

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION  
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**Hilton Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois  
Sunday, November 18, 2012  
7:30AM – 5:00PM**

**1. Call to Order:**

President Otto Maduro called the meeting to order at 7:53AM. At that point there were over 80 people in attendance.

President Maduro also thanked the AAR Staff, Board, Past Presidents, and Program Unit Chairs for all the work that went into making this such a successful meeting.

**2. Approval of Minutes of 2011 Business Meeting**

**The previous year's minutes were approved unanimously.**

**3. Memorial Minutes**

President Maduro read the pre-distributed memorial list of members who had passed away since November 1, 2011. The names included were:

Kathleen Brasile, Mary Coleman, Sarah Hammon, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Marti Kheel, Kenneth Morgan, Hall Peebles, Hans Penner, Earl A. Pope, Holly Reed, Charles Stinson, Gabriel Vahanian, Wayne E. Ward

A moment of silence was held in the memory of these and any other members who might have passed away in the previous year.

**4. President's Report: President Otto Maduro**

President Maduro expressed his gratitude to all those who helped fulfill his responsibilities as president during his cancer treatment, including President-elect John Esposito, Vice President Laurie Zoloth and the AAR's Executive Committee and Board.

President Maduro expressed concern that we have not yet advanced sufficiently in the direction of defining a labor policy adequate to the circumstances that we face. He noted that there is a joint AAR-SBL task force in place that is tackling the issue as well as a member-sponsored resolution that will come before the Business Meeting for a vote a bit later.

He also noted that the AAR is heading in the right direction and doing well in terms of membership, its finances and in the success of this Annual Meeting which has over, 1,000 sessions and more than 11,000 participants. President Maduro concluded his remarks by thanking AAR Executive Director Jack Fitzmier for his leadership and “for all the help he has given me during this year.”

## **5. Report on the state of the Academy:**

AAR Executive Director Jack Fitzmier began his report by thanking President Maduro and noting his determination and commitment to carry on despite the health challenges that he had to deal with this past year.

He also expressed his gratitude to three AAR Board Members whose terms are ending: Donna Bowman, Brian Pennington, and Cheryl Kirk-Duggan

He went on to point out that the AAR remains in very good shape financially and programmatically. The establishment of concurrent meetings with SBL is on track and proceeding well. The proximity of the AAR and SBL staffs in the Luce Building facilitates their work together.

He indicated his gratitude to the city of Chicago for providing the McCormick Convention Center to AAR and SBL at no cost. While acknowledging that there are challenges and that this is a big building, he pointed out that it has accommodated our needs while contributing in positive ways to the meeting’s bottom line. The total number of attendees at this meeting will make it close to a record for our joint gatherings.

Turning next to the AAR’s financial situation, ED Fitzmier reported that the AAR’s recent audit confirmed that the AAR is back in the black with respect to its annual income and expenses, a turn around from recent years’ outcomes. After taking a dip associated with the “great recession” AAR membership is coming back up. We finished last year with about 10,000 members, which is short of our high, but on the way back up.

ED Fitzmier also announced that Melanie Harris had been selected by the AAR’s Executive Committee to serve as the Board’s Member-Advocate. Her selection was based in part on recommendations from AAR’s LGBTIQ, SWIP, and CREM committees.

A recent comprehensive jobs report based on data from the AAR/SBL Employment Center has recently been posted on the AAR’s website. Members are encouraged to study its contents. Special thanks go to the SBL’s Charles Haws who was the report’s principal author.

The AAR is at work on two new departmental resources: a Religion Majors Site and a Religion Majors Assessment project both with support from Georgia State and the Teagle Foundation. Five schools are involved with the assessment project and are very happy with results. The long term aim is to build on these pilot projects databases that catalog student experiences as religion majors and that provide department chairs with a resource for benchmarking their own majors against those at other institutions.

Revisions to the AAR's database system, which contain all of the AAR's records, are proceeding apace and will go live in the late Spring. We are already making use of aspects of the new system to enable paper and cv submissions.

## **6. Proposed By-law change:**

Executive Director Jack Fitzmier introduced the following motion:

**MOTION:** In order to correct an error that occurred when the bylaws were drafted, and in order to make the bylaws conform to Board policy, we recommend that the words "an At-Large Director" in Article VII, Part I, Section 4 of the AAR Bylaws be replaced with the term "the Member Advocate Director," as follows:

Section 4. Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee shall present to the Board at least two candidates to run for each AAR Director position elected by vote of the membership. The criteria for nomination include distinction in scholarship, teaching, and service to the Academy. The Committee selects candidates so as to bring the rich diversity of the AAR membership to the Board of Directors. The Committee shall be composed of five members: three Members who are not on the Board of Directors, the immediate past president of the Academy, and ~~an At-Large Director~~ **the Member Advocate Director**. The three non-director Members shall serve a term of three years and may not serve additional consecutive terms.

**The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote**

## **7. Member resolution regarding contracts**

Executive Director Jack Fitzmier invited Carolyn Roncolato to present the member resolution regarding AAR's policies for handling contracts with hotels that are involved with labor disputes.

The resolution read:

RESOLVED: The American Academy of Religion will add protective language to all future contracts with hotels and conference centers for annual meetings declaring that if there is a boycott, strike, lockout, picketing or other labor dispute at the contracted facility, the AAR will be released from all contractual obligations without charge or penalty. Furthermore, the AAR will not patronize a hotel or conference center that is in the midst of a boycott, strike, lockout, picketing or other labor dispute. This resolution is consistent with the purpose and values statements as published on the AAR website: the religious traditions as understood and critically evaluated in our work support the values of equal human dignity and worth. In addition, the general public expects professional organizations that teach religion to be consistent with that value. We serve our members through this consistency, as some might actually be prevented from attending meetings held in facilities where there are labor disputes because of their religious and/or ethical convictions. Finally, this resolution is highly congruent with the AAR values statement as “equity, responsibility and democratic accountability” are further through respect for the rights of all workers in facilities we patronize through our dues and fees.

This resolution was presented with 177 signatures by AAR members.

After approximately 30 minutes of discussion the question was called by Stacy Patty.

**The motion passed on a voice vote with 4 votes in opposition and one abstention.**

## **8. 2012 election results:**

President Otto Maduro announced the results of the 2012 elections:

Thomas Tweed elected as Vice President  
Linda Moody elected as treasurer  
Susan Hall elected as regions director

## **9. New business**

There was praise for the new Annual Meeting smart phone app. Members testified that this app is better than last app.

## **10. Adjournment**