



Fostering Excellence
In the Study of Religion

American Academy of Religion

In This Issue

Friends:

Greetings from the Luce Center in Atlanta! This month's e-bulletin contains a number of items: news about the Annual Meeting in Montréal; an invitation regarding our upcoming Centennial Celebration; several calls for contributions within the Academy; and other important items.

With every good wish in this winter season, I offer you my thanks for your participation in the work of our Academy.

Jack Fitzmier
Executive Director

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ANNUAL MEETING

Call for Papers

The **2009 Call for Papers is now online**. Proposals may be submitted through the [Online Paper/Panel Proposal \(OP3\) system](#) or by using the participant forms for surface mail or e-mail. Please note and use the appropriate method of submission each program unit prefers. The deadline for all proposal submissions is **March 2, 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**.

Registration and Housing

Registration and Housing for the 2009 Annual Meeting are [now open](#). *You must be registered to secure housing*. “Advance” registration rates are in effect until September 15. Check your *March Religious Studies News* for the

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AAR Registration and Housing brochure containing all the details, and visit www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/registration.asp to register and book housing online.

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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION PUBLICATION

As a part of the AAR's Centennial Celebration in Montréal, we are preparing a publication which will celebrate the history of the AAR over the last 100 years. If you have suggestions — especially if you can supply materials — for what might be included in this publication, such as photos of AAR events (Annual Meetings or regional meetings), photos of members, photos of venues, significant initiatives, lists of influential publications, etc., please contact Carey J. Gifford at cgifford@aarweb.org by March 15.

CALL FOR AAR SERIES BOOK EDITOR

The Publications Committee seeks a book editor for the Teaching Religious Studies series, which is published in cooperation with Oxford University Press.

Further information on books published in this series can be found [here](#).

AAR series editors help set editorial policy, acquire manuscripts, and work with Oxford University Press in seeing manuscripts through to publication. Further information on the entire Oxford/AAR book series can be found [here](#). The required finalist interviews for the position will take place at the Publications Committee meeting, on Saturday, November 7, 2009 at the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal, Canada. Further information on the Publications Committee can be found [here](#).

The new editor will assume office on January 1, 2010, for a five-year (renewable once) term, and is expected to attend the two meetings of the Publications Committee: on the Saturday morning of the Annual Meeting and at the offices of Oxford University Press, in New York City, usually in mid-March.

This is a volunteer position. All applicants must be members of the American Academy of Religion. Please e-mail inquires, nominations (self-nominations are also encouraged), and applications (a letter describing interests and qualifications, plus a current curriculum vita) by Word or PDF attachment to Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Publications Committee Chair, at cduggan@shawu.edu. The application deadline is September 1, 2009.

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 legitimization 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; and
- 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.

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 Zizek 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.

- What is the meaning of “the return of religion” for theology and religious studies more broadly?
- How might genealogical interrogations of the category “religion” by theologians and religious studies scholars reconfigure both fields?
- How do we think these two questions together?
- 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?
- 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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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS — FROM THE STUDENT DESK

From the Student Desk, which appears in the March, May, and October issues of *Religious Studies News*, is currently seeking submissions for upcoming issues. Articles should address the challenges and perspectives unique to graduate student members of the AAR; a wide diversity of topics is encouraged. Issues of particular interest right now are the admissions experiences of recent applicants to doctoral programs, and the effects of university budget cutbacks on graduate student life and job searches. Submissions should not exceed 800 words and should be emailed to cshughe@emory.edu. Articles to be considered for the October 2009 issue should be sent by June 1.

AAR IS NOW ON TWITTER!

[Twitter](#) is a free messaging service that lets you stay informed about your friends and interests. You can now find updates on AAR events, job postings, In the Field notices, and more at <http://twitter.com/aarweb>. Follow us to receive notices on your own Twitter page, your mobile phone, or however you like. For more on Twitter, see this [Beginner's Guide](#).

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Meetings of the AAR regions occur in the spring. Check the [Regional Meeting](#) page for details. All AAR members are welcome to participate in any region's activities.