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2007 Member Calendar

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

October

Religious Studies News October issue.
Spotlight on Teaching Fall issue.
October 1–31. AAR officer election period.
Candidate profiles will be published in the October RSN and online.
October 15. Excellence in Teaching award nominations due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/award/teaching_awards.
October 22. EIS preregistration closes.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.
November 15. Executive Committee meeting, San Diego, CA.
November 16. Fall Board of Directors meeting, San Diego, CA.
November 16. Leadership Workshop at the Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

November 19. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. See the Program Book for time.

December

December 1. New program unit proposals due.
December 7–8. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for their Calls for Papers. See www.aarweb.org/About_AARRegions.

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/onlinefield/submit1.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/submit1.asp.

And keep in mind throughout the year…

Periodical postage paid at Atlanta, GA.

Religious Studies News is the newspaper of record for the field especially designed to serve the professional needs of persons involved in teaching and scholarship in religion (broadly construed to include religious studies, theology, and sacred texts). Published quarterly by the American Academy of Religion, RSN is received by some 11,000 scholars and by libraries at colleges and universities across North America and abroad. Religious Studies News communicates the important events of the field and related areas. It provides a forum for members and others to examine critical issues in education, pedagogy (especially through the biannual Spotlight on Teaching), research, publishing, and the public understanding of religion. It also publishes news about the services and programs of the AAR and other organizations, including employment services and registration information for the AAR Annual Meeting.

For writing and advertising guidelines, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.
Dear Readers,

As we approach the Annual Meeting, we find ourselves in very busy times as reflected by this large October issue of RSN. October always brings news of and about the Annual Meeting, this year in San Diego. Registration forms, what to do, and features on the international focus on China are all inside. Additionally, don’t forget to vote in our elections — the deadline is November 1. As always, we have a solid slate of candidates, but please let your voice be heard and vote on the future volunteer leadership of the AAR.

In Focus, we examine the complexities of “The Religion Major and Liberal Education.” Supported by a Teagle Foundation grant, a working group has organized and is taking steps to eventually craft a “white paper” on the topic. This section discusses the project, and encourages all AAR members to get involved. There are so many contexts from which we all work — public or private institutions, large state flagships, small liberal arts colleges, departments, combined departments, programs within other departments, etc. — that we need to hear from you. At the Annual Meeting there are two opportunities for extended conversation — one is the leadership workshop on Friday, November 16, and another is a wildcard session scheduled for 1 PM Saturday, November 17.

A pioneer in the field, Letty Russell, died recently; President-elect Emilie Townes offers a wonderful tribute in a beautifully written piece. Also in this issue is a Spotlight on Teaching titled “Diversifying Knowledge Production: The Other within Christianity.” Spotlight guest editor is Zayn Kassam, who has produced for us an important issue written by a variety of learned authors. This marks the last issue for which I will serve as executive editor and Shelly Roberts will serve as editor. We have enjoyed the opportunity to serve the Academy in this capacity. Carey Gifford and Stephanie Gray will assume our responsibilities. I hope you will submit any thoughts, letters to the editor, comments, and criticisms concerning Religious Studies News to Gifford at cgifford@aarweb.org.

Kyle Cole
Executive Editor, Religious Studies News

FROM THE EDITOR

AAR Officer Elections

A Message from the AAR Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is pleased to place six excellent names on the ballot this year for Vice President, Secretary, and Student Director. We are grateful to all of them for their willingness to serve the Academy in this way.

Once again, AAR members will be able to vote by electronic ballot. A paper ballot will be mailed to members whose e-mail addresses are not on file. Please know that we guarantee the privacy of your vote.

We expect a large number of our members to vote in this election. Please be among them.

Hans Hillerbrand, Chair
Nominations Committee

Call for Nominations

The Nominations Committee will continue its practice of consultations during the Annual Meeting in San Diego, California, to begin the process for selecting nominees for Vice President to take office in November 2008. The committee takes seriously all recommendations by AAR members.

The following characteristics regularly surface in discussions of candidates for Vice President:

(a) Scholarship: “represents the mind of the Academy,” “international reputation,” “breadth of knowledge of the field,” widely known.

(b) Service to the Academy: “serves the Academy broadly conceived,” “gives papers regularly,” “leads sections,” “chairs committees,” “supports regional work.”

(c) General: “electable,” “one the average member of the Academy will look upon with respect,” “one whose scholarship and manner is inclusive rather than narrow, sectarian, and/or exclusive.”

How to Vote

All members of the Academy are entitled to vote for all offices. The elected candidates will take office at the end of the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Please vote online at www.aarweb.org. Paper ballots are sent only to those without e-mail addresses on file or by special request (please call 404-727-3049). Vote by November 1, 2007, to exercise this important membership right.

Vice President

The Vice President serves on the Executive and Program Committees, as well as on the Board of Directors. She will be in line to be confirmed President-Elect in 2008 and President in 2009. During her tenure, the Vice President will have the opportunity to affect AAR policy in powerful ways; in particular, during the presidential year, the incumbent makes all appointments of members to openings on committees.

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for recording and verifying the official records of the meetings of the members, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. The Secretary serves a three-year term and is eligible for reelection to one additional three-year term.

Student Director

The Student Director is a member of the Board of Directors, representing the particular concerns and issues of AAR student members at large. In addition, the Student Director works with the Student Liaison Group and Graduate Student Committee.

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I am excited by the possibility of serving as the Secretary of the AAR. Following is an overview of how I might fit that position.

Some of the traditional secretarial responsibilities are certainly part of the job description, i.e., accurately recording what is said in the Board meetings and in some of our Standing Committees. Having had two long terms as secretary in other academic organizations, I would welcome this responsibility. I find the role of secretary in some ways to be remarkably similar to my academic research, e.g., discerning what Matthew was about. At some point in my life, or at least at some point in my teaching career, I have frequently had to discern what Matthew was about, or what Foucault wrote about sex, or what Sibhs tell me about the function of language in our day-to-day interactions. I love the challenge of understanding something and describing it; moreover, I find that the more experience I have, the better able I am to understand different points of view, even those of people whose points of view are contrary to mine. In the case of the AAR, I see my role as that of a member of a group of people who, like me, are engaged in teaching and research, and who share a commitment to the field of religious studies.

As a trained biblical scholar, I have long been interested in the religious life of the people of the Middle East. I have recently done fieldwork on that topic in India, Cuba, and the Middle East, and this past summer I was in Indonesia. In addition, like many of you, I am passionate about teaching, which includes learning with and from students, and from experts in instructional development. My current project is to work with my colleagues on embedding a teaching stream into our institution’s doctoral program that would coherently integrate “teaching” and “research” throughout the four-year program.

The newly constituted Board has many lengthy discussions concerning how to represent the voices of both humanists and social scientists, lobby the federal and provincial governments effectively, and manage the complex fiscal matters that are now attended by over 8,000 delegates from nearly 70 academic societies. In addition to capturing and recording information, the AAR Secretary also contributes to committee discussions and will work closely with John Fitzmier, our new executive director. To make an informed choice in this election, you need to know a bit more about other matters that are dear to my heart.

I am actively engaged in both research and teaching. Trained as a biblical scholar, I have long been interested in anything and everything that sheds light on the human construction of religion. Currently I am keenly interested in finding ways to make sense of the ways in which food contributes to people’s religious lives. I have recently done fieldwork on that topic in India, Cuba, and the Middle East, and this past summer I was in Indonesia. In addition, like many of you, I am passionate about teaching, which includes learning with and from students, and from experts in instructional development. My current project is to work with my colleagues on embedding a teaching stream into our institution’s doctoral program that would coherently integrate “teaching” and “research” throughout the four-year program.

The AAR is also dear to my heart, and it would be an honor to serve this society as its secretary.
Statement on the AAR

The AAR STANDS at a momentous point in its history. The study of religion is more relevant than ever today. Every major issue confronting our world is deeply intertwined with religious beliefs, practices, histories, and communities. Moreover, the AAR is about to embark upon its most significant new direction since its founding — an independent Annual Meeting — which signals a new identity for the Academy. The role of elected officers will be crucial as the Academy makes these transitions and positions the AAR to play a greater role in the study of religion. There are many areas that require strong leadership today. In particular, I will focus my attention on the following issues:

I. The Annual Meeting

The move to an independent meeting offers the AAR new possibilities. It also presents the following challenges:

1. Finances. The independent meeting will introduce new uncertainties concerning AAR finances. The AAR’s elected leadership must work with the staff and Board to respond to these financial realities through predictive actions such as diversification of membership, foundations, publishers, etc. The financial well-being of the Academy remains the primary responsibility of its leaders.

2. Programming. An independent meeting provides expanding program options, a more workable size, and the potential for new conversations. The most important task will be to ensure that our new meetings are the most exciting and efficient possible. Central ways that presidents can contribute to this include appointing broadly representative committees, clear communication about emerging opportunities, and cultivation of cross-disciplinary conversations concerning broad shifts in the study of religion.

3. Collaboration with other scholarly organizations. While not meeting annually with SBL, we nonetheless need to repair relationships with our long-term scholarly partner. Importantly, there is also now an opportunity to build closer institutional relations with other scholarly organizations including SSR, MESA, and IHST.

II. Centennial Strategic Initiatives

The AAR has adopted a Centennial Plan to chart its priorities from 2004–2009. I would devote particular attention to enhancing the internationalization efforts of the AAR and supporting the increased diversification of the Academy, especially in leadership roles.

As Director of the AAR Project on “The Study of Religion in a Global Context,” the importance of greater international participation in AAR meetings, increased scholarly exchanges, and deeper intercultural engagement became ever clearer to me. The work of the International Connections Committee deserves strong support if the AAR is to continue to be a world leader in the study of religion. We must engage international scholars and seek funds for extending our efforts in this area.

I am also deeply committed to the strategic initiative of diversifying AAR leadership. The leadership of the Academy has become more diverse in the last two decades. But the Board and leadership remain less than fully representative of the Academy as a whole. I am committed to broadening such representation both through appointments to committees and in working to increase the diversity of new scholars.

III. Transparency

There have been strong reactions, both positive and negative, to the move to an independent meeting. But no matter where we come out on the decision, most members have been confused about how it was made. We must implement transparent processes that include the input of our constituencies and model democratic discussions and decision making.

IV. Public Outreach

The study of religion has never been more important than now. It is imperative that we seek ways to disseminate and make available our knowledge produced by our members in ever more accessible and publicly effective ways. The public outreach of the Academy should be a central priority in the coming years.

Statement on the AAR

The AAR and the study of religion are in transition in several ways. As an organization, we are still working through the logistical and administrative effects of the decision to meet independently of the SBL. As a discipline, we have been engaged in several decades of serious self-critique, and there are signs of interest in rebuilding in new ways. While religion has arguably been of continuing interest to the general public, it is now a topic of renewed interest throughout the academy, on both ends of the political spectrum, and in the media.

In light of these transitions, my aims would be as follows:

1. To work with the Board and executive director on unresolved issues of governance and logistics that emerged in the wake of the decision to meet independently of the SBL. As the current president has indicated, there are a number of practical matters having to do with meeting dates, rates, and locations, and whether or how often meetings should be coordinated with the SBL that still have to be worked out. I support the current president’s interest in considering how the AAR compares with similar organizations in terms of governance, particularly as it relates to input from the membership regarding major decisions. I would want to work with the Board and executive director to ensure continuity in working out these issues as thoughtfully and responsibly as possible.

2. To foster conversations within the discipline that look forward in light of decades of diversification and internal critique and do so while building stronger relations with other disciplines, especially in the social and natural sciences. We have made tremendous strides in terms of making the AAR more inclusive and more globally aware. While our ties to cultural studies and some of the social sciences are strong, our ties to the natural sciences are comparatively weak. Scientific advances in cosmology, evolutionary theory, and especially brain research, are regularly discussed in the media and excite widespread public interest.

While the growth of science and religion studies in recent years has been truly astounding, relatively little of this work is presented at the AAR. Foundations have been funding research and conferences; popular books — often by scholars without training in religious studies — have been garnering public attention. In the context of the AAR, however, we have not critically engaged this work as fully as we might, either in terms of plenary speakers, program units, or initiatives that would increase our familiarity with the natural sciences. This is an area of study that the AAR needs to engage more fully if we want to stay on the cutting edge of scholarly and influence broader social trends and policy decisions arising out of research in this area.

I would bring considerable familiarity with disparate groups within the AAR to these tasks. Having taught in a theological school associated with a cluster of liberal arts colleges and a private graduate university for over 20 years before moving to a religious studies department in a public university, I have first-hand experience of the spectrum of institutions in which we are employed. I have served the AAR in a number of capacities over the past 25 years, including section co-chair, unit steering committees, AAR committee work, and unit reviews. I have been involved with various ATS (Association of Theological Schools) initiatives and have served or am serving on the executive committees of smaller organizations associated with the study of religion, such as the LACSR (International Society for Cognitive Science and Religion).
Candidates for Student Director

Annie Blakeney-Glazer

Annie Blakeney-Glazer is a doctoral candidate in Religion and Culture at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She received a BA in English from Michigan State University (2001) and an MA from UNC in Religion and Culture (2004). Her Master’s thesis investigated how the works of Dusen and Guattari might assist Foucauldian investigations of religious phenomena. Annie has served as AAR student liaison for the past two years. While holding this position, she organized information sessions for entering graduate students, conference paper proposal workshops, and mock presentations. She has presented papers at AAR national and regional conferences, as well as Popular Culture conferences. At UNC, Annie held several teaching and research positions, most recently teaching a course entitled “Introduction to Religion and Culture: American Evangelicals and Sports in the 20th Century.” She is currently writing a dissertation on this topic, exploring Christian athletic organizations in post-World War II America. Her project focuses on gender as an important evangelical and sporting category and queries the relationship between conservative Christian gender logic and the growing presence of evangelical Christian sportswomen in the male-dominated athletic world.

Statement on the AAR

For their first assignment in my class last semester, I asked my students to attend a sporting event and look for religion. Their findings were as diverse as the competing definitions of religion developed by scholars. Some pointed to bodily practices like kneeling in prayer, pointing up after a score, or making the sign of a cross as evidence of religious devotion. Some highlighted the blurring of religious training in ethics and moral character-building enterprises that resemble religious training in ethics and morality. This small example demonstrates that today’s undergraduates are more than willing to connect religion and popular culture, and are increasingly adept at doing so. In my myriad conversations with students, I noticed that they do not see religion and culture as distinct entities but instead as interlocking and important methods of self-awareness.

How does this relate to the AAR? An important emphasis in recent scholarship and teaching is interdisciplinarity. We are encouraged, if not required, to be historians, anthropologists, cultural theorists, textual critics, sociologists, and more. And while interdisciplinarity can illuminate exciting connections and new avenues for study, it can also cause anxiety about disciplinary boundaries. Definitions of “religious studies” are vague and various, and students and faculty are likely to find their work more closely aligned with those in other departments than with those down the hall from them. What will religious studies look like in the future? How can the AAR both expand the boundaries of the field and preserve the security of our discipline?

During my two years as student liaison, I noticed graduate students in my department increasingly concerned with the state of the job market. The employment survey data in the March 2007 Religious Studies News caused considerable anxiety for those of us thinking of entering the job market in the coming years. This is something the AAR must address. Are religious studies departments producing more PhD candidates than the job market can handle? What can we do about this discrepancy? If the academy in general is becoming more interdisciplinary, how can the AAR encourage interdisciplinarity without losing its identity or blurring the boundaries of the field beyond recognition? I hope that in serving as student director, I will have an opportunity to foster discussion on these issues.

The AAR currently provides excellent resources for graduate students. For example, the Syllabus Project and Openings are great assets for students as they contemplate professionalization. The Syllabus Project demonstrates the diversity of the field and numerous opportunities within it for innovation. However, for many of us, Openings is a reminder that the field changes slowly and that traditional teachers are often in demand. The AAR, as the professional organization for scholars of religion, is in a position to address the challenges of pursuing a career in religious studies today.

As students comprise nearly 50 percent of AAR members, student interests are vital to the continued relevance of the AAR. In addition to job market anxieties, graduate students are concerned with the ethics of the interview process; how to keep up with researching, teaching, and publishing demands; adequately preparing for conference involvement; offsetting costs of conference attendance; and the particulars of negotiating a split AAR/SBL conference. As the researchers, teachers, publishers, clergy, administrators, and professionals of the future, graduate student anxieties arguably represent the field as whole, and their concerns must be taken seriously as the AAR continues to grow and change. Past student directors have done much to foreground these issues, and I hope to continue this important work.

Nichole Renee Phillips


Nichole has served as an AAR student liaison and as the GDR representative to the Student Committee on Personnel and Policy of Vanderbilt Divinity School. She holds memberships in the Pentecost, Culture, and Religion Group (PCB) of the AAR, the Society for Pastoral Theology, the Society for the Social Scientific Study of Religion, and others scholarly organizations. She has presented papers at regional meetings of the AAR and has held teaching fellowships and research assistantships. Her dissertation project continues the ethnographic research she conducted as a student participant of the “Religion and Politics” Project for Vanderbilt’s Center for the Study of Religion and Culture and will focus on measuring practices and death rituals in the West Tennessee community where she is presently doing fieldwork.

