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Religious Studies News — AAR Edition

2004 Member Calendar

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

March
Journal of the American Academy of Religion March 2004 issue. For more information on AAR publications, see www.aarweb.org/publications or go directly to the JAR home page hosted by Oxford University Press, www3.oup.co.uk/jaarel/.
March 1, 2004 Annual Meeting proposals due to Program Unit Chairs.
March 1. Book award nominations due from publishers. For more information see www.aarweb.org/awards/bookrules.asp.
March 5–7, Southeast regional meeting, Atlanta, GA.
March 6–7, Southwest regional meeting, Irving, TX.
March 12–14, Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.
March 13, Religion and Disabilities Task Force meeting, Atlanta, GA.
March 15–16, National Humanities Day. National Humanities Day is an advocacy event organized by the National Humanities Alliance and co-sponsored by the AAR and more than 20 organizations to promote support for the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information, see www.nhlc.org/about/2004/
March 17–18, Mid-Atlantic regional meeting, Baltimore, MD.
March 20. Committee on Publications meeting, New York, NY.
March 21–22, Western regional meeting, Whittier, CA.
March 26–27, Rocky Mountain–Great Plains regional meeting, Provo, UT.
March 27–28, Academic Relations Task Force meeting, Atlanta, GA.
(More information on regional meetings, www.aarweb.org/regions/meetings.asp.)
April
April 1. Notification of acceptance of Annual Meeting paper proposals by Program Unit Chairs.
April 2–3, Midwest regional meeting, Chicago, IL.
April 15, Regions Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.
April 16, Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.
April 16, Regional Secretaries meeting, San Antonio, TX.
April 16–17, Upper Midwest regional meeting, St. Paul, MN.
April 17–18, Board of Directors meeting, San Antonio, TX.
April 30–May 1, Eastern International regional meeting, Ithaca, NY.
(Amore information on regional meetings, see www.aarweb.org/regions/meetings.asp.)
May
May 1, Nominations (including self-nominations) for committee appointments requested. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/committees/indirectors.asp.
May 7–9, Pacific Northwest regional meeting, Vancouver, BC.
May 17, Registration & housing opens for 2004 Annual Meeting.
May 17, Registration for the Employment Information Services Center opens.
May 30, Annual Meeting Additional Meeting requests due for priority consideration. (For more Annual Meeting information, see www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/2004/default.asp)
June
June 15, Membership renewal and Annual Meeting registration deadline for 2004 Annual Meeting participants.
July
July 1, New fiscal year begins.
July 31, Deadline for participants to request audiovisual equipment at the Annual Meeting.
August
Annual Meeting Program goes online.
August 1, Change of address due for priority receipt of the 2004 Annual Meeting Program Book.
August 2, Research Grant Applications due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/grants/old/default.asp.
August 15, Membership renewal period for 2005 begins.
August 31, Regional development grant applications due to regional secretaries.
September
Annual Meeting Program Books mailed to members.
September 17, Executive Committee meeting, Washington, D.C.
October
October 1–31, AAR officer election period. Candidate profiles will be published in RSN.

November
November 1, Research grant awards announced.
November 18, Executive Committee meeting, San Antonio, TX.
November 19, Board of Directors meeting, San Antonio, TX.
November 19, Chairs Workshop at the Annual Meeting, San Antonio. Free for departments enrolled in the Academic Relations Program. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/department/academic.asp.
November 20–23, Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. Held concurrently with the Society of Biblical Literature, comprising some 8,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 100 hiring departments.
November 22, Annual Business Meeting. See the Annual Meeting Program Book for exact time and place.

December
December 2, New program unit proposals due.
December 10–11, Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.
December 31, Membership renewal for 2005 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/dues.

Religious Studies News — AAR Edition is published quarterly by the American Academy of Religion in January, March, May, and October. Letters to the editor and features examining professional issues and problems are welcome from all readers. Please send editorial messages to aarweb.org/publications/ren/ for more information.

Religious Studies News—AAR Edition is a combination of news about the services and programs of the AAR and other organizations, including employment services and registration information for the AAR Annual Meeting.

And keep in mind throughout the year...
Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for their Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/regions/old/default.asp.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. In the Field is a members-only online publication that accepts brief announcements, including calls for papers, grant news, conference announcements, and other opportunities appropriate for scholars of religion. Submit text online at www.aarweb.org/publications/indirectors/submit.asp.

Openings: Employment Opportunities for Scholars of Religion. Openings is a members-only online publication listing job announcements in areas of interest to members; issues are viewable online from the first through the last day of each month. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/openings/submit.asp.

Religious Studies News — AAR Edition 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 10,000 scholars, by departments enrolled in the Academic Relations Program, and by AAR—RSN communicates the important events of the field and related areas. It provides a forum for members and others to examine critical issues in education, pedagogy (especially through the biannual Spotlight on Teaching), research, publishing, and the public understanding of religion. It also publishes news about other services 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/ren/asp.
The City of Atlanta made AAR history by hosting the largest Annual Meeting ever last November. In both size and scope, the 2003 Annual Meeting was the biggest on record. Results from the Annual Meeting survey showed that the members overwhelmingly found the meeting to be a success. For a full listing of the survey results, visit www.aarweb.org/annualmeeting2003/surveys/results.asp.

Atlanta’s final registration number of 8,752 attendees exceeded the previous attendance record of 7,270 (B蚣, GA, 1999). Once again, California was listed as the resident state by the most attendees: 790. Georgia, as the host state, produced the second-largest number of attendees (593), followed by New York (532), Illinois (483), and Massachusetts (430). Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan drew the greatest number of international attendees. The focus on Japanese scholars and scholarship increased the number of attendees from Japan by 60 percent compared to the 2002 Annual Meeting. The AAR has been actively encouraging international scholarship in recent years, so in 2004 the focus will be on Latin American scholars and scholarship.

Atlanta was a hit with Annual Meeting attendees; 89 percent of survey respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the meeting in general. Several attendees’ comments suggested that the AAR return to Atlanta again — soon! One of the areas that most pleased attendees was the close accessibility between meeting hotels, with 89 percent responding with satisfied or very satisfied; many people wrote comments about the issue.

The 2003 Annual Meeting was also the largest in terms of its number of sessions: 281 sessions on the AAR program alone, compared to 270 AAR sessions in 2002. Including SBL and Additional Meeting sessions, over 800 sessions occurred over the five-day period from Thursday, November 20 through Tuesday, November 25. Survey respondents reported an 88 percent level of satisfaction with the overall quality of the sessions, and 88 percent of respondents enjoyed the opportunity to network with friends and colleagues.

The Conference Registration & Housing Bureau completed its second year of servicing the Annual Meeting with high marks. Online registration and housing registrations increased by 5 percent (2003: 57 percent; 2002: 52 percent). Almost 4,000 hotel rooms in Annual Meeting hotels were occupied on Saturday, November 22, the peak night of the meeting. Over 15,000 hotel room nights were occupied throughout the course of the Annual Meeting.

Survey respondents also gave satisfied or very satisfied responses to hotels, exhibit, and meeting room facilities (83 percent, 79 percent, and 73 percent, respectively). Many respondents commented on cramped room facilities within the hotel. The AAR is sympathetic to these concerns and the executive office knows this was a problem for several sessions. Large meetings hosted in hotels often allow for greater accessibility by sacrificing the flexibility of room space that can be found in conference centers. Meeting room space is assigned by considering several factors, including the estimated attendance at a session as provided by the program unit chairs; proximity to another session so that two sessions hosted by the same program unit are assigned to the same hotel; and the audiovisual equipment requested in the session. In order to keep audiovisual costs as low as possible, sessions with similar AV needs will be placed in the same meeting room.

“High-tech” sessions that include computers and LCD projectors are usually set in ballrooms in order to maximize the use of the room.

The Annual Meeting Satisfaction Survey is sent via e-mail to a sample of respondents (approximately 9,700) at the conclusion of each meeting and is also offered online at the AAR Web site. The number of voluntary responses this year was 1,171. Not every respondent answered each question, so the values were taken from the number of respondents who did. The survey is voluntary and open to all members.

The executive office staff would like to thank every member who participated in the survey. The post-Annual Meeting survey continues to be valuable to the Annual Meeting process. It provides the AAR’s Program Committee, Board of Directors, and executive office staff with an important measure of member satisfaction of the Annual Meeting. We value this opportunity to hear your comments and suggestions on how we can continue to meet your needs and to offer an excellent Annual Meeting experience.

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American Academy of Religion 2003 Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Atlanta

November 24, 2003

11:45 AM

1. Call to Order: Robert Orsi. The president called the meeting to order at 11:57 AM.

2. Approval of the 2002 Business Meeting Minutes. It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the 2002 Business Meeting Minutes.

3. Memorial List. The president read the Memorial List of members who died in 2003 and a moment of silence was observed.

4. President’s Report: Robert Orsi

President Orsi remarked that it had been an exciting year. He characterized the launching of the Centennial Strategic Plan as the most exciting event. He also remarked that the Academy was well along in the implementation of that plan.

5. Executive Director and Treasurer’s Report: Barbara DeConcini

Dr. DeConcini directed the attention of the Annual Report for a thorough list of the goings on of the year. She highlighted the clean audit received by the AAR and its availability by written or phone request to the executive office (404-727-3049). DeConcini reported on the new high in membership and Annual Meeting registration AAR realized this year. She announced that many have reported attending a number of events and that the Academy could not have achieved the success it did without the efforts of our members.

6. 2003 Election Results: Robert Orsi introduced Jane McAuliffe as president, Hans Hillebrandt as president-elect, and Dina Eck as vice president-elect. She invited Jane McAuliffe to take the podium. President McAuliffe thanked Orsi for his great leadership.

7. New Business

President McAuliffe opened the floor for new business. A short discussion ensued about the 2008 Annual Meeting decision. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Myshka D. Jenkins,
for Susan Hengstenberg,
Secretary

Atlanta: One for the Record Books

At THE ANNUAL MEETING in Atlanta, 25 authors and deans enjoyed presentations and discus- sions led by five experienced chairs. Chairs and deans from small religiously affiliated colleges, large research universities (both pri- vate and public), medium-size private col- leges, and a seminary all participated in the daylong event. Laurie Patton of Emory University began by leading a discussion regarding identity and leadership. Ellen Anderson of Rhodes College, Sue Green of Arizona State University, and Patricia Killen of Pacific Lutheran University led a discus- sion about how chairpersons manage their profes- sional identities as individual scholars while also being administrative leaders of academ- ic departments, as well as those who care for institutional souls. In the afternoon, Laurie Patton of Emory University and Karen Jo Tjossem of the Claremont Graduate University led the discussion on different leadership styles and department cultures. Laurie Patton wrapped up the event by leading a discussion on the theme of discernment. Participants commented: “For me, this was a real ‘chair/school’ workshop, which was exactly what I needed and was looking for.” “Far exceeded my expectations . . . was outstanding and the whole workshop made me think about my job in startling new ways.”

This chair workshop was the latest in a series that is presented every year at the Annual Meeting and prepared by the Academy. The series is titled “The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building & Managing Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands.” (June, 2003; “Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department” (November 2001); and “Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department” (November 2000)."

