summaries that refer to specific criteria in published documents (Table 6). The last three reports of the Western senior commission are available online; for June 2007, the site reports the denial of a candidacy petition, several warnings, and a probation, although no details are given. Also without comment, the North Central commission publishes a list of institutions accredited, renewed, and referred. For the most recent commission meeting (October 2007), one “on notice” listing is documented. Although the New England commission lists dozens of accredited and renewed institutions, no negative decisions are reported for April 2007.

Other accreditor websites and published reports contain more specific and detailed information. Through November 2007, the Middle States commission lists several negative actions with a detailed history available. Reasons given for these warnings or probations range from leadership and financial concerns to questions of “shared governance” and “academic rigor.” During the same period, three institutions were removed from warning status and dozens were granted initial or renewed accreditation. By far the most complete and useful summary of commission decisions is published online by the Southern commission. For June 2007, the commission specifies over thirty initial or continued accreditations and four removal of warning actions. A review of actions in earlier periods (also conveniently available online) shows numerous warnings and probations issued.

Conclusion

Despite a collective sidestep on the issue of part-time faculty, statements on student learning and support, faculty development, and the necessity of maintaining a faculty of involved and knowledgeable individuals exist in all accreditation handbooks. The problem with these lofty statements, however, is that their vagueness allows institutions to spin their compliance evidence. A standard requiring that institutions comment on their use of part-time faculty, for example, is much weaker than one stating that part-time faculty should generally teach “one or two courses.” Likewise, when agencies mandate that part-time faculty must be evaluated without specifying which institutional constituencies are involved in the evaluation process, the requirement means little. If an instructor is evaluated by students, using an instrument that may or may not have statistical validity, then a type of “evaluation” has taken place. On the other hand, requiring that part-time faculty have evaluations “consistent” with those for full-time faculty (as Middle States does) would seem to discourage the wholesale use of adjuncts. After all, in addition to budgetary incentives, avoidance of the due process associated with tenure-track evaluations is an incentive for administrators to create part-time positions. If evaluations for part-time faculty are required to be equally rigorous and comprehensive, as some accreditors stipulate, then enforcing institutional compliance would remove one of the incentives for hiring adjuncts.

In 1997, *Chronicle of Higher Education* reporter Courtney Leatherman asked, “Do Accreditors Look the Other Way When Colleges Rely on Part-Timers?”¹⁸ Leatherman noted that many accreditors’ guidelines pertaining to part-time faculty were vague and that the accreditors had been criticized for not enforcing the guidelines that were on the books. At about the same time, activist Keith Hoeller filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education against the Northwest commission for failure to enforce its own policies regarding faculty. In deflecting Hoeller’s complaint, the commission argued that its standards were never meant to be applied to part-time faculty. The commission has since revised the handbook to better separate these categories of faculty responsibility.

Unfortunately, more than a decade after Leatherman’s article, little has changed. Little, that is, except the proportion of college faculty now off the tenure track. Today, this figure has reached 68 percent. While a few accreditors have added statements dealing with the evaluation and support of part-time faculty, there is little evidence that noncompliance with these statements has been a consistent factor in institutional evaluation. Because of the relatively scant information released by some accreditors, the public often has no way of discerning the specific problems leading to actions taken by

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Table 5: Statements on Academic Freedom Specific to Part-time Faculty

Accreditor	Statements
Middle States commission	“Academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression are central to the academic enterprise [and] should be extended to all members of the institution’s community (i.e., full-time faculty, adjunct, visiting, or part-time faculty).”
New England commission	“The institution protects and fosters academic freedom of all faculty regardless of rank or term of appointment.”
North Central commission	None.
Northwest commission	None.
Southern commission	None.
Western junior commission	None.
Western senior commission	A “question for institutional engagement” suggests that academic freedom policies should “support a climate of academic inquiry and engagement for all members of the institutional community.”

Table 6: Statements on Academic Freedom Specific to Part-time Faculty Recent Actions Listed on Accreditor Websites

Accreditor	Actions
Middle States commission	Actions for last three years.
New England commission	Past four commission meetings.
North Central commission	Past five commission meetings.
Northwest commission	No “recent actions” information, but status of member and candidate institutions available in directory.
Southern commission	Past two commission meetings.
Western junior commission	Actions for last three years.
Western senior commission	Current and previous two commission reports.

New Impacts Seen for Faculty Unions

Scott Jaschik

Editor's Note:

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FACULTIES THAT ARE unionized have significantly higher percentages of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members, as opposed to adjuncts, according to research presented this week at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. At the same time, colleges that are unionized tend to spend less per student on academic support services, the analysis found.

Officials of the national faculty unions said they did not know of similar research findings. Much of the previous research on faculty unions has focused on the most direct bread and butter issues: wages and benefits. But the authors of the new research — two doctoral students at Vanderbilt University — said that it was important to explore as well questions of how faculty unions affect college issues that relate to the student experience.

Based on the premises that students benefit from having more tenure-track and tenured faculty members, and from more spending on academic support categories (everything from advising centers to study abroad centers), the researchers said they wanted to see if there are patterns that could relate to unionization.

The scholars — Marc Stein and David Stuit — are “agnostic” on faculty unions (in Stein’s words), study at a university without them, and have no ties either to academic unions or those who oppose them.

Their study arrives at a time that the national unions have all started campaigns to try to both improve adjunct pay and benefits and also to reverse the decline in the percentage of tenure-track jobs. The issue is a sensitive one, however. While many adjuncts who aspire to tenure-track jobs applaud the push, others suspect that any gains won’t help them, and resist poli-

cies based on the assumption that students benefit from not having adjunct instructors. The research cited by Stein and Stuit to back their assumption doesn’t fault the quality of teaching or commitment of adjuncts, but does point to many reasons that students benefit from a full-time faculty in that these professors are more likely to have offices on campus, time that they can be in those offices, and to provide the continuity that comes with knowing one can work with the same professor from semester to semester.

To make their comparisons, Stein and Stuit used data from the National Center for Education Statistics from 1989 to 1999, focusing on 500 public four-year colleges and universities. They then used a series of controls — enrollments, enrollment levels in science and technology courses, Carnegie classifications and location — all to insure that groups of institutions were being compared to like institutions.

Their findings: “Faculty unions are associated with fewer contingent faculty. Generally a student that enrolls in a non-unionized institution will be 10 percent more likely to have a contingent faculty instructor than one who selects a unionized school.” Added up over the course of an undergraduate degree, a student at a nonunionized college is likely to have a semester’s more courses taught by contingent faculty members.

On academic support services, taking similar steps to compare like institutions, the study found that campuses with faculty unions spend about 10 percent less than do nonunionized institutions. In both cases, the scholars speculate that the trends could be the result of faculty bargaining efforts. Many unions have made a priority of preserving or expanding tenure-track slots. While faculty unions are not known to advocate cuts in aca-

demic support programs (indeed many faculty unions represent the professionals who work in academic support), the authors suggest that faculty wage and benefit demands may limit what colleges can spend elsewhere.

In an interview, Stein said that the study did not analyze whether there were different results at institutions depending on whether faculty unions covered both tenure-track and adjunct positions (At some unionized campuses, a single unit represents both; at others there are different units; and at still others, only one category of professors is unionized).

Union leaders said that while they hadn’t done similar studies, the results rang true — at least with regard to adjunct positions. Union officials said it was important to note that advocating for more full-time, tenure-track positions was not inconsistent with pushing for better pay and benefits for adjuncts. Many have said, in fact, that because part of the motivation to shift tenure-track slots to adjunct slots is to save money, when colleges are pushed to pay adjuncts more money, part of that motivation is lessened.


Craig P. Smith of the American Federation of Teachers — which has both tenure-track and adjunct members — said he hadn’t yet seen the Vanderbilt study. “But we have consistently asserted that creating better faculty jobs both through pro-rata compensation for contingent faculty and more full-time tenure-track faculty lines will result in a better environment for teaching and learning at our colleges and universities. We believe that unions who have the power of collective action through negotiations and political action have proven to be the leaders in working toward these goals, despite resistance from some college administrators.” And he said that such changes benefit students. “As the old saying goes, ‘faculty members’ working

conditions are students’ learning conditions,” he said.

Valerie Wilk, higher education coordinator for the National Education Association, said that the findings reflected the way many faculty union have negotiated caps or ratios for the use of non-tenured or tenure-track positions.

Keith Hoeller, chair of the Adjunct Faculty Committee of the Washington State Conference of the American Association of University Professors and a member of the national AAUP’s Committee on Contingent Faculty and the Profession, also hadn’t seen the report but was intrigued by it. He said the report could provide evidence for his view that “the national faculty unions favor more full timers as the solution to adjuncts’ problems.”

Whatever the correlation between unionization and the use of contingent faculty members, Hoeller said it was important to question the authors’ assumption that students are hurt by having adjunct professors. “If adjuncts were treated equally, the differences [in the student experience] would disappear,” he said. So in looking at the study, he cautioned against using it to justify policies that may favor full timers over part timers.