Statement on the AAR

In Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty, British pastoral theologian Elaine Graham (1996, 32) queries: Is postmodernity a successor phase to modernity; a collapse and negation of the project of modernity; or a critique and revision of modernism, drawing out ambivalences and contradictions present at the heart of Enlightenment thinking? Although I will not presently venture a response, Graham’s series of questions provoke me to consider features of the postmodern condition. Such characteristics have become fundamental to my vision of leadership in the twenty-first century, and the study of religion as well as the study of religion, and will focus on measuring practices and death rituals in the West Tennessee community where she is presently doing fieldwork.

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SAN DIEGO WAS RECENTLY RECOGNIZED AS THE NATION’S TOP CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS DESTINATION, PROMPTING THE SLOGAN “COME FOR THE CONVENTION, STAY FOR THE VACATION.”

Experience a taste of San Diego’s rich history— in more Plaza del Pasado in Old Town

Whether whiling away a whole day or just stepping out for Seaport Village

A trip to San Diego just isn’t complete unless you’ve combed the beautiful beaches. A perfect combination of fresh air and warm water, the gorgeous shores offer the ideal setting for surfing, kayaking, or soaking up the California sun. To find the perfect course, go to www.signonsandiego.com/sports/golfguide.

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Seaport Village

Whether whiling away a whole day or just stepping out for an hour, these 50-plus diverse shops and 17 unique eateries will more than satisfy. Alongside four miles of tree-lined, bayside paths you’ll find all sorts of entertainers doing their thing. Bands, singers, dancers, magicians, whatever. Come explore Seaport Village’s sprawling tropical grounds and find everything under the sun.

Gaslamp Quarter

The historic Gaslamp Quarter is the city’s hottest dining and entertainment center. Several city blocks feature a variety of restaurants serving everything from traditional steaks to eclectic ethnic fare, all just seconds away from the convention center.

San Diego Zoo

Long recognized as one of the best zoos in the United States, the San Diego Zoo features animals from around the globe. They have created numerous habitats housing tigers, sun bears, and apes, among many others. Don’t miss the new Monkey Trails and Forest Tails exhibit, a naturalistic home to more than 30 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. You’ll also want to visit the giant panda research station and the Polar Bear Plunge exhibit. The San Diego Zoo is open every day of the year, including all holidays.

San Diego Zoo’s Wild Animal Park

A visit to the Wild Animal Park is like magically stepping from the hustle and bustle of Southern California into the mysteries of exotic, faraway lands. Try the Journey into Africa Tour, designed to give you a glimpse of the amazing diversity found in Africa, the second largest continent on Earth. You’ll see eye to eye with wildlife and get a new appreciation for just how huge a rhinoceros or Cape buffalo is. Also consider the Kilimanjaro Safari Walk and the Hidden Jungle.

ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

Checklist for your arrival at the Annual Meeting

Mailing of the Annual Meeting badge materials to all preregistered attendees began in mid-September. Materials include your name badge and drink ticket. Contact Experient Registration & Housing at aarsreg@experient-inc.com if you did not receive your materials.

Third-tier (“regular”) registration rates go into effect on October 16, so register early to get the best rate.

November 17-20 is the Annual Meeting in San Diego! Check www.aarsweb.org/fbcomplan for up-to-date information about the meeting.

Annual Meeting Countdown

Important Dates

Name Badge Holders. If you received your name badge by mail, all you need to do is swing by the Registration area in the San Diego Convention Center to pick up a name badge holder. Then you are ready to attend sessions and visit the Exhibit Hall.

Onsite Registration. If you did not receive your badge materials or need to register, visit the AAR & SBL Meeting Registration counter.

Annual Meetings At-A-Glance. Pick up a copy of the Annual Meetings At-A-Glance booklet. This booklet shows the updated program and room locations for all sessions. Updates or changes will be marked by gray shading. This is an invaluable addition to your Program Book!

Book of Abstracts. Interested in a session’s topic? Want to learn more before heading to the session? Check out the Book of Abstracts, located in the bins near registration, for more information.

Tote Bag. Tote bag tickets were mailed with the name badge materials. Tote bags are available while supplies last.

Find-A-Friend. Visit the Find-A-Friend boards in the Registration area to find whether your colleagues are attending.

AAR Member Services. Visit the AAR Member Services desk if you have any other questions.

Enjoy the meeting!
Religious Studies in China started in the early twentieth century as the country began to seek ways to modernize. Thinkers and revolutionaries at that time introduced Western Enlightenment ideas into China and emphasized that getting rid of traditional culture, including religion, was a precondition for modernization. Religious studies in China therefore had a strong antireligious element from the beginning, as religious ideas were a target for revolutionaries. In order to criticize religion, they studied it, investigating and critiquing its nature and function. Furthermore, those inside China’s various religious traditions naturally began to produce new theologies in response to these attacks. Besides these two groups, there were also scholars like Tang Yonglong, Chen Yink, Chen Yuan, He Sheng, Wang Zhi, and Chen Guo, who were outside the radical movements focused on the study of scriptures, religious doctrines, and the history of China’s various religions. The main focus of their research tended to deal more with Buddhism and Daoism as these two faiths had the greatest impact on China. Their contributions were mainly in the fields of historical, textual, and evidential studies of religions.

Religious studies were almost wholly suspend- ed in China during the years 1949–1976. The only purpose of studying religion was to wipe it out. After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, all kinds of academic work became inseparably linked to the party, and were conducted under the guid- ance of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Many academic fields were viewed as having, and therefore contributing to, the party spirit. Academic studies became monistic and politi- cized.

In 1953, Mao Zedong issued an edict on reli- gious matters. He said that a critique of theologi- cal knowledge was essential to write global history, and to grasp the history of literature and philos- ophy. The positive effect of Mao’s instruction was that he recognized the historical impor- tance of religion, and this led to the creation of the Institute of World Religions at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It was China’s first professional institute for religious studies. The disadvantage, however, was that Mao stipulated religious studies must be guided by Marxism, in other words by atheism. The purpose of reli- gious research was to criticize.

Furthermore, due to the political pressures of the time, “criticism” lost its original meaning and became associated with catchphrases such as “absolute denial,” “three attacks,” and even “completely sweeping away.” Such critique of theology went beyond academic studies of the- ism and atheism, calling instead for a political movement to destroy religion. Scholarly critics stressed the need for the political overthrow of religion, which was, in Marx’s words, the “opium of the people”—an especially loaded phrase. During the Cultural Revolution there were no courses about religion in universities, no professional journals, and almost no new books on religion published. As an independ- ent discipline, religious studies withered in mainland China.

After the Cultural Revolution, also known as the “ten years of turmoil,” China restored the right to freedom of religious belief. Religious worship was once again permitted, albeit under officially approved religious bodies, and monks and nuns were able to resume an openly reli- gious life. In recent years, religious observance grew in popularity in Mainland China, partly due to the disorder of social values and crisis of belief wrought by the Cultural Revolution. The rebirth of China’s religions, and their rapid development, led to an urgent need to study them.

Under the new policies of reform and opening up to the outside world, the minds of religious scholars were equally freed, and open to facing up to their subject matter. These changes pro- vided the conditions for the recovery and development of religious studies in the 1980s. Chinese scholars no longer understood Marxist ideas of religion one-sidedly and dogmatically.

A reflection of the new mood can be found in the early 1980s debate on the meaning of Marx’s saying that “Religion is the opium of the people,” a debate that was jokingly called the Opium War. To grasp the supercharged nature of the subject for Chinese scholars, one need to remember it was China’s defeat in the two Opium Wars that forced the country open to foreign influence and led to its decline under pressure from the West and Japan. Questioning the appealing nature of opium was not easy, and the debate was a timid one, but nonetheless significant. Scholars attempt- ing to emerge from the ideological world of the Cultural Revolution put forward two different objections to the radical left stance. One group argued that such sayings by Marx shouldn’t be understood as his main point and lead to the absolute denial of religion. Regarding religion only as a drug meant that religious believers were different from drug dealers or drug addicts. If religion was equivalent to opium, it should be understood not just like a single drug, but as the ideological background for the radical left.

The second line of argument was that Marx did admit religion’s anesthetic function. It was that opium was seen in Europe as a medicine to relieve pain at the time when Marx wrote his famous phrase, so the drug had some posi- tive connotations back then. These scholars also held that the spiritual opium of religion did not need to be wiped out. The radical left stance had other ideological resources. Between the two sides, a lot of ink was spilled over the difference between harmful drug and pain- relieving drug. There are more positive connotations back then. These scholars also held that the spiritual opium of religion did not need to be wiped out. The radical left

Trilogy in a Century: Religious Studies in Mainland China

Chen Xia, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China

Chen Xia is a research fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. She teaches the course “The Search for China” for CIES Study Center at Central University for Nationalities. Her specialty is religions in China and Chinese philosophy. She has authored and co-authored several published books and contributed more than 40 papers to various journals. Her current projects include Daoism and Ecology, the History of Philosophical Daoism, and Laozi’s Political Philosophy.

Religious Studies in China

Religious studies were almost wholly suspend- ed in China during the years 1949–1976. The only purpose of studying religion was to wipe it out. After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, all kinds of academic work became inseparably linked to the party, and were conducted under the guidance of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Many academic fields were viewed as having, and therefore contributing to, the party spirit. Academic studies became monistic and politi- cized.

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Plenary Addresses

The Covenant with Black America

(A17–132)

Saturday, 7:45–9:00 AM

Tavis Smiley, Los Angeles, CA

From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, as a broadcaster, author, advocate, and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be an outstanding voice for change. Newsweek profiled him as one of the “20 people changing how Americans get their news” and dubbed him one of the nation’s “captains of the airwaves.” Smiley hosts the late-night television talk show Tavis Smiley on PBS and radio show The Tavis Smiley Show on Public Radio International, making him the first American ever to simultaneously host signature talk shows on both public television and public radio. He also created the Tavis Smiley Foundation, whose mission is to enlighten, encourage, and empower black youth, as well as Tavis Smiley Presents, a subsidiary of The Smiley Group, Inc., that brings ideas and people together through symposiums, seminars, forums, and town hall meetings. In addition, he has authored ten books and made publishing history when a book that he edited, The Covenant with Black America, became the first nonfiction book by a black-owned publisher to reach #1 on the New York Times bestseller list.

How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left (A18–402)

Sunday, 7:15–8:15 AM

Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University

Nicholas Wolterstorff received his BA from Calvin College in 1953 and his PhD in philosophy from Harvard University in 1956. Before taking up his current position as Noah Porter Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale, he taught for 30 years at his alma mater, Calvin College. After concentrating on metaphysics at the beginning of his career, he spent a good many years working primarily on aesthetics and philosophy of art. In more recent years, he has been concentrating on epistemology, philosophy of religion, and political philosophy. In fall 1993 he gave the Wilde Lectures at Oxford University, and in spring 1995 he gave the Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews University. He has been president of the American Philosophical Association (Central Division) and of the Society of Christian Philosophers.

Religious Mobilizations (A18–403–M18–125)

Sunday, 8:15–9:15 AM

Charles Taylor, Northwestern University, McGill University

Charles Taylor, Northwestern University and McGill University, is the 2007 Templeton Prize winner for his long-standing efforts to examine the role of spiritual thinking in modern society. His work is a standard in philosophy, theology, and the social sciences, and it provides a map of the central issues of debate in the historical development of the understanding of the self and the relations between the religious and the secular. Taylor argues against the idea that rational movements that began in the Enlightenment render morality and spirituality as anachronisms. Problems such as violence and bigotry can only be solved by considering their secular and spiritual dimensions, and wholly depending on secularized viewpoints leads to fragmented, faulty results. Taylor insists that a narrow, reductive sociological approach wrongly denies the full account of how and why humans strive for meaning. His latest book, A Secular Age, was published by Harvard University Press.

Kudos to Co-sponsors

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

College of New Jersey
Zhihua Yao, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Lafayette University
Yen-zen Tsai, National Chengchi University

Columbia University and the University of Chicago
Xin Yu, Fudan University

University of Pennsylvania
Xiang Chu, Sichuan University

Humboldt State University and Indiana University, Bloomington
Weichui Zhou, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Harvard University and Princeton University
Chunwen Hao, Capital Normal University
Leadership Workshop Examines Religion Major

The ACADEMIC RELATIONS Committee (ARC) is co-sponsoring a workshop at the AAR Annual Meeting in San Diego this year to address the relationship between the liberal arts and the religion major. The workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” is part of the two-year Teagle Foundation-funded project of the same name. The working group on the project, led by Timothy Renick of Georgia State University, is co-sponsoring the event with ARC.

The Friday, November 16 workshop will bring together a distinguished group of experts to lead a daylong and interactive discussion of the religion major. Through plenaries, panels, and breakout sections, participants will explore and share challenges, best practices, success stories, and failures.

“There are central questions that most of us face on a daily basis regarding the nature of the religion major, just what are we trying to accomplish and why?” Renick said. “Unfortunately, we rarely have time to pause and consider the answers. The workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to engage in an extended discussion about the religion major.”

Renick will lead the workshop and the committee has secured Stephen Prothero, chair of the Religion Department at Boston University, as keynote speaker.

Joining Renick and Prothero are Dena Pence, Executive Director of the Wabash Center, Richard Carp, Appalachian State University, and ARC member, and the members of the working group for the project. A preliminary agenda is printed below in the registration form.

Some of the topics on the agenda include the challenges to conceiving of and establishing a major in religion, the nature of the major amid different institutional contexts and missions, and the connection between the religion major and other departments and programs,” Renick said. “Clearly, there is no one right way to conceive of the religion major, but there is a lot that we can learn from each other. I hope that the workshop can provide a forum for this continuing discussion.

The cost for the workshop is $75, which includes the entire day of sessions and lunch.

This leadership workshop is one of two workshops the Academic Relations Committee approved for the 2007 Annual Meeting. A chairs workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations,” is also being offered.

LEADERS AND PANELISTS WILL INCLUDE:

Richard Carp, Interdisciplinary Studies, Appalachian State University
Dena Pence, Executive Director of the Wabash Center
Stephen Prothero, Chair of Religious Studies, Boston University, and author of Religious Literacy

PRELIMINARY AGENDA:

Introduction: Why Religious Studies?
Establishing the Religious Studies Major: Stories from the Trenches (interactive session)
Religious Studies across the Curriculums: The Interdisciplinary Nature of the Major (panel discussion)

The workshop will be of benefit to a range of participants: faculty, administrators, and graduate students. The goal is to bring a diverse group of AAR members together in a lively and open discussion about what it means to major in religion, what our field contributes (and should contribute) to the education of our students, and how we can be better at what we do.

New Program Units

Exciting sessions are on offer at the Annual Meeting by the following new program units.

Qur’an Group
The Qur’an and Interpretation (A17–317)
Saturday, 4:00–6:30 PM

The Qur’an and Cultural Translation (A19–225)
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM

Buddhism in the West Consultation
New Perspectives on Buddhist Modernism in the West (A17–324)
Saturday, 4:00–6:30 PM

Mormon Studies Consultation
Teaching Mormon Studies: Theory, Topics, and Texts (A17–227)
Saturday, 1:00–3:30 PM

North American Hinduism Consultation
Creating (and Sustaining) North American Hinduisms (A18–127)
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM

Hindu Texts in North American Contexts (A18–226)
Sunday, 1:00–2:30 PM
Co-sponsored by the Yoga in Theory and Practice Consultation

Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements Consultation
Monday, 1:00–3:30 PM

Research Sites, Opportunities, and Problems in Borderlands Pentecostalism (A17–122)
Saturday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Co-sponsored by the Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group

Religion and Cities Consultation
Religion in the Region of Urbanization and the Structure of Cities (A18–129)
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM

Religion and Migration Consultation
Creative Crossings: Religious Transmutations in Latin America and the Caribbean (A17–318)
Saturday, 4:00–6:30 PM
Co-sponsored by the Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean Group

Religion on the Move: Migration, Displacement, and Identity (A18–130)
Sunday, 9:00–11:30 AM

Space, Place, and Religious Meaning Consultation
Spatial Constructions of Religious Identity across World Traditions (A17–229)
Sunday, 1:00–3:30 PM
Sacred Space in South Asia: Sites of Vision, Sites of Experience (A20–124)
Tuesday, 9:00–11:30 AM
Co-sponsored by the Sacred Space in Asia Group

TO REGISTER

Complete the information below, arrange payment, and send via fax or surface mail. You can also register online as a part of the Annual Meeting registration process: www.aarweb.org/annualmeeting/2007.