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regarding identity and leadership. Ellen 
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of Arizona State University, and Patricia 
Killen of Pacific Lutheran University led a dis-
cussion about how chairpersons manage 
their professional identities as individual 
Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair
An Interview with Pauline Yu, President of the American Council of Learned Societies

Pauline Yu is President of the American Council of Learned Societies. Yu, a member of the ACLS Board of Directors since 1998, was formerly Dean of Humanities in the College of Letters and Science and Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. Before becoming Dean at UCLA in 1994, Professor Yu taught at the University of California, Irvine, where she was Professor and Founding Chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures. Between 1986 and 1989, she was Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, having joined that faculty as an Associate Professor in 1985. She earlier held appointments as Assistant Professor (1976–1980) and Associate Professor (1980–1985) in Humanities and East Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University in 1979.

RSN: First of all, congratulations on being appointed the president of the American Council of Learned Societies. This is quite an honor. Can you tell us how you first learned that you were appointed?

Yu: Thanks very much for the good wishes. I was both surprised and thrilled when Sandra Barnes, professor at the University of Pennsylvania, co-chair of the search committee, and member of the ACLS Board, called me with the news shortly after Christmas last year. It certainly added to the excitement of the holiday season! It was very difficult to leave the deanship at UCLA, and I think only the ACLS could have persuaded me to do it.

RSN: Can you tell us about what types of initiatives you expect to undertake at the ACLS?

Yu: A great deal of my effort will be devoted to furthering the mission that has been at the heart of the ACLS since its establishment — supporting scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences in a variety of ways. Our core fellowship program has been substantially reinvigorated over the past few months and will continue to do so, as long as they’ll have me! It’s been extremely instructive for me, and I hope it’s been helpful for them as well. I’m especially eager to encourage collaborative initiatives between societies, and, indeed, the distinctiveness of the humanities itself.

In her address, Tharaya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, linked religions to contemporary international crises in health care. She spoke about the spread of global diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the politics of reproduction, highlighting religion’s impact on the status and condition of women. The second plenary speaker, Madhu Kishwar, co-founder of Manush: A Journal about Women and Society, focused on the ways in which popular films in India embody responses to the social realities of religious pluralism and cultural difference. Both plenaries will be published in a special edition of JAAR.

Panel presentations addressed the following topics: “Re-Imagining Religion, Religions, and Their Discontents” and “Agendas for the Future.” Reflecting on the diversity of perspectives and concerns, panelist Olga Kazmina (Moscow State University) noted that these discussions “proved the necessity of interdisciplinary and multicultural approaches to the study of contemporary religious situations.” In her comments, sociologist Rita Laura Segato (Universidade de Brasília) noted that the historical transformation of the relationship between religion and society is “much more revealing and interesting than the discussion of secularization versus reinstatement popular among sociologists today.”

A series of smaller workshops complemented the plenary lectures and panels. These conversations focused on key issues in religion scholarship, among them “The Politics of Representation: Who Speaks for and about Religion?”; “The Engendering of Religions and Their Study”; “Religions and Violence”; and “Religion, Human Rights, and Democracy.”

In the workshop on “The Politics of Representation,” convenor Ethibabu Mtsou (Duke University) raised the following issues: if scholars speak about religion, especially religions not one’s own, then so should religious traditions have the opportunity to speak about themselves also.

It’s also clear that, as an intrinsically and deeply global field, religious studies plays a key role in the internationalization of scholarship, not to speak of the international and political importance of religion itself.

YU: Because religion is in many ways a more public possession than “the humanities” are, scholars of religion may be in an especially good position to promote the understanding of the humanities outside the academy.

RSN: What are some ways in which the field of religion can help promote the humanities?

Yu: If, among other concerns, the humanities explore how humans make sense of their lives, then surely religious studies embraces one of the central ways in which that happens. The study of religion is one of the most venerable areas of humanistic inquiry. It seems to me that there’s an inherent interdisciplinarity of approach and multiplicity of intersections with other disciplines that allow scholars of religion to make valuable contributions to other domains of scholarship as well. It’s also

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RSN: What is the most beneficial role that religious studies can play within the humanities?

Yu: One of the most important roles that religious studies have been able to play is to bridge what has been thought of in religion scholarship, among them “The Politics of Representation: Who Speaks for and about Religion?”; “The Engendering of Religions and Their Study”; “Religions and Violence”; and “Religion, Human Rights, and Democracy.”

An Interview with Pauline Yu, President of the American Council of Learned Societies

Shannon Planck, American Academy of Religion

J U S T B E F O R E the Annual Meeting, the American Academy of Religion hosted an international conference on the study of religion. Funding for the conference came from the Ford Foundation, with support from AAR and Emory University. The conference, initiated by the editors of JAAR and directed toward internationalizing the journal, served as the inauguration of a larger project entitled “Contesting Religions/Religions Contested: The Study of Religion in a Global Context.”

Some 65 scholars, activists, religious leaders, diplomats, and journalists from around the world gathered for the three-day event. Participants traveled from Mexico, Senegal, Great Britain, India, Israel, Belgium, Brazil, Japan, Turkey, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Russia, Indonesia, Ukraine, Egypt, Palestine, Taiwan, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Denmark, New Zealand, South Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Czechoslovakia, Netherlands, and Iran.

The conference included plenary addresses, panel presentations, and small-group workshops, as well as special events like a visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and a gala dinner on Emory’s campus. Former U.N. Ambassador the Honorable Andrew Young gave the opening welcome.

In her address, Tharaya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, linked religions to contemporary international crises in health care. She spoke about the spread of global diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the politics of reproduction, highlighting religion’s impact on the status and condition of women. The second plenary speaker, Madhu Kishwar, co-founder of Manush: A Journal about Women and Society, focused on the ways in which popular films in India embody responses to the social realities of religious pluralism and cultural difference. Both plenaries will be published in a special edition of JAAR.

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Employment Information Services Center 2003

EMPLOYERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Registered</th>
<th>98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preregistered</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Onsite</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positions Available</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Positions to Candidates</td>
<td>1:3.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CANDIDATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Registered</th>
<th>405</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preregistered</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Onsite</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Participants</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Participants</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Female to Male</td>
<td>1:1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the years the AAR/SBL Employment Information Services Center has collected data from registered candidates and employers. In the past, candidates have been free to select multiple subfields in religion when describing their academic qualifications. Beginning in 2003, however, EIS required that both candidates and employers designate one classification as their primary choice. By including only primary choices in these annual EIS statistics, more accurate conclusions can be drawn. However, this new method of reporting statistics means that the 2003 job classification statistics are not comparable to the EIS statistics of the past. •

Analysis

As can be noted in the charts to the right, the five subfields with the most positions available (in descending order) are:

- Early Christian Literature/New Testament
- Hebrew Bible
- Catholic Theology (all areas)
- Islam
- Christian Theology (general or not listed separately)

The five primary subfields of candidates (again in descending order) are:

- Hebrew Bible
- Early Christian Literature/New Testament
- Christian Theology: Systematic/Constructive

• Christian Ethics
- History of Christianity/Church History

Also noteworthy are some of the ratios of employer classifications to candidate classifications. However, it is important to remember that only primary classification choices are shown. Many jobs fall under classifications that candidates are less likely to remember that only primary classification choices are shown. Many jobs fall under classifications that candidates are less likely to designate (World Religions, for example). The classifications with the highest job to candidate ratio are:

- World Religions
- Preaching/Ministry
- Missiology
- Administration
- Christian Studies

AAR Seeks Series Editor

The AAR seeks an editor for the Texts and Translations series. This series is devoted to making available to the religious studies community publications that are currently inaccessible, or that would fill an important research or pedagogical need were they to be collected or translated for the first time. Because of the breadth of this mandate, the series favors no particular methodological approach, and solicits works in all areas of religious studies. Recent reprints in the Texts and Translations series include Hermann Cohen’s Religions of Reason; J. Samuel Pressey’s Explaining Religion; and Wilhelm Bouset’s The Anarchist Legend. Recent translations include Schleiermacher’s Dialectic and a Tamil poem and commentary, The Study of Stolen Love. The series has also recently published the 19th century Sabbath Journal of Judith Lomax, as well as collections such as W. S. F. Pickering’s Darbhainm on Religion, and Nancy Frankenberry and Hans Pennen’s Language, Truth, and Religious Belief.

AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing projects through to publication. The Texts and Translations editorialship will begin with the November 2004 Annual Meeting. Experience in academic translating desirable but not necessary. Please send applications and nominations (self-nominations encouraged), including a letter describing interest, qualifications, and a current curriculum vitae, to Francis X. Clooney, S. J., Publications Committee Chair, preferably by e-mail attachment to clooney@bc.edu, or by surface mail, to Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3859. Application deadline: September 1, 2004. •
Religious Studies News — AAR Edition

Going Our Way

The 2000 Survey of Departments of Religion
Hans J. Hillerbrand, Duke University

T HE 2000 SURVEY of undergraduate departments of religion and theology is of considerable significance for understanding the academic study of religion in North America. It is by far the most informative empirical assessment of our field to date. It deserves (and begs for) extensive discussion and reflection, on both the national and the local institutional level, especially since the data encompass both the expected and the unexpected.

In a way, this census might be seen as a parallel to the theoretical reflections on the nature of “religion” and the “academic study of religion” that have accompanied our work during the past two decades. Both have been extensive and yielded — I am thinking of Russell McCutcheon and Mark Taylor — provocative insights. However, the realization of these insights into the academic and administrative realities of American higher education has proven to be far more complex. There is the argument that no separate administrative units (departments) for the study of religions are necessary since such a study is part of the agendas of other behavioral sciences and humanities departments. There is also the legacy that identifies “religion” with “Christianity.” And, even if demurrers notwithstanding, there continues the disposition to see the academic study of religion as more of an existential journey of discovery than an intellectual endeavor.

With these preliminaries before us, what does the 2000 Survey tell us?

First of all, the survey makes it clear that the undergraduate study of religious studies in North America is both far more extensive than in any other country and yet is modest in size compared to such fields as chemistry or mathematics in the same universities or even in history and the humanities. There are over 5,000 departments of English and history in the United States, spread over universities, colleges, and community colleges; there are only 1,131 departments of religious studies, or theology. This discrepancy in numbers finds a number of explanations, though there should be little doubt that the extensive absence of departments at public colleges and universities is a major factor. There are notable (and distinguished) exceptions — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, the University of Missouri, Arizona State University come to mind — but, looking at the country as a whole, the generalization remains one of the questions part of our universe holds.

By the same token, the study of religion at church-related and “Christian” colleges and universities is more often than not at the heart of the institutional program of these institutions. Some of these institutions require one or more courses in religion for graduation; others require such courses to fulfill distribution requirements in general education. Moreover, many of these institutions are characterized by strong denominational ties or by a particular understanding of the Christian tradition, be it Catholic or Evangelical. The academic study of religion at these institutions is thus quite distinctive.

It is to be taken for granted that at these institutions “Christian Studies” dominates the curricular offerings.

The 2000 Undergraduate Survey provides empirical data to allow a better grasp of our field, both in a larger context and in its specific manifestations on college and university campuses. The analysis of the results yields a wealth of information about who we are, and what it is we are doing. To be sure, some limitations must be noted. The questionnaire was extensive and called for a host of specific information; one suspects that not all respondents answered the questionnaire according to the highest canons of scholarly accuracy. Also, not all of the 1,131 institutions with discrete administrative structures for the study of religion — free-standing departments, combined departments, centered programs, and general humanities/social science programs — responded. However, the return rate (some 870 institutions) is impressive, and statistically responsive return makes the findings of the survey valid for the entire field.