On the study’s other finding — that unionized campuses spend less on academic support services — Wilk questioned the link. She noted that faculty unions represent many people in those departments. Further, she said that all kinds of college expenditures might be responsible for a smaller slice of the budget piece going to academic support. She noted, for example, that if a college spends more on administrators or heating or noninstructional technical staff, such spending could have an impact. 

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accreditors or the details of how an institution achieved a subsequent reinstatement to good standing.

Despite generally dismal news for the academy, there are also occasional rays of hope. While the North Central commission avoids well-defined terms such as “professor,” “tenure,” and “academic freedom,” and does not prohibit institutions from employing no tenured faculty at all, the Southern commission has taken a different position, at least in some cases. In the most recent commission report (June 2007), one denial of candidacy and one probation were based at least in part on core requirement 2.8: “The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.”¹⁹ While other problem areas were listed in both cases, a failure to provide a core of full-time faculty did, in fact, affect accreditation decisions by the Southern commission. Based on information available to the general public, the same cannot be said without qualification for any other accrediting agency.

Endnotes

¹ Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, *Accreditation Handbook*, 2003 (updated 2008), 168.

² Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, *Standards for Accreditation*, 2005, 14; Middle States Commission on Higher Education, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, 2006, 37.

³ The Higher Learning Commission, A Commission of the North Central Association, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 3rd ed., 2003, 9.4–2; Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, *Accreditation Reference Handbook*, 2007, 77; Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 67.

⁴ Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 2001, 122; Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 168.

⁵ Western senior commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 26; Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 63; Middle States

commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 38; North Central commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 6.4–6.

⁶ Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 63; New England commission, *Standards for Accreditation*, 16.

⁷ AAUP, *AAUP Contingent Faculty Index 2006* (Washington, D.C.: AAUP, 2006), 9.

⁸ North Central commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 9.4–2; Middle States commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 39.

⁹ Ernst Benjamin, “How Over-Reliance on Contingent Appointments Diminishes Faculty Involvement in Student Learning,” *Peer Review* (Fall 2002): 7.

¹⁰ Middle States commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 38; North Central commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 5.3–2.

¹¹ AAUP, “Trends in Faculty Status, 1975–2005,” *Academe* (January–February 2008): 6.

¹² New England commission, *Standards for Accreditation*, 15; Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Colleges, *Resource Manual for Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 2005, 16; North Central commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 3.4–3.

¹³ Western junior commission, *Accreditation Reference Handbook*, 18; Southern commission, *Resource Manual*, 46; Middle States commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 38; Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 63.

¹⁴ Western senior commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 25.

¹⁵ New England commission, *Standards for Accreditation*, 14; Western senior commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 21; Western junior commission, *Accreditation Reference Handbook*, 9; Middle States commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 37; Northwest commission, *Accreditation Handbook*, 31; Southern commission, *Resource Manual*, 16.

¹⁶ North Central commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 3.2–11, 3.2–12, 3.2–14.

¹⁷ New England commission, *Standards for Accreditation*, 15; Middle States commission, *Characteristics of Excellence*, 21; Western senior commission, *Handbook of Accreditation*, 18.

¹⁸ Courtney Leatherman, “Do Accreditors Look the Other Way When Colleges Rely on Part-Timers?” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 7, 1997.

¹⁹ Southern commission, *Resource Manual*, 16. 

Students Speak: A Report on the AAR Graduate Student Survey

David V. Brewington, Emory University

Survey Mechanics and Response Rate

On March 24, 2008, 2,439 survey invitations were e-mailed to current AAR student members. The survey included questions about demographics, education, why students were pursuing an advanced degree, what students knew about advanced degrees and job markets when they entered the program, mentoring at their institution, and their relationship with and expectations of the American Academy of Religion. After several follow-up messages, the survey was closed on April 3, 2008. A total of 1,154 respondents started the survey (47.3 percent), while 1,046 completed it, making for a response rate of 42.9 percent.

Program and Job Market Expectations/Realities

Most respondents (approximately 82 percent) indicated that they are pursuing an advanced degree as a result of their interest in the subject matter and their desire to become part of the professoriate (when given the option to choose more than one reason). When asked to choose a specific reason, interest in the subject matter was the top reason given (at 43.5 percent).

For the most part, students had a good understanding of the expectations placed on them by their departments (e.g., over 85 percent have a clear, or some, understanding of when they were expected to take exams, when they were expected to graduate, and criteria used for determination of graduation). However, students indicate that they were less clear about the state of the job market in their specialty — 80.6 percent indicated they had no or only some understanding of this (see Figure 1). Only 12.7 percent had a clear understanding of their program's job placement success in their field of study (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

Did you have a clear understanding of the job market for PhDs in your specific field of study when you started?

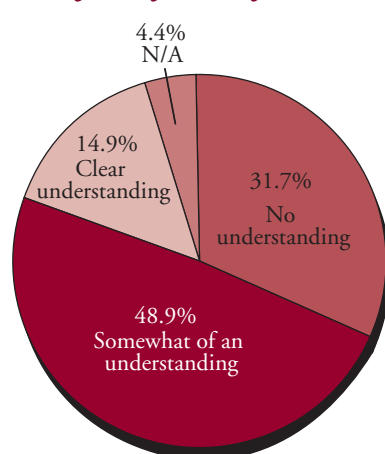
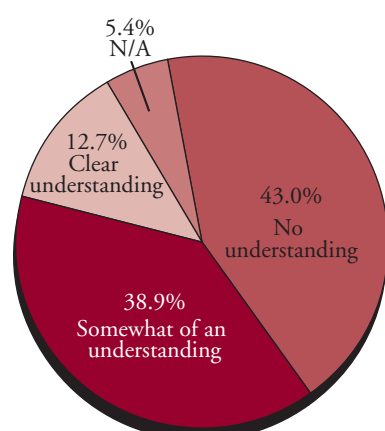


Figure 2

Did you have a clear understanding of the job placement success for graduates from your institution in your field of study when you started?



Most respondents clearly prefer a tenure-track faculty position (86.7 percent — see Figure 3). Working as a nontenure-track faculty member is the next desirable position after a tenure-track job. The least preferred employment outcome for students is teaching in secondary schools, followed by working in journalism, working in government, and working in academic administration. However, students have the perception that they are much more able to receive a nontenure-track faculty job over a tenure-track faculty position (Figures 4 and 5). At the same time, students know little about their ability to get nonacademic jobs.

Figure 3

Job preferences: tenure-track faculty

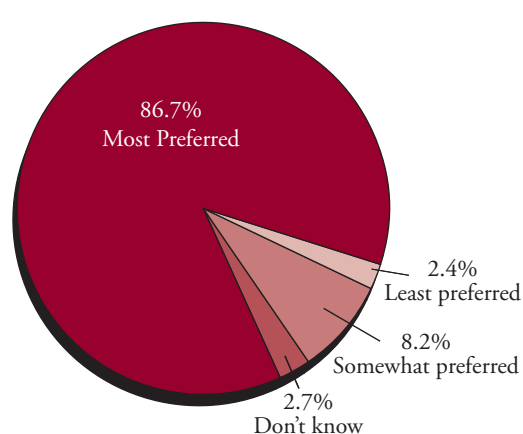


Figure 4

Perceived ability to receive a nontenure-track faculty position

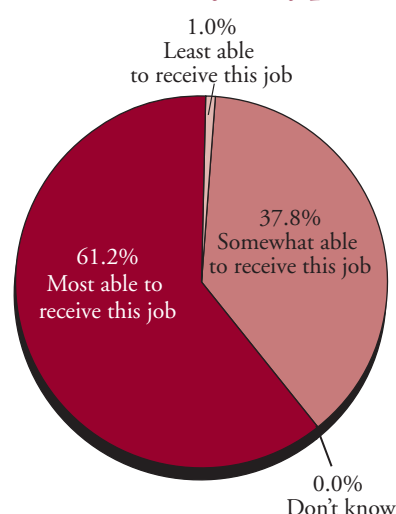
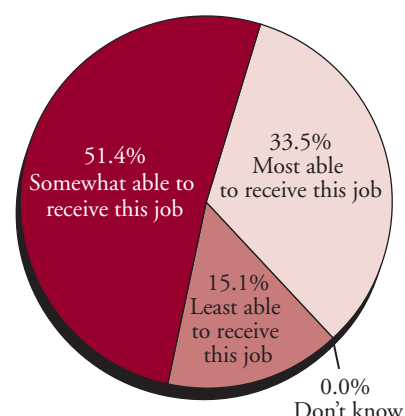


Figure 5

Perceived ability to receive a tenure-track faculty position

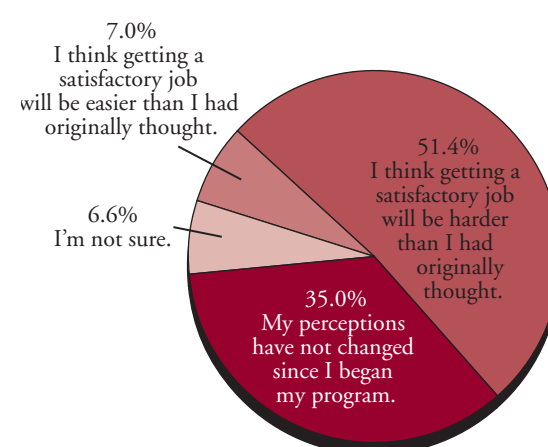


When given a chance to rank their most preferred academic setting, liberal arts colleges garnered the highest preference, while working at a research university was the second highest preference. The least desired academic setting was a community college. However, over half (51.4 percent) of respondents indicated that getting a satisfactory job will be harder than they originally thought when they matriculate (Figure 6). Individuals cite their own experience in the job market, hearing their peers talk about it, and seeing that “quite a few people who completed degrees in the past few years still have not gotten a job,” amongst many other reasons.

