



Fostering Excellence  
In the Study of Religion

## American Academy of Religion

## In This Issue

### Friends:

Greetings from the Luce Center in Atlanta! We are making final plans for our Annual Meeting in Chicago, which is now only 5 weeks away. This month's e-Bulletin contains news about that event, as well as other items. Most important among these are the elections for AAR Vice President. Please take the time to read the candidate's profiles and please participate in the election. And for those of you involved in Theological Education, please note the announcement of our new Luce Summer Seminar Program on Comparative Theology.

See you in Chicago next month!

Yours sincerely

Jack Fitzmier  
Executive Director

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## AAR ELECTION

You should soon receive notice of the electronic ballot for the 2008 AAR elections. The Vice President position is to be filled during this election. You can view the candidates' statements at the [AAR Election Page](#) after the elections open on September 22. (You will need to log in to use this page, using your surname, "[name]" and member ID "[aar\_id]"). The successful candidates will take office at the conclusion of the 2008 Annual Meeting. This is a wonderful opportunity to influence the governance of the AAR, so please cast your vote for the candidates when elections are open September 22–October 20, 2008.

### Important Dates

**October 13:**  
Annual Meeting Job Center  
Registration Closes

**October 31:**  
2009 Annual Meeting  
Registration Opens

**November 1-3:**  
2008 Annual Meeting in

## ANNUAL MEETING

### \$250 Shopping Spree

Want to win a \$250 shopping spree in the AAR Exhibit Hall? Come by the Exhibit Hall on the Lower Level of the Chicago Hilton Towers Hotel during our grand opening on Friday, October 31, 7:00–9:00 PM. Pick up a Montreal postcard, write your name, hotel room, or cell number on it, and get it stamped at five exhibit booth stations. Then drop it off at the AAR Booth (501) for your chance to win! The drawing will be Saturday morning at 9:00 AM. Good luck!

### Annual Meeting Job Center 2008

Registration for the [Annual Meeting Job Center](http://www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter) (hyperlink to: [www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter](http://www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter)) closes October 13. The Job Center is an efficient way for employers and candidates to communicate and participate in job interviews. Those who register by the deadline will receive full benefits.

### U.S. Election Day

Attendees at the Annual Meeting are reminded that the U.S. election will be on Tuesday, November 4, the day after the meeting ends. Please make your travel arrangements with this in mind.

### Krista Tippett to Address Annual Meeting Leadership Workshop

American Public Media's *Speaking of Faith* host and author Krista Tippett will be the featured speaker at the [Leadership Workshop](#) in Chicago on October 31. The workshop, "Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know," will begin with Tippett's discussion of educating students for public life. Participants will receive a complimentary copy of Tippett's book, *Speaking of Faith*, and a book signing will follow the workshop. Online and mail-in/fax registration for the workshop is open. You can [register online](#) for the workshop. There is a limit of 75 people, so we strongly encourage early registration. See the October *Religious Studies News* for more details on the workshop.

Chicago, IL

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**RELIGION IN THE RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE**

**AAR Religion and Media Workshop, Friday, October 31st  
Chicago Hilton Towers, 9:30 AM–5 PM**

With the historic nomination of an African-American to the highest political office in the country, and interest in religion prominent in the press, blogosphere, and airways, the [2008 Religion and Media Workshop](#) is pleased to announce that **DWIGHT N. HOPKINS** (University of Chicago) and **MELISSA HARRIS-LACEWELL** (Princeton University) will be speaking on “Race and Religion in the Race for the White House,” during our annual pre-conference workshop on Friday, October 31st.



Just days before the election, they and other panelists will explore the role of religion in the 2008 presidential contest. Additional sessions include Steve Waldman (founder and CEO of *Beliefnet.com*) and Christian Lundberg (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) speaking on “Making Religion in the Public Square;” and Kathleen Flake (Vanderbilt Divinity School), Melissa Proctor (Harvard University), and Manya Brachear (*The Chicago Tribune*), speaking on “When ‘Mitt’s a Mormon’ Is News.” The afternoon will feature small group lunch discussions, a transatlantic perspective from former BBC journalist Jane Little, and a roundtable on evangelicalism and politics with sociologist Michael Lindsay, journalist Jeff Sharlet, and historian Randall Balmer.

[Register today](#) to join these scholars, fellow educators, and journalists in a timely discussion on the relationship between religion and American electoral politics.

**LUCE SUMMER SEMINARS ON COMPARATIVE  
THEOLOGY**

The AAR is very pleased to announce that we have been awarded a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to deliver [Summer Seminars on Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology](#) to theological educators. These seminars will help faculty participants to formulate a working answer to the properly theological question, “What significance does my neighbor’s faith and tradition have for my own?” Two cohorts will each be composed of 25 participants and 8 instructors and will gather for a week-long event the first summer, then a one day event the following fall at the Annual Meeting, followed by another week-long event the next summer.

## AAR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

The Committee on Teaching and Learning seeks nominations for the [AAR Award for Excellence in Teaching](#). Nominations of winners of campus awards, or any other awards, are encouraged. Procedures for the nomination process are outlined on the AAR website.

## IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT DETWEILER

Robert Detweiler, former Director of the Emory University Institute of the Liberal Arts, died August 31, 2008 in his home on St. Simons Island, Georgia, at the age of 76.

Robert Detweiler was Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts (ILA) at Emory University, and served as the Institute's director for eight years (1974–1982). He was also the director of the Institute's graduate studies program from 1987 to 1989.

Detweiler's interests were formed by the Mennonite Church of Pennsylvania (the Pennsylvania Dutch), by the search for his German roots, and by his experience with the victims of war. He was a freshman, in a church college in Virginia, when he decided to work on a church-sponsored relief project in post-World War II Germany. He had intended to remain for only one year, but instead stayed for six. First he built houses for refugee families, then worked with young refugees in summer camps and counseled students who had lost their families and homes.

Detweiler enrolled in the University of Hamburg to study philosophy, theology, and literature. Upon returning to the United States, he became a graduate of the University of Florida (MA, 1960; PhD, 1962). Detweiler has taught at the University of Florida, Hunter College (CUNY), and Florida Presbyterian College (Eckerd College). He has held numerous visiting appointments, including three Fulbrights (University of Salzburg, University of Regensburg, and University of Copenhagen), two appointments at the University of Hamburg, and the American National Bank Chair of Excellence in Humanities at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the predecessor of the SunTrust Bank Chair of Excellence in Humanities.

Detweiler has published extensively on the intersection of religion, literature, and culture. Among his many books are *John Updike* (1972, 1979, 1984), *Story, Sign and Self: Phenomenology and Structuralism as Literary Critical Methods* (1978, 1984), *Breaking the Fall: Religious Readings of Contemporary Fiction* (1989), and *Uncivil Rites: American Fiction, Religion, and the Public Sphere* (1996). *Breaking the Fall* (reissued 1995) was honored with a 1990 AAR Award for Excellence in Religious Studies. In addition, Detweiler's life and work were celebrated in a 1994 festschrift, *In Good Company*.

Further information can be found by clicking [here](#).