Most notably, the data dispel a number of myths and generalizations that most of us including the present writer have tended to consider revelatory truths about our field.

To begin with, the survey makes it clear that our field is anything but embattled. It is exceedingly healthy in terms of the number of students taking courses and majoring in religion. During the four-year period (1996–97 to 1999–2000), enrollment in religion courses increased by over 15 percent, while the number of religion majors increased, during the same time, by 25 percent. In absolute numbers, religion courses had 605,000 students enrolled in 1999–2000 and 593,000 enrolled in 1996–97. This is surely impressive, even though both figures need to be viewed in light of the overall enrollment increase in American higher education during those four years.

Perhaps the most interesting finding of the survey has to do with the nature of courses offered. It surely has been a widespread notion in the field that during the past generation or so departments of religion or religious studies changed from reflecting the model of Protestant seminaries to a new kind of department in which the study of Christianity, not to mention Protestantism, was no longer privileged over the study of other religions. The 2000 survey indicates, however, that the nature of the field has changed far less than this might have suggested. The academic study of religion in the U.S. continues to be foremostly the study of Christianity. Here are some figures. Almost half of all courses (exactly 45.1 percent) taught in 1999–2000 were on Christian topics, with courses on “Introduction to the Bible” (11 percent of all courses), “Introduction to the New Testament” (10.5 percent), and “Christian Theology” (9.4 percent) leading the way. By way of comparison, Islam accounted for only 1.3 percent of all courses offered, while courses on Judaism accounted for 3.1 percent.

Analogously, courses on Christian topics were offered by more departments: New Testament courses were offered by 84 percent of the departments; Old Testament courses by 79 percent.

Contingent Faculty in the Academy

Carey J. Gifford, American Academy of Religion

A T A SPECIAL TOPICS Forum at the 2003 Annual Meeting (“The Use and Abuse of Adjunct Faculty in Religious Studies”), further data analysis was presented on the state of contingent faculty in the field of religious studies and theology in the U.S. and Canada. As a result of our further analysis of the data that we collected in our 1999–2000 survey of undergraduate departments of religion and theology in the U.S. and Canada, we have now confirmed empirically what many faculty members have long based on anecdotes and insights — to be the case.

The number of male contingent faculty in 1999–2000 was 2,443 and the number of female 1,051, making for a total of 3,494, a 52 percent increase over 1996–97. The ratio of women to men was 1 woman for every 2.3 men. The ratio of contingent faculty to full-time faculty was 1 contingent for every 1.6 full-time positions.

We also found that contingent faculty taught 5,303 courses in 1999–2000. The average number of courses taught by any one contingent faculty was 6.45, for which the average per course compensation was $2,445. Freestanding departments (as opposed to combined philoso- phy and religion departments, programs within theology departments, or humanities or social sci- ence divisions) paid the most for any single course taught by contingent faculty, with 33 percent paying $1,000–$1,999, and 27 percent paying $2,000–$2,999 per course.

Sixty percent of all male contingent faculty were employed by freestanding departments. However, we found that fully 28 percent of all institutions did not have any male contingent faculty: Twenty-one percent had only one contingent male, with only 16.5 percent having two. The greatest concentration of males (36.2 per- cent) were in Protestant institutions.

With regard to women, 65 percent of all female contingent faculty were employed by freestanding departments. Fifty-two percent of all institutions did not have any female contingent faculty: Twenty-four percent had only one, and only 11 percent had two. Again, the highest concentration (36 percent) was in Protestant institutions.

We were curious, then, about what the census figures might show regarding the geographical dispersion of contingent fac- ulty across the Academy’s ten regions. The following statistics reflect our findings:

• The percentage of women contingent fac- ulty was greatest in the Midwest region.

• The percentage of men contingent fac- ulty was greatest in the Southeast region.

• The percentage of all contingent faculty was greatest in the Southeast region.

When we look at the number of contin- gent faculty by types of institutions, the number of majors in those institutions, and the number of courses taught, the same geographical concentration patterns are present. These three facts regarding geographical concentration mirror the results of the census as a whole: that our field is geographically concentrated in the Southeast, especially among Protestant baccalaureate institutions.

They Also Serve

Editor’s Note:

With the completion of the data collection and analysis of both our undergraduate and graduate surveys, the Academy gathered a group of experts in the fields of religion, higher education, and the sociology of religion to review the results, identify the core questions and issues, and specify further work needed. After this daylong discussion on October 4 in Atlanta, RSN asked two of the participants who have extensive experi- ence in the areas of graduate and undergraduate education (Richard Roeringen and Hans Hillerbrand) to further refine and analyze the plethora of data that we had gathered and presented. Their articles in this issue of Religious Studies News highlight the salient features of both surveys. The results of both surveys and their extensive analysis will be posted on the Academy’s Web site in the spring. Members will be noti- fied of the location on our Web site in a future e-bulletin. It is the goal of the Academy to conduct regular periodic repetitions of these surveys, which will allow for trend analysis. Such analysis is critical for developing effective strategies to secure and strengthen the study of religion and theology in our colleges and universities.
The AAR Graduate Survey at First Blush

Some Initial Thoughts on Institutional Definition and Doctoral Areas of Concentration

Richard A. Rosenzweig, University of Chicago Divinity School

The American Academy of Religion seeks to develop reliable data on the field, and it has taken an important step toward that goal in its recent surveys of undergraduate and graduate programs. The difficulties entailed in such an undertaking will be familiar to most readers of this piece, but merit brief rehearsal: as an even rarer event, prospective institutional programs in religion at the undergraduate level are idiosyncratic, with reference both to what individual approaches are expected to come (Hinduism and New Testament, e.g.), and to each department’s self-understanding and articulation. Graduate programs also have their own self-understandings and articulations, and it will be especially interesting and crucial in the future to learn what we can about how they do and do not “map onto” undergraduate curricula. In seeking data from the graduate programs, the AAR hopes to compile a database of how those who teach undergraduates are trained, and thus to achieve a reliable and ongoing taxonomy of the field of graduate education and, presum- ably, the sense of how graduate education shapes undergraduate instruction in religion.

My assignment is to offer preliminary observa- tions on the data in the graduate survey. What we have is responses from 60 of the 99 institu- tions contacted (15 Canadian institutions on the original mailing list had to be dropped due to under-reporting). While possibly less reliable than the undergraduate survey, the grad- uate survey presents some useful and interesting data. Space conveniently excuses the challenge of a full review (the survey itself is 40 plus pages in length), and in what follows I focus on two tables: the actual names of the 60 par- ticipating programs, and the “Areas of Concentration” within which students at these institutions pursue their programs of doctoral study. A general reason for my choice of these tables is that the data they provide is the most straightforward self-reporting in the survey: there is the least room in these responses, and in a reader’s analysis, for misconstrual of a pro- gram’s self-understanding. Other survey data, perhaps especially the numbers that describe placement, are comparatively opaque. But each of these tables also holds intrinsic interest. As a list of eligible institutions (see Web address below) underscores, the survey on graduate programs raises taxonomic questions about graduate education in religion. I want to suggest that such questions begin, and may in fact end, with questions of nomenclature. Table I’s list of areas of concentration highlights important issues about the location of the study of Christianity in graduate education, and the relationship of confessional and non-confessional perspectives within the academy.

What’s in a Name?

The full list of eligible institutions, including those who responded, is available at www.aar.org/department. The institutional names listed are the ones they provided (they are not chosen from a pre-set listing). The immediate reaction some will have to this table is that it “implies and suggests.” These appear to be very different institutions in terms of their purposes in devoting themselves to the study of religion. We find departments of religion and theological seminaries, schools of theology, religion, and divinity, and varia- tions on these. The student at Andrews Theological Seminary and her counterpart at Syracuse University’s Department of Religion would appear to have very different concep- 

tions of the business of their graduate education. So how do we organize this list of institu- tions into some set of categories will be crucial to understanding both who is in this survey and, by extension, who is doing graduate educa- tion in religion.

The following chart, which I construct from the list of responding institutions, offers an element of organization by their common designation. Declaration of Religion 1

Editor’s Note: The Academy surveyed those universities, theological schools, and seminaries in the United States and Canada that offered an academic doctoral program in religious studies or theology. We defined academic doctoral programs as those in which students earn a doctorate with the intent of becoming scholars, researchers, or profes- sors. The purpose and nature of such a doctoral degree must be to prepare indi- viduals for research and teaching in reli- gion and theology. Typically the resultant degree would be the PhD, ThD, STD, DHL, or DThS. We were not soliciting information on professional doctoral degrees whose intent is to further an individual’s administrative, or counseling competence, such as the minis- terial degree.

The immediate question brought by such an “isbn” has to do with the degree to which this reflects a common syntax that supports even this minimal taxonomy. Is there a difference between “religion” and “religious studies”? Does the moniker “school of” transform or merely underscore the differences implied in the institutions that follow that phase with theology (6), religion (3), and religious studies (12). What difference is there, for instance, between my own institutional home, a university-related divinity school, and the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard, with which we occasionally compete directly for PhD students? (It would be espe- cially interesting to hear the answer to this question from the Harvard Divinity School, which offers a ThD but did not respond to the survey.)

Such questions would seem to lend credence to the mudd-stroked distinction between the- ology and religious studies. Following that lead, there are 30 “theological” and 29 “relig- ious studies” respondents. If we examine the programs in each, however, the distinction does not disappear but it does become more complex. An example underscores the com- plexity. Princeton University’s Department of Religion, a respondent, includes in its curricu- lum doctoral areas of concentration in ethics and its biblical studies. Princeton Theological Seminary, also a respondent, also includes these areas of concentration in its doctoral cur- riculum. Despite these parallel programmatic structures that ensure their common inclusion in the survey, and student cohorts that might well identify their interests similarly and apply for at least some of the same jobs, they are not in my experience commonly grouped together in discussions of graduate education in reli- gion. The reasons for this are not unrelated to the fact that one calls itself a department and resides in a university, while the other is a free- standing theological seminary. Some, perhaps many, feel confident that they know the differ- ence between the two New Jersey respondents. But any account that offers a straightforward and uncomplicated distinction will quickly bump into the important fact that these two responding institutions share a principled and rigorous endowment of academic standards. This raises a set of questions that merit more serious conversation than they have received, about classic distinctions between the academ- ic and the confessional in the study of religion. A look at these names, and consideration of the questions they raise, invites a caveat concerning the degree to which the survey actually captures graduate education in religion in the United States. There always has been, is today, and should always be significant schol- arship on and teaching of religion not only in the departments, programs, schools, and com- mittees that make such work their explicit business, but in related departments (philoso- phy, anthropology, literature, history, etc.) at many of the academic institutions to which some respondents belong. For understandable reasons, the AAR Graduate Survey does not capture that information in this survey. Yet if we are going to understand fully the structure and institutional self-understandings of gradu- ate programs in religion, we will need to know a good deal more about this. It may also help us to frame the questions raised in the follow- ing section about the place of Christianity in graduate curricula.

