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RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

May 2009

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AAR President Mark Juergensmeyer discusses his thoughts on his journey and his goals for the Academy as its president. See his interview on page 9.

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Subscriptions for individuals and institutions are available. See www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn for more information.

Deadlines for submissions:

January	October 15
March	December 15
May	February 15
October	June 15

Advertising

For information on advertising, please see www.aarweb.org/publications/rsn.

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2009 Member Calendar

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

June

Journal of the American Academy of Religion June issue.

June 15. Membership renewal deadline for 2009 Annual Meeting participants.

June 15. Annual Meeting registration deadline for 2009 Annual Meeting participants.

June 15. Submission deadline for the October issue of *Religious Studies News*. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

July

July 1. Annual Meeting program goes online.

July 1. New fiscal year begins.

July 31. Deadline for participants to request audiovisual equipment at the Annual Meeting.

August

August 1. Research grant applications due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Programs/Grants.

August 1. Regional development grant applications due to Regionally Elected Directors.

August 15. Membership renewal period for 2010 begins.

September

Journal of the American Academy of Religion September issue.

TBD. Program Committee meeting, Santa Barbara, CA.

TBD. Executive Committee meeting, Santa Barbara, CA.

September 1. Deadline for submissions of nominations for AAR Series Book Editor. See this issue, page 18, for more information.

September 29. Finance Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.

September 28–October 28. AAR officer election period. Candidate profiles will be published in the October *RSN*.

October

Religious Studies News October issue.

Spotlight on Teaching Fall issue.

October 1. Deadline for Additional Meetings inclusion into the *Annual Meeting Program Book*.

October 12. Annual Meeting Job Center pre-registration closes.

October 15. Submissions for the January 2010 issue of *Religious Studies News* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

October 15. Regional development grant awards announced.

November

November 1. Research grant awards announced.

November 5. Regionally Elected Directors meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

November 5. Executive Committee meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

November 6. Fall Board of Directors meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

November 6. Leadership Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

November 6. Sustainability Workshop at the Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

November 7. Annual Meeting registration and housing opens for 2010 meeting.

November 7–10. Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada. The AAR Annual Meeting, the world's largest gathering of scholars of reli-

gion, anticipates some 5,500 registrants, 200 publishers, and 125 hiring departments.

TBD. Annual Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting. See the *Program Book* for day and time.

November 20. New program unit proposals due.

December

Journal of the American Academy of Religion December issue.

TBD. Program Committee meeting, Atlanta, GA.


December 15. Submissions for the March 2010 issue of *Religious Studies News* due. For more information, see www.aarweb.org/Publications/RSN.

December 31. Membership renewal for 2010 due. Renew online at www.aarweb.org/Members/Dues.

And keep in mind throughout the year...

Regional organizations have various deadlines throughout the fall for the *Calls for Papers*. See www.aarweb.org/Meetings/regions.asp.

In the Field. News of events and opportunities for scholars of religion. *In the Field* is a members-only 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/In_the_Field/submit1.asp.

Job Postings. A members-only publication, *Job Postings* lists job announcements in areas of interest to members. Issues are available online from the first through the last day of the month. Submit announcements online, and review policies and pricing, at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Opening/submitad1.asp. 

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

This issue of *Religious Studies News* will be the last printed issue of this member newsletter, a publication which has served the membership of the American Academy of Religion since 1986. The Academy is facing extraordinary financial times, times in which we are called to continue producing the benefits our members expect of us, while at the same time having to face a substantial constriction in our annual income. *RSN* has been a multiple message publication (news, announcements, marketing, solicitations, and education), and will continue to be this — but in a different communication medium. Later this year, *RSN* will go online. Born of economic necessity, this move will help the Academy achieve an important environmental goal — sustainability. By this move to an electronic format, we will eliminate the need for and cost of paper and ink and the waste/recycling of the print edition once it is read and disposed of.

With this new online version, we can also move the timing of each “issue” to correspond with events in the field and within the Academy. With the printed *RSN* we had been constrained to publish it based on the cyclical and seasonal nature of our members’ academic calendar. With an online publication our members will be able to view each issue anywhere in the world, at any time.

Many of us in the Executive Office have worked on *RSN* in one capacity or another over the last decade. We always liked to think that putting together the issues each year gave us a good grasp of the life of the Academy.

We hope you will enjoy the new look of *RSN*.

Carey J. Gifford
Executive Editor 

RSN
RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS

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*), theological education (through the annual *Spotlight on Theological Education*), 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.

