2009 Member Calendar

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

June

- June 15. Membership renewal deadline for 2009 Annual Meeting participants.
- June 15. Annual Meeting registration deadline for 2009 Annual Meeting participants.
- June 15. Submission deadline for the October issue of Religious Studies News. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.
- July
  - July 1. Annual Meeting program goes online.
  - July 1. New fiscal year begins.
  - July 31. Deadline for participants to request audiovisual equipment at the Annual Meeting.

August

- August 1. Research grant applications due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Programs/Grants.
- August 1. Regional development grant applications due to Regionally Elected Directors.
- August 15. Membership renewal period for 2010 begins.

September

- September journal of the American Academy of Religion September issue.
- TBD. Program Committee meeting, Santa Barbara, CA.
- TBD. Executive Committee meeting, Santa Barbara, CA.
- September 1. Deadline for submissions of nominations for AAR Series Book Editor. See this issue, page 18, for more information.

October

- October
  - Religious Studies News October issue.
  - Spotlight on Teaching Fall issue.
  - October 1. Deadline for Additional Meetings inclusion into the Annual Meeting Program Book.
  - October 12. Annual Meeting Job Center pre-registration closes.
  - October 15. Submissions for the January 2010 issue of Religious Studies News due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.
  - October 15. Regional development grant awards announced.

November

- November
  - November 1. Research grant awards announced.
  - November 5. Regionally Elected Directors meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
  - November 5. Executive Committee meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
  - November 6. Fall Board of Directors meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
  - November 6. Leadership Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
  - November 6. Sustainability Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
  - November 7. Annual Meeting registration and housing opens for 2010 meeting.
  - November 7–10. Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada. The AAR Annual Meeting, the world’s largest gathering of scholars of religion, anticipates some 5,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 125 hiring departments.
  - TBD. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. See the Program Book for day and time.
- November 20. New program unit proposals due.

December

- December
  - TBD. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.
- December 15. Submissions for the March 2010 issue of Religious Studies News due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

And keep in mind throughout the year...

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the year for the Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/MeetingRegions.asp.

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/InTheFieldSubmit1.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/Publications/Ops/OpeningSubmit1.asp.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

This issue of Religious Studies News will be the last printed issue of this member newsletter, a publication which has served the membership of the American Academy of Religion since 1986. The Academy is facing extraordinary financial times, times in which we are called to continue producing the benefits our members expect of us, while at the same time having to face a substantial contraction in our annual income. RSN has been a multiple message publication (news, announcements, marketing, solicitations, and education), and will continue to be this — but in a different communication medium. Later this year, RSN will go online. Born of economic necessity, this move will help the Academy achieve an important environmental goal — sustainability. By this move to an electronic format, we will eliminate the need for and cost of paper and ink and the waste/recycling of the print edition once it is read and disposed of.

With this new online version, we can also move the timing of each “issue” to correspond with events in the field and within the Academy. With the printed RSN we had been constrained to publish it based on the cyclical and seasonal nature of our members’ academic calendar. With an online publication our members will be able to view each issue anywhere in the world, at any time.

Many of us in the Executive Office have worked on RSN in one capacity or another over the last decade. We always liked to think that putting together the issues each year gave us a good grasp of the life of the Academy.

We hope you will enjoy the new look of RSN.

Carey J. Gifford
Executive Editor

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.
2009 Plenary Addresses

Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara
Mark Juergensmeyer is director of the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, professor of sociology, and affiliate professor of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is an expert on religious violence, conflict resolution, and South Asian religion and politics. He has published more than two hundred articles and twenty books, including the recently released Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State (University of California Press 2008). His widely read Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence (University of California Press, revised edition 2003), is based on interviews with religious activists around the world — including individuals convicted of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, leaders of Hamas, and abortion clinic bombers in the United States. A previous book, The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State (University of California Press, 1993), covers the rise of religious activism and its confrontation with secular modernity. Juergensmeyer has edited the Oxford Handbook of Global Religion (Oxford University Press 2006), Religion in Global Civil Society (Oxford University Press 2005), and is coediting The Encyclopedia of Global Religions (Sage Publications 2008) and The Encyclopedia of Global Studies (Sage Publications 2009). His 2006 Stafford Little Lectures at Princeton University, “God and War,” will be published by Princeton University Press. Juergensmeyer chairs the working group on Religion and International Affairs for the national Social Science Research Council. Since the events of September 11, he has been a frequent commentator in the news media.

Named by Time magazine as one of the one hundred most important innovators of the twenty-first century, Tariq Ramadan occupies a unique place among leading Islamic thinkers. Representing a new generation of Islamic reformers, Ramadan advocates the exploration and application of Islamic traditions and values within a modern pluralistic context, calling on Western Muslims to embrace Western culture rather than reject it. A Swiss national, he is a well-respected professor of theology at the University of Oxford. Ramadan has written more than twenty books exploring the difficult issues of reinterpretation and reform within Islam itself and between the Islamic world and its neighbors around the globe. His books include Western Muslims and the Future of Islam (Oxford University Press, 2008), Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity (The Islamic Foundation, 2000), To Be a European Muslim (The Islamic Foundation, 1998), and Jihad, Violence, War, and Peace in Islam (in French only, Tawhid, 2002). Ramadan serves as an expert in various commissions linked to the Brussels Parliament, and is a member of several working parties concerned with Islam in the world and on the continent. Because we are meeting in Canada this year, Ramadan will be able to speak live to AAR attendees, unlike 2004 and 2006, when the United States State Department would not issue him a visa to attend the Annual Meetings.

Islamic thinkers and activists are facing the great social changes associated with modernity that other religious traditions have faced and are facing. Cultural diaspora, the context of pluralism, the breakdown of traditional family and social patterns, changing cultural values (including shifting gender roles and sexual attitudes), and the intersection of political and spiritual ideas means that all elements of modernity that have confronted all religious traditions. Are Islamic responses any different? Are they diverse and changing? Are there internal disputes as well as external pressures? And what is the future of Islamic ideas and culture in a postmodern world? These and similar questions will be addressed by a distinguished panel of observers of the contemporary Islamic world, exploring the changing character of Islamic modernity in all of its geographic and cultural diversity.

Panelists:
- Tariq Ramadan, University of Oxford
- Nûlûtû Çole, L’Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales
- Robin Wright, Washington Post

The emergence of strident new forms of religion in the twenty-first century challenges the domain of secular ideas and institutions in the public sphere — and encourages a rethinking of what secularism is, as an ideology and as a way of life. This panel brings together some of the most articulate social divines writing on the subject — scholars associated with a major project on rethinking secularism sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, a think tank supported by the professional academic associations of the social sciences. They explore the roots of the secular ideal in eighteenth-century European Enlightenment thought, the way it is diversely conceived in the present day around the world, and how the concept is changing. They raise the question of whether we are moving into a new moment of history marked by resurgent religion in public life — a post-secular age.

Panelists:
- Charles Taylor, McGill University
- José Casanova, Georgetown University
- Craig Calloun, New York University
- Saba Mahmood, University of California, Berkeley

Visa Requirements

IT IS NECESSARY for those entering Canada to clear customs. Visitors from the United States, Mexico, and the European Union must present a passport in order to enter Canada. Please be prepared. Non-North American and European Union citizens should inquire about possible visa requirements. Please see www.cic.gc.ca for details.

Official letters of invitation to the Annual Meeting to support visa applications are available. E-mail annualmeeting@aarweb.org with your name, address, and the full contact information of the Canadian consulate of your country.

ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

2009 Presidential Address
Beyond Words and War: The Global Future of Religion
Saturday 7:30 PM–8:30 PM
Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara

Europe’s Encounter with Islam
Sunday 11:45 AM–12:45 PM
Tariq Ramadan, University of Oxford

Centennial Plenary Panels

In addition to the regular plenary lectures, the AAR is pleased to offer three Centennial Plenary Panels on the theme of the Globalization of Religion:

Islamic现代化和后现代性

Islamic thinkers and activists are facing the great social changes associated with modernity that other religious traditions have faced and are facing. Cultural diaspora, the context of pluralism, the breakdown of traditional family and social patterns, changing cultural values (including shifting gender roles and sexual attitudes), and the intersection of political and spiritual ideas means that all elements of modernity that have confronted all religious traditions. Are Islamic responses any different? Are they diverse and changing? Are there internal disputes as well as external pressures? And what is the future of Islamic ideas and culture in a postmodern world? These and similar questions will be addressed by a distinguished panel of observers of the contemporary Islamic world, exploring the changing character of Islamic modernity in all of its geographic and cultural diversity.

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Panelists:
- Charles Taylor, McGill University
- José Casanova, Georgetown University
- Craig Calloun, New York University
- Saba Mahmood, University of California, Berkeley
**Special Invited Guests**

**Thomas Altizer**
graduated from the University of Chicago with BA, MA, and PhD degrees. He then became professor of English at Emory University, where he taught from 1956 to 1968. While teaching at Emory, Altizer and his religious views were featured in the famous 1966 *Time* magazine article, “Is God Dead?” The *Time* article dealt with Altizer’s religious proclamation of a secularizing thesis that, on a pure level, viewed God’s death (really self-extinction) as a process that began at the world’s creation and came to an end through Jesus Christ — whose crucifixion in reality poured out God’s full spirit into this world. In developing his position, Altizer drew upon the dialectical thought of Hegel, the visionary writings of William Blake, the anthroposophical thought of Owen Barfield, and adapted aspects of Mireia Eliade’s view of the sacred and the profane. In the mid-1960s, Altizer was drawn into discussions about his views with other radical Christian theologians, such as Gabriel Vanhman, William Hamilton, and Paul Van Buren, and also with the Jewish rabbi Richard Rubenstein. Each of these thinkers appeared to form a loose network of other thinkers who held to different versions of the death of God. Altizer is currently professor emeritus of religious studies at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. His memoir is entitled *Living the Death of God.*

**Slavoj Žižek**
is a Lacanian Marxist sociologist, psychoanalyst, and cultural critic. He received a Doctor of Arts in philosophy from the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia and studied psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VIII with Jacques-Alain Muyr and François Regnault. Žižek is a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and a professor at the European Graduate School. He is currently the International Director of the Birkebeck Institute for the Humanities at Birkebeck, University of London, and president of the Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis, Ljubljana. Žižek’s work is famously idiosyncratic. It features striking dialectical reversals of received common sense, a ubiquitously sense of humor, a patented disrespect towards the modern distinction between high and low culture, and the examination of examples taken from the most diverse cultural and political fields. Žižek challenges many of the founding assumptions of today’s left-liberal academia, including the elevation of difference or otherness as ends in themselves, the reading of the Western Enlightenment as implicitly totalitarian, and the pervasive skepticism towards any context-transcendent notions of truth or good. Žižek has reinvigorated Jacques Lacan’s challenging psychoanalytic theory, controversially reading him as a thinker who carries forward founding modernist commitments to the Cartesian subject and the liberating potential of self-reflective agency, if not self-transparency. Žižek’s works since 1997 have become more and more explicitly political, contesting the widespread consensus that we live in a post-ideological or postpolitical world.