Around 50 percent of respondents indicated that their departments offer teaching development centers, readily available resources on teaching, teaching assistant training courses, and academic job seminars. Only 31.8 percent indicated their department offers seminars or workshops on nonacademic position opportunities.

Figure 6

Since beginning your advanced degree program, has your perception of the likelihood of ultimately receiving a job changed?



Mentoring

Students met with their advisors predominantly once a semester (36 percent), and almost a third met with their advisors once a month. Nearly 10 percent met with their advisors once a year or less (Figure 7). Reasons given include the following (comments verbatim):

- I have no advisor.
- My advisor is only in the States one quarter per year.
- I am still with my default advisor, who is not a particularly gifted administrator. I will meet more frequently with my “real” advisor once I have moved on in my program to my area of specialization.
- The Advisor is hard to reach. I talked more with the Dean of Advanced Studies and another adopted professor as my mentor.
- Professors are much too busy, have little interest in the MA program, and little knowledge about teaching positions available to graduates with MA degrees.
- We met about once a month in the early stages of writing, but the last year of writing, we met every few months. In the last stages, we went four months without meeting because his direction was becoming paralyzing. I had a “ghost advisor” work with me to complete the dissertation.

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Figure 7

On average, about how often do you meet with your advisor?

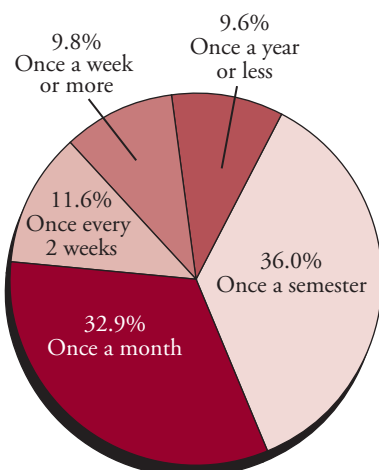
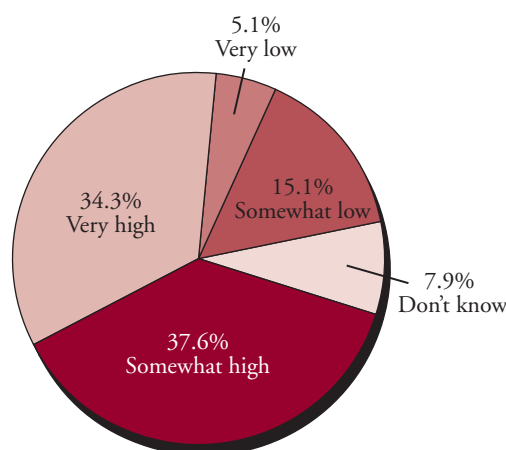


Figure 8

How would you rate the quality of time you have with your advisor?

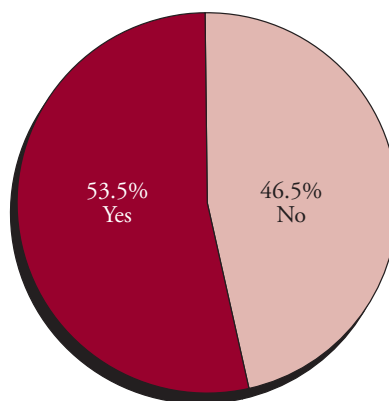


Most students rated the quality of their time with advisors as somewhat or very high (71.9 percent), but over 20 percent indicate some level of low satisfaction (Figure 8). Dissatisfaction with advisors included personality conflicts, poor communication, micromanagement, advisor had too many advisees or too much work, differences over method, and lack of accountability of professors to graduate students.

Surprisingly, only 53.5 percent of respondents indicated that job placement is part of the conversation with their advisors (Figure 9). This may be due to overrepresentation of younger cohorts in the survey, but, nonetheless, indicated that a great deal of students had not been advised about job placement. At the same time, students indicated that they are mostly satisfied with the model that their advisors provide concerning teaching, research, service, collaboration, and mentoring.

Figure 9

Is job placement part of the conversation with your advisor in the course of your program?



Relationship to AAR

Most students indicated that they join the AAR to network (74.6 percent), and secondly to attend the Annual Meetings (59.2 percent). Most students cited networking as the most important role that AAR has played in students' graduate careers, with sharing and hearing others' research a close second at 67.7 percent.

Nearly 26 percent of students responding to the survey provided some comment or thoughts on specific suggestions for how the AAR could be more helpful in job placement issues. These comments are instructive and deserve much more detailed analysis than can be provided here. However, nonsystematic analysis indicates that graduate student members of AAR are very interested in seeing more attention devoted to job placement as a whole, and in light of a lack of tenure-track academic jobs, they would like to see more information coming from AAR about nonacademic job settings. Suggestions include the following (all comments verbatim):

- Perhaps spotlight/give publicity to programs that make a significant effort in this regard, especially since the best programs are often rather negligent in this area.
- I think one of the best things that AAR could do would be to encourage or coerce institutions and/or departments to begin keeping and reporting a variety of helpful statistics about admission, funding, retention, degree completion, job placement, and careers of alumni. If that information was widely available it would go a long way towards cleaning up current practices.
- It's a catch-22 because if more students knew about the current job realities and the high costs, they would probably not start a graduate program right now. . . . Graduate programs do need to begin to advise students of possible ways to structure career paths given the current context. I think, for the most part, the baby boomers will just retire and let recent grads figure it out for themselves. Little responsiveness or mentoring is happening, let alone if you are a minority or a woman.
- Encourage hiring institutions outside of academia to become more of a presence within the meetings, particularly in the job search process, and involve students in mentoring for job considerations from the beginning of their careers.

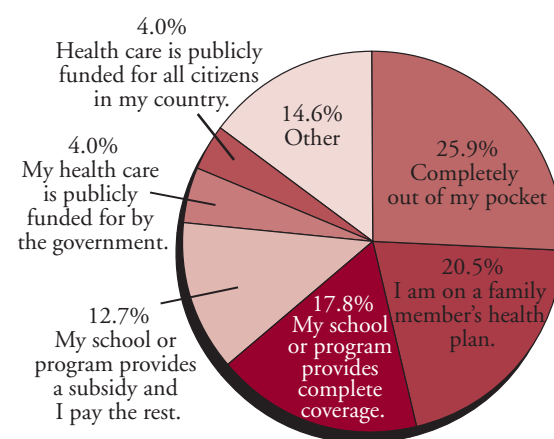
- There should be less pressure to get into research-based positions upon graduation and more acceptance of alternative uses of the religious studies PhD.
- I wish that MUCH more is offered to empower and encourage us in work outside of academia, particularly as independent scholars in bivocational settings.

Health Insurance

Given national attention to issues of health insurance, the AAR included a question in the survey about how graduate students in religion pay for health insurance. Over 25 percent indicated they pay for health insurance completely out of pocket (see Figure 10). Only 17.8 percent indicated that their school or program provides complete coverage. Of the 14.6 percent of respondents who responded "other" to this question, there are a surprising number of students who indicated they have no health coverage. There are also many who indicated they receive health insurance through a part-time or full-time job.

Figure 10

How do you pay for your health insurance?



Emergent Themes and Next Steps

At this point in the analysis, emergent themes seem to be the lack of information on and preparedness for the academic job market, a lack of information on nonacademic jobs, and a desire for tenure-track positions in liberal arts and research universities, combined with a sense of the lack of ability to attain these positions. To address these and other related themes, AAR Career Services is working to implement improvements that will expand AAR's employment resources. These improvements include regional meeting workshops that will provide insight into the job market as well as online links and resources about nonacademic career opportunities. In addition to Career Services, various constituencies of the AAR — particularly the Job Placement Task Force and the Graduate Student Committee — will use this data to inform their work with graduate institutions, administrators, faculty, and students as we continue to address the realities for future scholars and leaders of the study of religion.

PSN

The AAR Public Understanding of Religion Committee invites nominations and self-nominations for the Martin E. Marty Award for Contributions to the Public Understanding of Religion.

The award is intended to bring greater recognition to scholars whose relevance and eloquence speaks not just to scholars, but more broadly to the public as well. Nominees for this award do not have to be AAR members. For nomination details, see www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Marty_Award, or mail the name of the nominee, his or her affiliation, and any supporting information by January 30, 2009, to

Marty Award, AAR
825 Houston Mill Road NE, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30329

In the Public Interest

Why does sex play such a large role for fringe sects?