Areas of Concentration

The AAR Survey solicited a set of data describing the areas of concentration of students in these doctoral programs. The responses to this question in the Survey are listed seriatim in Table II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I</th>
<th>Participating Program’s Designation</th>
<th># respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Religion/Religious Studies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Seminary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Theology/Theological School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Theology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University-related Divinity School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Free-standing Divinity School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee on the Study of Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Religious Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Division of Religion</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Department of Religion</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Union</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II</th>
<th>Distribution of students’ primary concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Concentration</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity: Bible and Testaments/Christian Origins</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Theology: Constructive</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity: History</td>
<td>322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Testament or Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Theology</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Theology: Practice</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity: Ethics</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missiology &amp; Evangelism</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity &amp; Judaism in Antiquity</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Education</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Exposition, Liturgical Studies, and Preaching</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Theory in Religion</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care and Counseling/Religion and Personality</td>
<td>53</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Area of Concentration | Distribution |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism/Japanese/East Asian Religions</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Scientific Studies</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism/South Asian Religions</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics and Religion</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam/West Asian Religions</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion and Modernity; Religion and Social Change; Theology and Society</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Studies</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Religious History</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion in Antiquity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible and Theology</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confucianism/Chinese Religions</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East Studies</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbinsins</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Traditions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/African-Diaspora Religions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Mission</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Volunteering for Committee Service in the Academy

Much of the work of the Academy outside of the Annual Meeting is accomplished through committees and task forces. These groups of members contribute their time and talent in support of the AAR’s mission to foster excellence in the study of religion. For the ongoing vitality of the Academy’s work, it is important to welcome new voices into the conversation and to achieve broad and diverse member participation in these activities. The Academy encourages letters of nomination for committee appointments, including self-nomination. All appointments are made by the president in consultation with the executive director. Please send nominations, including a curriculum vitae, to Myesha Jenkins at mjenkins@aarweb.org.

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A Conversation with the President

Jane McAuliffe, Georgetown University

Jane Dammen McAuliffe is Dean of the College at Georgetown University and Professor in the Department of History and the Department of Religion at Trinity College. She earned a B.A. in Philosophy and Classics from Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Toronto. She has published primarily in the areas of Qur’anic studies and Muslim-Christian relations. Titles include Qur’anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis (Cambridge, 1991), Abbaid Authority Affirmed: The Early Years of al-Ma’mun (SUNY Press, 2006), and With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaisms, Christianity, and Islam (Oxford, 2003). Presently she is the general editor of a five-volume Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an (Brill, 2011), of which three volumes have now been published. Her work has been supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship (1992), a Mellon Foundation fellowship (1994), a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship (1996), and a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship (1997).

RSN: Tell us something about your background. In what type of religious life, if any, did you grow up?

McAuliffe: I was a middle child in a family of six children and both my parents were very devout Roman Catholics. I grew up in a family that prays together, stays together. In what type of religious life, if any, did you grow up?

RSN: At what point did you decide you wanted to become a scholar of religion?

McAuliffe: If you want the honest truth, I’ve always thought that I landed in this field by sheer luck. A week after graduation from Trinity College, I married the love of my life and assumed that I was thereby foisting any teenage dreams of an academic career. The first two babies quickly followed, 16 months apart, and with a graduate student spouse, life was pretty hectic and decidedly hand-to-mouth. (By that time we were living in New York and my husband was finishing a Ph.D. in Italian literature at NYU.) After getting out the rudiments of cooking, cleaning, and infant care, I began to feel a bit restless and signed up for a graduate class at Fordham in religious education. Initially, I was motivated by a feeling of inadequacy at the thought of trying to pass on my faith to these new little people in my life. The course was interesting, and the following semester I took another one, this time with Ewart Coats. In a conversation with him, he sensed my growing interest in theological studies and suggested that I try some of the courses at Union Theological. So I did that, taking one a semester, which was all that we could afford, both in terms of tuition and child-care dollars.

RSN: How did your parents or your extended family influence your career?

McAuliffe: As a family, we talked about religion and theology a lot. It was a staple of our dinner table conversations and I can recall countless Sunday dinners in which the day’s sermon was discussed or debated. My mother, who was not college-educated, was nevertheless a voracious reader and much of what she read was concerned with theology, spirituality, liturgy, and biblical studies. My father, perhaps because he was a convert to Catholicism, had a tremendous interest in matters of ecclesiology and church politics. Added to this, several of my siblings spent various amounts of time in a convent or a seminary, and the notion of a vocation to the religious life was not an unusual one in our family. One older brother in particular, who was a seminarian for about ten years, kept feeding me lots of interesting books and arti-
cles, many of them dealing with the theolog-}
ical ferment that immediately preceded and coincided with the second Vatican Council. My mother’s relative, my maternal sister, is a Franciscan nun who taught at a Catholic women’s college in the Midwest and who was also very generous to me with reading material and good conversation.

RSN: Can you describe your early higher education?

McAuliffe: All of my education until grad school — elementary, secondary, and undergraduate — was in Catholic schools. I spent my high school years at Georgetown Visitation in Washington, D.C., the oldest Catholic girls’ school in the country. It’s a wonderful school and I’m delighted that my youngest is a student there now. For college, I felt that Catholic women of my genera-
tion quite ordinarily did — I headed for a Catholic women’s college, Trinity College, also in Washington, D.C. This was in the late ‘60s, just before places like Yale, Georgetown, Princeton, etc., began to admit women, and most of my high school friends, both male and female, also departed for single-sex schools. I’m actually a big believer in the value of single-sex schools for women and therefore encouraged my two oldest daughters to attend this type of institution.

RSN: What do you think was the period of your doctoral study? What was it like and how did you feel about it?

McAuliffe: If you want the honest truth, I’ve always thought that I landed in this field by sheer luck. A week after graduation from Trinity College, I married the love of my life and assumed that I was thereby foisting any teenage dreams of an academic career. The first two babies quickly followed, 16 months apart, and with a graduate student spouse, life was pretty hectic and decidedly hand-to-mouth. (By that time we were living in New York and my husband was finishing a Ph.D. in Italian literature at NYU.) After getting out the rudiments of cooking, cleaning, and infant care, I began to feel a bit restless and signed up for a graduate class at Fordham in religious education. Initially, I was motivated by a feeling of inadequacy at the thought of trying to pass on my faith to these new little people in my life. The course was interesting, and the following semester I took another one, this time with Ewart Coats. In a conversation with him, he sensed my growing interest in theological studies and suggested that I try some of the courses at Union Theological. So I did that, taking one a semester, which was all that we could afford, both in terms of tuition and child-care dollars.

RSN: Describe the period of your doctoral study. What was it like and how did you feel about it?

McAuliffe: Well, part of my answer to the previous question segues into this one. The Toronto graduate program in religious studies was — and is — a terrific, interdisciplinary endeavor. It was created by pulling together faculty from departments and programs across the university whose research involved some aspect of religious education. For example, I actually studied primarily with faculty from what is now known as the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, but did so only after some core preparation in method and theory, as well as in religious tra-
ditions other than the one in which I concen-
trated. Toronto was also generous with teach-
ing opportunities and quite soon after arriv-
ing there I was given the chance to develop a new undergraduate course. I then taught the equivalent of a two-thirds load for the rest of my time as a graduate student. Consequently, time management was always a problem. By then we had three children, an infant and two in elementary school, so I learned how to work productively in very brief time seg-
m ents. Now, as an administrator, that’s a technique that still stands me in good stead.

RSN: While at Toronto what were your areas of greatest interest and with whom did you study?

McAuliffe: I took my first graduate course at the University of Toronto with Will Oxtoby, whose enthusiasm for the entire field of religious studies was boundless and whose death in 1983 was a real loss to the field. A course on Islamic philosophy with Michael Marmura was my first exposure to Islamic studies and it was followed by an opportunity to...
RSN: How long have you been in the department, and acting as chair?

Bell: I came to the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara in 1995, after living in Japan and Taiwan for nearly four years. California was just one more exotic culture to me then, a New Yorker by birth. I was the first woman in Asian religions, and in truth I felt like I was responsible for the whole non-Christian world, depending on how you want to think of the Torah and the Bible. For a number of years I taught all the Asian offerings, as well as comparative courses that included Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. It was a great education. But I never expected to be chair — I tried to be a good lieutenant without any interest in advancement. When Louise Hackett, who was my mentor, Sensory Specialist to the Camino Real and it sits in the heart of the Silicon Valley. So students troup via a real architeclural site in a highly revered (now wireless) environment. Compared to many schools in the West, there is a sense of history and regular reflection on it — with recent emphasis on unafflicting moments in “mir- iam” life before the university was founded. After many years of a theology program in which students were constantly taking half-credit courses in aspects of Thomism, a proper Department of Theology was formed. Finally, under the influence of the late Catholic theologian Theodor Muckin, this became the Department of Religious Studies in the last 10, an explicit commitment to an under- graduate curriculum that places Christianity within a fully global context.

Bell received her BA in 1975 from Manhattanville College in New York, where her teachers included FDH from Chicago such as Franklin Gamwell. Not unwisely, she chose the University of Chicago Divinity School where she took her PhD in 1983. She studied history of religions with Mircea Eliade, and was deeply involved in the study of Chinese religions. Her dissertation addressed the role of “texts about rites” in early medieval Daoism. She has published two books that further developed her ideas about rites (Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice (1992); Ritual Development (1999)), while a series of articles has pursued her interest in the printed text in Chinese popular religion. After research time in Beijing, she suddenly became department chair in 2000, and her research is recently impacted, but she is currently focusing on the social and material aspects of “believing.”

Bell: Since we offer approximately 120 courses each year, we organize such a huge curriculum in two main ways. First, the courses are divided into three areas: Scripture and Traditions; Theology; Ethics and Hermeneutics; and Religion and Society. This imperfect but useful system generally helps students find the types of courses that interest them, but it also represents a departmental consensus, built up over time, about what we consider important for this school to provide. As a Catholic institution, this is the place to study that tradition, but we understand the breadth of context needed today for any specialization. So, with temporary holes here and there, we cover all the main areas articulated by the Academy. But then it gets really interesting. In addition to the three areas, the courses required by the core curriculum are sequential, a first-year course, second-year, etc. We have experienced managing how to distinguish the courses by approach, substance, and pedagogical purpose. So, for example, first-year courses in all three areas are taught with providing a basic language or set of categories for thinking about religion — not just do you believe or not. Second-year courses are open and in the best possible coherent and substantive body of data about a tradition (Islam) or a method of study (psychological approaches), attempting to expand the student’s basic awareness of what religion includes. The third-level course, one of the last courses taken to complete the Core, deliberately addresses open-ended issues, questions for which there are no neat answers. Those courses try to model how to engage the concerns raised by religious activity or about religion in the life of any thoughtful person. Sometimes I think we may have gotten a little too ambitious, but we have learned a lot in defining a sequence of goals. And, of course, it makes religion very central to the Core; it is the only requirement that straddles all four areas and major fields.

RSN: What is the major challenge facing the religious studies program at Santa Clara University?