Name
Department
Institution

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. Send your registration form and payment of $75.00 *** before October 31, 2007 ($100.00 after and onsite).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

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

☐ Credit Card (check one):

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

☐ Card Number ☐ Expiration Date

☐ CIP

☐ Cardholder Signature

Name on Card (Please Print)

* Card Identification Number (required for Discover cards) 4 digits on front of American Express. 3 digits on back of other cards

Register online (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/jumplam

Register by Fax: 330-963-0319

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

**Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations**

The Academic Relations Committee is co-sponsoring its chairs workshop with the Committee on the Status of Racial & Ethnic Minorities in the Profession during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego on Friday, November 16, 2007. The daylong workshop, “Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty — Honest Conversations,” will deal with issues of recruiting majors as well as recruiting and retaining faculty of color, and will feature several breakout sessions. Miguel A. De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology, will lead the workshop. The event is based upon the online AAR Career Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession, which will be printed and given to workshop participants.

“Many academic institutions lament the lack of diversity among student body and/or the faculty,” De La Torre said. “Here is an opportunity for chairs to discover the nuts and bolts on how to better diversify their institution, and the pitfalls to avoid when making such a commitment.”

The workshop will feature several speakers who’ve dealt with a variety of diversity opportunities and issues. Sharon Watson Fluker, vice president for doctoral programs and administration at the Fund for Theological Education; Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Brite Divinity School; Edwin Aponte, Lancaster Theological Seminary; and Fumitaka Matsuoka, Pacific School of Religion, are all scheduled to address attendees.

The workshop will then move to breakout sessions led by Aponte; De La Torre; Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary; and Akintunde Akinade, High Point University. The workshop will conclude with all speakers in conversation with the participants in a panel discussion.

Fred Glennon, chair of the Academic Relations Committee, said the committee was enthusiastic about co-sponsoring this important workshop with the Status of Racial & Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee.

“Recruiting and retaining racial and ethnic minority faculty is a concern for most departments, as is the need to recruit more racial and ethnic minority students into the discipline of religious studies,” Glennon said. “This workshop and the guide developed by CREM should prove to be an invaluable resource.”

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. The cost for the workshop is $75, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a printing of the Career Guide.

This chairs workshop is one of two workshops the Academic Relations Committee approved for the 2007 Annual Meeting. A leadership workshop, “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” was developed in response to the Teagle Foundation’s award for a two-year project to study that issue.

Wildcard Sessions

Wildcard sessions are one-time sessions proposed by individual AAR members on topics outside of the Annual Meeting program unit structure. This year, the AAR is pleased to add 14 wildcard sessions to our program.

Radical Life Extension: Implications for Eschatological Visions of the Religions (A17–202)

The Religion Major and Liberal Education (A17–230)

Restorative Justice and the U.S. Penal System (A18–201)

Islamic Apocalypses: Textual, Historical, and Methodological Considerations (A18–205)

The Holy Child: Traditions of the Infant and Child Jesus (A18–225)

The Place of the Practitioner in the Academy (A18–250)

Theological Readings of Economics (A18–251)

Horizons in Religious Studies: Theorizing Hip-Hop (A18–305)

Liberation Theologies at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Between Sex, Gender, Class, and Race (A18–306)

Martin Luther and the Lutheran Theological Tradition: Current Issues (A18–307)

Southeast Asia: Transforming Religion and Religious Identities (A18–308)

The Holy Child Jesus and Charism: Foundations and Evolutions of a Contemporary Tradition (A18–329)

Is Humanism a Dead Topic in the Study of Religion? (A19–302)

Religious and Theological Reflection upon Musical Meaning (A19–328)
Religious Studies News

Annual Meeting Performances, Exhibitions

THE AAR is showcasing the following performances and exhibitions during this year’s Annual Meeting.

Chinese Dancers (A18–405)
Sunday, 8:30–10:00 PM
Join us for an exciting evening featuring a Los Angeles Chinese folk dance troupe. Dancers will perform and information in the dances and their religious connotations will be available.

Golden States of Grace: Prayers of the Disenfranchised (A18–404)
Sunday, 8:30–10:00 PM
How do those on the margins of society find faith, sanctuary, and community? Through Golden States of Grace: Prayers of the Disenfranchised, a photo-documentary and traveling exhibit hailed by the Los Angeles Times as “a veritable United Nations of spirituality,” social documentarian Rick Nahmias sums up three years of work documenting 11 different marginalized groups, across 8 faith traditions. From the elderly to the executable, from sex workers to refugees of genocide, from the rural poor to recovering addicts, Golden States of Grace artfully looks at religion from the bottom up, smashing stereotypes and asking questions about who “belongs” in our society and houses of worship. Nahmias will present a multimedia program created exclusively for this event, combining images, audio, and music from the project, as well as insight into how the body of work came together logistically and creatively. There will be a question and answer period following the presentation. For more info please visit goldentestafgrace.com.

Religion on Display in San Diego

Daiot Ritual
AAR and SBL attendees are cordially invited to rare, public performances of Daiot ritual at San Diego State University. The performances, featuring Daiot priests from Taiwan, will draw from the Offering (iao) ritual for universal harmony and from the Pacifying the Dragon (anlong) rite for the establishment and dedication of sacred space.
Sunday, November 18 at 10 AM
(Offering ritual) and 2 PM (Pacifying the Dragon ritual), with public follow. Visitors welcome throughout the day. Scripps Cottage, San Diego State University (maps and directions at www.cal.sdsu.edu/contact/maps.Asd). From the Convention Center, take the Blue Line trolley northbound to Old Town, switching to the Green Line eastbound to SDSU (trolley map and schedule at www.sdcommuter.com/Rider_Information/trolley/trolleymap.asp). For more information, contact Julius Tsai, San Diego State University, 619-594-5185, jtsai@mail.sdsu.edu.

Maya: Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth
Discover the art and architecture of the ancient Maya people at the Museum of Man.
San Diego Museum of Man – Balboa Park, 1350 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101; 619-239-2501. Admission: $8 for adults, $6 for seniors/military w/ID; $4 for ages 6–17, kids under 6 and members free.

“Picturing Eden”
The contemporary artists featured in “Picturing Eden” examine the many facets of paradise, from a place of contemplation and restoration to a site of loneliness and despair. The exhibition is organized in four sections: Paradise Lost, Paradise Reconstructed, Despairing of Paradise, and Paradise Anew. By looking at the notion of paradise and the garden through the photographic lens, “Picturing Eden” highlights original lost innocence, the ongoing significance of a humanistic, culturally charged environment, and its place in the history of art.
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego Downtown, 1100 K Street, San Diego, CA 92101; 858-454-3541. Tues-Sun 10 AM–5:00 PM; Thu 10 AM–9:00 PM. Admission: $4–$6; children under 12 and military free.

Future AAR Annual Meeting Dates and Sites

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<td>2007</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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Please renew your membership now, and consider making an additional contribution to the AAR’s Academy Fund. Membership dues cover less than 30 percent of programs and services. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/renewal. Or contact us at TEL: 404-727-3049 E-MAIL: membership@aarweb.org. Please see the membership page, www.aarweb.org/membership.
Eating and Drinking in San Diego

**Price Guide (for average entrée):**
- $ = up to $10
- $ = $11–$20
- $$$ = $21–$30
- $$$ = $31 and over

### EATING

**Aqua Blue**
734 Fifth Ave
The sister restaurant of Bella Luna, Aqua Blue specializes in Pacific Rim cuisine and seafood with Asian influences. $$

**Bondi**
333 Fifth Ave
Bondi, a restaurant serving authentic Aussie cuisine and beer, is the creation of an Australian exchange student who wrote the business plan for the restaurant as a course assignment while studying in the United States. $$

**Cine Café**
412 K ST
A popular city café boasting made-to-order sandwiches and large cups of coffee. $

**Dussini Mediterranean Bistro**
275 Fifth Ave
An intimate steakhouse and Italian restaurant located on the site of the former Old Spaghetti Factory. $$

**Fillipi’s Pizza Grotto**
1747 India ST
A San Diego tradition for more than 50 years, family members of the restaurant’s original founders continue to serve Italian favorites at Fillipi’s Pizza Grotto. $$

**Greek Islands Café**
879 W. Harbor DR
A charming café on the water’s edge, Greek Islands Café tours outdoor dining, imported beers and wines, and free sunsets. $$$

**Greystone Steakhouse**
685 Fifth Ave
Greystone is a multi-level steakhouse serving prime-aged meat, seafood, and pasta. $$$

**Harbor House**
831 West Harbor DR
The Harbor House serves fresh fish, shellfish, premium steaks, and local draft beers. They offer informal dining upstairs and on the outside decks as well as tablecloth/quiet dining downstairs. Come and enjoy the great city and harbor views. $$$

**House of Blues**
1055 Fifth Ave
Known for its soulful food and soulful music, the House of Blues serves dinner nightly, and it offers a gospel brunch with a Southern-style buffet and gospel choir every Sunday. $$

**Los Panchos de Charley**
431 E ST
Authentic Mexican dining and live entertainment that has been a part of the San Diego community for almost 30 years. $$

**Moose McGillycuddy’s**
535 Fifth Ave
Originally established in downtown Waikiki, Moose McGillycuddy’s offers a relaxed atmosphere and a variety of sandwiches and burgers. $$

**Red Circle Café**
420 E ST
Designed to reflect a post-era Russian vodka bar, Red Circle Café serves Mediterranean cuisine and specialty cocktails.

### DRINKING

**Dublin Square Pub**
554 Fourth Ave
An authentic Irish pub with a variety of beer and live entertainment.

**Henry’s Pub**
628 Fifth Ave
A friendly bar and restaurant with nightly entertainers. Henry’s Pub attracts an eclectic crowd of regulars in both board shorts and business attire.

**Red Circle Café**
420 E ST
Designed to reflect a post-era Russian vodka bar, Red Circle Café serves Mediterranean cuisine and specialty cocktails.

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**Noteworthy Releases in Religious Studies from Baker Academic**

**Foundations in Ritual Studies**
* A Reader for Students of Christian Worship
  Paul Bradshaw and John Mellish, editors
  9780801034992 • 234 pp. • $22.99p
  “This collection of essays gathers together some of the classic texts in ritual studies. Every student and professor of Christian worship will want to have this book as a reference in their library.”
  —Judith M. Rubek, Fordham University

**Resounding Truth**
* Christian Wisdom in the World of Music
  Jeremy S. Begbie
  9780801026959 • 316 pp. • $22.99p
  “Begbie has published a number of fine books in which he, as both a Christian theologian and a practicing musician, reflects on music; but this is his finest. It is theologically acute, deeply informed by both the history of music and the history of reflections on music, and throughout displays Begbie’s wide-ranging engagement with music of many kinds from both the past and the present.”
  —Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University

**Reformed and Always Reforming**
* The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology
  Roger E. Olson
  9780801031694 • 240 pp. • $19.99p
  “Olson has become a major interpreter of American evangelical theology and an advocate of a postconservative approach. What we have lacked is a clear guide to this perspective within evangelicalism. In his new book, Olson sets forth a genuinely evangelical theology that rejects modernity and fundamentalism... Anyone interested in a truly gospel-oriented theology will benefit from engaging with his arguments.”
  —Alan G. Padgett, Luther Seminary

**Reframing Theology and Film**
* New Focus for an Emerging Discipline
  Robert K. Johnston, editor
  9780801032400 • 336 pp. • $24.99p
  The study of theology and film has been in existence for fewer than three decades. What, then, does the future hold for this evolving subject? Johnston has drawn together more than a dozen scholars who regularly write and teach on the topic in order to explore how the discipline of theology and film can flourish and mature.

**What Would Jesus Deconstruct?**
* The Good News of Postmodernity for the Church
  John D. Caputo
  9780801031566 • 160 pp. • $19.99p
  “Caputo brilliantly manages to bring thought to life and life to thought. He wears his learning and scholarship so lightly that one has the impression of returning to a fresh-and-blood world where Jesus deconstructs and reconstruc...”
  —Richard Kearney, Boston College
Letty Mandeville Russell, 1929–2007

Emilie Townes, Yale Divinity School

Letty Mandeville Russell, one of the world’s foremost feminist theologians and longtime member of the Yale Divinity School faculty, died Thursday, July 12 at her home in Guilford, Connecticut. She was 77. As noted in her 1999 festschrift, Liberating Emilie, her influence and temporary theology is “monumental” and she had an “uncanny ability to articulate a vision of the church that is radical in its feminist-liberationist critique but that nonetheless remains anchored in the historic traditions and communities of the Christian church.” Also a leader for many years in the ecumenical movement, she remained active in ecumenical circles until her death, working for the World Council of Churches and the World YWCA. A global advocate for women, she was a member of the Yale Divinity School Women’s Initiative on Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa and was co-coordinator of the International Feminist Doctor of Ministry Program at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Russell was one of the first women ordained in the United Presbyterian Church and served the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City from 1952–68, including ten years as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Ascension. She joined the faculty of Yale Divinity School in 1974 as an assistant professor of theology, rose to the rank of professor in 1985, and retired in 2001. In retirement, she continued to teach courses at Yale Divinity School as a visiting professor.

Margaret Farley, the Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics emerita at Yale Divinity School and a friend and colleague of Russell for three decades, said, “She leaves a legacy of wisdom, integrity, and unbridled hope. Voices will rise from women and men throughout the world to bear witness to her gifts to them, not the least of which is her gift of faithful friendship. There is perhaps no other feminist theologian who has been more dedicated to ecumenical, interfaith, and international theological dialogue. Hers has been the influence not only in the creation of the world but of partnership. Yet her work has challenged everyone, not only because of its substance but because of her own commitment to making the world both more just and more hospitable.”

In her last major public address in May 2006, “Encountering the ‘Other’ in a World of Difference and Danger,” at the annual Paul Tillich Lecture at Harvard University (where she was a member of the first class of women to be admitted to Harvard Divinity School in 1955), Russell remained unequivocal in denouncing injustice. Displaying her usual range of sources from James Luther Adams, Audre Lorde, George Lakoff, Paul Tillich, and George Webber (among others). Russell questioned the postmodern use of the Other, saying, “In my perspective there are no ‘others,’ for all are created by God; no one is an ‘other.’” For Russell, the action of others is the radical misuse of difference. Ultimately, said Russell, “Our struggle is to overcome the fear of difference and to break the bars that keep us apart. [Others] want what we want. They want to work, they want to change the social structures. They want hospitality with justice.”

Past AAR president Peter J. Paris noted that he could “think of no one who has done more in helping to develop and promote the work of African and American women theologians than Letty Russell. She has gained immortality in their eyes and has made an indelible mark on the lives of all who knew her including myself. Most important, she embodied all the best moral and spiritual virtues so much needed in our contemporary world. Thus, we are all diminished by her departure.”

In 1999, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bestowed Russell with its Women of Faith award, and Union Theological Seminary in New York named her a Unitas Distinguished Alumna. She was recognized as a distinguished alumna with the Rabbi Martin Katenstein Award from Harvard Divinity School in 1998. Wellesley College named her the first recipient of its Emmaville Luce Severinghaus Award for Work in Religion in 1986.

At Yale Divinity School, Russell’s influence extended far beyond the confines of the classroom. She was the inspiration behind the creation of the school’s international travel seminar program where students travel to countries, frequently impoverished ones, for direct encounters with the realities of religion on the world stage. Yale Divinity School dean Harold Attridge said that, through the travel seminar, Russell’s “legacy of commitment to a universal vision of engaged theology will continue as a vital part of Yale Divinity School.”

Russell’s deep commitment to justice-making globally in ecumenical dialogues and theological education was noted by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Reverend Dr. Samuel Kobia, and noted Asian feminist theologian Kwok Pui-lan. For Kobia, Russell’s books “centered around her theological and ecclesiological vision of the church as inclusive and justice-seeking community.” Kwock said that Russell was instrumental in founding Pacific, Asian and North American Women in Theology and Ministry (PANAWTM) in 1984 and for 13 years served with Shannon Clarkson as the coordinator and fundraiser for the group. “Letty was a wise mentor and beloved colleague for many Asian Christian women. She exemplified what solidarity in global sisterhood means . . . .” Letty never retired. As she said, she just rewired. Even cancer could not slow her down. She was still traveling to teach the DMin program and finishing other work between chemo during her last year. Her passion for life and her dedication to mending God’s creation is inspiring.”

Letty was a rare person who actually lived what she preached and expected others to do so as well. . . . I feel responsible — responsible to carry on a small piece of her amazing vision for a just world. If we indeed inherit our mother’s gardens, those of us who are daughters and sons of Letty’s teaching and mentoring have the phenomenal task of nurturing a global landscape, rooted deep in biblical tradition, bearing fruit of a mended creation. The world is different because Letty is gone from it. By the guidance of her spirit, my hope is that the world will continue to be different through our work.”

Russell graduated with a BA in biblical history and philosophy in 1951 from Wellesley College, and she was among the first women to receive an STB from Harvard Divinity School, in theology and ethics, in 1958. She earned an STM from Union Theological Seminary in New York in Christian education and theology in 1967, and two years later received a ThD in mission theology and ecumenics from Union.