Kimberly Winston

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The April 2008 Texas child protection officials' removal of 416 children from a Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS) community was widely covered by national news media. But much of this coverage disregarded the religious and historical contexts for the state's actions. Journalist Kimberly Winston of Religion News Service interviewed AAR members Timothy Miller, Sarah Pike, and Catherine Wessinger for a story about sexuality in sectarian movements that ran in several newspapers. Winston was particularly interested in exploring the reasons behind the uneasy marriage of sexual experimentation and sectarianism. Winston's story is followed by responses from Miller, Pike, and Wessinger. These pieces work together to suggest that there is further need for informed coverage of stories about religion, particularly unorthodox religion.

WHAT IS IT WITH SECTS AND SEX? The Texas probe into alleged child abuse at a polygamous compound started with an anonymous phone call about underage girls having sex with adult men. Reports circulated of rumped bed linens inside the sect's glistening temple. Its imprisoned leader, Warren Jeffs, reportedly has dozens of wives and would grant and deny wives to his male followers depending on their perceived worthiness. Without multiple wives, he taught, they could never achieve salvation.

Yet Jeffs isn't the first sect figure to come under legal scrutiny for sexual practices that outsiders might consider unusual, immoral, or even abhorrent. Indeed, many new religious movements (NRMs) are distinguished not only by their unconventional beliefs but also by the sexual proclivities of their male leaders. All of which raises the question: Why do people join or remain members of a group that practices unusual sexual behaviors? And what's more, what kind of sexual power do the leaders of NRMs hold over their followers?

"Every group has its own dynamics and diversity," said Catherine Wessinger, an expert in NRMs at Loyola University in New Orleans. "A leader can use sexual activity to diminish ties between followers and direct their affections and emotions. But the thing to remember is that no one has that charisma unless the people behind him or her believe that he or she has it." Often, the leader's followers believe that God or other divine beings communicate through the leader, something that can endow the leader's sexual relations with a special holiness or sanctity, Wessinger said.

In the case of the Branch Davidians, sex with prophet David Koresh was seen as normal and desirable — even when it involved girls as young as 14. Similarly, in the Peoples Temple, whose members committed mass suicide in the Guyana jungle in 1978, sex with leader Jim Jones was sometimes a reward — for both men and women, married and unmarried.

"You would think that if you stole someone's wife that would piss them off," said veteran religion writer Don Lattin, who's written several books on NRMs, including *Jesus Freaks*, about an evangelical sect known as The Family. "But in these groups the opposite often happens. The husband goes along with it and is controlled by it because it is all linked with his eternal salvation. By sharing his wife he is getting closer to the central power — the guru or prophet." In the case of Jeffs's Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), his one-man power to arrange (or undo) marriages between young girls and older men lent a sanctity to their union, scholars say.

Yet while groups like Jeffs's may garner headlines, they're neither new nor unusual. American history has seen the rise — and often the decline — of NRMs, many with unusual sexual attitudes:


- In the late 1700s, the Shakers established a celibate community in upstate New York.
- The Oneida Community, a utopian commune established in the 1840s in upstate New York, held that sex with someone "spiritually higher" advanced one's spirituality.
- Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, proclaimed polygamy a divinely revealed concept, and it remained so until the mainstream Mormon Church disavowed it in 1890. That initiated the rift that would lead to the founding of the FLDS church.
- David Berg, the charismatic founder of The Family, reinterpreted Jesus's teachings on love as sanctifying multiple sexual partners, including underage girls and boys. The group renounced sex with minors in 1986.

Wessinger also links "millennial" NRMs — those that focus on a coming end of the world, like the FLDS sect — with unusual sexual attitudes. Such groups, she says, often enact relationships they believe will exist in the afterlife. That's what prompted members of Heaven's Gate, a millennial sect that committed mass suicide in San Diego in 1997, to practice celibacy and male castration — they believed there would be no sexual activity or relationships in their longed-for afterlife. "I think it is absolutely connected because in a millennial movement there is a belief that there is going to be an imminent transition to a collective salvation in which relationships will be completely transformed," Wessinger said. "They are anticipating the way they think relationships will be after their collective salvation."

Many spiritual experiences involve the body — Pentecostals speaking in tongues, fire-walking Hindus and Buddhists, or even the bleeding wounds (stigmata) attributed to some Catholic mystics and saints. It isn't such a leap, then, for NRMs to marry the sexual with the spiritual. "Intense religious experiences often involve the body," Lattin said. "It is a spiritual ecstasy that can be like a sexual ecstasy. You have that physical experience of body which is very real and very integral to religious experience."

Sarah Pike, a religious studies professor at California State University, Chico, says there may be something distinctly American about NRMs and sex. "I think it has something to do with the fact that from the very beginning Americans have had this sense that they are in the process of creating a new society and new governance," Pike said. "It seems there is a willingness to experiment."

But other scholars disagree, saying unusual sexual activities were once part of many mainstream religions. Early Christians, led by Saint Paul, wrote of celibacy as a means to holiness — an outrageous idea to ancient societies that placed high value on procreation. "Paul writes long passages about being celibate, like he is, because in the kingdom of heaven there (will) be no marrying or giving in marriage," Wessinger said.

Timothy Miller, a professor of religious history at the University of Kansas, says he sees very little different between the sexual activity in NRMs and other, more traditional religious groups. "I think it happens in regular religious movements," he said, citing the recent sexual abuse scandals in the Hare Krishna movement and the Catholic Church, among others. "You see the same situation — someone with authority and a lot of trust has the same weaknesses and desires as anyone else. These people are human. I think that is the bottom line." 

People are sexual beings, and therefore sexual transgressions and scandals have occurred in all religions at all times in history. Sex scandals do not occur only in the groups commonly called "cults." All religions have strengths and weaknesses among their leaders and followers, and we would be well advised to accept all religions as religions rather than trying to distinguish between religions and "cults." All religions are populated by human beings, and humans suffer from pride, arrogance, hubris, and credulity, among other imperfections and deadly sins. Both leaders and followers may adopt beliefs and practices that seem strange to outsiders, but people work out their systems of believing and living in diverse ways.

TIMOTHY MILLER,
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

The juxtaposition of children and alternative forms of sexual expression in sectarian movements ensures there will be trouble. This is especially true when communal life is hidden from public view because the pairing of children and secrecy arouses outsiders' suspicions. The child victim is paraded in front of us by critics of new religious movements, effacing the experiences of real children within these communities. The focus on sexual predators in sectarian groups functions as a convenient distraction from the widespread sexual abuse of children in the broader society. In this instance, and in other cases such as the violent deaths of Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, actions to protect children tragically result in further damaging their lives.

SARAH M. PIKE,
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

One of the points I stressed to Kimberly Winston is that ethical values relating to sexuality change, in mainstream society and alternative religions. Conflicts sometimes arise due to the interactions of the shifting values of mainstream and marginal groups. For example, David Koresh was functioning in a social context in which sexual activity by young teenage girls was not unusual. Among the Branch Davidians, it was deemed best to channel youthful female sexuality toward bearing "God's children." Conversely, when Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints moved to Texas, legislators raised the age a girl could be married with parental consent from fourteen to sixteen. Members of new religious movements will reform unconventional sexual practices, especially to retain custody of children.

State authorities have the responsibility to investigate and prosecute those engaging in abusive and illegal sexual activity, but the definitions of these change. Authorities who get carried away by the hysteria promoted by the "cult" stereotype may take excessive actions, which harm the children they are aiming to protect.

CATHERINE WESSINGER,
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

Research Briefing

Envisioning Hinduism: Raja Ravi Varma and the Visual Canon

Karline McLain, Bucknell University



Karline McLain received her PhD in Asian Cultures and Languages from the University of Texas at Austin in 2005. She is currently Assistant Professor of Religion at Bucknell University, where she teaches courses on Hinduism, Islam, and visual media and religion in South Asia. Her first book, *India's Immortal Comic Books: Gods, Kings, and Other Heroes*, was awarded the Edward Cameron Dimock Jr. Book Prize in the Indian Humanities by the American Institute of Indian Studies and is forthcoming with Indiana University Press in 2009.

WHILE SIPPING steaming tea one hot morning in the studio of Pratap Mulick in Pune, western India, I asked the artist about his influences. He quickly reeled off a list of

Western artists who have worked in the same genres as Mulick has: oil and watercolor painting, as well as the popular media of comic books and advertising posters. "But what about Indian artists?" I asked. "Of course," he replied almost dismissively, as if the question were so obvious it need not even be posed, "Ravi Varma, other Indians. All Indian painters know other Indians' work. I have many books, many posters around to look at." As we browsed through his personal reference library of Indian and Western lithographs, posters, books, and comic books, I was amazed at the stacks of aged lithographs that he had carefully preserved, including many from the Ravi Varma Press.

Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906) was one of the earliest artists in India to use the medium of oil and to embrace a Western academic style in his portraits and narrative paintings of Hindu mythological subjects. Varma's technique and subject matter were popular with Orientalists and with elite Indian nationalists; but his paintings were especially popular with the Hindu masses, who waited in line for days just to glimpse his images of the gods. For many Hindus, these new "realistic" paintings of the gods were an exciting way to engage in *darshan*, the ritual exchange of glances between devotee and deity that could previously only be experienced in the temple. To meet the growing demand, Varma founded his own lithographic press in Bombay in 1894, which made his images of the Hindu gods affordable to the middle classes and rapidly spread them across India.