Bell: There is a basic challenge for the professional scholar teaching undergraduate courses to...
In the Public Interest

Promoting the Public Understanding of Religion in the Schools

Diane L. Moore, Harvard University

E nhancing the public understanding of religion is, appropriately, an important priority of the AAR. Adequate from legitimate concerns about the future of the profession and a desire to better ed cate citizens about religion as a sociocul tural as well as a theological phenomenon, scholars of religion know all too well that the consequences of our national religious illiteracy are grave ones that serve to foster and often justify bigotry, intolerance, and fe ar. Though these consequences are well documented throughout the history of the U.S., they have come into bold public relief in the aftermath of 9/11. Shocking images of targeted violence against those perceived to be of Arab descent and a growing dis comfort with the underlying justifications for many of our nation’s policies related to terrorism have been well documented and need not be rehearsed here. It is, however, worthy of note that 9/11 and its aftermath have sparked an unprecedented desire by many in the nation to learn more about Islam in particular and, by extension, reli gion in general as a sociocultural phenom enon. This is especially apparent in our nation’s schools. Public and independent school boards have scrambled to find useful, credible information to address these issues responsibly in classrooms all across America.

This spate of interest is in many ways heartening to those of us who have devot ed our careers to the public understanding of religion. There is, however, a danger that many of these activities may actually exacerbate the very problems they are intended to overcome. In the context of our national illiteracy about religion in general and specific traditions in particu lar, educational efforts by those who have not been trained in religious studies will often unwittingly reproduce unexamined stereotypes and/or problematic method ological assumptions that deepen rather than minimize misrepresentation and mis understanding. Here I will outline what I perceive to be two common themes that are related examples of public illiteracy about religion as they are manifest in the schools. I will close with some suggestions for how we in the Academy can join with others to fur ther promote the public understanding of religion in intellectually credible, constitu tionally sound, and educationally innova tive ways.

Religion Perceived as Abistorical Devotional Practice

Given the fact that few people have been exposed to the study of religion from a sociological perspective, religion is often interpreted from a simplistic, non-prescriptive lens with little understanding of its descriptive or social-historical dimensions. Wilfred Cantwell Smith articu lated an understanding of these distinc tions as “religious experience” and the “cumulative tradition” to represent reli gion as both devotional practice and social-historical phenomenon. While many have since taken to this when they think of religion itself with theological beliefs that are both timeless and self-contained. (This understand ing is, of course, influenced by a Protestant Christian representation of reli gion.) Though many will recognize that within a given tradition there are often competing claims regarding what constitutes legitimate expression of the faith, these disputes are rarely understood in their social, political, and historic context. This lack of exposure to religion as a social/historical phenomenon couples with the fact that relatively few are aware of even the basic tenets of most of the world’s religions traditions creates an intel lectual black hole where spurious claims have as much credibility as more accurate ones. Without the fundamental tools to assess competing representations within defined contexts, simplistic and/or sensa tional interpretations are often uncritically accepted. Thus, for example, Islam becomes equated with media representa tions of the Taliban on, conversely (and with the intention of countering that depiction), Islam is portrayed as a religion that promotes rather than denigrates fundamental human rights. Both representa tions share the assumption that Islam is itself definable in absolute terms devoid of historical/cultural expression — an assumption that few people trained in the study of religion would accept.

Religion Prone to Uncritical Embrace or Simplistic Rejection

The second example of religious illiteracy that I will highlight is related to the first: Because religion is often associated with discrete belief systems, it can easily be either rejected as obsolete or embraced and interpreted uncritically through one’s own particular experience. For example, as Stephen Carter and others have docu mented, religion is often disregarded or trivialized as a credible contemporary worldview because it is equated with “blind,” simplistic faith; oppression (espe cially of women and those representing “foreign” religious traditions); or views that are contradictory to science; and/or unfounded (naive) optimism. Those who hold these views about reli gion are seriously as a contemporary, relevant, and sophisticated phenomenon. On the other
Barker: Well, I suppose I always had a vaguely curious talent in how people can believe things that the rest of us think are clearly wrong, possibly dangerous or, at very least, somewhat weird. My first career was as an actress and I was never interested in the sort of people who ‘play tennis’—juveniles. I preferred the challenge of trying to portray the murderer, the psycho, or the madman; the man who worked out (in the Stanislavski tradition) what there was in me that might (were I to have had similar experiences and to have found myself in that situation) allow me to understand why they would behave in the way they did — even if it was perfectly certain I wouldn’t go down the same path.

Later, through a series of accidents, I found myself transmogrified into a sociologist at the London School of Economics. My husband, who worked for the INFORM, which supplies information about the new religions that is as objective and up-to-date as possible. She is a frequent advisor to governments, other official bodies, and law-enforcement agencies around the world; and it is the non-American to have been elected President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

RSN: Can you tell us about your research interest in new religious movements and the social reactions to which they give rise?

Barker: This seemed to me to be another opportunity that was just too good to miss. Here was a wonderful laboratoire of social behavior, by pointing out the overwhelming majority of those subjected to the ‘irresistible and irresistible’ techniques managed to walk away. But the reviews were good, and it sold well! In fact, it is still being used, 20 years later — for Methods teaching as much as for informing people about the Unification Church.

RSN: Can you tell us about your research into religious change in post-communist countries?

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RSN: Can you tell us about the reception your award-winning book, The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice? has received?

Barker: It varied. The Moonies themselves were entirely happy with it. Some of them felt I’d betrayed them by not pro-claiming the Truth as they saw it. The anti-cultists hated it because I questioned the effectiveness of brainwashing by pointing out that the overwhelming majority of those subjected to the ‘irresistible and irresistible’ techniques managed to walk away. The reviews were good, and it sold well! In fact, it is still being used, 20 years later — for Methods teaching as much as for informing people about the Unification Church.

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RSN: How can scholarship help reduce the occurrence of violence and aggression associated with religious movements?

Barker: Well, I’m not 100 percent convinced that it can — but I work on the assumption/hope that, other things being equal (which, of course, they rarely are), if the researchers could be pretty, the results would be better than ignorance or faultless truths. Some religious movements (new and old) have undoubtedly indulged in violent, aggressive, or criminal behavior, but most of them haven’t and, curiously enough, recognizing that alone could go some way towards reducing problems. People tend to react to new or unfamiliar ideas with lifestyles by way of petrified suspicion — and ignorance, with often grossly dis-orted images being promulgated by the movements, their opponents, and the media. Over and over we can see situations being made worse at the individual, group, and/or governmental level — due to misinformation doing to and resulting from moral panics, the crimi-nologists might put it. The Waco debacle is an obvious example.

RSN: Does this tie in with your founding of Inform?

Barker: Yes. By the mid-1980s I had seen plenty of examples of what appeared to me to be inappropriate behavior lead-ing to unnecessary suffering. Some of this, I thought, might be avoided if the knowl-edge and understanding accumulated by scholars were more widely available — but scholars are not usually the most gripping of communicators; the media know much better than we do to tell a good story. Anyway, I thought it could be helpful to make scholarship more accessible and we elicited the support of the British govern-ment, the mainstream churches, and sev-eral other bodies and individuals and set up an organization called Inform — an interna-tional network based at LSE that pro-vides enquirers with information about minority religions that is as accurate, bal-anced, and up-to-date as possible. Now in our 17th year, we have dealt with thou-sands of enquiries from all over the world; we have data on around 3,000 dif-ferent religions and similar organizations; we organize regular day-long seminars; sometimes we mediate disputes between new religions and relatives of members.

Inform operates on the principle that the methods of the social sciences can produce more reliable information than the sort one often finds in the media (I’m not saying we don’t listen to and learn from people with different perspectives). If one hears a story at a dinner party about a cult-related incident that comes from someone’s cousin, it may well be true, but is not necessarily typical of new religions (or even that particular movement) or apotypical of the rest of society. To take an example I often use, it is possible to read half a dozen headlines about a cult member committing suicide and start to wonder what it is about cults that leads people to take their own lives. However, one is unlikely to read a statement about a Catholic committing suicide — it isn’t just news — but the social scientist would want to compare the cult suicide rate with that of people of the same age and background as its membership; and if the latter were higher, we might want to ask what it is about new religions that stops people committing suicide. Of course, it may be that less people with a psychological dis-position to commit suicide join the move-ment — but at least the question will have been raised.

But Inform operates with a working hypothesis that understanding how the world works is desirable not just from a scientific point of view (finding out what variable is likely to vary with what), but also from an empathetic perspective — being able to understand why people (many of them us) do the things we do in certain circumstances. Such information might alert us to, and per-haps help avert, a variety of new and problems. Of course, scholarship is never foolproof and Inform hasn’t got a magic wand, I know that doesn’t sound very work. But I do believe — in fact I know — that it does sometimes work!

RSN: Do you see European society becoming more or less understanding and tolerant of nontraditional religious movements?

Barker: Yes — both more and less! I think the immediate influx of nontradi-tional religions can give rise to a variety of concerns, and there’s no doubt that there’s quite a bit of intolerance in some coun-tries, from most other sources, that are threatened. There will always be conflicts of interests and other problems. But, despite some of the awful things that hap-pened during the last century, we now have a relatively speaking, a history of toler-ance and accommodation. I suspect there will be a process of increased understand-ing and tolerance of the present “nontraditional,” but that new nontraditionalists will arrive to rock the boat. The future of reli-gion is, in a way, a rough journey, but I don’t see European civilization being drowned in the immediate future.
Beyond the Annual Meeting

Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion

Dena S. Davis, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

RSN: Tell us, what does your committee do?

Davis: The goal of our committee is to promote the public understanding of religion in many different venues. We have focused especially on supporting better news coverage of religion, better-informed responses by law enforcement to crisis situations involving religion, and more education of the public by religion scholars.

We have implemented a number of activities to encourage journalists to report on religion, and to do it well. We have a yearly contest to recognize outstanding reporting in the field of religion, in three different categories. We are also playing a supporting role. As I hope most AAR members know, Religionsource provides instant access for journalists to 3,000 scholars in the field of religion. They can research topics in ways that do not presuppose knowledge of the field, and receive contact information on scholars who are experts on the topic they are investigating. Our hope is that Religionsource will encourage journalists to report on religion more widely and more accurately, and with a wider range of sources. We are especially concerned to reach journalists at media sources that cannot support a dedicated “religion beat.”

Also, the committee annually gives the Martin Marty Award, to recognize scholars who have contributed to the public understanding of religion. Recent honorees include Diana Eck (for her work on the Pluralism Project), and sociologist Robert Wuthnow.

RSN: It seems so obvious, but let me ask, what makes the work of this committee important for the Academy?

Davis: Yes, it does seem obvious! We are all in this field because we think that religion is an important piece of understanding the way in which people live their lives in this world. It’s frustrating when the media ignores religion, or reports it in narrow, stereotypical ways. And it’s frustrating when we see areas where our expertise could be useful, and it is ignored. I remember when President Clinton was preparing for a speech to the nation about a breakthrough in the peace efforts in the Middle East, and he wanted a quote from the Koran; they had to borrow one from a driver who worked for the Saudi Embassy. Don’t you wish that the White House had experts in religion on tap, the same way they have experts in economics or foreign policy?

Our work is also important for the Academy because, to the extent that we can promote an understanding of religion in society as a whole, people will want to take classes in religion and read books ranging from Islam to tantrism. At the 2001 Annual Meeting, the CPUR and FBI worked together to stage a simulated hostage crisis: a man with a rifle walked into a crowded building, standing silently, holding one last plate. The hardwood floor is tie-dyed in shades of brown, the pattern changed with times (and days!) for a Tuesday night class on campus, the endless changing of meeting times—time after time.—the lack of places to nurse or pump on campus, the endless changing of meeting times (and days!) for a Tuesday night class that weeks my childcare plan, the professor who “forgets” that I have to pump immediately before and after class in order to keep my milk up, the near lack of access to campus sites when wheeling a stroller, and night after night after four hours of sleep broken into one-hour increments . . . .