**Gérard Bouchard**
is a historian and sociologist from Quebec affiliated with the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. He obtained his PhD in history from the University of Paris in 1971. Trained in sociology and history, he launched a huge social history project on the Saguenay region, located in northeastern Quebec and opened to settlement in the 1830s. One of the major goals of Bouchard’s project was to build a computerized population register (called BALSAC) of this regional population between 1838 and 1971. Over the years, the project has generated numerous articles and collections of essays, culminating in 1996 in the publication of a synthesis book, *Quelques arpent's d'Amérique: Population, économie, famille au Saguenay, 1838-1971* (translated as *Border Country: People, Economy, Family at the Saguenay, 1838-1971*). BALSAC also gave birth to various research programs in the field of social history, historical demography, cultural studies, and human genetics. The various collaborations established through these research projects led to the creation of the Interuniversity Institute for Population Research (IREP), which Gérard Bouchard headed until 1998. Since leaving IREP, he has remained responsible for the BALSAC Project, whose main objective is to cover the whole of the Quebec population since the beginning of the settlement in the seventeenth century up to recent years. Bouchard is the younger brother of Lucien Bouchard, Premier of Quebec from 1996 to 2001. Like his brother, he is a supporter of the Quebec sovereignty movement. In 2007, he was appointed, along with Charles Taylor, to chair a provincial government inquiry into “Reasonable Accommodation.”

**Abdul Karim Soroush**
is an Iranian thinker, philosopher, reformer, Rumi scholar, and former professor at the University of Tehran. He is a well-known figure in the religious intellectual movement in Iran. After the Revolution, Soroush returned to Iran and published his book, *Knowledge and Value* — the writing of which he had completed in England. He then went to Tehran’s Teacher Training College, where he was appointed director of the newly established Islamic Culture Group. While in Tehran, Soroush established studies in both history and the philosophy of science. During the 1990s, Soroush gradually became more critical of the political role played by the Iranian clergy. The monthly magazine that he cofound ed, *Kiyann*, soon became the most visible forum ever for religious intellectualism. In this magazine, he published his most controversial articles on religious pluralism, heteroneutics, tolerance, and clericalism. *Kiyann* was clamped down upon in 1998, as well as many other magazines and newspapers, by the direct order of the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic. Over the next year, Soroush lost his three senior academic appointments, including a deanship. Public appearances were banned and he was forbidden to publish new articles. Since 2000, Soroush has lived in the United States and Europe, and has taught at Harvard University, Princeton University, and Georgetown University.

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**Religious Studies News**

**Improvements to Annual Meeting Publications**

**UPDATE YOUR mailing address now to receive a copy of the new Annual Meeting Program Planner, mailed in early June to all members of the AAR. Please allow 3–4 weeks for delivery. Program Planners will be mailed to new and renewing members in September. You can update your mailing address by going to www.aarweb.org/Members/My_AAR and clicking on “Change Contact Information.”**

The Program Planner contains a listing of the day, time, theme, participant names, and paper titles for all AAR sessions and a listing of the day, time, and theme for all Additional Meetings sessions. It is a great way to begin your Annual Meeting planning.

The format for the 2009 Program Planner is improved from the 2008 format; it will list the participant names and paper titles for every AAR session, as well as contain a participant index. However, it will not include session abstracts for highlighted sessions.

A complete listing of all AAR and Additional Meetings session information, including participant names, paper titles, room locations, and abstracts, will be available in the online Program Book on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org by July 1. The keyword, date/time, and other search features will allow you to find the sessions you are most interested in attending. The online Program Book includes a utility in which you can select the individual sessions you want to print to make your own custom program.

The Annual Meeting Program Book will be distributed to all Annual Meeting attendees onsite in Montréal. This is the familiar publication that includes complete session listings of AAR and Additional Meetings with up-to-date times, room locations, session and participant indices, hotel maps, and advertising about discounts in the Annual Meeting exhibit hall.
ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

Religious Sites Tours of Montréal

Registration for tours is available in the online Annual Meeting registration process or by faxing or mailing the form in the registration issue (sent in the March RSN issue). Space is limited on all tours, so please register early.

IN MONTRÉAL, religion dominates the landscape. Initially it is the Christian symbols that draw one’s attention. From the spires of the Notre Dame Basilica to the dome of St. Joseph’s Oratory, to the three-story illuminated cross on the mountain, one can find Christian symbolism on churches, in parks, schools, street names, and private homes. However, on closer inspection, it is obvious that the religions of the world are active in this city. The Montréal Venue Committee invites you to join us for two distinct guided tours of religious sites in Montréal, or to explore the city’s diverse religious sites on your own.

Sacred and Religious Sites of Montréal: Tour in Transition

Monday, 1:00 PM–5:00 PM

This religious sites tour will explore several encounters between the old and the new. Beginning with a stop at St. Joseph’s Oratory, we will have the opportunity to explore the world’s largest Catholic site dedicated to Saint Joseph. This ten-story building, with an impressive footprint on the Montréal landscape, attracts millions of pilgrims (and tourists) the world over. Recently the site has embraced its status as a pilgrimage site for non-Christians too. For more information, see www.saint-joseph.org/en_1007_index.asp.

Tour Leaders:
Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University
Laurence Nixon, Dawson College
Montréal
Susan Bronson, Mile End Memories

In cooperation with:
Paula M. Kane, University of Pittsburgh
Jeanne Halgren Kilde, University of Minnesota
Peter W. Williams, Miami University, Ohio

Tour fee: USD$20

Eastern Religious Sites of Montréal: Putting Down Roots
Sunday, 3:30 PM–7:30 PM

This bus tour will take us to the west island suburbs of Montréal, where several Eastern religious communities have taken root. The second stop will highlight the ongoing transformation of religious sites in the city center with tour guides from Mile End Memories leading us on a forty-five-minute walk that explores the impressive architectural and religious diversity of a dozen places of worship. Collectively, the sites offer testimony to the passage of several different cultural communities through the multicultural neighborhood of Mile End. This part of the tour will be outdoors, so please dress warmly.

The final stop will provide the opportunity to visit a brand new religious site, the Durkai Amman Temple Kovil, a Sri Lankan Tamil Saiwite Temple that serves a small but growing community of practitioners. Currently under renovation, the site offers access to a ritual space that from the inside could be anywhere on the south Asian continent. For more information, visit www.mldurkai.com.

Tour Leaders:
Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University
Laurence Nixon, Dawson College
Montréal

Tour fee: USD$20

Additional Stores
The tour will include stops at the Tibetan Buddhist Temple Gaden Chang Chub Choling, this temple, like many sites used by “new” non-Christian traditions in Canada, has converted a bank building into a temple space. Founded in 1980 and established in 1986, the center offers a range of religious rituals and cultural development activities. For more information, visit www.khenrab.org.

The second stop will take us to the “most beautiful Gurdwara in Montréal.” Following the trend of other religious communities, this Gurdwara is built in a semi-industrial neighborhood in a suburb twice removed from the city center, where land and zoning bylaws are easier to negotiate. The space includes an impressive example of traditional Gurdwara construction with a community that is ready to answer our questions.

The last stop on the tour will take us further down the island of Montréal into the suburb of Dollard Des Ameaux where we will visit the Thin Murgam temple, a Sri Lankan Tamil Saiwite Temple constructed in the traditional style of South Indian architecture, clearly the most beautiful example of its kind in the region. Our timing should coincide with a puja service, giving us the opportunity to share an experience with this most welcoming community. For more information, visit www.montreal murgamtemple.fitaiheun.com.

Tour Leaders:
Mark Bradley, Université de Québec à Montréal
Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University

Tour fee: USD$30

2009 Annual Meeting International Focus: Globalization of Religion in North America

A S PART OF the American Academy of Religion’s centennial celebration, the International Connections Committee’s international focus at the Annual Meeting in Montréal is “Globalization of Religion in North America.” In the one hundred years that the AAR has been in existence, the religious landscape has changed alongside demographic shifts in North America. The changing culture has influenced the Academy dramatically as scholars and teachers—especially in individual research and teaching—and all others present and practice religion.

The International Connections Committee will ask several North American scholars for this focus, as North American scholars will already attend the meeting. In the past, the Committee would sponsor several scholars from the featured region to attend and address the Annual Meeting. Instead, the Committee encouraged all program units to formulate sessions to address how globalization has influenced the study of, teaching of, and practice of religion.

There are three Special Topics Forums that the Committee is sponsoring for the Montréal meeting, and we encourage you to make a special effort to attend:

• Global Economies of the Sacred — Gilya Gerda Schmidt, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, presiding; with panelists Andrea Smith, University of California, Riverside; Amos Yong, Regent University, David Chidester, University of Cape Town; Ginette Ihematsu, University of Toronto; and Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University.

• Diasporas of Religion and Religions of Diaspora — Manuel Vasquez, University of Florida, presiding; with panelists Cynthia M. Baker, Bates College; Jacob Ohapuna, Harvard University; Iyadat Josti, Fairleigh Dickinson University; Thomas Tweed, University of Texas, Austin; and Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida.

• Transnationalism and Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning beyond Borders (copresented with the Teaching and Learning Committee) — Tersia Mbai Hinga, Santa Clara University, presiding; with panelists Edward Philip Antonio, Iffill School of Theology; Richard Foltz, Concordia University; Gemma Cruz, DePaul University; and Arvind Sharma, McGill University.

Additionally, AAR President Mark Juergensmeyer has organized three Centennial Plenary Panels on the following themes:

• Islam and Modernity — Reza Aslan, University of California, Riverside; presiding; with panelists Tarig Ramadan, University of Oxford; Nillurp Golé, L’Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales; and Robin Wright, Washington Post.