Several art historians have recognized Varma's substantial contribution to modern Indian art, noting that the Indian tradition of careful image preservation has meant that for more than a century now popular art has been indebted to his vision. This is certainly attested to by my conversations with Pratap Mulick and other artists. What is far less studied, however, is Varma's impact on devotional Hinduism. Varma's reproductions of Hindu gods were purchased by middle-class women, who hung them in their kitchens and used them in domestic *pūja* (worship) ceremonies, and by Hindu priests who installed them in temples. Today, Varma's images of the Hindu gods — and others modeled on them by later artists — are ritually used in homes, shops, street shrines, and temples throughout India.

In summer 2007, I spent several weeks traveling from New Delhi to Jaipur and then on to Mumbai. I interviewed several artists (working in the media of god posters, comic books, and oil painting) about Varma's influence, in order to explore the lasting impact that Varma has had on how Hindus picture and worship the divine. While in India, I also visited many small Hindu temples and modest street shrines to take note of the range of god posters and other visual imagery used in their devotional services, and I met with several Hindu families to discuss the images used in their home-based worship practices. Finally, I collected god posters from various vendors during my travels. Following this field research, I examined the Smith Poster Archive, a collection of 3,500 Indian devotional posters created in the twentieth

century by the generations of artists following Varma, which is housed at the Special Collections Research Center in the Syracuse University library.

In fall 2008, I will return to India for further research on Hinduism's visual canon. As a religion, Hinduism is notoriously difficult to define: there is no single historical founder, no single body of texts that all Hindus revere as sacred, and no single soteriological system of belief. Instead, Hinduism is characterized by an array of regional gods, stories, and scriptures. This diversity has led several scholars to claim that one can only speak of Hinduism in the plural, of many Hinduisms. My research explores artist Raja Ravi Varma's contribution to the definition of Hinduism as the shared religion of all Hindus by examining the legacy of the visual canon established with his paintings and lithographs. In his lifetime, Varma traveled throughout India to paint Hindu gods from every major region and sect, seeking to define a Hinduism united through its very diversity. Today, those featured by Varma are the deities that are known, worshiped, and reimagined again and again by Hindus throughout India.

I am grateful to the American Academy of Religion and to the National Endowment for the Humanities, both of which made it possible to begin this new research project. I will continue this research in 2008–2009 under the auspices of the American Institute of Indian Studies, which has generously funded four months of further field research in India.

RSN

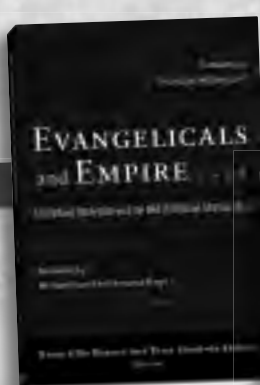
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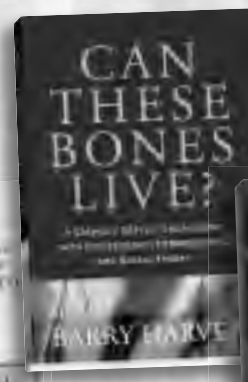
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From the Student Desk

Staying Straight/Going Queerly Forward: Navigating a Job Search When Your CV Has Queer Written All Over It

Pen Name: Emmy Russorde

Emmy is in a PhD program in religious studies near you. She is writing her dissertation and hopes to find a tenure-track job teaching in a religious studies department somewhere.

JUST A LITTLE over a year ago, I was sitting in a room of academics discussing the privileges and perils of being queer in the religious academy and the conversation turned to job searches. One of my conversation partners was about to embark on the job search process and asked advice from others as to how “out” she should be in the process of interviews, since she’d already determined that she should certainly not be out in her curriculum vitae or cover letters. I have to admit that I didn’t hear any of the advice that my other colleagues offered her, because her question sent me spiraling on my own journey of anxiety. As one with queer personal and professional identities, and whose academic work is deeply involved with queer theory, I was beginning to worry. “What am I going to do?” I thought, “My CV has QUEER written all over it.”

Perhaps the fact that I had not yet thought of this “problem” shows my naiveté, but I, of course, prefer to believe that it has more to do

with the changes I have experienced in my lifetime. After all, I grew up in the *Will and Grace* generation — a generation who has experienced public images of gay and lesbian people in television, movies, and print media, a generation for whom pride parades, rainbow flags, and equality bumper stickers abound, a generation that has known out lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) family members, teachers, pastors, and friends, and a generation that has seen LGBT lives, experiences, and perspectives become “legitimate” sources of academic inquiry with the presence and growth of gay, lesbian, and queer studies in academic settings. Of course, the burgeoning visibility of LGBT lives has not been all sunshine and roses.

Accompanying these generational shifts, there have been many public, often religious, voices condemning homosexuality and denouncing all things queer. And the political gains made toward equality and nondiscrimination have been met with as many (and more) political defeats and setbacks. Yet, I have been “out” since I was a teenager and my academic life has included LGBT and queer studies since my college days. So in that conversation with my colleagues, I was left wondering how it was that I would navigate the job search process, entering a profession in the religious

academy, which is itself deeply enmeshed in conflicts around sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and entering it as a queer person who studies queer things (among others).

For LGBT academics in the fields of religion, the job search process is fraught with complex negotiations of identity. This characteristic is not unique to LGBT academics; such negotiations are always part of the performance of identity, no matter what the identity is. But there are some unique negotiations that come with this particular identity. For example, many of the postings for positions to which I am applying list ordination as a requirement. I, like many LGBT academics, have been a member of one of the majority of Christian denominations that refuses to ordain gay people. So I find myself trying to choose between glossing over this obvious lack in my qualifications by emphasizing my view of teaching as a ministerial vocation, or saying right out that as a gay person I could not be ordained.

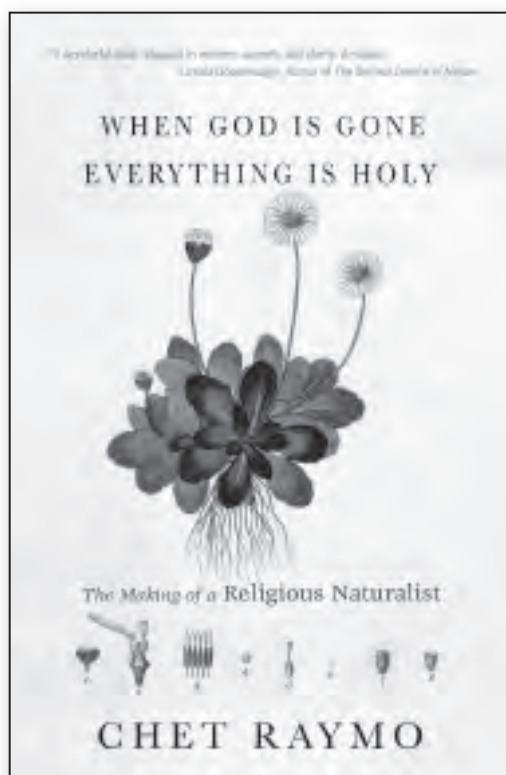
The heart of the matter is that regardless of my qualifications, experience, or scholarship, my queerness is a stumbling block for many institutions and individuals. Unlike other minority candidates, this diversity is not prized nor typically sought out, but more

often seen as a liability. In the current social and political climate, where debates about equality for LGBT people are charged with religious rhetoric, and where religious communities continue to discuss the morality of same-sex relationships, my own being becomes the site of conflict and I find myself struggling to negotiate my queer religious academic identity in a way that is both full of integrity and professionally advantageous.

Riding in the car one day with friends in an unfamiliar city, I was charged with navigating. As I read the directions we’d printed from MapQuest to the driver, I instructed her to “stay straight” on the street upon which we were currently driving. A voice from the back seat piped up and said, “Wouldn’t the more appropriate directive be to ‘go queerly forward?’” As I continue in this process, loaded with complex negotiations and countless choices, I plan to go queerly forward, with as much integrity, grace, and humor as I can, and maybe make it a little easier for those who will come after me. For this religious academic whose CV has queer written all over it, I can only hope that there are a few institutions who are ready to head in that direction too.