2009 Plenary Addresses



2009 Presidential Address

Beyond Words and War: The Global Future of Religion

Saturday
7:30 PM–8:30 PM

Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara


Mark Juergensmeyer is director of the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, professor of sociology, and affiliate professor of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is an expert on religious violence, conflict resolution, and South Asian religion and politics. He has published more than two hundred articles and twenty books, including the recently released *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State* (University of California Press 2008). His widely read *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (University of California Press, revised edition 2003), is based on interviews with religious activists around the world — including individuals convicted of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, leaders of Hamas, and abortion clinic bombers in the United States. A previous book, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (University of California Press, 1993), covers the rise of religious activism and its confrontation with secular modernity. Juergensmeyer has edited the *Oxford Handbook of Global Religion* (Oxford University Press 2006), *Religion in Global Civil Society* (Oxford University Press 2005), and is coediting *The Encyclopedia of Global Religions* (Sage Publications 2008) and *The Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (Sage Publications 2009). His 2006 Stafford Little Lectures at Princeton University, “God and War,” will be published by Princeton University Press. Juergensmeyer chairs the working group on Religion and International Affairs for the national Social Science Research Council. Since the events of September 11, he has been a frequent commentator in the news media.



Europe's Encounter with Islam

Sunday
11:45 AM–12:45 PM
Tariq Ramadan,
University of Oxford

Named by *Time* magazine as one of the one hundred most important innovators of the twenty-first century, Tariq Ramadan occupies a unique place among leading Islamic thinkers. Representing a new generation of Islamic reformers, Ramadan advocates the exploration and application of Islamic traditions and values within a modern pluralistic context, calling on Western Muslims to embrace Western culture rather than reject it. A Swiss national, he is a well-respected professor of theology at the University of Oxford. Ramadan has written more than twenty books exploring the difficult issues of reinterpretation and reform within Islam itself and between the Islamic world and its neighbors around the globe. His books include *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2003), *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity* (The Islamic Foundation, 2000), *To Be a European Muslim* (The Islamic Foundation, 1998), and *Jihad, Violence, War, and Peace in Islam* (in French only, Tawhid, 2002). Ramadan serves as an expert in various commissions linked to the Brussels Parliament, and is a member of several working parties concerned with Islam in the world and on the continent.

Because we are meeting in Canada this year, Ramadan will be able to speak live to AAR attendees, unlike 2004 and 2006, when the United States State Department would not issue him a visa to attend the Annual Meetings. 

Centennial Plenary Panels

In addition to the regular plenary lectures, the AAR is pleased to offer three Centennial Plenary Panels on the theme of the Globalization of Religion:



Islam and Modernity

Saturday

Reza Aslan, University of California, Riverside, Presiding

Islamic thinkers and activists are facing the great social changes associated with modernity that other religious traditions have faced and are facing. Cultural diaspora, the context of pluralism, the breakdown of traditional family and social patterns, changing cultural values (including shifting gender roles and sexual attitudes), and the intersection of political and spiritual ideas — all these are elements of modernity that have confronted all religious traditions. Are Islamic responses any different? Are they diverse and changing? Are there internal disputes as well as external pressures? And what is the future of Islamic ideas and culture in a postmodern world? These and similar questions will be addressed by a distinguished panel of observers of the contemporary Islamic world, exploring the changing character of Islamic modernity in all of its geographic and cultural diversity.

Panelists:

Tariq Ramadan, University of Oxford
Nilüfer Göle, L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
Robin Wright, *Washington Post*



Rethinking Secularism

Sunday
9:00 AM–11:30 AM

Mark Juergensmeyer,
University of California,
Santa Barbara,
Presiding

The emergence of strident new forms of religion in the twenty-first century challenges the domain of secular ideas and institutions in the public sphere — and encourages a rethinking of what secularism is, as an ideology and as a way of life. This panel brings together some of the most articulate social theorists writing on the subject — scholars associated with a major project on rethinking secularism sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, a think tank supported by the professional academic associations of the social sciences. They explore the roots of the secular ideal in eighteenth century European Enlightenment thought, the way it is diversely reconceived in the present day around the world, and how the concept is changing. They raise the question of whether we are moving into a new moment of history marked by resurgent religion in public life — a post-secular age.

Panelists:

Charles Taylor, McGill University
José Casanova, Georgetown University
Craig Calhoun, New York University
Saba Mahmood, University of California, Berkeley



Global Perspectives on Religious Studies


Monday

Vasudha Narayanan,
University of Florida,
Presiding


The modern field of religious studies is arguably a European and American invention and yet it flourishes around the world. Are there differences between the European and American paradigms of religious studies, and is the field of religious studies conceived differently in India, Indonesia, Mexico, and elsewhere? Is there resentment over what may be regarded as the intellectual colonialism of transported analytic frameworks from the West around the world, and are there new currents of intellectual creativity in disparate parts of the world that may be appropriated by Western scholars? This panel of distinguished international scholars of religious studies will describe how religious studies as a field fares within their own regions, how it is changing and becoming innovative, and how it interacts with the scholarship from the European and American academic community.

Panelists:

Azyumardi Azra, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia
Shrivatsa Goswami, Vrindavan, India
Koichi Mori, Doshisha University, Japan
Sylvia Marcos, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Mexico
Kim Knott, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

For times and locations, see the online *Program Book* at www.aarweb.org in July. 