• Global Perspectives on Religious Studies — Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida, presiding; with panelists Ayamoti Aza, Nyeri Hadyanurlathall State Islamic University, Indonesia; Shivrita Goswami, Vrindavan, India; Koochi Mori, Doshisha University, Japan; Sylva Marcos, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos; and Kim Knott, University of Leeds.

• Rethinking Secularism — Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara, presiding; with panelists Charles Taylor, McGill University; José Caasanova, Georgetown University; Craig Calhoun, New York University; and Sara Ahmed, University of California, Berkeley.

Tarig Ramadan will address the AAR in a plenary address. It will be his first time to address the AAR in person, though he has participated via satellite linkup during past AAR meetings.

The International Connections Committee encourages all to attend its sessions and those sessions that Program Units have created celebrating and investigating the Globalization theme. It also wishes to thank the Program Units and President Mark Juergensmeyer for helping make this Montréal meeting a truly international event.

The International Connections Committee is chaired by Tariq Ramadan, with members Tersia Mbai Hinga, Santa Clara University; Gilya Gerda Schmidt, University of Tennessee; Edward Philip Antonio, Iffill School of Theology; Manuel A. Vasquez, University of Florida; Xiaoxi Kang, Carnegie Mellon University; and Kyle Cole, AAR Director of Professional Programs, staff liaison.

Striking Out on Your Own: Montréal Religious Sites on Foot

If you are looking for an opportunity for some fresh air between sessions, there are several religious sites within walking distance from the Palais des Congrès. A five-minute walk to the south will take you to the edge of Old Montréal, where you can visit the Notre Dame Basilica, a replica of the original in Paris. The Basilica is open daily. Paid tours are available, but there is no fee to enter the church. Donations are appreciated. For more information, visit www.basilique.nd.org.

Just outside the doors of the Palais des Congrès on the north side, in just a few steps, you enter Montréal’s Chinatown where you can visit several temples, including one supported by the Montréal Chinese Buddhist Society. For more information about this and other sites in Montréal’s Chinatown, check out the Montréal Asian Religious Sites Project reports at www.marp.mcgill.ca/ethn.htm.

Two blocks north of the Palais des Congrès, you will find the newly built and opened Al Oumm Al Islamiya Mosque located at 1245 St. Dominique. This mosque and many other religious sites you visit in Montréal. We hope you will join us in November!

Discover Old Longueuil and the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

Monday, 8:30 AM–1:00 PM

Details to come in the Annual Meeting Program Planner.

Organized by: Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University.

May 2009 RSN • 5
AAT THE ANNUAL Meeting in
Montréal, the AAR’s Sustainability Task Force will host a half-day workshop addressing the roles and methods of religion and theology teachers wanting to infuse sustainability topics into the curriculum. The workshop, “Religious Studies In an Age of Global Warming: Transforming Ourselves, Our Students, and Our Universities” will be from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM on Friday, November 6, and will be led by Roger S. Gottlieb, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and task force member, and Stephanie Kaza, University of Vermont. Task Force members Sarah McFarland Taylor (chair), Northwestern University; Isabel Mukonyora, Western Kentucky University; Laurel D. Kearns, Emory University, and Barbara A. B. Patterson, Emory University, will serve as breakout group facilitators at the workshop.

Gottlieb teaches in the Department of Humanities and Arts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and is one of the world’s leading voices of religious environmentalism. His works in this area include This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment (the first comprehensive textbook in the field); A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet’s Future (the first book-length analysis of religious environmentalism); The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology: Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change; and A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth.

Kaza is Director of the Environmental Program at the University of Vermont, where she teaches environmental humanities. She is best known for her work in Buddhist environmental thought and Buddhist–Christian dialogue. Her books include Dharmas Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism, Hooked: Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume, and Mindfully Green. At the University of Vermont, Kaza works closely with the Office of Sustainability on campus greening and socially responsible investing.

Teaching the environmental crisis poses unique challenges and opportunities for higher education. The scope and extent of the threat demands that faculty inform themselves about a host of practical, theological, moral, historical, and political concerns that probably were not part of their original scholarly field. At the same time, the encompassing nature of the threat touches all of our lives.

Faculty, like students, experience fear, grief, and despair as we witness the vanishing species, changed weather, and polluted waters of our planet. Yet the very universality and severity of the environmental crisis also provide a unique opportunity to make our teaching intensely relevant to the world outside the classroom, and to experience the deep satisfaction of offering teaching that is personally, morally, and politically important.

This workshop will explore these challenges and opportunities, giving participants the chance to examine their own responses to the environmental crisis, to engage with faculty concerning teaching resources, sample syllabi, course modules, and instructional themes, and ways to connect with other academic departments and the wider campus sustainability movement. Material will be provided to support the development of “Religion and Environment” courses, and integration of environmental themes into courses such as “Introduction to Religious Studies,” “Social Ethics,” “Religion and Politics,” or studies of particular religions.

The workshop will take up relevant theological issues (e.g., ecological interpretations of scripture), moral problems (e.g., stewardship versus biocentric ethical models), the role of religious environmentalism in relation to other social movements (e.g., feminism, racial justice), and engaged teaching techniques designed to (re)connect students to these crucial moral issues and their meaning for life on earth.

“This workshop crosses a multitude of subfield boundaries and appeals broadly to scholars across the curriculum who wish to address the most critical issues facing the Academy — and the world — today,” said Sarah McFarland Taylor, chair of the Task Force. “If you attend one workshop in Montréal this year, make it this one!”

You may register for the workshop when you register for the Annual Meeting, or by using the form on this page and faxing it to 301-694-5124. The registration fee for the workshop is $50 until October 20, 2009. After that, registration is $75 onsite only.

You are encouraged to register early as the workshop is limited to the first seventy-five participants.

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

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants.

Send your registration form and payment of $50.00 before October 20, 2009 ($75.00 after and onsite).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

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

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number expiration Date

CID*

Cardholder Signature

Name on Card (Please Print)

* Card Identification Number: 4 digits on front of American Express; 3 digits on back of other cards

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

Participants will then explore the presence of these characteristics in the design of majors in different institutional contexts (small public, large public, private, and theological). The workshop will conclude with presentations and discussions about how we address these characteristics in ways attentive both to our responsibilities as educators and to the students and the reasons they are in our programs.

“The hope is that this workshop will not only continue the conversation begun by the AAR/Teagle Working Group but also extend it to illuminate some best practices for curriculum and program development,” Glennon said.

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

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. The cost for the workshop is $100, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a book on the topic. The topics for past chairs workshops have been:

2008 Annual Meeting
Leadership Workshop — Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know
2007 Annual Meeting
Chairs Workshop — Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Faculty 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 — Assembling and Advancing the Religious Studies Program

We look forward to seeing you in Montréal! The Academic Relations Committee: Fred Glennon, chair, Chester Gillis, L. DeAnne Laguerquist, Steve Young, Rosetta Ross, Edwin David Aponte, and Kyle Cole, staff liaison.
Québec's Quiet Revolution: From Catholic Hegemony to a Modern State

Donald L. Boisvert, Concordia University

Donald L. Boisvert is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religion at Concordia University, Montréal. His areas are religion in Canada, religion and gender, and Catholic culture. He has published two books with Pilgrimage Press, Out on Holy Ground: Meditations on Gay Men's Spirituality (2000) and Sanctity and Male Desire: A Gay Reading of Saints (2004).

The expression “Quiet Revolution” may seem a bit strange to those unfamiliar with the histories of Canada and of Québec. How can any revolution be quiet? Is a revolution not boisterous by its very nature? Yes, usually. But the case of Québec is different. The province underwent radical and significant social change in the 1950s and 1960s; it was, however, a rather noiseless and placid affair. For nearly four centuries, the Catholic Church had been the dominant social, cultural, and political force in Québec. The Church was widely perceived — and it certainly saw itself — as the guardian of the Catholic faith, the French language, and the traditional rural lifestyle. After the fall of New France to the British in 1759, and especially following the establishment of British rule in 1763, French was made the official language of the territory, and Québec became part of the British Empire. For several decades, there had been an ultra-conservative political party in power with close links to the Church, headed by Maurice Duplessis. This period is often called, rather simplistically, la Grande Noirceur (the Great Darkness), All that was to change in 1960. The year is a useful marker, because it was then that the Québec Liberal Party, headed by Jean Lesage, won an election and formed the provincial government. Their platform called for a significant modernization of the State apparatus in Québec, and this would necessarily imply a major shift in the role and presence of the Catholic Church in many facets of public life. The impetus for change had come decades before, however, as Québec, like other postwar societies in the West, found itself increasingly subject to the vicissitudes of increased urbanization, economic prosperity, a rising middle class, labor unrest, and generational tensions. In some important ways, the Catholic Church was instrumental in paving the way for the changes heralded by the Quiet Revolution, and some historians have argued that the source of these changes can be found within the social activism of the Church itself (Gauvreau, 2005).

So “revolution” because the change was sudden, profound, lasting, and irreversible; “quiet” because it took place in an atmosphere of relative calm, with little or no serious social or political conflict. After their election in 1960, Lesage’s Liberals put in place an active process of modernization of the State apparatus in Québec — everything from the nationalization of hydroelectric power, to the creation of a number of State-controlled economic agencies, to the establishment of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs (in 1961) and a Ministry of Education (in 1964). In the case of the latter, power and jurisdiction passed from religious orders to government-sanctioned professional school boards (much later, in 1998, to be converted to linguistic school boards). Moral authority therefore shifted from the Catholic Church to the government of Québec, which became the major and sole arbiter of the common good. Culture also flourished, whether in literature, cinema, or the visual and performing arts. Simultaneously, the years of the Quiet Revolution saw a significant growth in the nationalist feeling in Québec, finding its ultimate expression in the 1968 founding of the social-democratic Party Québécois (PQ), which advocates sovereignty for Québec. (The PQ was founded by René Lévesque, one of Jean Lesage’s foremost cabinet ministers, who led the battle to nationalize hydroelectric power. Lévesque served as Premier of the Province from 1976 to 1985.) No longer was it the traditional themes of family and faith that served as the loci of collective identity; rather those of language and State. The people of Québec moved from identifying themselves as French Canadians to the more defiant Québécois. The bridge had been crossed. The Catholic Church entered a period of decline, something with which it continues to grapple.

Bibliography


Pendegrass in Montréal...

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

We look forward to welcoming you to our city. As you get together with colleagues, take some time to explore Montréal and sample its downtown vibe, eclectic architecture and superb cuisine.