RSN

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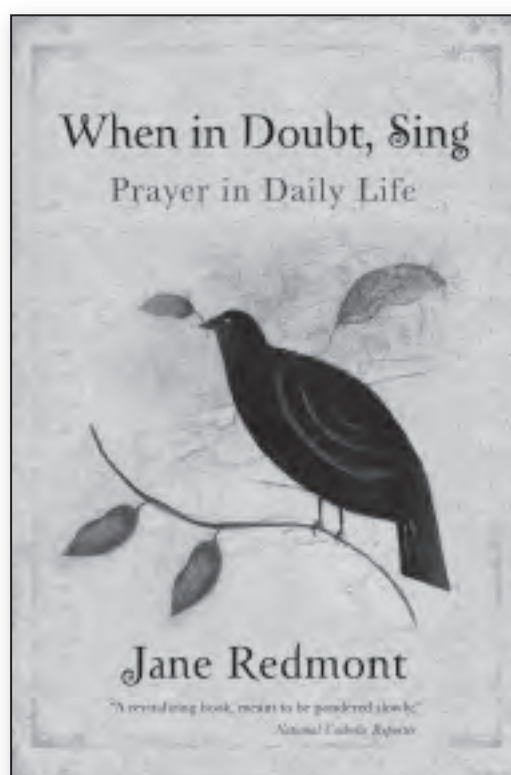
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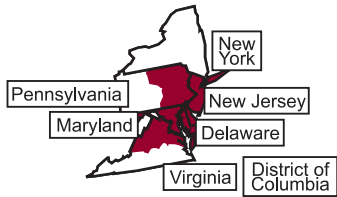
Regional Meetings and Calls for Papers

For information about our ten regions and more detailed Calls for Papers, go to www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Regions.



Eastern International

Information on the 2009 Eastern International regional meeting is not yet available. For more information, please see www.aarweb.org/about_AAR/regions/eastern_international.



Mid-Atlantic

Radisson Hotel at Cross Keys
Baltimore, MD
March 26–27, 2009

We invite scholarly proposals in any area of religious studies; especially those that address the 2009 conference theme, “Religious Studies and Sustainability: Conversations and Crossroads”.

Proposal Submission

Send proposals by e-mail attachment to Devorah Schoenfeld at drschoenfeld@smcm.edu no later than November 15, 2008. You may submit no more than two proposals to the Program Committee. It is advantageous to send proposals as soon as possible.

Call for Session Presiders

The MAR–AAR will offer a discounted registration rate for any member (\$10 for one day/\$20 for two days) who presides at a session. The preregistration form will have an area that you may check off if you are interested in presiding at a session. Note that this discounted rate will only apply to members who are not presenting during the meeting.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Awards

MAR–AAR will award \$200 to the most innovative proposal for a group session (or panel) dealing with peace issues or women’s studies. To help foster graduate student participation, the Robert F. Streetman Prize of \$200 will be awarded for the best student paper presented by an AAR regional member. Those interested in the Streetman prize should submit their entire paper by November 15, 2008, and clearly indicate they are submitting the paper for prize consideration.

Preregistration

Online preregistration will be available in January at www.aarweb.org. Please utilize the AAR website for registration, as it saves paper and helps the region fulfill our national AAR mandate to promote environmentally sustainable gatherings.

Hotel Information

The Radisson Cross Keys offers hotel room registration online at www.radisson.com/baltimoremd or by phone at 888-201-1718. Indicate that you are attending our conference to receive the conference rate. Discounted hotel rooms (\$125) will be held until March 2, 2009. Only 40 discounted rooms have been reserved, so reserve rooms early.

For updated conference information, consult www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Regions/Mid-Atlantic/call.asp. Information will be posted as it is available.

2009 Proposal Guidelines

Paper Proposals (250–500 words) should include full name, title, institution, phone number, fax number, e-mail, and mailing address. The proposal should state 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.

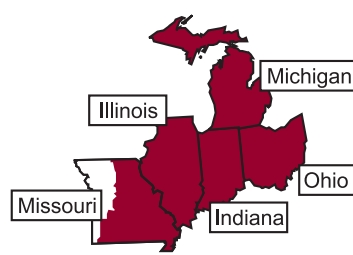
Proposals for a Panel Session should include abstracts (150 words) and contact information for each individual participant. A “panel” is a session with one announced theme and a list of participants who address that theme but do not present separate formal papers.

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.

If you have not presented a paper before a learned society, you must send us your paper and a plan to present (12 pages maximum). In your cover letter, add any information that may help us weigh your submission.

You will have approximately 35 minutes to present your paper (whether by reading it or by interactive discussion) and to respond to questions. Your paper should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages.

We cannot supply any audiovisual equipment due to prohibitive rental costs. Consider bringing photocopied handouts to your session.

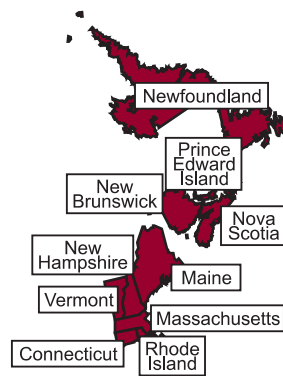


Midwest

Dominican University
River Forest, IL
April 3–4, 2009

Conference Theme: Religion and Play

The Midwest Region invites research presentation proposals related to the academic study of religion from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and encompassing a wide range of religious and cultural phenomena. This year, we especially invite proposals dealing with topics related to our conference theme, “Religion and Play.” Proposals might include research engaging such things as: ritual performance and inverted roles and identities — gods at play; “playing” with religious convention, tradition, and symbol; theological “play”; dramaturgy; religious plays or religious dimensions of theatrical performance; religious institution theater groups; religious games and toys; religion in online virtual gaming worlds; religion and sporting games; and so forth. This year’s conference will feature a special interactive gaming session and we invite proposals for other sorts of “play-based” opportunities for conference attendees to have “serious fun.”



New England–Maritimes

Instead of holding a NEMAAR regional meeting in 2008–2009, the region will continue to co-sponsor events proposed and organized by regional members from all parts of the region. For this coming year, for example, we will help to support the following:

What the Gods Demand: Blood Sacrifice in Mediterranean Antiquity, November 19–21, 2008, at Boston University.

For this coming academic year’s call: Our goal is to sponsor events in all 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 those 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 Linda Barnes, Boston University, linda.barnes@bmc.org. Applications should be sent to individuals listed in the call.

Co-Sponsoring Conferences: NEMAAR will function as a co-sponsor of conferences proposed by members around the region. NEMAAR’s contribution will involve: 1) Grants of up to \$800 to help support conference-related costs; 2) Assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best-practice planning schedules; and 3) Access to regional e-mailings to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Grove Harris, Cambridge, MA, groveharris@post.harvard.edu, and should include a conference title, an abstract, 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: 1) Grants of up to \$800 to help support conference-related costs; 2) Assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best-practice planning schedules; and 3) Access to regional e-mailings to locate presenters and/or to publicize the event. Proposals should be sent to Barbara Darling-Smith, Wheaton College, 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 grants of up to \$400 to help support related costs and access to regional e-mailings to publicize the series. Proposals should be sent to Michael Hartwig, Emmanuel College, 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 webpage at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Regions/New_England-Maritimes.

(continued on page 39)

(continued from page 38)



Pacific Northwest

Pacific Lutheran University
Tacoma, WA
April 24–26, 2009

Papers will be accepted for the following program units at our Call for Papers website available in November 2008. The official Program Unit calls will appear in our fall 2008 newsletter and on our webpage (www.pnw-aarsbl.org):

Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ASOR)

Gloria London, glondon@earthlink.net.

Asian and Comparative Studies

Nicholas F. Gier, University of Idaho, ngier@uidaho.edu.

Hebrew Scriptures

Heidi Szpek, Central Washington University, szpek@cwu.edu.

History of Christianity and North American Religions

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

Paul Ingram, Pacific Lutheran University, poingram@comcast.net, and Mark Unno, University of Oregon, munno@uoregon.edu.

New Testament and Hellenistic Religions

Paul N. Anderson, George Fox University, panderso@georgefox.edu.

Religion and Society

Kevin O'Brien, Pacific Lutheran University, obrien@plu.edu.

Theology and Philosophy of Religion

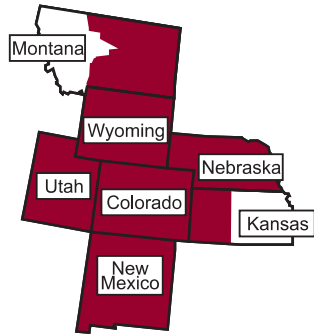
Dennis Jowers, Faith Seminary, djowers@faithseminary.edu, and Mari Kim, Emory University, mkim@alum.emory.edu.

Women and Religion

Ardy Bass, Gonzaga University, bassa@gonzaga.edu, and Kendra Irons, George Fox University, kironson@georgefox.edu.

Special Topic Session in Arts and Religion

Susan G. Carter, Marylhurst University and the California Institute of Integral Studies, susangailcarter@yahoo.com or scarter@ciis.edu, and Louise M. Pare, lmpare849@aol.com.



Rocky Mountain–Great Plains

Regis University
Denver, CO
March 6–7, 2009

The Regional Program Committee cordially invites you to submit proposals for papers and panels to be presented at the 2009 Regional Meeting in Denver, Colorado. The deadline for submissions is **November 3, 2008**. Each proposal should consist of a one-page abstract describing the nature of the paper or panel. 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 Committee also welcomes proposals for panels and thematic sessions in the following areas:

- Religious Studies among the Disciplines
- Religion and Popular Culture
- Women and Religion
- The Bible and Cognate Literature
- Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue
- 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 November 3, 2008 (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). 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.