The author or editor of over 17 books, her books include: Theology and Community, Feminist Interpretations of the Church and her co-edited work Dictionary of Feminist Theologians characterized her commitment to feminist/liberation theologies and to the renewal of the church. In 2006, she co-edited a book with Phyllis Trible of Wake Forest University entitled Hagar, Sarah and Their Children: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives.

Russell was born in Westfield, New Jersey, in 1929. She was predeceased by her sister, Jean Berry of New Jersey; and her former husband, the late professor Harvard Holckendijk. She is survived by her partner, Shannon Clarkson; her sister, Elizabeth Collins of Salem, Oregon; 7 nieces and nephews; 14 great-nieces and great-nephews; and 1 great-great niece. In addition, Russell felt that her wider family included generations of feminist and womanist activists and scholars around the world. She believed and lived that freedom is coming for the Philippines, Singapore, Switzerland, and Taiwan were models of deep constructive theological engagement that takes seriously partnership based on a thoroughgoing commitment to genuine mutuality in the household of God.

Perhaps no better place to understand the impact of Russell’s work is the incredible role she played as mentor to literally hundreds of men and women in theological education and the church. Kristen Leslie, associate professor of pastoral care and counseling at Yale Divinity School and representative of a younger generation of scholars, commented, “Letty’s international scholarly work was matched by her significant teaching and mentoring of students and colleagues. As both her student and then her colleague, I recognize the world has been changed by Letty’s willingness to speak truth to power.” Recent Union Theological Seminary doctoral graduate and Yale Divinity School alumna Kate M. Ott wrote, “Letty was a rare person who actually lived what she preached and expected others to do so as well. I feel responsible — responsible to carry on a small piece of her amazing vision for a just world. If we indeed inherit our mother’s gardens, those of us who are daughters and sons of Letty’s teaching and mentoring have the phenomenal task of nurturing a global landscape, rooted deep in biblical tradition, bearing fruit of a mended creation. The world is different because Letty is gone from it. By the guidance of her spirit, my hope is that the world will continue to be different through our work.”
Templeton Research Lectures grants awarded

Johns Hopkins University and Boston University were recently selected as the 2007 recipients of the Templeton Research Lectures grants. The universities will receive up to $500,000 to promote science and religion conversations.

Stephen Gross, an associate professor at Johns Hopkins, will lead the “Evolution, Cognition, and Culture” project, which will explore the explosion of interdisciplinary research in the cognitive science of religion and its implications—specifically for religion, public policy, and the general understanding of evolution, cognition, and culture.

“Researchers are only just beginning to understand the complex interactions among evolution, cognition, and culture, and religious belief and practice has provided some of the most fertile ground for thinking about these matters,” Gross said. “This exciting interdisciplinary work not only promises to shed light on the role of religion in human lives, but also offers a particularly fruitful site for reflection on the place and limits of a scientific understanding of the human.”

Robert Neville, a professor of philosophy, religion, and theology, will head the Boston University grant. The “Religious and Psychological Well-being” project will investigate four topics: religious experience, character development, meaning construction, and therapeutic models/spiritual places.

“The grant provides the opportunity to formalize the interdisciplinary connections we have been building informally over the years,” Neville said. “Few problems at the interface of psychology and religion are as intriguing as the integration of psychological and spiritual models of ‘well-being,’ and a better understanding of this has immediate application in practical help for people seeking well-being.”

Bill J. Leonard receives service award

At its annual meeting, each year, the Baptist History and Heritage Society presents its most prestigious award, the W.O. Carver Distinguished Service Award. On June 8, at Campbellsville University, Campbellsville, Kentucky, the society presented the 2007 award to Bill J. Leonard, dean and professor of church history at Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Leonard has had much influence on the Baptist History and Heritage Society. As a longtime member, he has participated as a speaker at the society’s annual meetings, written articles for Baptist History and Heritage, and authored society publications.

Leonard earned a BA degree from Texas Wesleyan College, an MA from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a PhD from Boston University. He served as professor of church history, associate dean, president of the faculty association, editor of Review and Expositor, and W. Brooks Professor of American Religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, he was chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy.

In 1996, Leonard joined the faculty of Wake Forest University with joint appointments in the Divinity School and Department of Religion, and in 1999, he was named the founding dean of the Wake Forest Divinity School.

Leonard is the author or editor of 15 books, including Wixt of God Among the Ages: Using Church History in Preaching; God’s Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention; and Baptist Ways: A History. His most recent book, Baptist in America, was published in 2005 by Columbia University Press. He has also authored more than 400 articles, published in a variety of journals, periodicals, and books.

Guggenheim names 2007 Fellows

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation recently announced its 2007 fellowship winners, which include five AAR members.

The foundation, which was established in 1925 by Senator Simon Guggenheim, provides fellowships to artists, scholars, and scientists to assist them in their scholarly and artistic endeavors.

Decisions are based on the recommendations of hundreds of advisers, and this year's fellowship winners include 189 individuals selected from almost 2,800 applicants for awards totaling $76,000.

The following AAR members received fellowships:

- Catherine Anne Brekus, associate professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, studying evangelicalism and the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century America
- David Franksfurter, religious studies and history professor at the University of New Hampshire, examining Christianization in late antique Egypt
- Susan Ashbrook Harvey, religious studies professor at Brown University, researching Biblical women and women's roles in Jewish tradition
- Michael L. Satlow, associate professor of religious studies and Judaic studies at Brown University, studying Jewish piety in late antiquity
- David Gordon White, religious studies professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, researching Indian yoga 200 BC–200 CE

Online guide probes rise of religion on campus

According to a 2007 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey, 83 percent of American college students are affiliated with some denomination or religion, and nearly four in five say they believe in God. Evangelicalism — often in the form of extra-denominational or parachurch campus groups — has eclipsed mainstream Protestant and Catholicism and Judaism, too, are thriving, as are other faiths.

To make sense of the plethora of faith communities on today’s college campuses, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), with support from the Temple Foundation, has published an online guide, “The Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates” (http://religion.ssrc.org/guide), which was derived from a series of essays it commissioned from leading authorities in the field of religion and American higher education, as well as from a review of current scholarship.

The guide presents the perspectives of leading thinkers such as Alan Wolfe, director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College; journalist Diane Winston, who has co-edited a major work on religion in urban centers; and Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow, an authority on religious diversity. Consisting of eight sections and opening with a preface by SSRC president Craig Calhoun, it examines basic questions such as whether or not the college experience affects students’ religious beliefs and how religion should be incorporated into the college curriculum. It also addresses the current situation on college campuses: How do Evangelical students engage with college life? How open can professors be about their own religious beliefs? Finally, it provides some much-needed historical perspective, tracing the origins of America’s many religious colleges. Designed to be read online, the guide also features an annotated bibliography with links to key references.

Gillis named to Georgetown Catholic Studies Chair

Georgetown University recently announced the appointment of Chester L. Gillis, theology professor and a member of the AAR’s Academic Relations Committee, as the first Joseph and Winifred Amaturo Chair in Catholic Studies and the founding director of the Program on the Church and Interreligious Dialogue, a new initiative of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

“This is an important appointment,” said Jane McAuliffe, dean of Georgetown College and a past AAR president. “Gillis brings a rich background in the theology of religious pluralism to this significant university initiative in Catholic studies.”

Gillis began his tenure as the Amaturo Chair on July 1. The funding for this chair is provided through a gift from Joseph and Winifred Amaturo of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Gillis has served on the Georgetown faculty since 1988 and was chair of the Department of Theology from 2001 to 2006. He holds degrees in philosophy and religious studies from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and earned his PhD from the University of Chicago. His research interests include comparative religion and contemporary Roman Catholicism.

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Already renewed? Confirm your membership status at: www.aarweb.org/members/my_account

The AAR is encouraging members to take advantage of online renewal because renewing online . . .

- Helps the environment
  Online renewal is a sound environmental choice because it replaces production and delivery of over 10,000 renewal packets.
- Helps the whole Academy
  The funds saved by every online renewal can be applied to services and programs that benefit the study of religion.
- Helps you
  The online submission is instant (immediately gain access to online services), accurate (no handwriting confusion or transcription mistakes), and safe (secured with strong encryption). Additionally, it frees staff time to assist directly with member needs.

If you still wish to renew by paper, we are, of course, happy to serve your needs. You can print a membership form directly at www.aarweb.org/dues. Or you can contact us at membership@aarweb.org or 404-727-3049 to have forms mailed or faxed to you.
Annual Meeting Survey Ends October 15

September 2007
Dear AAR Members and Friends,

In the spring of 2003, the Board of the American Academy of Religion decided to hold some of the Academy’s Annual Meetings independently from the Society of Biblical Literature. Both organizations have contracts committing them to meet at different times from 2008 to 2010 and again in 2012. And, in fact, six-figure fines if they broke the contracts. The AAR and the SBL have agreed to meet simultaneously in San Francisco in November of 2011, but independently — meaning, most importantly, that they will not be collaborating on the production of a single program book.

The decision to meet independently was a controversial one, and many members continue to express concerns over the content of the decision, the way in which it was reached, or the AAR’s governance structure. The Board of Directors is addressing these concerns in two ways.

First, the Board has convened a Governance Task Force, which we shall co-chair, to review the structure and functions of the AAR and, where necessary and appropriate, to recommend changes. Our aim is to ensure that the AAR conducts itself democratically.

Second, the Board wants to invite our members to say in detail what considerations they think the Board should take into account when deciding on future Annual Meetings and how much weight each of the considerations should have. For this reason, the Board decided at its spring 2007 meeting to conduct a survey of our members. The survey has been designed with the assistance of professionals who are familiar with such instruments.

It is a survey, not a referendum, because the issues are too complicated to be reduced to a single question. In 2003, the big yes-or-no question was about meeting independently. Today, planning for future meetings by our Board and Executive Staff has been complicated by the emergence of three clusters of logistical challenges:

1) Dates and Rates. Moving away from our traditional meeting time — the weekend before Thanksgiving — poses logistical problems. Some of the dates contracted for future meetings conflict with election days. Many members, whose institutions take a Thanksgiving break, may, on the new plan, have to use parts of two teaching weeks to attend the independent Annual Meeting.

2) Impact on AAR Services. Meeting independently will have an impact on some of the functions served by the Annual Meeting. Some of our book exhibitors have told us that they cannot afford to attend both the AAR and the SBL Annual Meetings. With the AAR and the SBL no longer planning to run the Employment Information Service jointly, some members are concerned that this will disrupt their searches or force some job candidates to make difficult choices about which meeting to attend. Others have expressed concerns about the fate of additional meetings, related scholarly organizations, and school receptions that count on attendance from both AAR and SBL members. How strongly do members feel about these issues?

3) Simultaneity. In its spring 2003 meeting the Board decided to meet with the SBL on some future occasions and to consider meeting with other professional societies at times, as well. But with what other professional societies should we consider meeting? And in the long run, how often should we aim to meet with the SBL in the way we are planning to meet in San Francisco in 2011 — independently but in the same city on the same weekend?

It is clear that the Board will need to take all of these issues into account when deciding on future meetings. The Board needs your help to make sure we have all of the relevant considerations in view and to determine how much weight each of the various considerations should be given. The survey will be available online from September 15th until October 15th. To take the survey, go to www.aarweb.org/Members/Surveys/Annual_Meeting.

The results of the survey will be discussed at the November meeting of the Board and will then be made public. Our hope is that all members will take the seven to ten minutes that will be required to fill out the survey and submit it. The higher the response rate, the easier it will be for the Board to take members’ views into consideration, as we wish to do.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey L. Stout, President
Emilie M. Townes, President-elect

New AAR Task Forces

The AAR Board of Directors has approved the creation of four new task forces.

Governance Task Force

Chairs: Jeffrey L. Stout, Princeton University, AAR President
Emilie M. Townes, Yale Divinity School, AAR President-Elect

Charge: The Governance Task Force will study the adequacy of the current AAR by-laws and governance practices and make recommendations to the Board concerning how the AAR and its regions might organize and govern themselves so as to best serve their members. The objective of the task force is to achieve the ideal balance among the following values: representation of the membership as a whole, representation and protection of women and minorities within the profession; representation of the regions; the expertise required to fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board; the ability of the Board to conduct its business efficiently, and the need to give members of the AAR ample opportunity to influence and contest important decisions made by the AAR Board and staff.

Job Placement Task Force

Chair: Deanna A. Thompson, Hamline University

Charge: In consultation with the relevant standing committees, this task force is charged: 1) to review the full experience of the placement process for candidates and to recommend improvements in EIS and other aspects of the process; 2) to review current graduate program reporting on graduates and to create guidelines for best practices regarding public disclosure of placement records; 3) to create a list of recommendations for how graduate programs in religion can realign their curricula to respond to current (and future) job placement realities; and 4) to investigate how the AAR might best assist people being trained in religious studies to prepare for and find jobs outside of religion and theology departments, seminaries, and divinity schools.

Status of LGBT Persons in the Profession Task Force

Chair: Melissa Wilcox, Whitman College

Charge: This group recommends policies and good practices to assure the protection and advancement of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered persons within the Academy and develops programs to enhance their status in the profession.

Sustainability Task Force

Chair: Sarah McFarland Taylor, Northwestern University

Charge: The Sustainability Task Force fosters attention to the issues associated with sustainability throughout the AAR. This group makes proposals to the Academy for initiatives for contributing to teaching about sustainability and for developing best practices for conducting sustainable meetings and regional events.

AAR Goes to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Humanities Funding

In March, the AAR and 36 other associations involved in higher education cosponsored Humanities Advocacy Day, an annual event in Washington organized by the National Humanities Alliance (NHA).

The AAR, along with other members of the NHA, is advocating a budget of $177 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities in fiscal year 2008. This figure would restore NEH appropriations to their peak reached in 1994 and would represent an important step forward in restoring NEH funding to its historic levels. The NEH is the largest funder of humanities programs in the United States.

The AAR also supports FY 2008 funding of $12 million for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The NHRPC is the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration and for the past three years has received only minimal funding for staff to administer current grants, after which the program would be terminated.

The AAR participants were board members Frederick Denny of the University of Colorado, Boulder (emeritus) and Stacy Patty of Lubbock Christian University, member Scott Collins-Jones of Princeton Theological Seminary, and AAR staffers Steve Herrick and Shelly Roberts. They met on Capitol Hill with congressional staff from Colorado, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Texas. In addition, Denny represented the AAR at the NHA’s annual meeting held the day before.

As of the RSV copy deadline, the House of Representatives has approved bills funding NEH at $160 million for FY 2008 and NHRPC at $10 million. The full Senate has yet to vote.
Utah State University Launches Religious Studies Program

Charles S. Prebish and Norman L. Jones

I N T H E SUMMER 2004 issue of Utah State Magazine, Jane Koerner wrote, “When history department chairman Norm Jones and his colleagues proposed a religious studies program for Utah State University, they were skeptical after another said the idea would never fly in a state where politics mirrors deep religious fault lines. They were wrong.” The Religious Studies Program was approved by the university’s Board of Trustees on April 8, 2005, and opened its doors to students for the fall semester 2006.

To begin the process of asking why we believe and act as we do,” to that end, we hope that Utah State University’s new Religious Studies Program will continue to be an exciting place of inquiry, learning, and sharing.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

Tenure-track position available August 22, 2008, in East Asian Buddhism. Major responsibility: teaching load of six courses per year (3/semester). Typical teaching duties include two sections per semester of “Introduction to Religion and Culture,” and one upper-level survey course (e.g., “Religions and Cultures of East Asia” or “Buddhism”) of interest to the candidate’s area of competence or expertise. The departmental focus is Religion and Culture, especially the modern period. Minimum qualifications: earned doctorate in religious studies or comparable discipline with specialty in East Asian Buddhism by August 20, 2008; competency in one or more of the following: popular religion, performance studies, ethnography, gender studies, religion and social theory, and cultural studies; breadth and breadth of training in religious studies expected along with ability to conduct research in appropriate languages (e.g., Chinese or Japanese). Preferred qualifications: experience mentoring undergraduate students; experience in diversity issues; dedication to teaching and research.

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, graduate school transcripts, three letters of recommendation writing sample, and a brief statement of teaching philosophy and research interests to: Dr. Jeffrey Brackett, Search Committee Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Review of applications will begin September 15, 2007, for initial screening at November AAR.

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies seeks to attract an active, culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber. Ball State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.
JENNIFER GREEN of the Ottawa Citizen, Jason Byassee of the Christian Century, and Roberts Sibley of the Ottawa Citizen have won the 2007 American Academy of Religion Awards for Best In-Depth Reporting on Religion.

Green won the contest for journalists at news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation or on the Web; Byassee for journalists at news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation; and Sibley for opinion writing. The awards recognize well-written, well-researched newswriting that enhances the public understanding of religion.