To register for the Annual Meeting and to book a hotel room visit www.aarweb.org

La Montréal
TOURISM.MONTREAL.ORG
I went to seminary after college — Union Theological in New York City — where I fell under the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr and his way of thinking about the interaction of religion and public life. But then I roamed around Southeast Asia and India for a couple of years before coming to Berkeley in a graduate program in political science. It was to come in contact with intellectual interests I had developed under Niebuhr at Union.

I hadn’t a clue as to what I was going to do after that, but this was the 1960s and I had gone through this militant movement. The unjust war at that time was the one in Vietnam, and I soon decided to abandon graduate school and return to the region as a freelance journalist, since I had filed some radio interviews from Saigon on my first trip to Vietnam and they seemed to have been well received. I was going to sell my motorcycle to make enough money for the airfare, but the week before I was to leave my motorcycle was stolen. So I couldn’t go.

As a result, I ended up not becoming a journalist, but finishing my PhD, combining my interests in religion, politics, and India in a thesis on the role of religion in the social aspirations of the people in India known as Untouchables. And this launched my academic career in the comparative-study of religion and politics. All because of that darned motorcycle.

RSN: What has compelled you to research, publish, and lecture in the area of religiously motivated violence?

Juergensmeyer: My interest in religious violence began with the Sikhs — a lively and welcoming people among whom I had lived for several years in the Punjab region of North India. So it was personally disturbing to see so many young Sikhs caught up in a militant movement during the 1980s. Having worked with Gandhians in India and written about nonviolent approaches to conflict, I expected religion to champion nonviolence, and was perplexed to see the role that religion was playing in this militant movement and in other violent social movements around the world.

I wanted to know why — why this violence was happening now, and what religion had to do with it. Eventually I went from India to Sri Lanka to the Middle East, and then to Tokyo and Belfast and Oklahoma City — wherever there was a religious dimension to violent social conflict, to interview the participants and supporters of the activism, and to understand their view of the world. Inevitably it was a view of a world at war, where their understanding of a decent social order and a meaningful life was challenged by the social and political conditions of our contemporary age.

Out of these interviews and case studies came my first articles and several books, most recently Global Rebellion, which reviews thirty years of religious activism in recent years. Our concern is with the way that global forces — economic, technological, political, social, and cultural — are interacting in a dynamic way to create new ways of thinking and acting in public life. We have created graduate as well as undergraduate academic degree programs, and a research center, which I currently direct.

Our Orfalea Center is now launching a new project, supported by the Luce Foundation, that explores the role of religion in global society. By ‘global civil society,’ we mean the movements of civic activism and nongovernmental organizations that have arisen to challenge and shape public life in a global era. The role of religion in this new world is vital, but ambivalent — it plays both destructive and creative roles, as we have all seen. The challenge is to imagine how these religious forces can be redirected and reconceived in a positive way in a postsecular world.

RSN: What is your greatest joy in teaching?

Juergensmeyer: The fun of teaching is to learn from your students and from what you are teaching. I teach more courses than I ever imagined I would teach. I teach in a positive way in a postsecular world. Forces can be redirected and reconceived in a positive way that global forces — economic, technological, political, and cultural — have been doing in a postsecular world.

When I first began to teach, I was under the illusion that my job was to impart knowledge, but I abandoned that misconception long ago. Students can go to Wikipedia for that. Instead I think my job as a teacher is to share our love of learning and of critical thought. If we can light that fire of intellectual excitement, we will inspire the flames of knowledge that will last a lifetime.

Several years ago I won a distinguished teaching award on campus, and the student who nominated me was a conservative, pro-Bush, anti-Muslim, right-wing Israeli activist. I asked him why he nominated me, and we seemed to disagree on almost all political issues. “I know,” he said, “but I think you respect me.” And it’s true. I did respect him. He was a very thoughtful guy who I would frequently ask to stand up in class and give a counter-perspective to an opinion I had advanced, since I wanted the class to know that intellectual life is all about questioning and challenging ideas — including one’s own.

RSN: What do you think of the new United States administration?

Juergensmeyer: I am tentatively hopeful.

One of my greatest criticisms of the previous Bush administration was that the phrase of the ‘war on terror’ — a war that was not just a metaphor but a real war. It became the Cold War of the twenty-first century, for behind the ‘war on terror’ phrase was an ideological position on world politics, the idea that the secular West was locked in a hopeless spiral of conflict with Islamic militancy.

The problem with this ‘clash of civilizations’ view of the world was that it was too rigid, a caricature, it vastly exaggerated the threat, and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy. It not only scared the Muslim world by characterizing it as the enemy — the potential enemy — but also angered it by America’s militant invasion and occupation of two Muslim countries. America’s militant invasion plant new seeds of radical Islam in the Muslim world as terrorism. And they produced terrorism in response.

There is no question in my mind that the attitude and actions of the United States government following 9/11 helped to foster the conditions for the very terrorism that they were intended to diminish. This was the great irony of the Bush foreign policy; that it created the enemy it was trying to combat.

Now that Bush is gone, the Obama administration’s outlook is quite different, much more realistic, and less ideological. Gone is the rhetoric of ‘the war on terrorism,’ ‘destroying the evil-doers,’ and ‘if you’re not with us you’re against us.’ This is not just a shift in rhetoric, it is a paradigmatic change of policy. It is based on negotiation with those who are radical rather than combat with those dismissed as perennial foes. Though the Obama administration’s policies are not perfect, it understands that the Muslim world is diverse and reasonable, and that there, as elsewhere, religion can play a positive role in public life.
Leadership Summit Synopsis

In February 2009, AAR held its first ever Leadership Summit. The Summit comprised more than sixty committee and task force members. The President, President-Elect, and Vice President were also in attendance. Groups present included:

• Academic Relations Committee
• Executive Committee
• Graduate Student Committee
• International Connections Committee
• Job Placement Task Force
• Nominations Committee
• Public Understanding of Religion Committee
• Religion in the Schools Task Force
• Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force
• Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee
• Status of Women in the Profession Committee
• Teaching and Learning Committee
• Theological Education Steering Committee

Each group held their own biannual meeting to discuss their plans for future events and work. What made the Leadership Summit so unique was that the groups were also able to meet with each other to discuss plans to work together on future projects. Some of the exciting developments of the cross-partnerships include a mentoring lunch at the Montréal Annual Meeting cosponsored by the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee, and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force; several cosponsored Special Topics Forums planned over the next two years at upcoming Annual Meetings; and a future topic for Spotlight on Teaching highlighting issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation in the classroom.

A reception was held on Saturday night in which the seventy-seven volunteers and AAR staff gathered to hear Jack Fitzmier, AAR Executive Director, speak about the future direction of the AAR. The Academy will give attention to the following objectives in the coming months:

• Increasing attention to membership development;
• Adding innovative new components to the Annual Meeting;
• Building global connections and positioning the AAR to be an international partner and resource;
• Reimagining governance structures;
• Celebrating our centennial, beginning with the 2009 Montréal Annual Meeting and ending a year later in Atlanta;
• Enhancing the public understanding of religion;
• Experimenting with more forms of technology for scholarly communication; and
• Enhancing the work of the AAR’s ten regions.

Fitzmier then invited the volunteers to think beyond the near term. Once we meet our near-term goals, what should we focus on next? What will the Academy look like in 2020? Given the dynamic and radical changes taking place in the economy, technology, higher education, and in the larger framework of humanistic inquiry, it is foolish to think that the AAR’s business model, Annual Meeting model, and larger goals will remain unchanged. The volunteers were split into small focus groups to discuss some of the things the AAR should think about now to set the Academy up for a successful model in 2020.

The volunteers returned to present the top three points from their focus groups. The most popular points made include developing vital regional meetings; promoting the academic study of religion in terms of jobs and healthy undergraduate departments; expanding further into video and web media; expanding membership diversity across geographical and international lines; and using different technologies to build relationships among members and across networks and cultures.

The energy and dynamic interactions amongst the various committees and task forces was invaluable. A follow-up survey to members who attended the Summit indicated a keen interest in this format and a desire to find more ways to have AAR working groups collaborate on common projects.

The Teaching and Learning Committee discusses future Spotlight on Teaching topics and cosponsored Special Topics Forums with the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force.

Religious Studies News

The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards

In the Category of Gender Studies:

ELISHEVA BAUMGARTEN
Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe
(Princeton University Press)

In the Category of Philosophy and Jewish Thought:

MARTIN KAVKA
Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy
(Cambridge University Press)

The AJS is now accepting submissions for the 2009 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards

DEADLINE: JUNE 26, 2009

Further information can be found at: www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html.
In partnership with the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, The Fund for Theological Education will host workshops for students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups who are considering the pursuit of a Ph.D. or Th.D. in religion, theology or biblical studies. Faculty nominations and student applications will be required.

American Academy of Religion
Annual Meeting
November 6, 2009
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Society of Biblical Literature
Annual Meeting
November 20, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana

Join us in identifying a new generation of talented scholars and educators. For more information, e-mail doctoralinfo@thefund.org to receive updates and nomination/application materials as they become available.

Save the Date

“Reading Scriptures, Reading America:
Interruptions, Orientation, and Mimicry among
U.S. Communities of Color”

October 15-17, 2009

Keynote address by award-winning journalist,
Richard Rodriguez

Institute for Signifying Scriptures
Claremont Graduate University
Claremont, CA

For further information contact: Vincent L. Wimbush, Convener
iss@cgu.edu Ph: (909) 607-9678 www.signifyingscriptures.org

The Graduate Student Committee and Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force met to discuss future cosponsored projects.

The Graduate Student Committee and Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force met to discuss future cosponsored projects.

Committee and task force members at the Leadership Summit reception.
Don’t Let Time Get Away from You!

Register for the AAR Annual Meeting Job Center by October 12. 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 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, and to register, see www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter.

Request for Proposals
The Pedagogy of Transnational Education

- What are the pedagogical challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of students from a variety of countries in your North American classrooms and at your institution?
- What project, activity, or faculty conversation can help you address these challenges and opportunities in ways that strengthen teaching and learning at your institution?

The Wabash Center invites proposals for projects up to $20,000 and three years in length from faculty teaching theology and religion in seminaries, divinity schools, colleges or universities in the United States or Canada.

Deadline: September 1, 2009

Application procedures are the same as for our general grants programs. Read instructions and procedures: http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/grants/how-toapply.aspx

We encourage you to discuss your ideas and questions with us.