I let the last plate fly. Being both a student and a parent (especially a new parent) is not the easiest thing to do in the academy, an institution that on the whole honors the ideal student of 30 years ago. At times the tension can be overwhelming for those who want to take both a career and a human child. But the problems are just as real. Money, scholarship, can both enrich and ground aca-

The plates are gifts from my husband’s grandmother. They are now in a pile of big chunks, with tiny shards of porcelain scattered throughout the room. She had been amazed that I could negotiate Atlanta traffic (after all, I am a woman). She believed the most fulfilling thing in her life to be giving birth and raising children. The hardwood floor is tie-dyed in shades of brown, the pattern changed with the shattering of each plate. I am standing silently, holding one last plate.

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The case that the supernatural, not ritual, provides the core of religion can be demonstrated in several quite specific and dramatic ways.

If one truly believes that ritual is the essence of religion, then what is one to make of people who include very valuable "sacriﬁces" in their ceremonies, thereby deprecating themselves. They must be crazy. Which is, of course, what many social scientists who devote themselves to explaining "sacriﬁce" concluded. Rodney Stark concluded that the burning of sacrifices commemorates the "original sin" in which the sons in a primal horde rose up and killed and ate their father and then had to make amends. That view was rated at length by Robert Ernlke. Money-Kytle, and, in his inﬂuential textbook, Brian Morris referred to Freud’s thesis as "amazing" and "tantalizing.

Equally, that line of analysis "bottomed out" in such absurdities as Rodney Needham’s denial of the existence of any "interior state" that might be recognized religious belief. If S. R. Price’s claim that religious belief is a purely Christian invention, so that when "primitive" ﬂy for things, they don’t really mean it. Indeed, Dan Soper offered the amazing sophism that, because it is self-evident that supernatural beings do not exist, it is absurd to interpret religious rituals as efforts to enlist the divine on one’s behalf. Even Clifford Geertz went so far as to say that healing ceremonies conducted by the Navajo are intended to cure the sick. 

Ralph Linton, in his classic work, concluded that although "it is sometimes held that funeral and mourning rites are the result of a belief in a soul surviving death. . . . I would never hold the view that a belief in a surviving soul is not the uncluttered matter of the case." By the same logic, cultures are said to "discover" the existence of rain Gods as a result of performing rain dances — never mind how it was that they stumbled upon rain dances. The point is that one must be highly trained sociological scientist to believe such things.

This, and a great deal of similar "expert" advice, turned social-scientiﬁc attention to peripatetic myths and rituals that people did in the name of religion, which then appeared to be fundamentally irrational to sociological scientists who, having dismissed the objecthood of ritual, did not conceive of why people engaged in such actions.

Consequently, all Biblical really said was that Gods are not central to Godless religions. Bellah also failed to acknowledge that Gods are not central to the religious life of the West. As I have more often argued, Gods, faiths are sustained only by small intellectual elites, and the popular forms of Buddhism, Christianity, and Taoism among others. Obviously, when Gods are many, and each is of quite limited scope, the centrality of any one of, or all of, all of them is that the religious life will be modeled in comparison with the centrality of One True God. But, rather than having identiﬁed a fallacy, all Roman Catholics think that when the monolith is different from polytheism, and that both differ greatly from the Godless religi- ons of Eastern philosophers and Western lib- ers. Perhaps unwittingly, Bellah’s work itself stands as evidence that variations in concep- tions of the supernatural are the basis from which all comparative analysis of religion, as well as magic, must begin.

The case that the supernatural, not ritual, provides the core of religion can be demonstrated in several quite speciﬁc and dramatic ways.

When magic fails, it is usually assumed that the fault lay with the performance: that incarnations were not precisely correct or that rituals were not done exactly right. The same assumption applies to most ritual actions performed on behalf of the small Gods of polytheism. On the other hand, while there is a considerable body of literature in anthropology, and with each of the great monoliths, there is little concern about precision: No sincere Roman Catholic thinks that the sub- stitution will not occur during the Mass if the priest gets some of the words wrong or out of order. Indeed, appeals must to Yalewh, Jesuit. If the Allah involves a miracle, then any ritual, often being quite impromptu substitutions by ordinary believers.

Recently, a substantial body of anthropological and experimental evidence has been assembled to explain that variations in the importance placed on ritual precision reﬂect differences in the capacities attributed to the supernatural agent to which (or whom) the rituals are addressed. As in the case of the the supernatural agent is an unconscious entity or is a supernatural creature of very limited capacity (such as a demon or an imp), it will be assumed that each ritual must be performed with extreme precision because the supernatural agency lacks the capacity to know the intent of those performing the ritual and is unable to overlook errors in ritual perform- ance. As the psychologist Justin L. Barrett put it, "too great a precision is required when dealing with ‘dumb’ Gods."

That same logic applies, if to a somewhat les- ser extent, to religions based on Gods of lim- ited scope. They, too, may not take note of the intent of rituals, but only of their execution. Indeed, if there is a substantial element of impulsion in dealing with small Gods as well as with the creatures that sometimes are invoked by the ritual, that is an inability to control perfect, otherwise the supernatural agent will not ﬁnd them binding. In contrast, the omnipotent Gods of monotheism are thought to be fully aware of the intent of the agent. He cannot control the ritual. Consequently, rituals are far less important and precision is barely an issue when dealing with Gods known of all-seeing — the priest err, Jehovah knows what was meant, and the efﬁcacy of a prayer does not hinge on precise adherence to a sacred formula.

An even more devastating case against the primacy of ritual can be made by close examination of the most popular of all ritualistic foundations: assumptions about religion: religion functions to sustain the moral order. That classical and the modernist foundations, are regarded by many as the closest thing to a “law” that the social-scientiﬁc study of religion possesses.

In his Burnet Lectures, W. Robertson Smith explained that “even in its rudest form Religion is a force, the power that men revered on the side of social order and moral law, and the fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society, which were also the laws of morality.” Émile Durkheim, of course, argued that religion exists because it unites humans into moral communities and has the social effect of regulating social order. “A law exists not only in a recent but also in the conscience. Not only do metaphysicians but ideas and sentiments.” And, according to Bronislaw Malinowski, “every religion implies some sort of reward or punishment of sins.

In one form or another, this proposition appears in nearly every introductory sociology and anthropology textbook on the market. But it’s wrong. Moreover, it wasn’t even handed down from the founders, at least not unanimously! Indeed, the founder of British anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor, and the founder of British sociology, Herbert Spencer, both took pains to point out that only some kinds of religions have moral implications. “Savages’ reli- gion [religion] is almost devoid of that ethical element which the educated modern mind is the very meaning of practical religion,” Tylor reported. “Nor, as I have said, that morality is absent from the life of the lower (cultures). . . . But these ethical laws stand on the morality is merely the social or conventional. is simply the link between religion and morality is ‘no causa- tion’ is to misconceive the ‘history of religions’. She suggested that the linkage probably is typical of ‘the higher ethics’ of refugees. He conceded that the fugitives impure their own unscrupulous exchange practices to their Gods and seize every opportunity to cheat God. Peter Lawrence found that the Garia of New Guinea, the New Guinea have no conception whatever of the cause but the effect of the rites. Tylor reported. Of course, I have said, that morality is absent from the life of the lower (cultures). . . . But these ethical laws stand on the morality is merely the social or conventional. is simply the link between religion and morality is ‘no causa- tion’ is to misconceive the ‘history of religions’. She suggested that the linkage probably is typical of ‘the higher ethics’ of refugees. He conceded that the fugitives impure their own unscrupulous exchange practices to their Gods and seize every opportunity to cheat God. Peter Lawrence found that the Garia of New Guinea, the New Guinea have no conception whatever of the cause but the effect of the rites.
If you’re a junior, find a mentor. If you’re a senior, mentor the junior faculty. The success of one shines a brighter light on all.

RSN: Could you give us some examples of your most enjoyable activities?

Raitt: I enjoy my work as Interim Director of this Center, largely because the faculty and staff are such splendid people with whom it is a pleasure to work. Starting anything from scratch is an exciting challenge; you think about it all the time. We have to raise money as well, so I am always alert to ways to do that, but mostly I like the sense of continuous involvement and new ways of involving the Center across the campus.

RSN: Who have been your role models during your retirement?

Raitt: I am afraid I don’t have many models because most people don’t retire and begin a whole career at once. If I suppose my models are those who are still active in their late 70s and 80s, the ones who want to maintain their edge as long as possible. Maintaining an edge, a bright, sharp one, requires action and even friction, the tug and rub of trying to make a success of a new enterprise.

RSN: What makes for a satisfactory retirement?

Raitt: From what I have just said, you might think this question moot, but I believe that I no longer yearn to ride. It’s the first time in 70 years that I haven’t wished myself on a horse! But now I ride long hours last Thanksgiving when I visited my nephew and his family in Buckeye (near Phoenix), Arizona. I gave them my lovely Arabian mare, Irish Fire, but now they have three horses. We rode across the desert together and I was as much at home in the saddle as ever.

RSN: What has been the most significant change in your life since you retired?

Raitt: Living in town is my most significant change and it has been a happy one. I can’t believe that I no longer yearn to ride. It’s the first time in 70 years that I haven’t wished myself on a horse! But now I ride long hours last Thanksgiving when I visited my nephew and his family in Buckeye (near Phoenix), Arizona. I gave them my lovely Arabian mare, Irish Fire, but now they have three horses. We rode across the desert together and I was as much at home in the saddle as ever.

RSN: What might you have done differently during your academic career?

Raitt: I would have been more political, more open to others. Otherwise, I am happy with my career. The Department of Religious Studies here continues to be a strong, collegial group of faculty and students. It is an achievement anything beyond that would be proud of, although I am calling Steve Friesen in second founder because of the fine leadership he is providing.

RSN: What has been the most enjoyable activity during your retirement?

Raitt: What have been the most enjoyable activities in your retirement? I have a new director and I will become a resident of the fine leadership he is providing.

RSN: Do you do any teaching?

Raitt: You can’t change in your life since you retired. What have been the most significant changes in your life since you retired?

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RSN: Do you do any teaching?
The Need for the Academic Study of Religion in the Schools

These and other expressions of religious illiteracy are common ones shared by individuals from a wide diversity of educational, economic, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds and experiences. Given that most people are educated about religion through their own faith traditions and/or popular culture, this state of affairs is hardly surprising. With little to no exposure to the study of religion in general, many people may not recognize the sociocultural phenomenon, what else can be expected? The relevant fact here is that widespread religious illiteracy in America is the product of inexperience rather than incompetence. If there is any hope of substantially and effectively promoting the public understanding of religion, the academic study of religion must be more responsibly and intelligently integrated into the curricula of the nation’s schools.

This awareness is hardly novel. The AAR has itself been involved periodically in promoting the study of religion in the schools for over 50 years and other organizations and institutions, such as the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School, the Religion and Public Education Resource Center at California State University, Chico, Religious Studies in Secondary Schools in California 3 Rs Project, and the First Amendment Center, have supported similar goals. Though some progress has been made, widespread misunderstanding of the religious liberty clauses of the First Amendment coupled with the lack of adequate teacher training in the study of religion has substantially hindered the comprehensive effectiveness of these efforts. The recent surge of interest in religion is in many ways encouraging, but the challenges associated with teaching about religion in intellectually responsible ways are still significant ones that will require more substantial efforts to overcome than has heretofore been accomplished.