Green submitted stories on the Saint John’s Bible project; the split in the Anglican Church over same-sex unions and gay clergy; conservative faith and public discourse in Canada; a Baylor University scholar and the repercussions of expressing his views on Southern Baptists; and how Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered by some Muslims. The judges highlighted Green’s “thorough reporting, good writing and interesting choice of topics,” calling her a “gifted journalist” with an “impressive set of entries.”

Byassee submitted stories on emergent churches; Protestant theologians converting to Catholicism; the meaning of social justice to hospitality workers; prison inmates and the lives of prisoners; and a Hispanic immigrant seeking sanctuary in a Methodist church. “An excellent body of work,” said the judges, noting Byassee’s “confident tone about a wide variety of topics.” Said one judge, “This writer has an enormous amount of talent and a reporter’s keen eye for detail, the good quote and the added insight that makes readers keep reading.”

Sibley, who placed second in last year’s contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation, submitted opinion articles from a series on faith, nihilism, and wonder; and from a series marking the fifth anniversary of September 11, which included essays on intellectuals in the aftermath of September 11 and on multiculturalism. The judges called Sibley’s work “deeply informative,” noting that “each piece is solid and thoughtful,” and praising him for illustrating “the essential voice of religious studies scholars in general coverage of religion.”

Jennifer Garza of the Sacramento Bee placed second in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. “Lively, engaging writing,” said the judges, commenting on Garza’s “good sense for the news” and “strong use of the newspaper profile that takes readers into a setting and bears the reporting with a sense of that environment.” Summed up one judge, “This writer takes the reader to the scene in every article.”

G. Jeffrey MacDonald of the Christian Science Monitor won second place in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. The judges said MacDonald “confronts a wide variety of challenging topics head-on and with excellent writing skills,” and offers “serious exploration of American religion.” His stories have “good perspective, a strong sense of character and color,” remarked one judge.

Asra Nomani, a freelancer based in New York, placed second in the 2006 contest. Her work on the September 11th terrorist attacks, the post-September 11th climate of fear, and the backlash against Muslims, won her the award for opinion writing. “This writer’s works all deal with aspects of Islam, but in such a way, and with such authority, that they become relevant to non-Muslim readers as much, if not more, than to Muslim readers. Valuable service,” the judges said, giving her op-ed pieces “well-written with great perspective and depth.”

Omar Sacirbey, a freelancer based in Boston, placed third in the contest for news outlets with more than 100,000 circulation. “Like few other newspaper writers today, this author has taken readers into the world of American Islam in wonderful detail. The stories flowed, and the quotes ring truth,” remarked one judge. “Insightful coverage . . . takes readers below the surface and behind the scenes,” noted another.

Adam Parker of the Post and Courier (Charleston, South Carolina), placed third in the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation. The judges were impressed with Parker’s entries, saying his “strong reporting and varied sourcing” made his work “stand out.” One commented that the “terrific writing draws the reader into each subject’s world.”

Kevin Eggelsh of the Cincinnati Post placed third in this year’s opinion-writing contest. One judge said of his work, “Pithy and to the point. An entry illustrating how religion and religious studies relate to so many facets of life.” Another remarked, “With verve and an admirable talent for economy, this writer’s columns pack a punch — and a lot of information — into a short space.”

Each contestant submitted five articles published in North America during 2006. Nominations of contest winners and their news outlets were removed from submissions prior to judging. Each of the first-place winners receives $1,000. The judges for the contest for news outlets with over 100,000 circulation included Gayle White, a reporter for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and Larry Witham, author and former reporter for the Washington Times. The judges for the contest for news outlets with less than 100,000 circulation and for the opinion-writing contest included David Gibson, author and former reporter for the Star-Ledger (Newark, New Jersey), and Cecile Holmes, a professor of journalism at the University of South Carolina and a former reporter for the Houston Chronicle. Ronald Thiemann, a professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, served as the third judge on all three contests. Thiemann is a member of the AAR Committee on the Public Understanding of Religion.
AAR Honors Eight Authors in Its Annual Book Awards

The American Academy of Religion offers Awards for Excellence in order to give recognition to new scholarly publications that make significant contributions to the study of religion. These awards honor works of distinctive originality, intelligence, creativity, and importance — books that affect decisively how religion is examined, understood, and interpreted.

Awards for Excellence are given in four categories: Analytical–Descrip tive, Constructive–Reflective, Historical, and Textual Studies. Not all awards are given every year. More than one book may win an award in a given category. In addition there is a separate competition and prize for the Best First Book in the History of Religions. For eligibility requirements, award processes, and a list of current jurors, please see the Book Awards rules on the AAR Web page, www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/book_awards.

The AAR is pleased to announce this year’s recipients of the Awards for Excellence in Religion and the Best First Book in the History of Religions:

Analytical–Descriptive


Historical (Co-winners)


Constructive–Reflective (Co-winners)


Textual Studies


Best First Book in the History of Religions


Floyd-Thomas to Receive Excellence in Teaching Award

Stacey Floyd-Thomas will receive the Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Floyd-Thomas is Associate Professor of Ethics and Black Church Studies at Brite Divinity School, where she has taught since 2002. She has also taught at Virginia Tech. At Brite she has taught courses on Christian Social Ethics, Contemporary Theological Ethics, Feminist Theology and Ethics, and African American Experience in Social Ethics, among others.

Floyd-Thomas has written essays and presented papers on various teaching and curricular issues, including “Teaching to Transform: From Volatility to Solidarity in an Interdisciplinary Family Studies Classroom” and “Interdisciplinarity as Self and Subject: Metaphor and Transformation.” To support her efforts to improve and re-shape teaching at her own institutions and in the broader profession, she has received several grants, including awards to support interdisciplinary teaching and a grant to support “an African-American Dialogue Concerning the Influences of Blackness in Theological Education Teaching Practices.”

One colleague notes how Professor Floyd Thomas’s teaching “represents a delicate balance between forceful instruction and patient guidance” and commends her “capacity to teach with excellence in two very different kinds of institutions” is impressive evidence of Floyd-Thomas’s ability and adaptability. Floyd-Thomas is an excellent example of dedicated and innovative teaching, both in the classroom and beyond it. Along with the previous winners of the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award — Tina Pippin, Eugene V. Gallagher, William Packer, Janet Walton, Timothy Renick, Zayn Kassam, and Patricia Killen — she demonstrates the wide range of creative and deeply engaged teaching in the Academy.

The Committee on Teaching and Learning has been impressed by the fine candidates who have submitted materials for consideration; the commitment and energy that they bring to their vocations as teachers demonstrate the range, pedagogical sophistication, and intellectual vitality that members of the Academy bring to the teaching of religion.

Eugene V. Gallagher, Chair of the Committee on Teaching and Learning encourages chairs and colleagues to nominate faculty for this significant award. The guidelines for this award are listed on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org/programs/Awards/Teaching_Awards.

The Committee on Teaching and Learning seeks nominations for the AAR Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Nominations of winners of campus awards, or any other awards, are encouraged.

Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR Web site at www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching_awards.

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Regional Meetings and Calls for Papers

Religious Studies News

Proposal Submission

Please send proposals by e-mail attachment to Natalie Houghby-Horton at debiquest@gmail.com no later than November 1, 2007. You may submit no more than two proposals to the Program Committee. Since we review proposals as they arrive it is advantageous to send proposals as soon as possible.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Awards

As has become our custom, MAR–AAR will award $200 to the most innovative proposal for a group session (or panel) dealing with peace issues or women’s studies; the deadline for submission is November 1, 2007. To help foster graduate student participation, the Executive Committee of the MAR–AAR will again award the Robert F. Steetman Prize of $200 for the best student paper presented by an AAR regional member. Those interested in the Steetman prize should submit their entire paper by November 1, 2007, and clearly indicate they are submitting the paper for prize consideration.

Preregistration

Online preregistration will be available in December. You will be notified when our preregistration is live. We hope you will take advantage of online preregistration since it saves a lot of on-site work for us.

Hotel Information

The Hyatt Regency New Brunswick will offer online hotel room registration as well. Again, we will notify you when the site is active. Alternatively you may call Hyatt at 800-233-1234 to reserve rooms. Please indicate that you are attending our conference. Discounted hotel rooms ($129) will be held until March 5, 2008. Since the normal room rate is $179 and only 40 discounted rooms have been reserved, we strongly encourage you to reserve rooms early.

Submission Guidelines

1. Paper Proposals (250–500 words) should include full name, title, institution, phone number, fax number, e-mail, and mailing address. The proposal should state, as fully as possible, the paper's purpose and how it will proceed. Provide enough context to show that you are aware of the basic literature in the field and summarize the arguments of your presentation. An abstract of the paper (150 words) should also be included. Accepted abstracts will be posted online.

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

3. Proposals for a Paper Session should include the name of the designated session head and should include abstracts (150 words) and contact information for each individual participant. A session with separately arranged paper titles is considered a “paper” session.

4. If you have not presented a paper before a learned society you must send the paper you plan to present (12 pages max) by November 1, 2007. In your cover letter please add any other information that may help us weigh your submission.

5. You will have approximately 35 minutes to present your paper (whether by reading it or by interactive discussion) and to respond to questions. Since the average person reads one double-spaced, 10-font page, without notes, in 2.5 minutes, your paper should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages. This will allow a few minutes at the end for questions. Please do not exceed this limit.

6. We regret that we cannot supply any audiovisual equipment due to prohibitive rental costs so please plan accordingly. In lieu of audiovisual equipment, consider bringing photocopied handouts to your session.

For ongoing updated information please consult our website at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Regions/Mid-Atlantic.

New England-Maritimes

Instead of holding a NEMAR regional meeting in 2007–2008, the region will co-sponsor conferences proposed and organized by regional members. Events for this coming year include:


We welcome proposals from regional members related to any of the following kinds of events.

For this year’s call: Our goal is to sponsor events in different parts of the region, to benefit the greatest possible number of members. Such events will be organized by members and supported with regional financial and promotional assistance, provided that the event is open to any regional member. Faculty, and graduate students with a faculty mentor, are all eligible to apply. We have set a rolling deadline to make it possible to submit an application at any time. If you have an idea or inquiry and want feedback, please send it to regionally elected director Linda Barnes at linda.barnes@btc.org. Applications should be sent to individuals listed in the call.

Co-Sponsoring Conferences: Instead of organizing a single annual regional meeting, which relatively few people attend, NEMAR will function as a co-sponsor of conferences proposed by members around the region. NEMAR’s contribution will involve as NEMAR grants of up to $800 to help support conference-related costs; b) assistance with resources to facilitate conference planning, including best-practice planning schedules; and
Tim Renick, Georgia State University

The Religion Major in Transition

The Religion Major in Transition has struggled for years to convince secular colleagues, skeptical administrators, and a suspicious public of the importance of educating undergraduates about religion, often to little avail. We were all familiar with the arguments against religious studies. Religion was too personal, too private. Scholars were too liberal, too critical. Departments of religion were a luxury, an anachronism, or a threat to church-state separation.

Until 9/11. On a single day, the conversation about religion changed in this country. Arguments we had been making for years no longer fell on deaf ears. In fact, they began to be made by others. The news media began to turn to scholars of religion on a daily basis to clarify the seemingly overwhelming complexities surrounding religious sects and movements. The Times of London urged U.S. universities to take steps to aid Americans “to become more religiously literate so that they can [better] judge public policy issues.”

Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright wrote that a failure to understand other religions “poses one of the greatest challenges to effective diplomacy.” In the face of oftentimes mystifying acts of religious violence globally, American colleges and universities increasingly turned to the academic field of religion for reason and insight.

The impact on the discipline has been profound. Time magazine has traced a large and widespread increase in enrollments in religious studies courses at the university level since September 2001. On many campuses, religion courses have emerged as the most popular electives. In not only private colleges but also state universities, courses in the field are increasingly required as a part of core requirements, thus impacting all aspects of undergraduate education. Several new degree programs have sprung up.

The Challenge to the Field

With the rapid growth of the major in religion, with the unique place it occupies in the modern academy, and with significant changes in the national and global context in which Americans view religion, there is a need for the field to reassess the relationship between the goals of the concentration and those of liberal education. The Teagle Foundation grant on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” provides a unique opportunity for members of the American Academy of Religion to engage in a sustained dialogue regarding our central role in shaping the religious and cultural literacy of the next generation of Americans.

There is perhaps no academic field more centrally involved in addressing essential learning outcomes involving not only intellectual and practical skills (such as critical inquiry, written and oral communication, and problem solving) but also the areas of personal and social responsibility (including ethical reasoning and action, intercultural knowledge, and civic knowledge and engagement) than the field of religion. There also are few academic fields that are more oriented with undergraduate programs of religion variously situated in liberal arts colleges, religiously affiliated colleges, research universities, and theology schools.

In 2000, the American Academy of Religion, with a grant from the Lilly Endowment, examined the present state of the field in its Census of Religion and Theology Programs. With a 79 percent response rate, the census revealed diverse conceptions of the major curriculum and a range of approaches to achieving what are, at times, very different learning outcomes. Some member programs have added requirements that students undertake coursework in world religions, non-Western religions, Islam, religious violence, or ethics. Others have begun to expect that students engage in study-abroad experiences or conduct fieldwork in local religious communities. Still others mandate that students engage in service learning as a component of their studies through internships in nonprofit, religious, and community organizations.

Despite the survey and the wealth of approaches it revealed, there has been little opportunity for a sustained follow-up discussion about the nature of the major, the effectiveness of various approaches in impacting student learning, and alternate steps that might be considered. There also has been little opportunity to disseminate information about the success or lack of success of approaches that have been tried by member institutions, leaving each institution, in effect, to reinvent the wheel. These steps are particularly crucial given the changes wrought on both the nation and the field by the events of 9/11. They also are crucial given the increasingly prominent role that undergraduate courses in religion play in shaping the cultural literacy of a broad range of Americans, from journalists and...
lawyers to government employees, business leaders, and clergy persons.

This project has, in one sense, a very simple goal: to promote a sustained public dialogue within the field concerning how the concentration in religion can serve the evolving goals of liberal education and the needs of American society. The project seeks to encourage broad and diverse participation within the AAR in considering the following questions:

1. How might we invigorate learning in the field in light of recent global events?
2. In a context of growing religious violence and radicalism, how can we encourage students to engage ethical issues in a way that is both academically rigorous and morally constructive?
3. How can we best create learning environments which encourage students to intelligently and critically engage the moral, religious, and spiritual issues central to humanity while in the major and throughout their lives?
4. How can the concentration enhance its role in promoting practical skills central to liberal education such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, and problem solving? How might the promotion of these outcomes within the major be integrated with achieving the personal and social outcomes outlined above?
5. In light of the growing number of institutions that require undergraduates to take courses in religion, what should the shape of foundation or core courses in the field?

Multiple Opportunities for Participation

The project formally will extend almost two full years, from the initial convening of the working group in early 2007 to the AAR Annual Meeting in November 2008, when there will be a special open forum to discuss the completed White Paper. Ideally, the impact of the initiative will extend years beyond this initial period. For those of us who read through the proposals, it is clear that there are a large number of challenges facing our field — from difficulties getting programs started to growing pains as existing programs evolve into something new — and also a great deal of creativity, ideas, and enthusiasm in response to these challenges. The reports of the 10 institutions receiving seed grants will be integrated into the final White Paper.

First, a series of ten $500 seed grants were awarded to individual institutions to promote the discussion of the religious studies majors on a diverse group of campuses. The call for these proposals was made in this publication and in the AAR e-bulletin this spring. Over 30 proposals were submitted, and members of the AAR’s Academic Relations Committee ranked the top 10. For those of us who read through the proposals, it is clear that there are a large number of challenges facing our field — from difficulties getting programs started to growing pains as existing programs evolve into something new — and also a great deal of creativity, ideas, and enthusiasm in response to these challenges. The reports of the 10 institutions receiving seed grants will be integrated into the final White Paper.

First, a daylong Leadership Workshop on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” will be held on Friday, November 16, in San Diego, the day before the official start of the 2007 Annual Meeting. The workshop will provide a forum for a sustained discussion of the goals of the major, as well as interactive sessions exploring what is working and what is not on individual campuses. The keynote speaker will be Stephen Prothero of Boston University, author of Religious Literacy. All signs point to this being the most popular AAR workshop ever, with over 40 people already registered, but seats are still available. We hope you can attend.

Third, a special paper session on “The Religion Major and Liberal Education” will be held at the 2007 Annual Meeting (Saturday, November 17, 1:00-3:30 pm).

Five interesting perspectives on the major will be heard, with scholars representing church-related colleges, public universities, community colleges, and liberal arts institutions. Please attend the session and join in the dialogue.

Fourth, in spring 2008 and led by working group members, a White Paper will be written discussing the state of the religion major and outlining findings and best practices that have surfaced from the seed grants, workshop, and paper session. This White Paper will be distributed to all AAR members before the 2008 Annual Meeting.

Finally, at the 2008 Meeting, a special session will be held to discuss the White Paper and map out issues for AAR members to consider in the years ahead.

Why This Project?