Contact:
Paul Myhre
800-655-7117
myhrep@wabash.edu
Teaching Is an Aspiration Not an Encumbrance

A Conversation with Spotlight on Teaching Editor Tazim Kassam

Tazim R. Kassam is associate professor of religion at Syracuse University. A historian of religions, she specializes in Islamic culture and South Asian religions. Her book, Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Sarpanch Ismaili Muslim Saint, Pir Shams, focuses on the performance and devotional songs of Ismaili. Kassam has formerly chaired the Department of Religion and directed its Graduate Studies Program. Currently, she is a principal co-investigator of the LUCE-funded program on Religion, Media, and International Relations and the founding Director of Syracuse University’s inter-disciplinary Muslim Cultures program in London.

RSN: The first issue of Spotlight on Teaching was published in 1992. In his editorial, W. Lee Humphrey stated that the purpose of this new section in RSN was “to encourage creative and sustained reflection, research, and innovation in the teaching of religion and religions in many contexts. How would you assess Spotlight’s success?

Kassam: Since its inception seventeen years ago, the publication has grown from four pages to an insert of eight to twelve pages. Many members have told me that they pull out the inserts and keep them. I’d say the success of Spotlight on Teaching demonstrates that teaching has won recognition as being a fundamental dimension of scholarly life; that teaching is a legitimate, if not essential, focus of the Academy. Spotlight is part of a broader set of initiatives that were undertaken by the AAR, very forward looking for that time, to address issues of pedagogy in practice and theory, and to do so in a sustained, institutional manner; for instance, by constituting the Committee on Teaching and Learning. Spotlight’s editor is an ex officio member on that committee.

RSN: When you say forward looking, what do you mean? Why was it necessary to pay attention to teaching when advancement of one’s scholarly career depended primarily on research and publications? Two decades later, promotion and tenure is still largely decided on that basis.

Kassam: Well, isn’t that the perennial question? It has come up repeatedly in AAR workshops and panels on teaching. There are the nuts-and-bolts aspects of teaching, such as designing course syllabi, learning teaching skills, grading assignments, and so forth. But, inevitably, discussions about the how of teaching go on to the why: Why do we teach? What are the larger issues at stake? What cultural constructions of teaching and research bear upon how and what we teach? What power dynamics are obtained in the classroom? How do you strike a balance between research and teaching? So putting the spotlight on teaching brings into focus how teaching is conditioned by the stages of one’s academic career. Pedagogy cannot be addressed in a vacuum.

As for tenure and promotion, do we have to accept the premise that for tenure and teaching are mutually exclusive? Ernest L. Boyer’s 1990 report for the Carnegie Foundation, Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professorate, deserves renewed attention. His parsing of scholar- ship into four areas — discovery, integration, application, and teaching — offers a more generous and inclusive appreciation of how we actually function in our academic lives. It takes time for ingrained practices of peer reviews, criteria for tenure, and promotion to change. For me, it feels like the beginning of something, I must feel, must continue to be the critical factor, but perhaps these other factors should be given some importance. I think practices are finally changing.

RSN: Speaking of the various initiatives on teaching, since the early nineties, the AAR has sponsored a series of teaching workshops funded in part by the Lilly and Luce Foundations. You were among the first cohort of Lilly-AAR Teaching Scholars. What led to your interest in teaching?

Kassam: The same reasons that newly minted graduates have when they enter the profession. I had to learn how to teach before I could teach my students how to learn. It’s a simple fact — an academic life requires one to learn the nuts and bolts of pedagogy. That training was not an integral part of graduate education when I was a doctoral candidate around the late eighties. I was lucky I got to teach an existing course.

At that time, there was a fairly established view that the research was the be-all and end-all of academic life, and teaching the price you had to pay for living it. In reality, this wasn’t really true. I had fantastic teachers, and they gently taught me how to teach and how they taught. Mainly, you wanted to be like them — experts, reputable, and published scholars in their fields. Everyone’s dream was to land a job at a research uni- versity with a strong graduate program in religion or theology. The AAA’s newsletter, Openings, was a godsend, as was the Employment Center — undeniably important then as it is now. I knew that job fair where ARB and PhDs in religion and theology waited nervously for their interviews. Those booths still make me tremble! To test the waters, I put myself through the wringer as an ARB and made a few shortlists. And the first question after “So why is your dissertation important and when will you be done with it?” was “What will you teach and explain how you developed this syllabus?” It didn’t matter if it was a public university, liberal arts college, or research university, most campus interviewers asked a class lecture. You had to show you could teach your research and make sense. Now surely this calls into ques- tion the research-versus-teaching divide.

RSN: Before your appointment at Syracuse University, you had tenure-track positions at Central Michigan University, Middlebury College, and Colorado College. These are quite different contexts. How has this influenced your reflections on teaching?

Kassam: Well, that’s a good question. Obviously, it is difficult to move from one institution to another, but I really count myself fortunate because of the exposure it gave me to disparate academic environments and practices. I have had the privi-lege of working closely with faculty in each department on such things as revising the religion major, designing senior capstone projects, making cross-disciplinary connec- tions, organizing faculty colloquia, integrat- ing new learning technologies, etc. It is quite amazing to see that no matter where you are, many questions come up consist-ently, and there can be many different valid responses. When you move from one place to another, you also realize that a career is shaped not only by one’s depart- ment but also the overall character, struc- ture, and leadership of institutions. This exposure has helped me think about teaching and academic life within a much broader, comparative framework.

RSN: Your career spans a long period of time, but could you offer some examples? Are there particular moments or experi- ences at each of these places that left an impact on your teaching and development?

Kassam: Well, yes, in every environ- ment there is so much to learn, especially from colleagues. As you know, the first full-time teaching job is formative in one’s atti- tudes to teaching and research. Depart- ments may not realize how vitally impor- tant it is to support and socialize their newly hired junior colleagues. I went to Central Michigan University as an ARB and faced head-on the challenge of teach- ing — actually it was more like learning to teach — and at the same time, wrote my dissertation. Public universities often have heavy teaching loads. The religion depart- ment had a load of three, rather than four, courses a semester.

As I watched my colleagues work in a con- text of higher class enrollments, variable student abilities, and modest institutional re- sources, I developed a tremendous apprec- iation, from their example, of teaching as a vocation, as an aspiration and not an encumbrance. At the same time, within this environment, they had fostered a lively intellectual ethos. We regularly read each other’s works-in-progress, and met every month for dinner to discuss, debate, and offer comments. For a struggling ARB, I couldn’t have asked for a more enabling environment.

RSN: From Central Michigan University, you went on to teach at Middlebury and Colorado College, both liberal arts colleges. What differences did you find in teaching pedagogy?

Kassam: Both are liberal arts colleges, but they are quite different. I’ll talk about Colorado College because of its idiosyn- cratic structure called the block plan. The academic calendar is divided into eight blocks. Students take one course at a time, and faculty teach one course at a time. Imagine the initial challenge of trying to teach a semester course in a concentrated eighteen-day segment! One figures out quickly that covering material isn’t the pri- mary goal; writing, discovery, and critical thinking are. You can really get into sustained analysis of a single text when you meet students every day for three hours! This intensive format is not everyone’s cup of tea, but I loved it. I could assign sixty to seventy pages a day and students were expected to complete the readings and assignments. They had no excuses because they had the rest of the day to themselves and no other courses.

When you have a format like that with an average of twenty students, all sorts of cre- ative, nontraditional pedagogical possibili- ties open up — extended field trips, in-class writing and peer reviews, focused tex- tual analysis, team teaching with colleagues in other departments, study trips abroad, etc. This goes back to the point of an institu- tion’s structure and curriculum and how they shape teaching and research. Also at Colorado College, I developed a vivid sense of what one might approach knowledge as a whole, wide-open, inclusive universe, not as discrete and compartmentalized bodies of knowledge with the humanities on one side and sciences on the other. The type of stu- dents that Colorado College attracted also demanded this of us. They wanted a well- rounded liberal arts education.

Past Spotlight Topics

Spotlight issues edited by Tazim Kassam:

- Signifying (on) Scriptures: Texts (are) and Orientations
- Diversifying Knowledge Production: The Other Within Christianity
- News, Media, and Teaching Religion
- Teaching Difficult Subjects
- Reflections on a Teaching Career in Religion
- Embracing Disability in Teaching Religion
- Teaching with Site Visits
- Teaching about Religions, Medicine, and Healing
- Teaching about Religion and Violence
- Teaching about Material Culture in Religious Studies
- Teaching Religion and Music

(continued on next page)
I had to learn how to teach before I could teach my students how to learn.

RSN: What about graduate students? What reasons and expectations do you think they have when applying for admission to graduate programs in religion?

Kassam: My impression is that they are acutely aware of contemporary events and many have fairly skeptical readings of religion, its uses and abuses in society, politics, media, etc. It’s hard to generalize why students want to specialize in religion or why they favor one graduate program over another. That would be an interesting conversation to have with other programs.

RSN: Since you became a member of the AAR in 1987, you’ve served almost every year in some capacity — co-chair of the Study of Islam and Religions of South Asia Sections, president of the Western region, Women and Religion’s steering committee member, on the JAR and JSSR editorial boards, and Spotlight’s editor. In retrospect, would you do so again?

Kassam: Absolutely! The AAR is simply a fantastic place to serve, learn, and grow. Spotlight’s next editors have much to look forward to, and in AAR’s true tradition of renewal, will bring fresh ideas and break new ground.

RSN: You did your doctoral degree at the Department of Religious Studies at McGill University and then taught in undergraduate programs. At Syracuse University, you have come full circle. What observations do you have in terms of the goals and pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate level?

Kassam: Earlier I mentioned that I was struck by the fact that there are basic questions that come up in every undergraduate program: What is religion? Why teach it? What should be the requirements of a religion major? What is the position of the religion department in the college or university?

The AAR has sponsored several studies on undergraduate programs in religion, bringing together faculty from different departments to discuss how they tackle such questions. I was amazed to learn from a 2007 report on the “Religion Major and Liberal Education,” funded by the Teagle Foundation, that in just the last decade, religion majors have grown by 22 percent to an estimated 67,000 students. We aren’t talking about how many students take religion courses but how many major in religion!

It isn’t hard to account for this exponential increase. From politics to international relations, religious pluralism to creationism, the war on terror to human rights, it’s impossible to make sense of the world today without knowing something about religion. Many college students know that. They also have personal reasons; i.e., their own quest. If this trend continues, we may have a high uptake of undergraduate students with religion majors applying to doctoral programs.

