



Fostering Excellence
In the Study of Religion

American Academy of Religion

In This Issue

AAR ELECTION RESULTS

We have successfully concluded our elections for AAR Vice President. Kwok Pui Lan has been elected Vice President. Please join the Board and the Executive Staff in congratulating this friend and in thanking Janet Gyatso for her willingness to stand for election.

LUCE SUMMER SEMINARS ON COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY: DEADLINE EXTENDED

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 proper 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. *The application deadline has been extended to January 15, 2009.*

CHICAGO ANNUAL MEETING

We are pleased to report that our first independent Annual Meeting in decades in Chicago, IL was a resounding success! Total registration for the meeting was 5996. This number reflects a 4% increase from the AAR's share of the 2007 joint AAR & SBL meeting in San Diego.

Membership Receipt

If you need a membership receipt, you do not need to contact the AAR office. Members can generate a receipt for their membership dues on

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the AAR website. Login to the AAR website at www.aarweb.org using your last name and membership ID #. Click on the "Members" tab, and then the "My AAR" tab. Click the "Your Renewal History" link and then select the year of renewal. Voila!

Receipt for Annual Meeting Housing and Registration

If you need a receipt for your Annual Meeting Housing and Registration, this is not handled by the AAR Executive office. You must contact Experient Housing and Registration Bureau at:

Experient Housing & Registration Bureau
e-mail: aarsblreg@experient-inc.com
phone: 1-800-575-7185 (US & Canada)
+1-330-425-9330 (outside the U.S. & Canada)
fax: 1-330-963-0319

Contact Us

825 Houston Mill Rd. NE
Ste. 300
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Tel: 404-727-3049
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www.aarweb.org

JAAR CALL FOR PAPERS

Religion and Reasons: Justification, Argument, and Cultural Difference

Are religious reasons similar to or fundamentally different from scientific and scholarly reasons? The *JAAR* invites papers that explore the features of reason, justification, and legitimation in religious contexts. Religions provide many kinds of reasons for belief and action. Much attention, for example, has been given to the forms of reasoning embedded in cultural forms labeled as "magic" and "divination," and similar issues arise for a host of other practices, including textual exegesis.

Do particular examples of religious reasoning bring fundamental problems for understanding across cultures or conceptual schemes? How are reasons, whether religious or scientific, implicated in contestations for influence or power? Does consideration of religious reasoning challenge contemporary academic understandings of what counts as reason or rationality?

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- the forms of reasoning embedded in interpretative activities such as divination, dream interpretation, and textual exegesis;
- the roles of extraordinary states (such as mysticism, shamanism, possession, and paranormal phenomena) in discovering and legitimating both knowledge and norms for practice;
- the persuasive dimensions of performative practices including dance and theater;
- the philosophical grounds for argumentation, rhetoric, and cross-cultural interpretation;
- the complexities in accounts of western, scientific, or scholarly reasoning that are contrasted with religious reasoning. We particularly encourage papers that offer both specific case studies and theoretical reflection.

Deadline for submission is Monday, August 3, 2009. Please submit papers to:

Journal of the American Academy of Religion
Department of Religious Studies
PO Box 400126
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126

Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

JAAR CALL FOR PAPERS

The Return of Religion after “Religion”: Consequences for Theology and Religious Studies

Talk about “the return of religion” continues to be omnipresent in public conversation and within a variety of academic fields. Along with this talk about religion’s return has come a new attention to theology. Indeed, the centrality of theology is evident in the work of scholars who are not themselves theologians (the work of Agamben, Badiou, and Žižek on political theology; Eric Santner’s notion of “psychotheology,” the attention to theology in recent American political philosophy in William Connolly’s *Why I Am Not a Secularist* and Jeffrey Stout’s *Democracy and Tradition*).

However, public talk about the return of religion is taking place at precisely the same time as we see within the academic study of religion a sharp genealogical critique of the category “religion” from both theologians (Milbank) and scholars of religion (Asad, Balagangadhara, Dubuisson, King, Masuzawa). The category is now under fire as essentialist, provincially western, imbricated in colonial projects and the like.

What are we to make of this juxtaposition? How are we to think about the prominence of public discourse about “religion” precisely when the category is under fire within the academic study of religion? JAAR invites proposals for a special issue that critically examines the return of religion after “religion” and its consequences for both theology and religious studies.

1. What is the meaning of “the return of religion” for theology and religious studies more broadly?
2. How might genealogical interrogations of the category “religion” by theologians and religious studies scholars reconfigure both fields?
3. How do we think these two questions together? _
4. How will the growing prominence of religious voices in the public sphere reshape our ideas about theological reflection and the work of religious studies more broadly? What obligations fall to theologians and religious studies scholars in an era in which religion is an integral if contested aspect of public

discourse?

5. How do both scholarly communities take up this nexus of issues in a context marked by robust religious diversity?

Deadline for submission is Monday, June 1, 2009. Please submit papers to:

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PO Box 400126
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Please direct queries to jaar@virginia.edu.

AAR AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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 at www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/teaching_awards.

RESEARCH GRANTS

Each year the AAR awards grants of up to \$5,000 for individual and collaborative research projects. The deadline to apply for a 2009 grant is August 1. For additional information and to see a list of our 2008-2009 winners, see <http://www.aarweb.org/grants>.

RELIGION AND THE ARTS AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominations are being accepted for the Religion and the Arts award, which is presented annually to an artist, performer, critic, curator, or scholar who has made a recent significant contribution to the understanding of the relations among the arts and religions, both for the Academy and for a broader public. Nominees need not be AAR members. Please, no self nominations. To be considered for the 2009 award, nominations must be made by March 30, 2009. For submission requirements and more information, visit http://www.aarweb.org/programs/awards/arts_award.

BOOK AWARDS

In order to give recognition to new scholarly publications that make significant contributions to the study of religion, the AAR offers Awards for Excellence. 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. In addition, there

is a prize for the Best First Book in the History of Religions, comprising a wholly separate competition. For eligibility requirements and awards processes, visit http://www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Book_Awards.

MARTIN E. MARTY AWARD

To nominate someone for the AAR's Martin E. Marty Award, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to the public understanding of religion by those whose work speaks to the public as well as to scholars, go to http://www.aarweb.org/Programs/Awards/Marty_Award. Deadline: January 30, 2009.