Perhaps too often, our participation in the AAR serves to remind us of our differences — differences in institutional and religious affiliation, methodological approach, and disciplinary expertise. It’s clear, though, that there are certain issues we all care about the religious literacy of our students. We all believe that what our discipline does is genuinely important. We all are committed to being better at what we do.

Through the support of the Tagle Foundation, the current project provides us resources to explore these common goals in a sustained fashion. It provides us with a context to learn from each other, both with regard to what is working and what is not. The project will only be a success, though, with your participation. I hope you will volunteer to serve on this committee or other members of the working group with ideas and suggestions, and I hope you will participate in the workshop, the paper session, and the various other forums we have planned.

Recent world events present our field with a unique opportunity to reconsider and potentially to redefine our roles and responsibilities. How we respond to this opportunity will not only shape the future of our profession but also the religious literacy of the next generation of Americans. (For more information, e-mail trenick@gsu.edu or other members of the leadership group.)

Wildcard Session Features

Papers on Liberal Education

As part of the project “The Religion Major and Liberal Education,” a wildcard session has been scheduled for the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Diego. The session has a variety of papers addressing the evolving place of the religion major in the modern academy — from the effects of the institutional context upon the religion major to addressing how the religion major better prepares students to meet the needs of liberal education, the professions, and society.

Timothy Renick, Georgia State University and principal investigator for the project, will preside. Five papers will be presented:

• “The Religious Other and the Goals of the Liberal Arts” by Katherine Janiec Jones, Wofford College

• “For Sapiential Literacy: The Role of Religion at Public Colleges” by Anthony Mansueto, Collin County Community College

• “The Place and Purpose of Religion at a Church-Related College” by David C. Rutke, Lesley-Ryme College

• “A Calendar of Religious Studies in Three Settings: Developing Discursive Values” by David Reinhart, DePaul University

• “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Religious Studies and the Community College” by Steve Young, McHenry County College

The Religion Major and Liberal Education is a two-year project to reassess the relationship between the goals and objectives of undergraduate concentrations in religion and those of liberal education. As such, the AAR wants to involve as many as possible in the conversation. You are encouraged to attend this session and the leadership workshop to discuss this important initiative.

From Silver to Gold:
The Next 25 Years of Law and Religion

A Silver Anniversary Celebration

October 24–26, 2007, Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, Georgia

The world’s leading scholars will:
• Anticipate and articulate the hardest questions of law and religion to be faced during the next quarter century.
• Formulate how these questions might be best approached and answered.

Themes they will address:
• Religious liberty, human rights, and church-state relations
• Sex, marriage, and family life
• Christian, Jewish, and Islamic law
• The relationship between law and other religious institutions

Conveners: John Witte, Jr., Director, Center for the Study of Law and Religion
Frank Alexander, Founding Director, Center for the Study of Law and Religion

Seating is limited. Register at www.law.emory.edu/cslr/silveranniversary
Registration deadlines: early/September 21, late/October 21.
Free to Emory faculty, staff, students, and alumni/e. Fees apply to non-Emory registrants.
For more information, go to www.law.emory.edu/cslr or call 404-712-8710.

The Center for the Study of Law and Religion is home to world-class scholars and forums on the religious foundations of law, politics and society.
The Religion Major and Liberal Education: A Conversation

The AAR’s Working Group for The Religion Major and Liberal Education project believed a conversation among three scholars with deepest oreligious studies would help to illuminate the intricacies involved in the project. To fulfill the complexities and communalities of scholars in different academic positions, we are fortunate to publish this interview with Colgate University’s Rebecca Chopp, Northwestern University’s Eugene Lowé Jr., and Pomona College’s Zayn Kassam.

**RSN**: In order to function as a contributing and engaged society, we need to adopt certain central ideas and concepts that every undergraduate—regardless of major—should know about religion? If so, have these ideas and topics changed over the past generation?

**Rebecca Chopp**: More than ever, undergraduates need to master the basic assumptions and become handy with some of the skills involved in religious studies and in theological studies. Over the past generation religion has emerged as a significant force for societal, cultural and personal meaning. One of the many implications of 9/11 is that few Westerners can afford the luxury of thinking that religion will disappear or be reduced to the fringes of society. Secularization theses, once so popular in the academy, now seem largely irrelevant and dangerously outdated. Globalization has included the realization that religions are a real force in our contemporary world and we have to understand how meaning operates differently in different religious of the whole. However, 9/11 and subsequent events are not the only reasons religion is alive and well on our campuses. Most undergraduate students, according to the HERO study, “Religion in Higher Education,” are “religious and/or spiritual” and are asking questions about meaning, practice, and community. More and more faculty in departments such as political science, physics, and geology and professional schools including law, medicine, public health, and business consider some aspect of religion as subject matter. The immigration of new religions in American schools is, as Diane E. Jacobs says, “marveling” our culture. Finally, some of the major ethical-political-cultural issues of our day, including the environment, stem cell research, and health care, require religious analysis and theological reflection. Undergraduate students need to know how to think about religions as cultural forces (the subject of religious studies) and therefore need to know something important about religion and to believe (the subject of theological studies).

**Eugene Lowé Jr.**: Over the last generation, academic institutions and academic disciplines have engaged questions of diversity from a number of vantage points: in particular, with issues of access by underrepresented groups, and by undergraduate students, according to the HERI “religious and/or spiritual” and are asking questions about meaning, practice, and community. And once religious ideas, values, practices, and modes of expression are institutionalized in systems, even if their connections to religion are lost to public memory, the systems continue to shape and be shaped by those living within them. Whether these persons are explicitly religious or not.

Zayn Kassam: While in the past every undergraduate major in religion might have been expected to identify the key beliefs and practices of the major religious traditions, which number about five or six, now every religious studies major should emerge with a sense of wonder at the sheer diversity of ways in which human beings are religious. Yes, of course, a student should know the central figures, authoritative texts, the key rituals and observances, the organizing institutions, and the significant material and devotional forms of expression of the major world religions. However, all of these must be related to the historical and cultural context in which they were and a sense of the roles they were playing. In addition, and this is what makes the study of religion so exciting, students are being asked to understand how people have understood and found ways to be religious in connection with their existential realities through the ages. The present time is what makes the study of religion not only fascinating, but also central to understanding human civilization. The image that comes most readily to mind is the one invoked by Salman Rushdie in Haroun and the Sea of Stories, in which the source stories generated by the ocean of stories continual-ly interact with, meld with, infuse fresh life into, and generate new stories that are related to the source story but do not exist in intriguing ways. What are the afterlives of the text? What happens when religions migrate through conquest or immigration? How does the con-text create a new story? How do we make sense of tragedy? What kinds of stories are created to mobilize exercises in power? What are the shadows they create?

**RSN**: How can we if we are effective-teaching these central ideas and skills to our students? How do we best show others that we have done so?

**Chopp**: The study of religion includes disciplinary practices and perspectives shared with the social sciences and the humanities. Almost all social science and humanities disciplines are impossible to assess in order to yield hard-core quantitative data. If the point of intellectual thought and spiritual practice in a religious tradition is wisdom gained over a lifetime, then assessment is anachronistic. Still and all, I do think we can assess whether or not a student has learned the basic facts of the study of religion as determined by a particular program of study in religion and within a religious tradition (whether or not it is her own); or he can treat a religious event or practice from a multidisciplinary perspective, and if the course gives an assessment of a religious event within a particular historical situation, I think assessment has to be shaped to fit each school. I have not seen evidence to show that we can do what I call a “fin all” assessment that works for all programs of religion in all schools.

**Lowé**: I think a good test of our teaching is how students learn to think. We design courses that ask questions that address experiences and values different from their own. In a time when accountability looms as an important question for many stakeholders outside colleges and universities, being able to explain and justify outcomes is important. We need to exercise caution here, and make clear that religious studies as a part of the academic humanities does not...
Proposals Offer Insight into Complexities of Religion Major

Religious Studies at the Community College
Steve Young, McHenry County (IL) College

Close to half of all American college stu-
dents attend community colleges, and the bulk of these young men and women com-
plete the majority of their general educa-
tion requirements before transferring to a four-year institution. Approximately 70 per-
cent of these transfer students will change their major at least once as an under-
graduate. From this it follows that (a) community colleges are poised to play an
important role in developing the pool of potential religious studies majors at four-
year institutions, and (b) a large percentage of teaching about the academic study of
religion will occur in the community college. McHenry County College in Crystal Lake,
Illinois, contributes to this trend. Located in one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois,
the college now serves a younger, more tradi-
tional student body. Since the mid-1990s, it has experienced an 84% increase in fulltime,
associate degree-seeking candi-
dates and a 47 percent increase in those students who plan to transfer to a four-year institution. Meanwhile, the Humanities Department has seen a 109 percent increase in annual credit hours. Most
notably, “Philosophy 261: Religions of the World” — the cornerstone to building a
larger religious studies program at MCC — has grown apace from 466 annual credit hours
enrolled for in 1995–1996 to averaging over 1,000 credit hours each year from 2001 through
2006. Now, in their first two years of college, most students at MCC are exposed to religious
studies mostly and indirectly through other disciplines. For example, different
sects of Islam might be touched upon in an introductory course on the history of
Western civilization, an English course on comparative literature, or even during art
history class. In-depth teaching — to promote intercultural knowledge, to engage the
moral and spiritual issues central to humanity, or to invigorate more critical and
constructive learning in the light of recent global events — is not, however, offered in
the core coursework most students will complete before transferring to a four-year institution.

The challenges for religious studies at MCC, therefore, are similar to those at many
other community colleges. And attempts to identify and address these chal-
 lenges should be useful for both MCC and potentially for other community colleges as
well. The key challenges we face at MCC are as follows: few course offerings in reli-
gious studies; few faculty trained in reli-
gious studies; difficulty in finding qualified
adjunct instructors; coordinating the inter-
disciplinary study of religion; addressing the appropriateness of religious studies at a
secular educational institution given cultur-
al marginalization and privatization of reli-
gion, meaning appropriate course offer-
ings and linking them with Illinois Articulation Initiative and programs at four-year schools; and generating and sus-
aining sufficient enrollment for new cour-
 ses in religious studies. The religion major is central to a liberal education in America. Students must
become more religiously literate to better understand the root belief systems of other
cultures, the foundations of their own cul-
ture, and intelligently and ethically judge
the pressing public policy issues of the day in a more global context. Community col-
leges can be decisive in offering religious studies courses to serve as a foundation to
baccalaureate-seeking transfer students who will continue this field of study at a four-
year institution. To that end, the college has
sustained a dialogue over the challenges listed above, and based on the popularity of the “Religions of the World” course thus far, the Philosophy Department has explored the possibility of instituting a much broader religious studies program at McHenry County College.

Religion at Colorado Christian University: The Challenge
Jeffrey Mallinson and Frank Mitchel Ames, Colorado Christian University

The American Academy of Religion’s mission “welcomes all disciplined reflection on
religion — both from within and outside of communities of belief and practice — and
seeks to enhance its broad public understanding.” Colorado Christian University’s School of Theology is arguably located near the geographical epicenter of North American Evangelicalism. The chall-
enge, in this context, is to help students and community members understand the
tools of the academic study of religion to the extent that it can become appropriately self-critical, even within a community of belief and practice. This proposal solicits
much-needed help toward creating a viable and respectable religion major despite the
historic difficulties of such work within the evangelical academy. A seed grant would help our academic unit formulate a strong proposal for a religion major, complete with grants for research, academic freedom and the integrity of scholarship
alongside confessional restrictions. We believe this process will produce both a suc-
cessful religion program as well as an inter-
resting report to the American Academy of Religion regarding the unique challenges of a comparative religion program at a distinc-
tively Christian institution, especially regarding programmatic emphases on the nature of fundamentals.

After careful planning and study, the School of Theology hopes to inaugurate a religion major. This will draw on those confessional institutions that use the term “religion” as an umbrella for a variety of dogmatic, historical, and textual studies within Christian theology. Rather, the reli-
gion program at Colorado Christian University will train students in the methodologies and literature central to the top religion programs in the academy. Oversight for curricular development will come from Jeffrey Mallinson, dean of the School of Theology. The primary faculty member to direct the process will be Frank Ames. Planning will emphasize the role of the study of fundamentals, and strategies to ensure academic freedom with-
in a confessional institution. Long term, our goal is to create a center for the under-
standing of American Evangelicalism within
the movement, in order to provide students with the academic tools for produc-
tive and sensitive self-criticism.

Religious Studies in Texas: A Mission without a Major
Rebecca Raphael, Texas State University–San Marcos

No public university in Texas has an inde-
pendent department of religion. Only one, the University of Texas at Austin, has a reli-
gion major. Attempts to establish majors and departments often meet with
entrenched opposition at both the local and state level. The purpose of this project is to first, examine the historical and
social context of the expansion of religious studies at Texas State University–San Marcos; and second, to explore what the American Academy of Religion can do to support religious studies in the absence of a major or department.

Since the second most populous state is unlikely to support departments in the near future, the AAR should plan outside the department-centric model of religious stud-
ies in the liberal arts. In 1999, the Philosophy Department hired Rebecca Raphael as the only religious stud-
ies scholar on the faculty of Texas State University. She revised courses formerly
 taught by local ministers, obtained normal academic funding for all of them, and
became the coordinator of the department’s interdisciplinary minor in religion.
Enrollment in the minor has increased six-
fold, and average course enrollment has tripled. In spite of this demonstrated demand, the department’s proposal to
establish a tenure line and to move toward a major have been consistently rejected by administrators. In fact, the religion minor remains the only minor in the university not supported by at least one tenure line. During the 2007–2008 academic year, the principal investigator will organize two public panel discussions. One will bring biblical scholars and First Amendment spe-
cialists to campus to discuss academic study of the Bible in the state’s public high
schools and universities. The other will ini-
tiate a dialogue on how a liberal arts cur-
riculum, absent a religion major, can better address the urgent public need for better
knowledge of the world’s religions. Speaker invitations will draw on those personal
significant with the issues in Texas, e.g., Mark Chaneey of SMU or Douglas Laycock
of the University of Michigan School of Law. In addition, the principal investigator will conduct a survey of students and admin-
istrators to determine perceptions about reli-
gion studies. The survey and follow-up interviews will determine the relative
importance of several factors (e.g., percep-
tions about constitutionality or the aca-
demic quality of the field) in obstructing development of a major. The results should also
provide the AAR with insight into how to
promote the study of religion in the absence of a major or a department.

Texas State University trains more public school teachers than any other university in Texas. The presence or absence of religious studies in its curriculum thus directly a-
facts what prospective elementary and secondary teachers take into their future
classrooms. Finally, the AAR still needs to
attend to suspicion of religious studies, especially in the public university system of
such a large and influential state as Texas.

Religious Studies in a Jesuit Context
Paul G. Crowley, SJ, Santa Clara University

Santa Clara, a Jesuit University in the heart of California’s Silicon Valley, is the oldest
institution of higher learning in the State of California. Santa Clara is today a compre-
hen sive private university with some 9,500 undergraduate students, most of whom are
enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, the remainder in the Schools of Business
and Engineering. As part of the Santa Clara Core Curriculum, all undergraduates take

See SEED GRANTS p.25
Do You Know Where Your Students Are? Tracking Undergraduate Religion Majors

Darby Kathleen Ray, Millsaps College

SEED GRANTS, from p.24

three courses in the department, one of the largest units in the university.

We find that we are a unique department among Catholic and even Jesuit universities. The department strongly identifies itself as a "religious studies" department, and offers postbaccalaureate lives in a complex, globalized world? We wager that answers to these questions will help us improve our teaching, our curriculum, and maybe even the reputation, vitality, and utility of our discipline. Others of us are not so sanguine. We worry about the time, energy, and brain drain caused by such efforts; about the homogenizing and flattening of program types, expectations, and learning that can come about when we all march to the same drummer (or accreditation rubric, as the case may be); about the loss of risk-taking, courses, teachers, scholars, and students.

One of the challenges that we have faced in the past is how to keep track of our graduates. We knew that we needed to do something with this information, but we were not sure what. We decided to start a longitudinal assessment project. Our goal was to track our students over time, and to use the information we collected to make improvements to our curriculum and teaching.

Tracking Graduates

We began by collecting basic information about our graduates, such as their names, majors, and graduation dates. We also asked them to provide us with information about their future plans, such as plans to go to graduate school or to enter the workforce.

We then began to keep track of our graduates, contacting them periodically to ask about their current activities. We have used this information to make improvements to our curriculum and teaching.

We have found that tracking our graduates has been very beneficial. It has allowed us to see how our students are doing after they graduate, and to make improvements to our curriculum and teaching based on this information.

Conclusion

Tracking our graduates has been a valuable tool for us. It has allowed us to see how our students are doing after they graduate, and to make improvements to our curriculum and teaching based on this information. We believe that other departments could benefit from tracking their graduates as well.

Darby Kathleen Ray
Millsaps College
make simplistic claims about outcomes. Our goal is to illuminate
and critically analyze central questions about the meaning in
human experience across the ages and around the world.