We must develop an appreciation of teaching as a vocation, as an aspiration and not an encumbrance.

Kassam: It is apparent from the moment they enter the program that graduate students also have their eyes on the prize, a tenure-track appointment in a religion department. An important step we took to respond to this was to integrate teaching courses as a key component in the requirements of their four-year program of study. Doctoral students develop one upper-level course, usually in their subject area, and one introductory-level course, both under the mentorship of a faculty member. The class enrollments are capped. I have found that students are eager to teach, and more often than not, love it.

Graduate students in our program are also represented on the Graduate Committee, and have substantial input on a variety of issues pertaining to the graduate program, including admission and faculty searches. It is clear that preparing for the professoriate is an important part of their goals, and they participate in a Future Professor Program that exposes them to the gamut of career issues. Such training and opportunities were unheard of two decades ago.

RSN: As Spotlight’s editor, you have produced eleven issues of Spotlight on a range of topics. How did you go about selecting topics and contributors? Were there some fundamental guidelines?

Kassam: I worked closely with guest editors both at the early stages to focus the theme, set the overall framework, identify contributors, and decide on the format; then kept track of, reviewed, and edited the submissions from contributors. In terms of substance, I encouraged a balance between pedagogy and theory. That is, contributors describe actual realities and innovations in the classroom, and provide resources for teachers. At the same time, they discuss theoretical and critical issues they are grappling with in their fields or teaching environments.

The guest editors took up themes that were often marginal at the edge, bringing up sticky issues in the classroom or their field; for instance, our ignorance of disability issues in the classroom, or teaching controversial subjects that “offend” students who are Muslims, Hindus, etc. I think you will find in almost all the issues that contributors were pushing, blurring, or upsetting boundaries in their field and rethinking pedagogy.

Another guiding principle for me — and this really comes out of my own experience teaching in different contexts and participation in various sections at the AAR — was that the selection of contributors be diverse in as many ways as possible: specialization, viewpoints, pedagogies, institutions, gender, race, junior versus senior members, and so forth. This was of course an ideal, but I think having it clearly stated worked well.

RSN: What topics and themes would you like to see addressed in future issues of Spotlight? What new challenges do you anticipate faculty will face in light of broader trends in the academy and the global age?

Kassam: That’s a big question. I have found that themes dealt with in previous years reappear because of altered contexts, changes in society, developments in our fields, and of course, the student population. Take for example the introductory course survey in religion. Should this be a world religions course? Is it theoretically justifiable to teach such a course? If so, how does one go about in the context of the explosion and instantaneous access to the virtual jungle of information? I think graduate students — who form a bridge between generations, whose ways of accessing and thinking about information and knowledge are very different — could teach us about this in a Spotlight issue.

Another older theme currently resurfacing is the question of teaching and activism. Is there a place for activism in the Academy? What is meant by transformative pedagogy, pedagogies of resistance, and conscientizing teaching? Have new insights and lines of scholarship emerged from these teaching practices? How do scholars navigate the potential minefield of introducing politics and personal identity in the classroom? In “The New Climate of Timidity on Campuses,” A. Lee Fritschel argues that risk-averse pedagogy shortchanges students (The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 13, 2009). This timidity isn’t altogether unfounded. He mentions a religion colleague who was called to the carpet by a dean because a student complained he had criticized his faith.

Another topic worth attention is how do scholars in other disciplines teach courses on religion since such courses on offer in the social sciences, law, medicine, and even business schools have also increased. I would like to see a cross-section of colleagues in other disciplines give their views and discuss their experiences. Conversely, what do those scholars trained in anthropology, sociology, and feminist studies who end up in religion departments have to say about their experience and challenges teaching religion? This would come to the question of “What does interdisciplinary mean in practice?” in a different way.

A third topic is the way that faculty use blogs, vlogs, social networking websites, etc. We are vastly at an advantage today in terms of accessing research materials electronically. That’s the upside. What about the downside? A 2007 NEA report, “To Read or Not to Read,” says that seventeen-year-old nonreaders doubled from 9 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 2004. The modus operandi for learning nowadays is scanning not reading. We may need new ideas of what constitutes knowledge. The question now is not what we don’t know but how much of what we know just isn’t so. It is plain wrong, says Sara Lippincott, a former editor of The New Yorker, describes the state of affairs as “an explosion of errata” (quoted in Checkpoints by John McPhee, February 9th, 2009).

In the Next Issue of Spotlight on Teaching:
A Decade of the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award: New Teaching Statements and Resources from the Awardees

The question now is not what we don’t know, but how much of what we know isn’t so.
Executive Committee Establishes Support for Sustainability Research Efforts: Three-pronged Initiative Announced

INFLUENCED by the Sustainability Task Force request to encourage more research in the area of Religion and Sustainability, the Executive Committee has announced a comprehensive plan that will put sustainability issues at the forefront of the Academy:

• The Committee has asked the Journal of the American Academy of Religion (JAAR) to put out a call for a special issue on sustainability and religion.

• During the next three years, the AAR Annual Meeting Program will highlight papers that deal with sustainability in one form or another; and

• During the next three years, the AAR will dedicate up to three of its research grants for proposals that address sustainability, with the recipients of these grants, and others, recognized at the awards ceremony at the Annual Meeting. To facilitate adjudication of these grants, an expert on sustainability will be added to the research grants committee, with nominations for this appointment welcomed from the Sustainability Task Force.

The Executive Committee enthusiastically supports the work of the Sustainability Task Force, and its goal to stimulate more research on religion and sustainability,” the Committee’s motion said. Executive Director Jack Fitzmier added, “I am very pleased with this outcome and think that this decision puts the sustainability issue more clearly on our institutional map.”

“We are thrilled with the strategic shifts that have been made in such a short period of time,” said Sarah McFarland Taylor, chair of the Sustainability Task Force. “With the adoption of these and other sustainability measures, the AAR moves to the vanguard of academic societies and leads the way in setting the frame for scholarly focus in the twenty-first century.”

Fitzmier said that the Executive Committee believed it was imperative to dedicate an issue of JAAR to the topic. “We will schedule this as soon as seems feasible, given the needs, schedules, and commitments of the JAAR publishing calendar,” he said.

Fitzmier also said that the Executive Committee action does not guarantee that such research will appear in a special issue. “Religion and sustainability submissions will have to meet the same criteria and standards of excellence set by the JAAR editorial board, which is charged with accepting, rejecting, or calling for revisions of articles for JAAR. A special issue of JAAR will also require that a sufficient number of quality articles are submitted and accepted. It is our hope, of course, that a direct result of the AAR encouraging research in this area will be an increase in excellent scholarship worthy of appearing in JAAR.”

The announcement of the Annual Meeting program highlights an established pattern. The AAR often highlights, in one way or another, special themes or topics that are featured at a given Annual Meeting. This can occur in the Program Planner, the online version of the Program Book, or in the printed Program Book. As a relatively straightforward administrative task, the AAR aims for this to occur in advance of the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal.

The Executive Committee is directing its most expansive support to the AAR’s research grants program. Each year the AAR devotes approximately $35,000–$40,000 to its research grants program, which typically garners from forty to sixty-five grant applications. There are about a dozen that are funded, ranging from awards of $500 to $5,000. The Committee’s plan would allow up to three of these awards to be given to sustainability research projects for the next three years.

To help the jury assess sustainability proposals, the Executive Committee will ask the President to appoint an additional juror, with specific expertise in sustainability matters, to join the research grants jury. Like all other appointments to AAR committees, juries, and task forces, this falls to presidential appointment.

Fitzmier again said that the initiative does not guarantee that any AAR research grant monies will go to sustainability proposals. Rather, it stipulates that if sustainability proposals are deemed worthy of funding by the jury, up to three of those worthy sustainability proposals can be funded in a given year.

“I believe that if we make announcements soon, we might alert AAR members of this opportunity in time for them to submit sustainability proposals for selection in the fall of 2009 round of awards,” he said.

The Executive Committee is placing a three-year limit on this package of support. “Hopefully, this support package will result in an increased awareness of the importance of sustainability and that such a happy outcome will reduce the need for extraordinary efforts,” Fitzmier said.

Fitzmier praised the work of the Sustainability Task Force. “I think it is entirely reasonable to interpret the eagerness of the (Executive) Committee to establish this program as evidence of the positive impact your Task Force has made on the Board and on the AAR membership. I am sure that I speak for the entire Board and Executive Committee when I extend to you my thanks for your passion and hard work.”

Taylor in turn expressed the Task Force’s gratitude for the Committee’s swift action and Fitzmier’s leadership commitment to the area of sustainability. “This places the AAR at the forefront of institutions shaping the future of academic research in this critical area,” she said. “We will look back on the decisions our AAR executives have made today and will no doubt regard this as among their greatest legacies to the Academy and to the planet.”

Editor’s Note:
Information for this article was provided by RNA Extra Online, the newsletter of the Religion Newswriters Association (www.rna.org).

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Religion Newswriters Identify Year’s Top Ten Religion Stories

IN DECEMBER, the Religion Newswriters Association conducted its annual poll of nearly 300 active members. More than 100 journalists responded and identified the following as the top ten religion news stories of 2008:

1. Controversial sermons delivered in religion news stories of 2008. More than 100 journalists responded and identified the following as the top ten religion news stories of 2008.

2. John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and endorsements of evangelists Rod Parsley.

3. Sarah Palin’s nomination as Republican vice president leads many evangelicals, who had planned to sit out the election, to support the GOP ticket. The choice causes a dilemma for some religious conservatives who oppose women in leadership roles.

4. The California Supreme Court rules gay marriage is legal, but voters in November approve a constitutional amendment overturning the decision. Gay marriage also fails at the polls in Arizona and Florida.

5. In his first visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI brings a message of hope during stops in Washington, D.C., and New York. During the trip, he meets with victims of clergy misconduct.

6. United States conservatives alienated from the Episcopal Church say they will ask Anglican Communion leaders for permission to create the Anglican Church in North America, allowing dioceses unhappy in the Episcopal Church to operate under the authority of a North American bishop instead of Anglican bishops in Africa and Latin America, as is now done. The move is considered the most significant threat to the Episcopal Church’s unity since a gay clergyman was ordained bishop five years ago.

7. Terrorism, believed motivated at least in part by religious fervor results in the deaths of almost 200 people in a three-day siege in Mumbai, India; one of the major targets is a Jewish center, where an American rabbi and his wife are killed. Meanwhile, attacks on Christians in the eastern India state of Orissa and its neighbors, which began in late 2007, continue during 2008.

