

## Regions Director

Serves a three-year term. The Regions Director must have prior experience in the leadership of an AAR region. The Regions Director will represent the needs and interests of the AAR's ten regions to the Board of Directors. The Regions Director serves as Chair of the Regions Committee.

### James Bretzke

James Bretzke is a Jesuit and a member of the AAR since 1993. His doctorate is in Confucian-Christian ethics (Rome, 1989) and he has taught in Korea, the Philippines, Italy, and the United States. For fifteen years while at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and the University San Francisco, he participated in the Western Region, chairing its Religions in Asia Section for four years. Coming to Boston College in 2008 as professor of Christian ethics, he has served the New England-Maritimes Region (NEMAAR) as board member, vice president, president, and past president before being elected regional coordinator (REC) in 2014 and re-elected in 2017. As REC, he helped restart the annual conference in NEMAAR and has run the last four events.

Bretzke has published seven books, including most recently the award-winning *Handbook of Roman Catholic Moral Terms* (Georgetown University Press, 2014) and *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary* (Liturgical Press, 1998), as well as over 100 scholarly articles and reviews. He has presented several papers at both the national and regional conferences of the AAR as well as many other professional organizations and conferences. His current research interests focus on methodology in moral discourse and Asian religiosity in Endo's *Silence*.

### Statement

I have been in the AAR since 1993. In the 15 years I taught in the San Francisco Bay I regularly participated in the Western Region and chaired the Religions in Asia Section for 4 years and so I gained a lot of good experience in how that Region functioned. I also was elected Chair of the Department of Theology & Religious Studies while at the University of San Francisco, and while there we successfully redesigned both our undergraduate major in religious studies and our masters in theology, so I gained a lot of familiarity with program and curriculum development.

I have a lot of international experience as well, having done my doctorate in Rome in Confucian-Christian Ethics. Besides the USA I have taught in Korea, the Philippines, and Italy, and am conversant in five languages beyond my native English, as well as having academic facility in classical Chinese, Koine Greek and ecclesiastical Latin.

Coming to the Boston College School of Theology & Ministry as professor of theological ethics in 2008 I was soon invited to join the NEMAAR Board in 2009. I have served NEMAAR continuously since then as Board member, VP, President, and Past President before being elected Regional Coordinator (REC) in 2014 and re-elected in 2017. I was instrumental in re-starting the annual conference in NEMAAR, and I have run the last 4.

I have served on many academic committees at Boston College and chaired the drafting of our Faculty Handbook at the School of Theology & Ministry and these have given me an additional breadth of experience in academic life. In terms of publications I have published 7 books, including the Handbook of Roman Catholic Moral Terms (GUP, 2014) and *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary* (Liturgical Press) both of which won awards in the Reference Book Category from the Catholic Press Association. My *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology* (Liturgical Press, 2004) is still widely-used around the world and is now being released as an E-book. I have won a number of other grants, including most recently for educational technology in the classroom here at Boston College.

I have also published over a 100 scholarly articles and reviews and presented several papers at both the national and regional conferences of the AAR as well as many other professional societies and conferences, including the Society of Christian Ethics, the Catholic Theological Society of America and the College Theology Society. I am a frequent "go-to" person for the local, national and international media on local, national on Church matters.

At the November 2017 AAR conference I am presenting a paper on one of my current research areas, namely the intersection between Asian religiosity and Christianity in Shusaku Endo's masterpiece novel *Silence*. I faithfully attend the AAR national convention and the Regional Directors Board meeting so I have deepened my experience with how the different Regions are structured and work. This past summer I was on the Jury Committee that evaluated the proposals for the 2017 Regional Grants. I look forward to increasing networking, sharing of best practices, and collaboration among the Regions. My online CV and ethics resource web-page can be found at <https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/default.htm> and I am on Twitter as @jimbretzke and Facebook as James Bretzke.

### Katherine Downey

Katherine Downey holds a PhD in humanities, MS in management, and BA in history, all from the University of Texas at Dallas, where she taught for eight years following a twelve-year career in high technology materials sales. She retired from the Hockaday School, where she taught for nine years, and is now visiting professor at Texas Christian University. Downey works at the intersections of disciplines. She brings to her second career as scholar and teacher her experiences from her first career in sales management; her education in history, organizational behavior, biblical literature, and cultural studies; and her public and private school teaching (online and face-to-face) of humanities, literature, philosophy, and social science research. She published *Perverse Midrash: Oscar Wilde, Andre Gide, and Censorship of Biblical Drama* (Continuum, 2004), "Englishness in Literature and Religion," in *Religious Studies Review* (vol. 39, no. 1), and "Portraying Jesus as Human: *The Last Temptation of Christ*," in *Godly Heretics: Essays on Alternative Christianity in Literature and Popular Culture*, edited by Marc DiPaolo (McFarland, 2013). Downey has served in regional leadership since 2002 as program chair, president, and currently as two-term regionally elected coordinator. She is an active member of the Regions Committee.

### Statement

An early experience of nervously presenting a paper to a regional audience of accomplished scholars who generously commented on my work showed me how the scholarly world works. AAR has figured prominently in my scholarly life since. Now a senior scholar, I encourage younger scholars in their work, showing and creating for them opportunities to participate in the most invigorating aspects of academic life.

My regional service began in 2002 when I agreed to chair a program. I was elected in 2009 to the presidency and in 2013 to my first term as Regionally Elected Coordinator. I learned the mechanics of my region, made scholarly friends, created opportunities for innovation, and cultivated leadership in others. Service on the Regions Committee taught me the workings of the national organization, showed me what other regions do, and allowed me to see what we and they might do together.

When I asked our region's leadership to rethink how we do things, we redesigned procedures and redistributed leadership across redefined offices that are now substantive and foster collaboration. A Regional Development Grant supported workshop I designed resulted in major initiatives to enhance the relevance of the region for its members, including creation of a regional website to foster between-meeting work and to enhance regional communication and transparency. This year's plenary of senior scholars that will address academic retirement is one among many programming innovations. We have recruited and involved new members and leaders, which I think to be of vital importance for AAR regionally and nationally.

Our Student Director has become a full member of the leadership team, programs a session for students, and at my suggestion serves on the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies board of directors. Students at our regional meeting enjoy a luncheon program I jump-started that was so successful the Southwest Commission now funds it. These initiatives manifest support for students in our region and reflect my commitment to creating scholarly, leadership, and professional service opportunities for students.

The Regions Committee now hosts the Regions Forum at the annual meeting to showcase what is happening in the regions. Panelists in its first year demonstrated alternatives to conventional scholarly presentations. Last year regional officers and student directors learned how to conduct a regional development workshop to discern how their regions might better serve their members. This year the Forum will feature a presentation on navigating a career as religious studies and interdisciplinary scholar in the current academic market. The regions are fertile breeding grounds for innovation, fresh ideas, and new members.

The regions are gaining strength, national coordination, and academy appreciation. To build on this I want to experiment, innovate, share, collaborate, and—most importantly—support our members' creativity and career growth. I want to foster inter-generational and national-regional support to help our members navigate today's scholarly world and to strengthen the AAR as meaningful in individual members' lives and potent force in public life. I'm adept at perceiving needs, drawing in people to think about them, marshalling resources to address them, and organizing what's needed to make things happen. I am eager to serve the AAR members as Regions Director.