Kassam: I'm not much interested in quantifying excellence, although I real-
iize that it is necessary to do so for administrative purposes. What interests me is what goes on in the classroom, as
that is our first point of contact with students. We are lucky in
that the study of religion in the academy continues to evolve and
continue to surface the many complexities associated with the
study of religion, which now is no longer just the study of

say, what is their greatest strength about the
way our field currently trains its undergraduates? What is
the greatest weakness?

Chopp: Our greatest strength is the incredible expansion of

we view our field at this year's annual meeting,
our greatest strength is the incredible expansion of the
field and the sheer creativity of the scholarship over the last 30
years.

religion all depends on what is done in the classroom, as a first
indica
tor. Religious studies are by and large a service department
that


tables and the study of religion. Although I
realize it is necessary to do so for administrative
purposes. What interests me is what goes on in the classroom,
as that is our first point of contact with students. We are
lucky in that the study of religion in the academy continues to evolve and
continue to surface the many complexities associated with the
study of religion, which now is no longer just the study of

religion.

What do you think is the greatest strength about the
way our field currently trains its undergraduates? What is
the greatest weakness?

Chopp: Our greatest strength is the incredible expansion of
the field and the sheer creativity of the scholarship over the last 30
years. We have expanded the number of religions studied and the
tools with which we study them. We have begun to embrace seri-
ously the diverse experience of men and women within any one
religion. We have also embraced studying popular reli-

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MY PROJECT was to explore how the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Indian immigrants to Guadeloupe, French West Indies, in 2004 impacted Indo-Guadeloupean and Hindu discourses of religious self-representation. During my dissertation field research in 2002–03, I found that Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus expected that 2004 was going to be a year of recognition of their role and status on the island. They dreamed, for example, that Hinduism would emerge with the same status as Catholicism, the dominant religious tradition. They actively pursued these goals by planning events that would mark Hinduism as a nonthreatening religion. My research in 2005 sought to examine whether the organizers’ expectations were fulfilled and how the multicultural festivals and public religious rituals organized to commemorate the 150th anniversary had participated in the creation of new understandings of Hinduism in Guadeloupe.

My informants were delighted that I returned “to study” them but clearly disappointed that my goal was to examine 2004 and its impacts. This puzzled me. When I had left Guadeloupe a year and a half earlier, 2004 was all that mattered to most of them. Now they avoided talking about 2004 and preferred to talk about the upcoming sugar cane harvest. Why were they choosing to talk about an annual event and avoid one that had occurred only once in 150 years?

After failing to get them to speak about 2004, I decided to see what I could find in the island’s local archives. The records I needed, however, had not been microfilmed and I had to beg the island’s newspaper to let me use their archival copies. As I took digital photos of the columns, I made notes of my first impressions of the headlines, articles, and advertisements. Typical headlines such as “Éloge de la diversité culturelle” or “Année de l’Inde: le méritoire à l’honneur” revealed nothing of the hopes that Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had expressed to me in 2002–03.

Instead, they epitomized the local government’s message: 2004 was characterized as the year in which diversity was celebrated without alluding to what this diversity was actually composed of. In other words, the local paper portrayed 2004 within the rhetoric of French multiculturalism, which allows the government to express the undeniable fact that France is made up of people who came from different places without really acknowledging a specific expression of that cultural difference. It dawned on me that during my first round of interviews, I had only asked about what had happened, instead of what had not happened, and guessed that that might explain my informants’ evasiveness.

In my second round of interviews, I read some of these newspaper headlines to my informants (choosing articles that reported on an event I knew they had been involved with) and simply asked how they felt the articles portrayed the event. They started talking. Many could not stop talking. Most could not shake the feeling that their show had been stolen. Because the different Indo-Guadeloupean and Hindu members of the organizing committee had let their worldviews and hopes for 2004 interfere in their relationship during the planning months of the commemorative events, the local government had taken on the role of mediator. This role, many informants claimed, allowed it to control how the events of 2004 were portrayed. In this way, there had been a surplus of rhetoric. Because there was not a unified voice to speak for and represent their hopes for 2004, the commemorative events became an example of republican diversity instead of an opportunity for Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus to make self-identity claims.

I further discovered that while Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had not been able to claim their religious difference in 2004, Hindu discourses of self-representation did change. Ironically, the multicultural festivals that had been designed to highlight local Hinduism allowed Indo-Guadeloupean, Guadeloupean Hindu, and Guadeloupean audiences to discover the global context of Guadeloupean Hindu religious practices. For decades, Indo-Guadeloupeans and Guadeloupean Hindus had been bullied by Afro-Guadeloupeans because of their role in the history of the island’s economy. In addition, because their religious practices involved animal sacrifice, Hindus were likened to sorcerers and Hinduism to sorcery. But this changed in 2004 when events such as the film festival allowed Guadeloupean audiences to become familiar, for example, with Hindu Bollywood piety (for example, that of Paro and Devdas) and understand Guadeloupean Hindu piety in a similar light. And, soon, many Guadeloupean stereotypes of Hindus and Hinduism became obsolete. While many of the worldviews of Guadeloupean Hinduism remain little understood amongst general Guadeloupean audiences, 2004 changed the way Hinduism was perceived.

A Hindu officiant conducts a puja (an act of worship) at the Monument of the First Day on December 24, 2005. The monument, built at the port of Pointe-à-Pitre in 2004, commemorates the arrival of the Aurélie, the first convoy transporting Indian and Hindu immigrant labor to Guadeloupe on December 24, 1854.
In the Public Interest

Transformative Education in a Prison

Lawrence Mamiya, Vassar College

For the first 20 years of the program, Vassar students participated for a half unit of Field Work credit. As the program expanded in popularity, the prison began to place enrollment limits since at one point there were over 60 students per semester participating in the program. Professor Mark Cladin, now at Brown University, helped to run the program for ten years. The program was converted from Field Work to the Africana Studies Program, which provided an academic base and a Sunday evening class that met every third week from 5 to 7 PM on campus. The class shared pizza together, watched films on prisons, discussed their prison experiences and required readings, and heard guest lecturers on writing in prison, women in prison, and public policy issues. The students were required to keep a detailed ethnographic prison journal about their feelings and thoughts of going to the prison, discussion groups, readings, films, and lectures.

In recent years the prison program has expanded to include the Owsley medium-security prison and the Duchess County Jail. Additional interested faculty members have been recruited to provide adult supervision at these prisons.

The level of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.

Fyodor Dostoevsky

For a long period of time Christianity was the only religion recognized by prison officials. The turbulent decade of the 1960s led to lawsuits by members of the Nation of Islam that helped to pave the way for Muslims, Jews, and others to have their religious traditions and practices recognized. Anyone who has done volunteer work in a prison recognizes that there is a multiplicity of religious groups—including Protestant and Catholic groups, Rastafarians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Moorish Science, Five Percenters, Santeria, African Hebrew Israelites, etc. Over the years at Green Haven, Vassar students have participated in the Islamic Therapeutic Program (ITP) that used Islamic principles to deal with alcohol and drug abuse. They have also sat inAzan sessions with the members of the Luna Foundation, a Zen Buddhist group established in an American prison.

Incarceration in a maximum security prison over a long period of time constitutes a major crisis that often brings a person to a crossroad in their lives. They must decide whether they are going to change and transform themselves positively, taking responsibility for their crime, and leaving the street life behind. Or they can choose to become worse better at doing the negative things without getting caught. Since the prison experience involves this crossroad, a major choice point in life, many incarcerated persons seek some form of spirituality and discipline in making the change. This is the main reason there are so many religious groups. Even those who don’t wish to join an institutional religion will seek to construct some form of personal spiritual worldview for themselves that can help them through the transformation. Most incarcerated persons seek to transcend the harshs and brutal prison environment whether it is by writing poetry, doing art, singing, praying, or participating in a group religious ritual. Religious volunteers from the outside constitute the largest percentage of civilian volunteers in all prisons.

Vassar students have been fortunate because they meet and work with peer counselors who are in the process of positive self-transformation. These peer counselors, who lead the discussion groups, share their personal stories of changes they have made in their lives. Over the years, both students and faculty participants have reported that when working with oppressed people, the experience is so deep and powerful that it can provide opportunities for their own self-transformation. For them, and for the incarcerated men, the dialogue groups are often the first time that they have been able to talk to and learn from each other across race and class boundaries over an extended period of time.

Religion in Prison

Religion is closely related to the establishment of prisons in the United States. The origin of the term “penitentiary” derives from its religious usage of doing penance and repentance while incarcerated. The Quakers of Pennsylvania and Auburn, New York, influenced the policies of the first American prisons or penitentiaries or prisons, which involved solitary confinement, working in silence, and reading the Bible. Religion as a principle for the reformation of character received a priority in the Auburn system. In fact the Auburn system also gave priority to using prison chaplains as counselors. In both plans, the Quaker emphasis on silence in worship became the underlying principle for daily life among the incarcerated persons.

Obviously, the students learn a lot about the prison experience and the criminal justice system in the United States and for some of them their participation has been a transformative experience. But the question is often raised: what do the incarcerated men get out of those four months? For the most part half of all incarcerated persons in New York State prisons do not receive any visitors from the outside, those college students are their only visitors and contact with the outside world. As community volunteers they also serve as a check on what is going on in state prisons. The recent trend towards using more and more “for-profit private prisons” has led to a rise in the beatings and abuse of incarcerated persons, poorly trained guards, poor food and health care, lack of programs, and of course no civic responsibility. Second, the students also serve as resource persons about what is happening in the outsideworld, bringing in current events for discussion. They have been successful in the past in getting the students to come into a maximum security prison every week in spite of the attempts by correction officers and other prison officials who often portray the incarcerated men as dehumanized savages and brutes. For most of the American public, prisons are “out of sight and out of mind” to the most segregated and disadvantaged sector of society. Finally, the students have also had the student newspaper publish the poetry and short stories that the men have written, giving them a voice in the public.

In the last 20 years of the program, Vassar has also been able to work with other groups. Many have cited its influence in their decisions about future studies and careers. Publications such as the Vassar Quarterly and the Miscellany News have documented the students’ stories. As an outstanding student athlete, Nancy N饯ey ’84 had the men at Green Haven write a recommendation for her application for a Rhodes Scholarship. The student was deeply impressed by their recommendation and she made it to the final round until a West Point cadet won in her section. Nancy spent two terms (four years) with the Peace Corps in Mali. She went on to complete a PhD program in sociology and is teaching at Monmouth University. She is also doing volunteer work at the Tacoma Women’s Prison.
From the Student Desk

Exploring the Intersecting Spaces of Culture and Religion in Academia

Néstor Medina, University of Toronto

ORIGINALLY BORN in Guatemala, I migrated to Canada 18 years ago, at the age of 22. Not long after my arrival I chose to pursue further education. As I attempted to integrate into my newly adopted society, I became acutely aware of my Guatemalan roots and culture. Although I always admired and enjoyed sharing life with people from other cultural backgrounds, this time it was different. It was not as if everything I did was perfunctory, paying little attention to the complex set of social rules and cultural codes of conduct that I had inherited from my original background, but in a different geographical context. I lived according to codes of conduct that I had inherited from my original background, but in a Guatemalan in Canada and began to change as I acquired new cultural symbols and codes. This became more evident concerning the role of culture in the study of religion and theology. I did not understand why, for some inconceivable reason, I could not think, function, or process information as most of my Anglo-European peers did. It was impossible for me to be as “objective” as the academy required. My concerns and questions about reality were different, and so was the manner in which I engaged them. It took some time, but I came to the realization that whatever I understood as culture was fluid and changeable; it was not something that I produced alone as an individual, separated from the community and society to which I belonged. As a result of my newly found consciousness, and in the interest of understanding better the role of culture in all of my activities, I started questioning the epistemological bases and ways of framing and acquiring knowledge prescribed by the academy. I was tremendously enriched by the knowledge imparted to me by the European and Anglo-American authors with whom I interacted. But there was still a gap that needed to be filled. These authors, with very few exceptions, did not respond to some of the questions I was asking, and their experiences did not resonate with mine. Although I found great affinity with writers from Guatemala (and Latin America) and other places, I realized that my context was also different from theirs and that they could only help me map out possible answers for my concerns. In the midst of this process, isolating and at times frustrating, I arrived at the conclusion that knowledge is culturally and contextually bound and constructed, and that every experience of reality is culturally conditioned.

I found this was particularly true in the study of religion and theology. Often, I encountered authors for whom religion could be studied simply as an academic intellectual exercise, playing a peripheral role in understanding people groups. But as I reflected more carefully, I concluded — oddly enough with the help of Antonio Gramsci and others — that culture is a medium for religion: religious beliefs and practices are intertwined to such a degree that faith expressions are cultural expressions. Every religious expression is colored by the rich process of socialization of people, which includes the passing down of religious beliefs, understanding of reality, and perceptions of ultimate realities. Religious symbols would not make sense without the rich infusion of meaning by the cultural group to which people belong. In the same way, I also learned that people are not passive subjects in this dynamic process of cultural construction and dissemination. Cultural groups are actively constituted collectives of people who reproduce, interact with, and challenge commonly held beliefs, cultural values, and principles. This internal dynamic and uneven relationship between the members of cultural groups creates new avenues for further cultural development. In important ways, then, my initial migration into a different society allowed me to encounter and appropriate my own cultural lenses. I would not have been as keenly aware of some of the intricacies pertaining to my cultural reality were it not because of my own journey and experience as a former refugee and immigrant. At the same time, as I engaged these questions academically, I was launched into a process of self-discovery. Although I do not think the central role of culture in human activities is clearly defined in academia, my studies have helped me better understand and articulate my own experience. It is in this way that my own life experience and my studies of religion have together contributed to my formation as an academician.

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Career Alternatives Luncheon: Focus on Religion & Journalism
11:45 AM–1:00 PM
Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and American Theological Library Association

A17–200
Special Topics Forum
Introduction to the AAR
1:00–3:30 PM

A17–409
Student Members’ Reception
9:30–11:00 AM
Don’t forget your free drink ticket!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2007
A18–132
Student Teacher Luncheon
11:30 AM–1:00 PM
Sponsored by the Graduate Student Committee and Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

STUDENT LOUNGE
The Graduate Student Committee will again host the AAR Student Lounge, Saturday through Monday, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM. Stop by for a drink and conversation. The Lounge will be located in the San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina, Business Suite 2.

*Event locations will be available onsite in the AAR-At-A-Glance publication.
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Religious Studies News
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MAMIIYA, from p. 28

Myriam Brule’ 92 became a lawyer in Canada and is working with incarcerated First Nations men and women in Canadian prisons. Kaia Stern ’96, who went to Green Haven three times a week, received a PhD in Ethics from Emory University, writing her dissertation on the more than 100 graduates of the New York Theological Seminary Masters of Professional Studies Program at Sing Sing Prison, the first academic study of this long-term program. She has also included a course on prisons in her teaching. After graduation, Sarah Fromm ’02 wanted to combine her interests in women’s studies and prisons. She applied for a job with the Women’s Prison Association and is now deputy director of the organization. She spoke to our prison class and led our workshop on Women in Prison at the reunion.

Ron Armwood ’02, an African-American Vietnam veteran and a member of a Special Forces “hunter-killer” team, became addicted to narcotics after he was wounded on a mission behind enemy lines and his team members injected him with morphine over several days to keep him quiet and manage his pain. He spent 27 years as a heroin addict in New York City, but his survival skills kept him from being arrested. He eventually turned his life around, went to LaGuardia Community College, and transferred to Vassar. As a participant in the prison program for four semesters, he often said to himself that he could be one of the incarcerated men. He graduated with honors in urban studies and went to Columbia Law School. Ron is now a director of addiction services in New York City.

Amie Fishman ’98 said, “In Green Haven, I had one of those moments when I felt the path of my life turn sharply.” As an ethnobotany major, Fishman said her two semesters at Green Haven “has fueled all of my work since then. It just wasn’t an option not to continue the work. As a white person coming from economic privilege, I’d never really thought much about prison. Stepping into one was an amazing experience. It really broke my heart to see people who had great things to contribute to the world — and who had made some very bad mistakes — being denied the opportunity to contribute.” After graduation, Fishman worked as a caseworker at San Francisco’s nonprofit Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. She is currently working on appeals of death penalty cases in California.

“I needed to see the real-life workings of the criminal justice system. The Green Haven program is a great example of a well-rounded academic experience. It was touching. It hit me like a brick, and it changed my life,” said Rob Hope’ 00. Hope recalled how easy it was to give up his initial pretenses with the men from Green Haven. Coming from a suburban Midwestern background, Hope at first thought he needed to “pretend like I knew what they were talking about. But the men were so nonthreatening; they were straightforward and encouraged honesty.” After graduation, he worked for several years for the Vera Institute for Justice in New York City. He now works for nonprofit organizations focused on criminal justice issues on the West Coast. David Jaeger ’97 said, “Before my senior year, prisons were not on my radar screen. I got an insight into an institution that a lot of Americans must but don’t know much about.” He has referred to the Green Haven program as his “antiracist education” at Vassar. Jaeger has been involved in fundraising, grant writing, and volunteer outreach for The Prison Book Program in Boston.