8. China cracks down on Buddhists seeking Tibetan independence in a prelude to producing a peaceful Olympics games; demonstrations mar some of the torch passages.

9. The crumbling economy and subsequent drop in contributions force many faith-based organizations to cut back on expenses, at the same time as the need for social services increases.

10. Violence continues in Iraq as Sunni and Shiites attack each other and Christians are also targeted; Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Rahbo is kidnapped and murdered in Mosul. However, some progress toward peace is apparently made.

The Religion Newswriters Association, founded in 1949, strives to help journalists cover religion in an accurate and balanced way by providing free tools and training. RNA members have been selecting the top ten religion stories of the year for nearly thirty years.
JAAR Call for Papers

The Return of Religion after “Religion”: Consequences for Theology and Religious Studies

Talk about “the return of religion” continues to be omnipresent in public conversation and within a variety of academic fields. Along with this talk about religious return has come a new attention to theology. Indeed, the centrality of theology is evident in the work of scholars who are not themselves theologians (the work of Agamben, Badiou, and Zizek on political theology; Eric Santner’s notion of “psychotheology”; the attention to religiosity in recent American political philosophy in William Connolly’s Why I Am Not a Secularist and Jeffrey Stout’s Democracy and Tradition).

However, public talk about the return of religion is taking place at precisely the same time as we see within the academic study of religion a sharp genealogical critique of the category “religion” from both theologians (Milkman) and scholars of religion (Asad, Balangadhrara, Dubuisson, King, and Masuzawa). The category is now under fire as essentialist, provincially Western, imbricated in colonial projects and the like.

What are we to make of this juxtaposition? How are we to think about the prominence of public discourse about “religion” precisely when the category is under fire within the academic study of religion? JAAR invites proposals for a special issue that critically examines the return of religion after “religion” and its consequences for both theology and religious studies.

What is the meaning of the “return of religion” for theology and religious studies more broadly? How might genealogical interrogations of the category “religion” by theologians and religious studies scholars reconfigure both fields? How do we think these two questions together? How will the growing prominence of religious voices in the public sphere reshape our ideas about theological reflection and the work of religious studies more broadly?

What obligations fall to theologians and religious studies scholars in an era in which religion is an integral if contested aspect of public discourse? How do both scholarly communities take up this nexus of issues in a context marked by robust religious diversity?

Deadline for submission is Monday, June 1, 2009.

Please submit papers to: Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126
Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

Religion and Reasons: Justification, Argument, and Cultural Difference

Are religious reasons similar to or fundamentally different from scientific and scholarly reasons? The JAAR invites proposals that explore these issues of reason, justification, and legitimation in religious contexts. Religions provide many kinds of reasons for belief and action. Much attention, for example, has been given to the forms of reasoning embedded in cultural forms labeled as “magic” and “divination,” and similar issues arise for a host of other practices, including textual exegesis.

Do particular examples of religious reasoning bring fundamental problems for understanding across cultures or conceptual schemes? How are reasons, whether religious or scientific, implicated in contestations for influence or power? Does consideration of religious reasoning challenge contemporary academic understandings of what counts as reason or rationality?

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- The forms of reasoning embedded in interpretative activities such as divination, dream interpretation, and textual exegesis;
- The roles of extraordinary states (such as mysticism, shamanism, possession, and paranormal phenomena) in discovering and legitimating both knowledge and norms for practice;
- The persuasive dimensions of performative practices, including dance and theater;
- The philosophical grounds for argumentation, rhetoric, and cross-cultural interpretation; and
- The complexities in accounts of Western, scientific, or scholarly reasoning that are contrasted with religious reasoning. We particularly encourage papers that offer both specific case studies and theoretical reflection.

Deadline for submission is Monday, August 3, 2009.

Please submit papers to: Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126
Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.
Luce Summer Seminars
Cohort One Fellows Announced

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce Cohort One of the Luce Summer Seminars in Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology: American Academy of Religion/Henry Luce Foundation Summer Seminar Fellows.

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Summer Seminars on Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology: Cohort Two

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce the formation of Cohort Two of our Luce Summer Seminars

These weeklong seminars will provide training to theological education faculty who often prepare students for future religious leadership and ministry. The Theological Education Steering Committee invites applications from theological educators interested in pursuing questions about the meaning of religious diversity. The seminars will help address the question of religious diversity 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.

The seminars, composed of twenty-five participants and eight instructors, are designed for those relatively new to the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, allowing them to learn from expert 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 during their participation in the seminars.

Cohort Two will meet June 13–20, 2010, at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, then on October 29, 2010, at the Annual Meeting, Atlanta, and, finally May 29–June 5, 2011, at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago.

The application deadline for Cohort Two is January 15, 2010. All accepted applicants will be notified by late February or early March 2010.

Further information on the seminars can be found at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Summer_Seminars or by contacting the Project Director, John J. Thatamanil, Vanderbilt Divinity School, john.j.thatamanil@vanderbilt.edu.

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Michel Andraos
Catholic Theological Union
Edward Phillip Antonio
Iliff School of Theology
Loye Ashton
Tougaloo College
Julia Watts Beiser
Missouri State University
Sharon Betcher
Vancouver School of Theology
Clifton Clarke
Regent University, School of Divinity
Marion Grau
Church Divinity School of the Pacific/Graduate Theological Union
Kathleen Greider
Claremont School of Theology
Ravi M. Gupta
College of William and Mary
Lisa M. Hess
United Theological Seminary
Mary E. Hess
Luther Seminary
Emily Holmes
Christian Brothers University
Tat-siong Benny Liew
Pacific School of Religion/Graduate Theological Union
Anna Bonta Moreland
Villanova University
Reid L. Neilson
Brigham Young University
Stacy L. Patty
Lubbock Christian University
Miriam Perkins
Emmanuel School of Religion
Yolanda Pierce
Princeton Theological Seminary
Paul F. Sands
Baylor University, George C. Truett Theological Seminary
Angel Santiago-Vendrell
Memphis Theological Seminary
Deborah Schoenfeld
St. Mary’s College of Maryland
Gerald Shenk
Eastern Mennonite Seminary
Karla Suomalainen
Luther College
Gregory Walter
St. Olaf’s College
Homayra Ziad
Trinity College

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Call for AAR Series Book Editor

T he AAR Publications Committee seeks a book editor for the Teaching Religious Studies series, which is published in cooperation with Oxford University Press.

The Teaching Religious Studies series locates itself at the intersection of pedagogical concerns and the substantive content of religious studies. Each volume provides scholarly and pedagogic discussion about a key topic (e.g., a text, theme, or thinker) of significance for teaching and scholarship in religious studies. Volumes typically comprise essays setting the topic within its historical context and locating the work within the traditions of religious studies, and an array of brief essays that discuss pedagogical and theoretical problems relevant to teaching the topic in a range of contexts. Volumes may also include primary sources and guides to reference tools. Taken together, the pieces collected in each volume place the topic firmly within the religious studies context and raise challenging questions about its role in teaching and in the field more generally. The series is designed to be useful and of interest to several groups, including new teachers, those teaching a subject for the first time or in a new context, teacher-scholars, and students interested in the specific topic. The Teaching Religious Studies series seeks creative ideas that represent the best of our work as teachers and scholars.

Further information on books published in this series can be found at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books/teachingreligiousstudies.asp. AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing manuscripts through to publication. Further information on the entire Oxford/AAR Book series can be found at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books. The required finalist interviews for the position will take place at the Publications Committee meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal, Canada. Further information on the Publications Committee can be found at www.aarweb.org/About_AARCommittees/Publications.

The new editor will assume office on January 1, 2010, for a five-year (renewable once) term, and is expected to attend the two meetings of the Publications Committee: on the Saturday morning of the Annual Meeting and at the offices of Oxford University Press in New York City, usually in mid-March. This is a volunteer position. All applicants must be members of the American Academy of Religion. Please e-mail inquiries, nominations (self-nominations are also encouraged), and applications (a letter describing interests and qualifications, plus a current curriculum vita) by Word or PDF attachment to: Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Publications Committee Chair, ckduggan@katsw.edu. The application deadline is September 1, 2009.

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.

Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements

On October 15–16, 2009, the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements will assemble scholars and practitioners from across the globe to explore the historical and contemporary expressions of revitalization within the world Christian community. This event, to be held on the campus of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, is one of three consultations designed to take the pulse of current Christian revitalization now occurring internationally. Designed to provide Christian leaders with beneficial resources for their work around the world, this event is funded by a strategic grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. For more information, visit http://revitalizationmovements.net.

Theologos Book Awards

The Association of Theological Bookstores recently announced the 2008 winners of the Theologos Awards. The awards represent the unique, professional evaluations of people who sell academic religious books. The Association of Theological Bookstores is a collaborative organization of diverse theological bookstores and publishers working together to enhance the quality and ensure the future of theological book selling. Only the bookstores of members of the association are eligible to vote.

Best General Interest Book

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism

Timothy Keller

Dutton Books

Best Academic Book

Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament

G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Editors

Baker Academic

Best Children’s Book

Psalms for Young Children

Marie-Helene Devaul

Illustrated by Arno Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Book of the Year

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism

Timothy Keller

Dutton Books

Publisher of the Year

Baker Publishing Group

The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008 Cahnman Publication Subvention Grants

IN SUPPORT OF FIRST BOOKS

Mara H. Benjamin, St. Olaf College

Rosenzweig’s Bible: Reinventing Scripture for Jewish Modernity

(to be published by Cambridge University Press)

Rebecca Kobrin, Columbia University

Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora: Between Exile and Empire

(to be published by Indiana University Press)

James Loeffler, University of Virginia

The Most Musical Nation: Jews, Culture, and Modernity in the Late Russian Empire

(to be published by Yale University Press)

Avinoam Patt, University of Hartford

Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust

(to be published by Wayne State University Press)

The AJS is now accepting applications for the 2009 Cahnman Publication Subvention Grants

DEADLINE: JUNE 26, 2009

Further information can be found at www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html.