Many of us who have been involved in efforts to promote the public understanding of religion in the schools have begun to formulate a consensus around how to advance this effort at this important historical juncture. There are many initiatives under consideration, but I will briefly highlight two of the most ambitious ones that directly involve scholars of religion in pivotal ways.

The formulation of standards and frameworks for the study of religion in the schools

Though we do not advocate the creation of a new, required field of religious studies as a separate discipline to be tested and monitored by state departments of education, we do feel that there is a grave need to articulate benchmark standards for what responsible teaching about religion entails. Religion is already present within state standards in a variety of disciplines and it is also offered at the secondary level in stand-alone electives such as “The Bible as Literature” and “Introduction to World Religions.” Unfortunately, few teachers are adequately trained in the academic study of religion to know how to teach this material responsibly. The establishment of standards would provide a basic foundation for educators and students alike. This initiative would involve a coalition of scholars of religion, teachers, teacher educators, and representatives from key state departments of education.

The inclusion of the academic study of religion in teacher training programs

Though ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers in the field are helpful and important to maintain, more substantial exposure to both the methods and content of religious studies is required for teachers to be adequately trained. Toward this end, I am likely to encourage the establishment of pilot programs in selected colleges and universities whereby teacher education programs partner with religious studies departments to include the academic study of religion as an aspect of preservice teacher training.

The California State University, Chico, provides one such model and we at the Program in Religion and Secondary Education at the Harvard Divinity School are in conversation with the Harvard Graduate School of Education to establish a closer partnership in this area.

Contrary to popular belief, religion has always been and continues to be “taught” in our nation’s schools in overt and covert ways. However, due to the lack of adequate teacher training, coupled with widespread religious illiteracy, the quality of that instruction is dubious at best and often poor. The need for citizens to be better educated about religion as a social-historical phenomenon has always been present and is especially apparent now. Though it is obviously impossible to fully eradicate religious bigotry and misrepresentation, we can certainly minimize the basic ignorance that fuels them by promoting the responsible academic study of religion in the schools.

Notes

1 This loosely defined coalition is composed of several members of the AAR (including but not restricted to those who serve with me on the Religion in the Schools Task Force) and individuals associated with the other organizations or programs mentioned above.

Religion in the Schools Task Force
www.aarweb.org/profession/reliefacts.asp

Program in Religion and Secondary Education at Harvard Divinity School
www.bhl.harvard.edu/proj/program屠.html

Religious Studies in Secondary Schools
www.rite.net

Religion and Public Education Resource Center
www.csuchico.edu/rtperc

First Amendment Center
www.firstamendmentcenter.org

McAuliffe: As the moment, my atten-

McAuliffe: From p.9

to work with some wonderful faculty, particu-

McAuliffe: Probably a moment of tem-

McAuliffe: Editing a major reference book

McAuliffe: At the moment, my atten-

tion is pretty securely focused on the faculty

McAuliffe: After a two-year sabbatical in

McAuliffe: To work with some wonderful

McAuliffe: At the moment, my atten-

tion is pretty securely focused on the faculty

McAuliffe: At the moment, my atten-

tion is pretty securely focused on the faculty

McAuliffe: From p.11

hand, those raised with a strong sense of religious identity within a particular tradi-

tion may assume that the theological claims of one’s own community are both broadly representative and ideologically “true.” Those who fall within this category often have a difficult time accepting both the diversity within their own traditions as well as the fact that there are other credi-

ble faith perspectives that are worthy of study and understanding. Both of these assumptions (overall rejection and uncriti-

cal acceptance) are rooted in a narrowly defined representation of religion that is both simplistic and dangerous.

MOORE: From p.11

The Need for the Academic Study of Religion in the Schools

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barricaded himself and his two small children in his house, claiming that it was also his church, and refusing access to officers who wanted to foreclose on the property because of his refusal to pay taxes. Every 15 minutes we stopped the action and asked for comments and questions from scholars in the audience. AAR members had plenty of suggestions for how their expertise could be useful—some of which the FBI accepted. The committee has sponsored three related special topics forums: a presentation by a former FBI crisis negotiator and the formerly violent religious adherent he negotiated with; a panel entitled “How Religion Matters in Crisis Situations,” which included perspectives from a journalist, two religious studies scholars, and two FBI officials. At present, we are considering new venues for our interest in bringing together scholars of religion with law enforcement. Perhaps corrections officers, or child protection workers, will be our next focus.

The committee also initiated a Religious Studies New column called “In the Public Interest,” identifying topics and recruiting guest editors. Topics have included important Supreme Court decisions, the flap over assigning part of the Koran as required freshman orientation reading at UNC, and the role of religion in the debate over embryonic stem cell research. Davis: The work of this committee has been especially gratifying to me because it brings together my two disciplines: religion and law. Also, because I teach in a law school rather than in a religion department, being active in AAR is a wonderful way of remaining close to what I consider my home discipline.

RSN: What would you say to someone interested in your committee?

Davis: It’s a fair amount of work, but it really helps one to understand and influence the shape of the Annual Meeting and of the entire organization.

MEMBERSHIP FORM
2004 Calendar Year
You may also establish your membership online at www.aarweb.org/membership

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City: _________________________________ State/Province:___________

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Current Institutional Affiliation (if any):

CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION
If any, please indicate name of institution

[ ] Student: I am including a copy of my current valid student ID and I have not been a student member for 7 or more years.

[ ] Retired: I am 65 or older and I am retired from full-time employment.

[ ] SBL Member: I am also a current member of the Society of Biblical Literature. SBL dues must be paid separately to SBL.

Annual Income (in U.S. Dollars) AAR Standard AAR Retired AAR Member Discount

$90,000 or More $145 $116 $116 $93

$80,000 – $89,999 $135 $108 $108 $86

$70,000 – $79,999 $125 $100 $100 $80

$60,000 – $69,999 $110 $88 $88 $70

$50,000 – $59,999 $95 $76 $76 $61

$42,000 – $49,999 $80 $64 $64 $51

$38,000 – $41,999 $70 $56 $56 $45

$34,000 – $37,999 $65 $52 $52 $42

$30,000 – $33,999 $60 $48 $48 $38

$26,000 – $29,999 $55 $44 $44 $35

$22,000 – $25,999 $50 $40 $40 $32

$20,000 or Less $40 $32 $32 $26

Student: $25 n/a n/a n/a

Annual Fund Contribution

Membership Dues

Non-U.S. Postage (add $10)

Annual Fund Contribution

TOTAL DUE

PAYMENT DUE
Circle the appropriate dues category in the chart to the left and enter the amount owed in the space provided below. Non-U.S. residents must include an additional $10 for postage.

Calendar Year 2004

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Non-U.S. Postage (add $10)

Annual Fund Contribution

TOTAL DUE

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Please fill in the demographic information below (optional). This is for AAR aggregate statistical use only.

Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female

Citizenship: [ ] U.S. [ ] Canada [ ] Other (specify): ______________ Year of Birth: ______________

Ethnic Background: [ ] Asian or Pacific Islander [ ] Black, Not Hispanic [ ] Native American or Native Alaska [ ] Hispanic [ ] White, Not Hispanic [ ] Other: ______________

Return to: AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION 825 HOUSTON MILL ROAD, SUITE 300 • ATLANTA, GA 30329-4205, USA TELEPHONE 404-727-3049 • FAX 404-727-7959 • E-MAIL aar@aarweb.org www.aarweb.org

RSN: What contributions have different members made?

Davis: One of the great things about the committee is the diverse backgrounds of our members. Laura Olson is a political scientist; she was instrumental in organizing our 2003 Special Topics Forum, “Religion in the 2004 Election.” Judy Buddenbaum is a professor of journalism; Debra Mason is executive director of the Religion Newswriters Association. Gene Gallagher, a former member of the committee, has continued to play a pivotal role in planning fora with the FBI.

RSN: Committee work can be demanding. What makes you willing to give so freely of your time and talent? How has this work been fulfilling in scholarly or professional ways, for instance?
This data is in part shaped by a set of choic- es offered to the responding institutions, so in part reflects preconceived rubrics. As with the responding institutions, the resulting tabulated list is initially bewildering but the sheer number and variety of the responses requires more interpretation. Table III, which I constructed from Table II, offers one set of rubrics to organize the data.

Approximately three-fifths of the reported doctoral students in these programs pursue graduate study in some aspect of the Christian tradition, and four-fifths do so if one includes what I here designate as the "applied" fields. The six largest sets identify a concentration in an aspect of Christianity (New Testament/Christian Origins; Theology; Constructive; History; Old Testament/Hebrew Bible; Theology; Ethics). No other religious tradition in the survey differentiates, and Christianity does so in profusion. It is also present in several cohorts in the "method" rubric, and in at least one of the "non-Christian traditions/regionally organized." The "applied" section outnumbered the "meth- ods" and "non-Christian traditions/ regionally organized" sections. In short, these responses organize decisively around the Christian tradition.

This point merits further discussion, but some preliminary observations can be made. First, to understand the place of Christianity in graduate education, one crucial question concerns how it is taught. Taking the most prominently featured area of concentration, New Testament/Christian Origins, for example, it suggests that the answer may vary substantially. Vists to Web sites of the responding institutions reveal a range of programmatic emphases (and combinations of them) in this concentration: historical-critical, history of interpretation, literary criticism, history of religions, deconstructive/critical-theoretical. The graduate survey raises crucially for us the question of how religion is taught in graduate programs. This data is all the more striking in the con- text of the recent decisions by the AAR to hold its annual meetings apart from the Society of Biblical Literature. On this survey's accounting, at least, study of Christianity is a central component of graduate educa- tion in religion in the United States. The undergraduate survey correlates substantially with this emphasis. The ensuing division of these professional societies will not reflect the wider professional practice in the profes- sionaries to whom we aspire to speak.

Conclusions

The common challenge presented by these relatively straightforward Tables might be described as the difficult relationship between what is studied and what is taught. Taking the most prominently featured area of concentration: that these emphases are present in an undergraduate survey is studied, but whether the survey fully captures the range and idiosyncrasy of prac- tice is dubious. This is not to fault an important survey, but to say that the first general step it invokes is the standard one of the refinement and reformulation of its cat- egories of analysis on the basis of generated data. I am here suggesting that such a process will raise immediately a set of diffi- cult yet crucial questions: about the place of Christianity in the study of religion, about the complex interaction of constructive, historical, and human scientific approaches to the study of religion, and about the very broad institutional/departmental that our work embraces. All that redounds, I want to sug- gest, to the glory of our work and testifies to the complex phenomena that is religion; and it would be a shame not to pursue the groundwork established here because it rais- es such fundamental and complex matters.

Correlative analysis with the undergraduate survey also will be a crucial next step. There are a set of important, and preliminarily revealing, specific questions to ask. For example, follow up on the dis- cussion of areas of concentration above: are the graduate programs in New Testament/Christian Origins training the faculty who are actually teaching all the undergraduate biblical studies? To what degree do the schema of disciplinary train- ing reflected in graduate programs in bibli- cal studies "map onto" the undergraduate curricula? Such specific answers will help us in beginning to address the much larger, equally fascinating question of the degree to which graduate programs really shape undergraduate education in religion.