The Vassar College prison program has been an experiment in transformative education. It has created a model that can be replicated by other colleges and universities. In the words of an incarcerated person named Brickhouse provide the most fitting conclusion to this article: “Service to others is the rent you pay for the space you occupy on this planet.”
future directions for revaluing biblical studies in higher education; and 3) special topic sessions. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the chair, Heidi Spreek, Central Washington University, aspebk@uw.edu.

History of Christianity and North American Religions: Papers are welcomed in any area of History of Christianity and North American Religions. Proposals are especially solicited on the following themes: 1) Religion and social justice, with special interest in (but not limited to) papers addressing the Quaker church and its inner-city social activism; 2) Ecumenism (given that this year is the 60th anniversary of the World Council of Churches); 3) Religion, ecology, and greening religious communities; 4) Religion, politics, and elections; and 5) Topics related to early church history, including but not limited to ecumenism, social justice, and the relationship between church and state.

Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the co-chairs, Suzanne Crawford-O’Brien, Pacific Lutheran University, Suzanne.crawford@plu.edu, and Priscilla Dore-Levison, Seattle Pacific University, ponep@spu.edu.

Intercultural Dialogue with the Natural Sciences: Papers for this section should focus on conceptual dialogue with the natural sciences from the perspective of the traditions normally included under the academic discipline “history of religions.” Accordingly, papers written from a Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Chinese religious perspectives in dialogue with the natural on such broad topics as cosmology, evolution, stem cell research, ecomeritism, the relation between mind and body, the problem of suffering in light of the theory of evolution, the anthropic principle, and the problem of consciousness are especially welcome. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the co-chairs, Paul Ingram, Pacific Lutheran University, poingram@pacific.edu, and Mari Kim, Emory University, mkim08@emory.edu.

Women and Religion: AAR: We invite individual papers or panels on any aspect of the study of women and religion. This section especially welcomes proposals that facilitate cross-disciplinary and/or religious traditions in the study of women. Papers exploring feminist pedagogy are also welcome. SBL: We invite proposals on women in religious literature, including but not limited to, ancient Greek and Roman, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Asian religions. Papers exploring the connection between sacred texts and violence are especially welcome. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the co-chairs, Dennis Jones, Faith Seminary, djowers@faithseminary.edu, and Mari Kim, Emory University, mkim08@emory.edu.

Religion and Society: All topics related to ethics, ethical decision making, particular ethical issues, and ethical methodology and theory are welcome. We especially would welcome papers on religion and the environment, peace issues, and ethics in storytelling. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the chair, Gabe Chamberlin, Seattle University, gchamber@seattleu.edu.

Theology and Philosophy of Religion: While proposals for papers, panels, and book sessions on all aspects of the disciplines of theology and the philosophy of religion are welcome, proposals this year are especially solicited for sessions being anticipated on the following themes: 1) The French Connection: Critical Explorations of the Contributions and Influence of French Thinkers in Contemporary Philosophical and Theological Discourse; 2) Reanalyzing Jung and Freud: Examining Intersections of Psychological Traditions with Philosophy/Theology; 3) Exploring the ‘Trinity: Considering the Knowability of God and the Sacred; 4) Science New and Past: The Scientific Traditions in Philosophical and Theological Perspective; 5) A Feminist Era: Reflections on the Contributions of North American Feminist Lerty Russell; and 6) Relocating Philosophy: the Eastern Influences of “Western” Philosophical and Theological Discourses. Proposals should be submitted electronically at the region’s on-line website to the co-chairs, Dennis Jones, Faith Seminary, djowers@faithseminary.edu, and Mari Kim, Emory University, mkim08@emory.edu.

REPRESENTATION AND LIVING TRADITION: Proposals are welcome in all areas of religious and biblical studies. The Program

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DOING JUSTICE TO MERCY
Religion, Law, and Criminal Justice

EDITED BY JONATHAN ROTHCILD, MATTHEW MEER BOYLFORD, AND KEVIN JUNG

It is often assumed that the law and religion address different spheres of human life. Religion and ethics articulate complex systems of moral reasoning that concern norms, deliberation of ends, cultivation of disposition, and transformation of moral agency. Law, in contrast, seeks to govern human conduct through procedural justice, rights, and public good. Doing Justice to Mercy challenges this assumption by presenting the reader with an urgent conversation between the law and religion that yields a constructive approach, both theoretically and practically, to the complex role of mercy in our legal process. Authored by legal practitioners, activists, and theorists in addition to theologians and ethicists, the essays collected here are informed by timeless principles, and yet they could not be timelier.

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Southeastern (AAR/SBL/ASOR/SE) March 7–9, 2008 Marriott Century Center Atlanta, GA

The following sections and program units invite members who wish to present a paper or coordinate a session to submit proposals (1–2 pages) or completed manuscripts to the appropriate section chairs by the call deadline, October 1, 2007. Each member is limited to one proposal. Please use the proposal submission form available on the SECSOR website (www.seconsor.appstate.edu). Proposals for joint sessions should be sent to all chairs.

Please note that unless otherwise indicated, papers must be of such a length as can be presented and discussed within 45 minutes. Planned use of audiovisual equipment must be noted on the submission form. Because of the very high cost of renting audiovisual equipment, presenters who wish to use such equipment must provide it themselves. SECSOR will provide a limited number of designated AV rooms with a screen, cart, and cords; however, presenters must bring their own projection, audio, and other AV equipment. It is still necessary for program planners to know which presenters are planning to use AV equipment so they can be scheduled in appropriate rooms. It is imperative that we have all information concerning AV equipment on proposal forms. This allows us to plan “AV rooms” where sessions with similar needs can be scheduled. AV costs are based on a per-room, per-day basis. By blocking rooms, SECSOR can save substantially on conference costs. Thank you for your cooperation.

The copying of handouts is also the responsibility of the presenter. All program participants must be preregistered for the meeting.

Suggestions for new program units or special speakers should be sent to SECSOR’s executive director or to the vice president/program chair of the respective society (see list of regional officers below). Consultation on Teaching Feminism/Womanism

The consultation invites proposals for 90-minute interactive workshops emphasizing practical aspects of womanist/feminist peda-
gogy, with special interest in the following issues: 1) teaching for/against social change; 2) men in the feminist classroom (e.g., as men at teacher’s conference, authors of texts on men and masculinity as an area of study/teaching; trans/genderqueer issues in the feminist classroom); 3) feminism and feminist pedagogy in foundations courses; and 4) engaged learning and the development of relationships within the broader community, social movements, and organizations. Workshops proposers may come from individuals or groups, and should be designed to occupy the space of a full session (90 minutes). Submit proposals to co-chairs: Margaret Aymer, Mercersburg College, nuareen@medfords.edu and Leitia Campbell, Emory University, leitia.campbell@emory.edu.

(AAR) Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy Themes: 1) Open call on Health, Healing, Religion, and Teaching: Papers can include text and individual or textual traditions such as Gyanvad, seals in the religion classroom, the impact of teaching religion on one’s health and/or the health of one’s students, the impact of one on the health of one’s colleagues, and engaged learning and wellness. 2) Open call on graduate students and teaching religion: Papers may include “best practices” by professors who teach graduate students, graduate students evaluating their pedagogical method in teaching religion, papers on being taught religion as a graduate student, etc. Papers may focus on arranged and/or extra-curricular places in which graduate students in religion-centered degree programs might teach or be taught, including but not limited to undergraduate programs, graduate school programs, graduate professional/programmatic places, places of worship defined widely, and so on. 3) Open call on Teaching Islam post-9/11. 4) Books That Help Us Teach: Hebrew Bible Survey Courses (joint with Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament). 5) A joint invited session with Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy on the history of religion and pedagogy. Submit proposals to chair: Margaret Aymer, Interdenominational Theological Center, mayner@itc.edu.

(AAR) African-American Religion Themes: 1) Open Call. 2) New Directions in the Study of African-American Religion: Papers are sought that offer new angles of vision for the present and future study of African-American religion. This includes engagement with interdisciplinary anthologies and individual texts such as Gyanvad seals in the religion classroom, the impact of teaching religion on one’s health and/or the health of one’s students, the impact of one on the health of one’s colleagues, and engaged learning and wellness. 2) Open call on graduate students and teaching religion: Papers may include “best practices” by professors who teach graduate students, graduate students evaluating their pedagogical method in teaching religion, papers on being taught religion as a graduate student, etc. Papers may focus on arranged and/or extra-curricular places in which graduate students in religion-centered degree programs might teach or be taught, including but not limited to undergraduate programs, graduate school programs, graduate professional/programmatic places, places of worship defined widely, and so on. 3) Open call on Teaching Islam post-9/11. 4) Books That Help Us Teach: Hebrew Bible Survey Courses (joint with Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament). 5) A joint invited session with Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy on the history of religion and pedagogy. Submit proposals to chair: Margaret Aymer, Interdenominational Theological Center, mayner@itc.edu.

(AAR) Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament Themes: 1) Two or three open sessions. We especially encourage submissions for a session on “Health, Healing, and the Hebrew Bible.” For these sessions, please send proposals (or completed papers if you have never presented) to Bryan Bibb, Religion Department, Furman Hall Suite 206, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29613, USA; bryan.bibb@furman.edu, and David Garber, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, 3001 Mercer University DR, Atlanta, GA 30341, USA; garber_dj@mercer.edu. 2) An invited panel on “Books That Help Us Teach: Hebrew Bible Survey Courses” (joint with Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy). 3) An invited panel commemorating the life and work of James Barr. 4) An invited panel on interpreting the Hebrew Bible in film. Submit proposals to: David Garber, McAfee School of Theology, garber_dj@mercer.edu.

(AAR) History of Christianity A call for papers in the History of Christianity on the general theme of “Healing, and the Hebrew Bible.” For these sessions, please send proposals (or completed papers if you have never presented) to Bryan Bibb, Religion Department, Furman Hall Suite 206, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29613, USA; bryan.bibb@furman.edu, and David Garber, McAfee School of Theology, garber_dj@mercer.edu.

(AAR) American Religious Hermeneutics Themes: 1) Joint open session with NT: “Reading Biblical Texts and Health.” Submit copy of proposal to chairs: Shelly Matthews (NT), Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu, and N. Samuel Murrell (Am. Bib. Hrns.), Murrell@uncw.edu. 2) Papers on all topics related to Hermeneutics and the Bible will be considered for open session. Send proposal to: Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu, and N. Samuel Murrell (Am. Bib. Hrns.), Murrell@uncw.edu. 3) Invited panel: Bible, Science, and Public Policy.

(SBL/ASOR) Archaeology and the Ancient World (4 sessions) 1) Two open sessions. 2) Workshop on the Karak Resource Project. 3) Presidential Address: John Vinaland (Kingsley Christian University). Send title and abstract (150 words) or complete paper (required of first-time presenters) to chair: Gregory L. Linnot, Johnson Bible College, 7900 Johnson Dr, Knoxville, TN 37998, USA; glinnot@jbc.edu.

(AAR) Arts, Literature, and Religion Themes: 1) A joint session with the History of Religion section concerning teaching Asian religions through literature and film. 2) Topics focused on the therapeutic uses of artistic media in keeping with the broad theme of the conference “Health, Healing, and Religion.” 3) Popular conceptions of Jesus in art and literature after the movie The Passion of the Christ, either cultural reactions to the film, or comparisons, or revisions. 4) Open call. Submit proposals to co-chairs: Megan Summers, Berkeley Preparatory School, meganm@uga.edu, and Adam Ware, University of Georgia, emusa@uga.edu.

(SBL) Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament Themes: 1) Two or three open sessions. We especially encourage submissions for a session on “Health, Healing, and the Hebrew Bible.” For these sessions, please send proposals (or completed papers if you have never presented) to Bryan Bibb, Religion Department, Furman Hall Suite 206, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29613, USA; bryan.bibb@furman.edu, and David Garber, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, 3001 Mercer University DR, Atlanta, GA 30341, USA; garber_dj@mercer.edu. 2) An invited panel on “Books That Help Us Teach: Hebrew Bible Survey Courses” (joint with Academic Study of Religion and Pedagogy). 3) An invited panel commemorating the life and work of James Barr. 4) An invited panel on interpreting the Hebrew Bible in film. Submit proposals to: David Garber, McAfee School of Theology, garber_dj@mercer.edu.

(AAR) History of Christianity A call for papers in the History of Christianity on the general theme of “Healing, Healing, and Religion” in the Early Church, Medieval Period, Reformation, or Modern Christianity, especially considering the practice of healing in modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, as well as theological debates of healing and teaching in Catholic and Protestant writers. Submit proposals to chair: Michael Simmons, Auburn University, bhosimmons@auburn.edu.

(SBL) New Testament Themes: 1) Open Call. 2) Call for papers related to the theme of the New Testament, health, and healing. 3) Call for papers on extracanonical texts related to issues of Christian origins. 4) Invited Panel on topic to be announced. 5) A joint session with the American Biblical Hermeneutics Section on “Reading Biblical Texts and Health.” For theme #5, submit copies of proposal to chairs of both sections: Shelly Matthews (NT), Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu, and N. Samuel Murrell (Am. Bib. Hrns.), Murrell@uncw.edu. All other submissions should be sent to chair: Shelly Matthews, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett HWY, Greenville, SC 29613, USA; Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu.

(AAR) American Religious Hermeneutics Themes: 1) Joint open session with NT: “Reading Biblical Texts and Health.” Submit copy of proposal to chairs: Shelly Matthews (NT), Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu, and N. Samuel Murrell (Am. Bib. Hrns.), Murrell@uncw.edu. 2) Papers on all topics related to Hermeneutics and the Bible will be considered for open session. Send proposal to: Shelly.Matthews@furman.edu, and N. Samuel Murrell (Am. Bib. Hrns.), Murrell@uncw.edu. 3) Invited panel: Bible, Science, and Public Policy.

(SBL/ASOR) Archaeology and the Ancient World (4 sessions) 1) Two open sessions. 2) Workshop on the Karak Resource Project. 3) Presidential Address: John Vinaland (Kingsley Christian University). Send title and abstract (150 words) or complete paper (required of first-time presenters) to chair: Gregory L. Linnot, Johnson Bible College, 7900 Johnson Dr, Knoxville, TN 37998, USA; glinnot@jbc.edu.
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Religion and Science
This section welcomes papers that analyze the various ways that science and religion intersect; topics may include (but are not limited to) historical analyses, theological/religious reflection on the implications of scientific theories and methods, scientific theories of religion, and examinations of social and political forces that shape the intersection of science and religion in contemporary culture.

Greg Peterson, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

Religion and Ecology
Submissions are welcome on any aspect of religion and ecology study, including the role of politics, globalization, war, or legal decisions in the creation of and/or resistance to environmental degradation. Other topics within the field are encouraged.

Nancy Vitorin-Vangerud, United Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, MN

Religion, Art, and Culture
Submissions are welcome on all topics that examine the relationships between religion and cultural ideas, including but not limited to, music, literature, and all forms of art, as well as the ways in which religion shapes and is shaped by culture.

Larry Harwood, Viterbo University, La Crosse, WI

Religion, Gender, and Sexuality
Submissions are welcome on all topics that explore the intersections between religious ideas and constructions of gender and/or sexuality. This section consolidates the Women & Religion and Religion & Sexuality sections.

C. Neal Keeye, College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN

Philosophy of Religion

Systematic Theology
This section invites papers that examine the interface between philosophy and religion, including both philosophical positions within religion and philosophy of religion more generally, as well as constructive theological work in dialogue with both historical traditions and aspects of the contemporary context.

Paul Capetz, United Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN

World Religions
Submissions are welcome on any topics related to religious traditions other than Judaism and Christianity, or topics that involve comparative reflection on more than one religious tradition. This year, we particularly encourage papers that address pedagogical issues in world religions or comparative religion courses; approaches to ritual, sacred texts, and/or mysticism in Asian religions and/or Islam; and the relationship between globalization, politics, and world religions.

Mark Berkoon, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN

Continued on p. 38
Tenure-track position available August 22, 2008, in religion and culture with specialization in Bible and cultural critical theory. Major responsibility: teaching load of six courses per year (3/semester), undergraduate. Typical semester teaching duties include two sections of “Introduction to Religion and Culture,” and one upper-level course in the candidate’s area of expertise in the modern period.

Proposals for papers on any aspect of the history of religions in Greek and Roman antiquity are welcome.

Religion in the Ancient World

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, graduate school transcripts, three letters of recommendation, writing sample, and brief statement of teaching philosophy and research interest to: Dr. Elizabeth Agnew, Search Committee Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Review of applications will begin September 15, 2007, for initial screening at November AAR.

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies seeks to attract an active, culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber. Ball State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.
Signs, Sighs & Significance

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