AJ S • 15 West 16th Street • New York, NY 10011 • Tel: 917.606.8349, Email:ajs@ajs.cjh.org • www.ajsnet.org
In the Public Interest

Exhibiting Religion
Sally M. Promey, Yale University

The culture of enlightenment that produced museums in their current forms framed these institutions as quintessentially modern spaces (see Museum Privilege: Public Cultures/Global Transformations (Duke University Press, 2007) for a useful recent account of the situation). An enlightenment mindset projected museums into a progressively secular culture of modernity, and one ultimately privileged on religion's disappearance. In this redaction, as numerous scholars have suggested for well over a decade, religion became a vestigial organ or appendage, a relic of the past, or a token of “less advanced” civilizations. Emptied of contemporary “religious” content, museums instead evolved and sacralized art and culture and traced civilization trajectories that replicated this kind of ascension (about which, see Carol Duncan’s persuasive argument in Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums (Routledge, 1995)). Especially when it comes to religion, then, museums represent an inherently political enterprise, having assumed their present shape, in large part, by locating religion securely in the past and replacing it with an elevation of its presumed modernized, aestheticized counterparts. Striking gaps open occasionally between this set of strategies in museum origins and the contemporary human material lives they seek to represent to the museum-going public. Sometimes objects resist the sort of cultural elevations “secular” museums have come to enforce; sometimes they implement their own variations. In 1965, for example, Chester Dale gave Salvador Dalí’s Sacrament of the Last Supper (1955) to the National Gallery of Art (NGA). In this case, and in this context, “art” should have trumped the religious subject matter — but art status failed to “protect” the object from religious practice. Stories (some perhaps apocryphal) have circulated for years about museum visitors praying in front of the image, and even reactions on a specific exhibition or, in Buggeln’s case, a cluster of exhibitions. Pope described and analyzed “Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South” (Art Institute of Chicago, November 2004 – January 2005); or the summative process of curating “Catholic Chicago” (Chicago History Museum, 2008–January 2009); and Buggeln presented case studies from the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum (Decorah, IA), the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (Old Salem, NC), and Colonial Williamsburg (VA).

A common assumption hovered, for the most part, just below the threshold of the panel’s spoken conversations: contributions stood at varying degrees of proximity to a shared notion of the ideal “neutrality” of museum spaces. As attractive as this ideal may appear, however, it not only fails to describe contemporary museum practice, but also obscures the historical shape and cultural technologies of these institutions. Museum space is anything but neutral. Any given exhibition, in any given museum, represents multiple constellations of constituents (e.g., curators, educators, patrons, donors, and a range of publics) with diverse and often competing interests, needs, and demands. Looking beyond this array of individuals and groups, many other aspects of museum practice complicate claims to neutrality. It is perhaps not surprising that scholars of religion should wonder where and how religion “fits” in museum display, for the “neutrality” of museum space is especially suspect when it comes to this subject of inquiry.
Making a Homeland: Imagining Sacred Spaces in the Nineteenth Century African Methodist Episcopal Church

Julius H. Bailey, University of Redlands

Julius H. Bailey is an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Redlands. He received his PhD in American religious history from the University of North Carolina. His first book, Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1865–1900 (University Press of Florida, 2005) examined African-American familial religious life in the home. He has also written on African-American new religious movements, such as in his article, “The Final Martyrs of the Nuwaubian Nation of Moors,” (in the Rise and Fall of the United American Colonization Society, Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol. 74, no. 2 [June 2006]: 302-323).

WHAT MIGHT a map of Liberia produced by the American Colonization Society, an organization formed to resettle free black Americans in West Africa, the journal entry of an African-American emigrant on the voyage across the Atlantic, or advertisements promising black southerners cheap fares to Africa if only they sold their possessions and made their way to New York for departure tell us about imagined sacred space in the nineteenth century? These are the kinds of questions and disparate sources that the AAR grant allowed me to explore as I analyzed descriptive and visual representations of Zion that were offered by African Americans as alternatives to a return to Africa in the nineteenth century. My search led me to the Library of Congress where I examined the African American Pamphlet Collection, 1822–1909, and the Maps of Liberia Collection, 1830–1870. These cartographic depictions of Africa, images, public orations, personal accounts, advertisements, diaries of ministers, and the portrayal of Africans in sermons and missionary tracts all reveal the ways nineteenth century African Americans constructed varied imagery to reconcile an African past, American present, and an evolving Christian identity. In addition, the Christian Recorder, the official denominational newspaper of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, also reflected the changing understandings of Africa. In 1870, the masthead was transformed, heralding the denomination’s missionary efforts with the words “Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Out Her Hands Unto God,” wrapped around a globe depicting the continent of Africa. Similarly, AME Sunday School literature, such as the Child’s Recorder, presented children with drawings of African “heathens” before and after receiving the Christian Gospel. This research constitutes a significant portion of the African-American material culture and visual representations of Africa that are interwoven throughout my current book project, Race Patriotism: The Meanings of Africa in the Nineteenth Century African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Chapters address the ascension of the denominational press as a central discursive site in which AME congregations engaged one another on the most pressing issues of the day, providing a distinctive arena for African Americans to enter into sustained conversations about the future of the race and, in so doing, reshaping the public discourse of the broader American public sphere. Taking seriously the importance of spatial location and the positionality of the historical narrator, there is a chapter on “Western Zions,” that begins to chart the religious map of African Methodism in the American West by sketching the multiple visions of the region. The chapter entitled “Reckoning with Darwin” examines the ways social Darwinian thought complicated notions of racial origin and biblical authority and the efforts of African Americans, through sermons, speeches, and writings, to respond to theories that they felt threatened to shake the foundations of their faith and reframe their relationship with Africa. One chapter investigates the parallel that AME leaders and laypeople draw between the history and experiences of the ancient Israelites and the relationship of African Americans to Africa. Even further, many black ministers understood the progress of contemporary Jews around the world as a framework for their own Pan-African efforts, a measure of potential African-American achievement, and the prognostication of the future advancement of the race. The final chapter analyzes the arguments surrounding Back-to-Africa movements as those on each side of the debate not only read the evidence put forth through the lens that supported their own position, but sought to discredit their opposition by challenging their cultural authority to speak for the race. Material culture provides me with a constant reminder that this was not solely an intellectual exercise and debate; real men and women uprooted their lives to settle in Liberia in the hopes of finding a better life and many southerners lost all that they owned as they journeyed to the East Coast only to find that the emigration company that they had put their trust in had swindled them of their money. Placing visions of sacred spaces, Zion, and sites of redemption in concert with other forms of historical imaginations such as cartography, sketches, illustrations, letters, orations, articles, personal accounts, editorials, and news reporting in the black press reveals new voices and perspectives inherent in the diversity of black communities and opens up whole new areas of inquiry into the importance of place and homeland in African-American religious history. I would like to express my appreciation to the American Academy of Religion for the grant that allowed me to complete key pieces of my research that would have otherwise likely been long delayed absent the support of the financial award.

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“I Study Physics”: Denying My Identity as a Religion Scholar

Kathryn Carriere, PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa

N O MATTER how much some assert that religion is a private matter, as scholars of religion and global citizens we can no longer deny that religion is everywhere. It reveals itself in the most unlikely places: in professional sports, in hit-song lyrics, on fashion runways in Milan, and in Inauguration Day ceremonies. People love to talk about religion — whether the question is gay marriage, hijab at school, or capital punishment. The supposed relegation of religion to the personal realm has left a colossal void in people’s daily discussions, and people are yearning to be given the green light to discuss faith and its place in society. But during a recent taxi ride, I discovered just how expensive a proposition giving that green light can be.

A few weeks ago I was heading off to the airport to go to a conference. Typically, a cab ride to the airport runs me fourteen dollars, including a very generous tip. It was just after dawn, and my extra-long shower had cost me my morning cup of brew. The driver pulled up to my apartment punctually and swiftly loaded my luggage into the trunk. After a few kilometers of silent driving, he casually asked me what I do. “I’m a graduate student,” I responded without any notable enthusiasm. He asked what I study and looked at me inquisitively through the rear-view mirror. “Religious studies . . .” I began, before I could catch myself.

I should have known I was in trouble when I saw his posture straighten enough to make any chiropractor proud. “Do you know about the Ethiopian Church?” he asked me. Before I could answer that, yes, I have in fact studied that tradition, the taxi driver embarked on a lengthy history lesson. I recognized his tone of voice: it reminded me of my father’s when I was about to be the lucky recipient of one of his parental “life lessons.” Beginning with his faith’s origins, winding through the Middle Ages, and continuing to present-day Ethiopia, he talked about his faith’s rituals and beliefs — even its eighty-one-book canon. Immediately, if unintentionally, I jumped into “fact-checking” mode, my brain struggling to edit the accuracy of his words. Was it the Council of Chalcedon, or the Council of Rome? Were the Jesuits really expelled or was it the Franciscans? Oh, I don’t know. I’m too tired. Leaning back on my seat, I realized it was impossible to be a critical graduate student prior to 8:00 AM. Maybe I’ll just sit back and listen, I thought, as I allowed the driver to continue uninterrupted. I’ll be a Good Samaritan today, I decided, struggling to keep my heavy eyes open.

After quite some time, I noticed that we were no closer to the airport. It seemed that my Ethiopian church history instructor was taking me on the scenic route in order to prolong the one-sided conversation that he was enjoying so much. Glancing over at the meter, I panicked. It already read forty-five dollars, and we still had quite a distance left. Remembering that I only had sixty dollars cash on hand, I began to wonder how much my good deed was going to cost me. I frantically interrupted his discussion of Ethiopian millennium celebrations to implore him to hurry. “Look at me!” he responded, laughing. “I can spend all day talking about religion with you!” He smiled compassionately and stepped on the pedal. “Don’t worry. There is no traffic; I will get you there on time.” Gradually, I began to appreciate his wisdom. “When was the Ethiopian millennium, again?” I asked.

The trip to the airport ended up costing fifty-six dollars. The driver accepted my four-dollar tip as though it was four hundred and humbly told me that it was a pleasure driving me. Placing my bags on the sidewalk, he handed me his card and asked me to call should I ever require another ride. I realized then how much our conversation had meant to him. By identifying myself as a student of religion, I’d given him the opportunity to talk about what mattered most to him. I’d done well, I thought to myself. My Mum would be proud. “But from now on,” I said aloud as I realized I had no money left for coffee, “I study physics.”

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

From the Student Desk is currently seeking submissions for upcoming issues of RSN. Articles should address the challenges and perspectives unique to graduate student members of the AS, a wide diversity of topics is encouraged. Issues of particular interest right now are the admissions experiences of recent applicants to doctoral programs, and the effects of university budget cuts across graduate student life and job searches. Submissions should not exceed 800 words and should be e-mailed to cs odby@uwyo.edu.

PROMY, from page 19

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