A third consideration for current and future reflection concerns the places in which reli- gion is taught. This survey and its counter- part on undergraduates together teach us a great deal about where religion is formally taught and how it is taught. But what everyone who teaches in a liberal arts or university context must consider is: How is it taught? that religion is taught elsewhere too, and that such work not only influences our students but sometimes constitutes it. More understanding of the roles of com- mon values of interdisciplinarity, formal and otherwise, would be a tremendous boon to our understanding.

All of this is only possible, however, because of the work that has been done. All of us who teach and study in the field of religion are now invited to measure the degree to which our work is effective. Our debt to the AAR will perhaps be paid if in the years ahead we press, prod, and massage what is here to learn more fully what it means. To that end, this survey deserves the widest possible dissemination, includ- ing established professionals and graduate students, the latter of whom can learn much for their own professional formation and training from it. All who do engage it surely shall be grateful to the AAR for an initiative of great import and considerable long-term potential.

Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Non-Christian Traditions/ Regionally Organized</th>
<th>Applied Christianity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,876</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosphy of Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture and Theory</td>
<td>(56)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>History of Relics/ Comp. Religions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Scientific Studies</td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics and Religion</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Religion and Modernity</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>(127)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism, Japanese, East Asian Religions</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Hinduism, South Asian Religions</td>
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Jonathan E. Brockopp, Pennsylvania State University (Study of Islam Section)
Rudiger V. Busta, University of California, Santa Barbara (Latin/o American Religion, Culture, and Society Group)
Sarah Caldwell, Holliston, MA (Hispanic Group)
David Daniels, McCormick Theological Seminary (Afro-American Religious History Group)
Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Yale University (Religious Theology and History Group)
Harvey Hill, Berry College (Modern Historical Consciousness and the Christian Churches Seminar)
Barbara A. Holdenga, University of California, Santa Barbara (Comparative Studies in Hinduisms and Jainsisms Group)
Suzanne Holland, University of Payer Sound (Bioethics and Religion Group)
Christopher Ives, Stonehill College (Japanese Religious Group)
Jane Namju Iwamura, University of Southern California (Asian North American Religion, Culture, and Society Group)
Sarah Iles Johnston, Ohio State University (European and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity Group)
Zayan Kassam, Pomona College (Study of Islam Section)
Thomas P. Kasulski, Ohio State University (Philosophy of Religion Section)
Bockja Kim, Hong Kong University (Korean Religious Group)
Lois Lorestren, University of San Francisco (Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group)
Michael M. Mendola, Pacific School of Religion (Bioethics and Religion Group)
Randall Nadeau, Trinity University (Chinese Religious Group)
Scott Noegel, University of Washington (Relics and Sacred Territory [Space] Consultation)
Stephanie Paulsell, Harvard University (Christian Spirituality Group)
Tracy Pintchman, Loyola University, Chicago (Hispanic Group)
Jeffrey C. Pugh, Elon University (Bonhoeffer: Theology and Social Change; Philosophy of Religion)
Rubina Ramji, University of Ottawa (Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group)
Jennifer Rycenga, San José State University (Lesbian-Feminist Issues and Religion Group)
Andrea Smith, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (Native Traditions in the Americas Group)
Bron Taylor, University of Florida (Religion and Ecology Group)
Anne Thayer, Lancaster Theological Seminary (History of Christianity Section)
Brannon M. Wheeler, University of Washington (Relics and Sacred Territory [Space] Consultation)
Midway through the conference, participants attended a gala dinner on the Emory University campus. After dinner the Atlanta Community Chorus led by Dwight Andrews (Emory University) performed. On the bus ride back to the hotel from campus, participants serendipitously heard the bus driver with the chorus’s closing gospel hymn.

During the conference, co-directors Sheila Davaney (Stiff School of Theology) and Gary Laderman (Emory University), along with a few conferees, conducted a plenary interview with media representatives. The Associated Press picked up the story about the conference as a result.

Immediately following the conference, the majority of conferees participated in the AAR Annual Meeting. JAAR sponsored a special topics forum entitled “Contesting Religions: Prospects and Perils in a Global Context.” Well over 100 attendees crowded into the room to participate in the conversation, further expanding the conference’s reach.

For more than ten years, the AAR has included international connections and public outreach among its primary goals. Emerging aware that the battle lines for pros- trating religious flourishing, that standard must be (and is) constructed by different human communities and institutions.

Yu: What are your ideas about the current and future condition of the humanities?

RSN: The humanities are intellectually vibrant, and there’s been accomplished with financial resources that would be considered “decoupled dust” in other domains. I would not have taken on this new position if I were not optimistic about the future, but as always that will only recently learned German and knew very little about German literature, but I thought she was terrific. She was Christa Saas, who was an assistant professor of German literature at Harvard (now at Toronto, I think) when I was an undergraduate. I took a course on German poetry (Rilke, Trakl, and Benn) as a junior who kindled my love of the classics. I was extremely small (two undergraduates, two graduates), and I was terrified most of the time because I’d only recently learned German and knew very little about German literature, but I thought she was terrific. She was my senior thesis advisor, though I even thought I eventually went on to focus on classical Chinese poetry in graduate school, she was the person who set me on that path.

Yu: What kind of moral or ethical concerns have been the most influential in your intellectual life?

RSN: What are your ideas about the current and future condition of the humanities?

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sin,” and “no idea of rewards in the next world for good works.” And Mary Douglas flippily asserted that there is no “inherent relation between religion and morality.” There are primitives who can be religious without being moral and moral without being religious.”

Tylor’s observation that not all religions support the moral order always should have been obvious to anyone familiar with Greek and Roman mythology. The Greco-Roman Gods were quite morally deficient. They were thought to do terri- ble things to one another and to humans as well —- sometimes merely for amusement. And while they were quite apt to do wicked things to humans if they failed to propitiate them, the Gods had no interest in anything (waxed or otherwise) humans might do to one another. Instead, the Greek and Roman Gods concerned themselves only with direct affronts.

For example, no religious sanctions were incurred by young women engaged in pre-marital sex unless they immersed themselves in sacred waters reserved for virgins. Because Aristotle taught that the Gods were incapable of caring about mere humans, he could not have concurred that religion serves the function of sustaining and legitimating the moral order. Indeed, classical philosophers would have ridiculed such a proposition as peculiar to Jews and Christians — and they would have been correct. The proposition about the moral func- tions of religion requires a particular conception of supernatural beings as deeply concerned about the behavior of humans toward one another. Such a conception of the Gods is found in many of the major world faiths, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. But it appears to be largely lacking in the supernatura- tal conceptions prevalent in much of Asia and in animism and folk religions generally.

It would seem to follow, therefore, that the moral behavior of individuals would be influ- enced by their religious commitments only in societies where the dominant religious organiza- tions give clear and consistent expression to divine moral imperatives. Thus, for example, when proper survey data are available, they should show that those who frequented the temples in Greco-Roman times were no more observant of the prevailing moral codes than were those who were lax in their religious practice. As Tylor pointed out, that is not to suggest that societies in antiquity lacked moral codes, but only that they were not predicated on religious founda- tions. It follows that the moral effectiveness of religions varies according to the moral engage- ment of their Gods.

Unconscious divine essences are unable to issue commandments or make moral judgments. Thus, conceptions of the supernatural are irrele- vant to the moral order unless they are beings — things having consciousness and desires. Put another way, only beings can desire moral con- formity. Even that is not sufficient. Gods can lend sanctions to the moral order only if they are concerned about, informed about, and act on behalf of humans. Moreover, to preserve virtue among humans, Gods must be virtuous — they must favor good over evil. Finally, Gods will be effective in sustaining moral precepts, the greater their scope — that is, the greater the diversity of their powers and the range of their influence. All-powerful, all-seeing Gods ruling the entire universe are the ultimate deterrent.

Two conclusions follow from this discussion. First, conceptions of religiousness on individual morality are contingent on images of Gods as conscious, morally concerned beings; religious- ness based on immanent or amoral Gods will not influence moral choices. Second, participa- tion in religious rites and rituals will have little or no independent effect on morality.

Recently, I conducted an elaborate research study to test these conclusions, based on data for the United States and 35 other nations. The results were consistent and overwhelmingly supportive.

In each of 27 nations within Christendom, the greater the importance people placed on God, the less likely they were to approve of buying goods they knew to be stolen, of someone failing to report that they had accidentally hit a pedestrian in a parking lot, or of using marijuana. The correlations were high in Protestant and in Roman Catholic nations and where average lev- els of church attendance were high or low. Indeed, participation in Sunday services (a meas- ure of ritual activity) was only weakly related to moral attitudes, and those correlations disap- peared or became very small when the God “effects” were removed through regression analy- sis. That is, God matters; ritual doesn’t.

The findings are similar for Muslim nations, where the importance placed on God is very strongly correlated with morality, but mosque attendance is of no significance. In India, too, concern for the Gods matters, but temple attend- ance has no detectable effect on morality. But in Japan, where the Gods are conceived of as many, small, and not particularly interested in human moral behavior, ritual activity is important to moral outlooks — concern about the God(s), visits to temples, prayer and meditation, all are without any moral effects.

Nor are there God or temple effects on morality in China. However, in China prayer does mat- ter, but in the wrong direction! That is, the more often they pray, the more tolerant the Chinese are of immorality. I suggest that result is due to the fact that, in China, “prayer” seldom implies a longstanding, deeply felt relationship with a God, but merely involves requests for favors from various deities of small scope. As such, praying tends to reflect a quite self-centered, self-serving activity, consistent with rapidly shift- ing from one God to another on the basis of results, or even taking a stick to the statue of a God who fails. Seen in that light, a question about prayer is likely to select those somewhat lacking in terms of a social conscience.

My results show that, and of themselves, rites and rituals have little or no impact on the major effect universally attributed to religion — moral con- formity to the moral order. Thus, it seems neces- sary to attend to the “law” linking religion and morality as follows: Images of Gods as conscious, powerful, morally concerned beings function to sustain the moral order.

Clearly, Durkheim made a major error when he dismissed Gods as mere religious epiphenomena. Unfortunately, his error had severe, widespread, and long-lasting consequences, for it became the exclusive sociological view that reli- gion consists of rites and ritual, and that those exist only because their latest functions is to inte- grate societies and to thereby lend sacred sanc- tions to the norms. In retrospect, it seems remarkable that such a notion gained such rapid acceptance and went unchallenged for so long. Stripped of its functionalist jargon, the basic argument seems to have been that, since “we” know there are no Gods, they can’t be the real object of religion — the trauma that things are real to the extent that people define them as real failed to make any headway in this area of social science.

So then, let us finally be done with the claim that religion is all about God. God is not the moral feature of religions. That holds even for Godless religions, their lack of Gods explaining the inability of such faiths to attract substantial fol- lowings. Moreover, it was not the “winds of the East” that gave rise to science, nor did Zen medi- tation turn people’s hearts against slavery. By the same, the effects of science was not the work of Western secularists or even deists; it was entirely the work of devout believers in an active, conscious, creator God. And it was faith in the goodness of that same God and in the mission of Jesus that led other devout Christians to end slavery first in medieval Europe and then again in the New World.

In those ways at least, Western civilization really was God-given.