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.rmgrp.org).

Program Committee. 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 Randy Lumpp at rlumpp@regis.edu by November 3, 2008. It is hoped that at least one faculty person from each of the participating schools in the region will serve on the Program Committee. Details on the Program Committee proposal review process will be e-mailed to those who self-identify by the deadline.

Please send all proposals and inquiries in MS Word Format to: Randolph F. Lumpp, Regis University, Department of Religious Studies, 3333 Regis BLVD, E-4, Denver, CO 80221; W: 303-458-3511; F: 303-964-5467; rlumpp@regis.edu.



Southeastern

Sheraton–Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC
March 13–15, 2009

Call deadline: **October 1, 2008**. For complete information on the Call, themes, and submission guidelines, log onto the AAR website or visit www.secsor.appstate.edu. Please use the proposal submission form available on the SECSOR website.

Consultation on Teaching Feminism/Womanism

Margarita Suarez, Meredith College, suarezm@meredith.edu, and Letitia Campbell, Emory University, letitia.campbell@emory.edu.

(AAR) Joint Session on Places of Redemption

Mark Medley, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, mark.medley@bsky.org; Emily Askew, Lexington Theological Seminary, easkew@lextheo.edu; Michelle Voss Roberts, Rhodes College, robertsm@rhodes.edu; and Emily Holmes, Rhodes College, holmese@rhodes.edu.

(AAR) Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy

Margaret Aymer, Interdenominational Theological Center, maymer@itc.edu.

(SBL/ASOR) Archaeology and the Ancient World

James Riley Strange, Samford University, jrstrang@samford.edu.

(AAR/SBL) Bible and Modern Culture

Brian Mooney, Johnson and Wales University, Charlotte, brian.mooney@juw.edu, and Finbar Benjamin, Oakwood University, fbenjamin@oakwood.edu.

(AAR) Black Cultures and the Study of Religion

Ronald Neal, Claflin University, rneal@claflin.edu.

(AAR) Constructive Theologies (formerly Philosophy of Religion and Theology)

Mark Medley, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, mark.medley@bsky.org, and Emily Askew, Lexington Theological Seminary, easkew@lextheo.edu.

(SBL) Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament

Bryan Bibb, Furman University, bryan.bibb@furman.edu, or David Garber, Mercer University, garber_dg@mercer.edu.

(AAR) History of Christianity

Michael Simmons, Auburn University, bishopmichael@centurytel.net.

(AAR) History of Judaism

Gilya Schmidt, University of Tennessee, gschmidt@utk.edu.

(AAR) Islam

Juliane Hammer, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, jhammer@unc.edu, and Rachel Scott, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, rmscott@vt.edu.

(SBL) New Testament

C. Kavin Rowe, Duke University, krowe@div.duke.edu.

(AAR) Philosophy of Religion

Mark Wells, Montreat College, mwells@montreat.edu.

(AAR) Religion, Culture, and the Arts

Megan Summers, Berkeley Preparatory School, summeg@berkeleyprep.org, and Adam Ware, Florida State University, amware@gmail.com.

(AAR) Religion, Ethics, and Society

Grace Kao, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, gkao@vt.edu, and Darla Schumm, Hollins University, dschumm@hollins.edu.

(AAR) Religion in America

Lynn S. Neal, Wake Forest University, nealls@wfu.edu.

(AAR) Religions of Asia (formerly, History of Religions)

Steven Ramey, University of Alabama, steven.ramey@ua.edu.

(AAR) Women and Religion

Michelle Voss Roberts, Rhodes College, robertsm@rhodes.edu, and Emily Holmes, Rhodes College, holmese@rhodes.edu.

Undergraduate Research

Send submissions by December 15, 2008, to chair Bernadette McNary-Zak, Rhodes College, mcnary_zak@rhodes.edu.



Southwest

Marriott Hotel, DFW Airport
Irving, TX
March 7–8, 2009

Submit proposals to the section chairs as listed below. Please indicate if the proposal is being submitted to more than one section. The deadline is **November 1, 2008**.

Arts, Literature, and Religion

Papers are solicited on the role and power of art to represent cultural values or to criticize them, the relationship between American

(continued on page 40)

(continued from page 39)

culture and the practice of religion, and whether religious tolerance and tolerance of religion are abiding cultural principles.

Proposals/abstract should be submitted to Katherine Downey, The Hockaday School, kdowney@mail.hockaday.org.

History of Christianity

Three areas are of special interest: 1) 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin; 2) 400th anniversary of John Smyth's founding of the first Baptist church in Amsterdam; and 3) 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

Send proposals to Arthur A. Torpy, we4torpys@grandecom.net.

Philosophy of Religion and Theology

All topics are welcome. A joint session with the Asian and Comparative Religion section and ASSR on the topic "Design and Evolution: The Encounter of Traditions and Modern Science," is planned. Send proposals to the chairs of each section. All proposals should be no more than two pages, pasted into the body of the e-mail.

Submit proposals to both Steve Oldham, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, soldham@umhb.edu, and Rebecca Huskey, University of Oklahoma, rhushkey@ou.edu.

Ethics, Society, and Cultural Analysis

All topics welcome, including politics and religion, race and religion, social ethics, poverty and economic justice, ecological and environmental ethics, medical ethics, theological ethics, sexual ethics, and the use of scripture or tradition in ethics.

Send proposals to Melanie L. Harris, Texas Christian University, m.l.harris@tcu.edu.

Comparative and Asian Studies in Religion

All topics welcome, especially religion and science, taxonomy in religious studies, nationalism, politics, and possession, and trance in comparative perspective. A joint roundtable session with Philosophy of Religion and Theology section and ASSR on "Design and Evolution: the Encounter of Traditions and Modern Science" is also planned. Proposals should not exceed 500 words (Word attachment preferable).

Send proposals to Ivette M. Vargas, Austin College, ivargas@austincollege.edu.

Theta Alpha Kappa

Student members in the Southwest Region are invited to submit papers. Submissions must come from the chapter advisor and include: 1) Presenter's name and contact information; 2) Entire paper (preferred) or an abstract of the paper (acceptable); 3) Name of the school; and 4) Venue for which the paper was prepared (e.g., honors project, senior thesis, etc.).

Submit proposals to Nadia Lahutsky, Texas Christian University, n.lahutsky@tcu.edu.



Upper Midwest

Luther Seminary
Saint Paul, MN
March 27–28, 2009

Submit proposals after September 15 online at www.umw-aarsbl.org. The program for the 2009 Regional meeting will be announced in January 2009.

Joint AAR/SBL Sessions:

Multicultural Perspectives on Theology, Religion, and Biblical Interpretation
Priscilla Eppinger, Graceland University

AAR Sessions:

Native American Religions
Dennis Kelley, Iowa State

Ethics
Mary Gaebler, Gustavus Adolphus College

Historical Perspectives on Religion
Jim Kroemer, Marquette University

Religions in North America
Murphy Pizza, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Religion and Science
Greg Peterson, South Dakota State University

Religion and Ecology
Nancy Vitorin-Vangerud, Hamline University

Religion, Art, and Culture
Phil Stoltzfus, University of St. Thomas

Religion, Gender, and Sexuality
C. Neal Key, College of St. Scholastica

Philosophy of Religion: Systematic Theology
Paul Capetz, United Theological Seminary, and Courtney Wilder, Midland Lutheran College

World Religions
Mark Berkson, Hamline University

Teaching the Bible and Religion
Matthew Skinner, Luther Seminary

Undergraduate Research
Lori Brandt Hale, Augsburg College, and Bruce Forbes, Morningside College

SBL Sessions:

Old Testament/Hebrew Bible
Paul Niskanen, University of St. Thomas

New Testament
Juan Hernandez, Bethel Seminary, and Daniel Scholz, Cardinal Stritch University

Christian Apocrypha
Casey Elledge, Gustavus Adolphus College

Religion in the Ancient World
Glen Menzies, North Central University

Greek and Roman Religions
Philip Sellow, University of Minnesota

Early Judaism and Judaic Studies
Michael Wise, Northwestern College

Archaeology and Excavation Reports
Mark Schuler, Concordia University

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 Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104, 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 at the time of making a paper proposal.

Upper Midwest Regional Officers

President: Bruce Forbes, Morningside College, Sioux City, IA

Vice-President: Susan Hill, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA

Program Committee: Amy Marga, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, and Phil Stoltzfus, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

Regional Director: Deanna A. Thompson, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN




Western

Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA
March 21–23, 2009

Standing at the Crossroads: Twenty-first Century Challenges in Ethics, Religion, and Social Justice — Reclaiming Traditions and Renewing Commitments

This year's theme is intended to foster discussion about responses generated by diverse faith traditions to new and old issues of social justice and equity, including, but not limited to, globalization and structural violence; civil strife, genocide, and war; intersections of race, gender, poverty, and social injustice; sexual, gender, and identity issues; and ecologic devastation/habitat destruction caused by the technical, biologic, and economic developments of the twenty-first century.

Section chairs are encouraged to develop individual calls that will produce papers and panels that offer critical reflections on these themes in relation to the ongoing interests of their sections. Joint sessions and interdisciplinary panels are encouraged, if relevant to the needs and interests of the section. Panels and papers may focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes: 1) Discussions of selected religious traditions and their social and ethical behavioral commitments, with particular attention to how these commitments are reflected in ongoing/everyday practice/s; 2) Explorations of the use of local and global faith-based strategies to promote cultural pluralism and peace; 3) Reviews of contemporary religious responses to new technologies, biomedical developments, scientific discoveries, and/or environmental concerns; 4) Investigations of the ongoing relationship between religious traditions and evolving social justice values; 5) Studies of the ability of marginalized groups (i.e., women, racial, ethnic, sexual, religious or caste minorities, and the poor) to successfully engage with, or challenge, marginalizing religious traditions, practices, and political, scriptural, or clerical authority, leading to new/renewed faith commitments, new interpretations of traditional practices, new understandings of scriptural text/s and authority, new practices and rituals, or new laws; 6) Reflections on the challenges that arise for religious traditions during periods of migration, genocide, war, or other volatile situations; and 7) Historic analyses that compare and contrast spiritual, religious, and ethical responses to globalization and structural violence, as well as gender and race relations in the past with current responses and realities today. For further information, visit www.sjsu.edu/wecor. 

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Summer Seminars on Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology

Funded by The Henry Luce Foundation and sponsored by the American Academy of Religion and its Theological Education Steering Committee

Faculty

John J. Thatamanil, Assistant Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Project Director. Thatamanil is the author of *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament* (Fortress Press, 2006). He is currently at work on a book tentatively entitled *Religious Diversity After "Religion"* (Fordham University Press). He is Chair of the Theological Education Steering Committee and a past President of the North American Paul Tillich Society.

Francis X. Clooney, S. J., Parkman Professor of Divinity and Professor of Comparative Theology, Harvard Divinity School. Clooney is one of the founding figures of comparative theology in its contemporary form. He is the author of numerous books, including *Theology After Vedanta: An Experiment in Comparative Theology* (SUNY Press, 1993); *Hindu God, Christian God: How Reason Helps to Break Down the Boundaries Between Religions* (Oxford University Press, 2001); *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother: Hindu Goddesses and the Virgin Mary* (Oxford University Press, 2005); *Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008); and *The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Srivaishnava Hindus* (Leuven: Peeters Publishing, 2008).

Jeanine Hill Fletcher, Associate Professor of Theology, Fordham University. Hill Fletcher has published a groundbreaking book entitled *Monopoly on Salvation? A Feminist Approach to Religious Pluralism* (Continuum, 2005), as well as the following articles: "As Long as We Wonder: Possibilities on the Impossibility of Interreligious Dialogue" in *Theological Studies*; "Unknowing in the Place of Understanding: The Theological Fruits of Dialogue," in *Prophetic Witness: Catholic Women's Strategies for the Church*, ed. Colleen Griffith (Crossroad, forthcoming 2008); and "Women's Voices in Dialogue: A Look at the Parliament of the World's Religions" in *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* (2006).

S. Mark Heim, Samuel Abbot Professor of Christian Theology, Andover Newton Theological School. Mark Heim is the author of several books on Christian approaches to theologies of religious pluralism. Among these, two have been recognized as foundational offerings that have changed the very terms of conversation within the field: *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Orbis, 1995) and *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Eerdmans, 2000).

Marcia Hermansen, Professor of Theology and Director of the Islamic World Studies Program, Loyola University, Chicago. She is the author of *The Conclusive Argument from God* (1996), a study and translation (from Arabic) of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi's *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*. She is the co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (MacMillan, 2003); the author of *American Sufis* (under contract to Oxford); "Islamic Concepts of Vocation" in *Revisiting the Idea of Vocation*, ed. John Haughey (Catholic University of America Press, 2004); "What's American about American Sufi Movements?" in *Sufism in Europe and North America*, ed. David Westerlund (Routledge, 2004); "Islamic Religious Healing in Chicago: Intersections of South Asian Sufi, American, and Islamic Models" for *Religious Healing in America*, ed. Susan Sered and Linda L. Barnes (Oxford, 2004); and "The Evolution of American Muslim Responses to 9/11" in *Religious Responses to 9/11*, ed. Ron Geaves (Ashgate, 2004).

Steven Kepnes, Murray W. and Mildred K. Finard Professor in Jewish Studies and Religion and chair of the religion department at Colgate University. He is the author of *Liturgical Reasoning* (Oxford University Press, 2007); *Scripture, Reason, and the Islam-West Encounter*, ed. with Basit Koshul (Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2007); *Reasoning After Revelation: Dialogues in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy* with Peter Ochs and Robert Gibbs (Westview Press, 1998); *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age* (New York University Press, 1996); and *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Hermeneutics* (Indiana University Press, 1992). He is currently working on a book on the signs of prophecy.

John Makransky, Associate Professor of Theology, Boston College. Makransky's publications include *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet* (SUNY Press, 1997); "Historical Consciousness as an Offering to the Trans-Historical Buddha" and "Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology: Its Emergence and Rationale" in *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, which he co-edited with Roger Jackson (2000); "Mahayana Buddhist Ritual and Ethical Activity in the World" in *Buddhist-Christian Studies Journal* (2000); "Buddhist Perspectives on Truth in Other Religions: Past and Present," in *Theological Studies Journal* (2003), and "Buddhist Analogues of Sin and Grace: A Dialogue with Augustine," forthcoming in *Augustinian Heritage*.

Peter Ochs, Edgar M. Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies, University of Virginia. Ochs has edited, co-authored, and authored several books, including *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation* (Paulist Press, 1993) and *Peirce, Pragmatism, and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). He is currently at work on two book projects: *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews* (Brazos Press) and *Come, Study! Teaching and Learning Scriptural Reasoning* (Eerdmans Press).

Anantanand Rambachan, Professor of Religion, Philosophy, and Asian Studies, St. Olaf's College. Rambachan's monographs include *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Sankara* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1991); *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Authority of the Vedas* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1994); and most recently, *The Advaita Worldview: God, World, and Humanity* (SUNY Press, 2006).

These week-long seminars will provide training to theological education faculty who are often preparing students for future religious leadership and ministry. The Theological Education Steering Committee invites applications from theological educators interested in pursuing these questions. The seminars will help address the question of religious diversity as a question of faith, that is to say, as a properly theological question: What is the meaning of my neighbor's faith for mine? While we expect that the bulk of applicants will come from seminaries and divinity schools, we also welcome theological educators who teach in theology and religious studies departments.

Cohort One

June 7–14, 2009, Union Theological Seminary, New York City
May 30–June 6, 2010, University of Chicago Divinity School

Cohort Two

June 13–20, 2010, Union Theological Seminary, New York City
May 29–June 5, 2011, University of Chicago Divinity School

Two separate cohorts will each be composed of 25 participants and 8 instructors and will meet for a week-long event the first summer, then a one-day event the following fall at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, followed by another week-long event the next summer. The seminars are designed for those relatively new to the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, allowing them to learn from scholars and advance their understanding. The result of the summer seminars will be to increase the number of theological educators who can teach in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology in a variety of institutions in which theological education takes place.

All accepted applicants will be awarded a cash stipend of \$1,000, plus the grant will cover their expenses incurred in their participation in the seminars.

The goals of these summer seminars are to provide theological educators with the following:

- Substantive introduction to the best in current scholarship and teaching resources in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology;
- The opportunity to engage in an interreligious conversation about the meaning of religious diversity;
- The opportunity to bring their own specific areas of research expertise into conversation with theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology;
- Support in developing teaching resources, syllabi, and other programming appropriate to the particular needs of their home institutions;
- The opportunity to disseminate their learning by means of publication or other appropriate media; and
- A cohort of scholar-teachers who can support each other in their own ongoing scholarly and teaching development in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology.

To be assured of consideration for Cohort One, applications must be received by December 5, 2008. Applicants will be notified by mid-January 2009.

The application deadline for Cohort Two will be in the fall of 2009.

For more information, please go to www.aarweb.org/Programs/summer_seminars or contact John J. Thatamanil at john.j.thatamanil@vanderbilt.edu.

Further information will also be available in the AAR booth (501) in the Book Exhibit hall at the AAR Annual Meeting in Chicago, November 1–3, 2008.

Postmodernism,
Culture and Religion 3

THE POLITICS OF

Love

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A constellation of internationally prominent theorists—philosophers, theologians and psychoanalysts—will gather to discuss the question of whether the concept of love can be re-described as a political concept. Is love necessarily a private matter or does it also have a public meaning? Can love become part of a political project? In addition to an ethics or religion of love, can there be a politics of love?

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

April 16-18, 2009

Coordinators

Linda Martín Alcoff, Professor of Philosophy
John D. Caputo, Thomas J. Watson Professor of
Religion and Humanities

Registration

Fee: \$125, Students: \$60
Preregistration is recommended.

Made Possible in Part by a Grant from the
Ray Smith Symposium.

Accommodations and all sessions at

The Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel and
Conference Center

For more information and on-line registration
visit our website at <http://pcr.syr.edu/>

Contact

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