Visa Requirements

IT IS NECESSARY for those entering Canada to clear customs and immigration. **Visitors from the United States, Mexico, and the European Union must present a passport in order to enter Canada.** Please be prepared. Non-North American and European Union citizens should inquire about possible visa requirements. Please see www.cic.gc.ca for details. Official letters of invitation to the Annual Meeting to support visa applications are available. E-mail annualmeeting@aarweb.org with your name, address, and the full contact information of the Canadian consulate of your country. 



Special Invited Guests

Thomas Altizer



Thomas Altizer graduated from the University of Chicago with BA, MA, and PhD degrees. He then became professor of English at Emory University, where he taught from 1956 to

1968. While teaching at Emory, Altizer and his religious views were featured in the famous 1966 *Time* magazine article, "Is God Dead?" The *Time* article dealt with Altizer's religious proclamation of a secularization thesis; that, on a pure level, viewed God's death (really self-extinction) as a process that began at the world's creation and came to an end through Jesus Christ — whose crucifixion in reality poured out God's full spirit into this world. In developing his position, Altizer drew upon the dialectical thought of Hegel, the visionary writings of William Blake, the anthroposophical thought of Owen Barfield, and adapted aspects of Mircea Eliade's view of the sacred and the profane. In the mid-1960s, Altizer was drawn into discussions about his views with other radical Christian theologians, such as Gabriel Vahanian, William Hamilton, and Paul Van Buren, and also with the Jewish rabbi Richard Rubenstein. Each of these thinkers appeared to form a loose network of other thinkers who held to different versions of the death of God. Altizer is currently professor emeritus of religious studies at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. His memoir is entitled *Living the Death of God*.

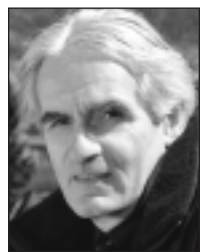
Slavoj Žižek



Slavoj Žižek is a Lacanian Marxist sociologist, psychoanalyst, and cultural critic. He received a Doctor of Arts in philosophy from the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia and studied psycho-

analysis at the University of Paris VIII with Jacques-Alain Miller and François Regnault. Žižek is a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and a professor at the European Graduate School. He is currently the International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London, and president of the Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis, Ljubljana. Žižek's work is infamously idiosyncratic. It features striking dialectical reversals of received common sense, a ubiquitous sense of humor, a patented disrespect towards the modern distinction between high and low culture, and the examination of examples taken from the most diverse cultural and political fields. Žižek challenges many of the founding assumptions of today's left-liberal academy, including the elevation of difference or otherness as ends in themselves, the reading of the Western Enlightenment as implicitly totalitarian, and the pervasive skepticism towards any context-transcendent notions of truth or good. Žižek has reinvigorated Jacques Lacan's challenging psychoanalytic theory, controversially reading him as a thinker who carries forward founding modernist commitments to the Cartesian subject and the liberating potential of self-reflective agency, if not self-transparency. Žižek's works since 1997 have become more and more explicitly political, contesting the widespread consensus that we live in a post-ideological or postpolitical world.

Gérard Bouchard



Gérard Bouchard is a historian and sociologist from Québec affiliated with the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. He obtained his PhD in history from the University of Paris in

1971. Trained in sociology and history, he launched a huge social history project on the Saguenay region, located in northeastern Québec and opened to settlement in the 1830s. One of the major goals of Bouchard's project was to build a computerized population register (called BALSAC) of this regional population between 1838 and 1971. Over the years, the project has generated numerous articles and collections of essays, culminating in 1996 in the publication of a synthesis book, *Quelques arpents d'Amérique: Population, économie, famille au Saguenay, 1838–1971* (Montréal, Boréal). BALSAC also gave birth to various research programs in the field of social history, historical demography, cultural studies, and human genetics. The various collaborations established through these research projects led to the creation of the Interuniversity Institute for Population Research (IREP), which Gérard Bouchard headed until 1998. Since leaving IREP, he has remained responsible for the BALSAC Project, whose main objective is to cover the whole of the Québec population since the beginning of the settlement in the seventeenth century up to recent years. Bouchard is the younger brother of Lucien Bouchard, Premier of Québec from 1996 to 2001. Like his brother, he is a supporter of the Québec sovereignty movement. In 2007, he was appointed, along with Charles Taylor, to chair a provincial government inquiry into "Reasonable Accommodation."

Abdul Karim Soroush



Abdul Karim Soroush is an Iranian thinker, philosopher, reformer, Rumi scholar, and former professor at the University of Tehran. He is a well-known figure in the religious intellectual movement

in Iran. After the Revolution, Soroush returned to Iran and published his book, *Knowledge and Value* — the writing of which he had completed in England. He then went to Tehran's Teacher Training College, where he was appointed director of the newly established Islamic Culture Group. While in Tehran, Soroush established studies in both history and the philosophy of science. During the 1990s, Soroush gradually became more critical of the political role played by the Iranian clergy. The monthly magazine that he cofounded, *Kiyan*, soon became the most visible forum ever for religious intellectualism. In this magazine, he published his most controversial articles on religious pluralism, hermeneutics, tolerance, and clericalism. *Kiyan* was clamped down upon in 1998, as well as many other magazines and newspapers, by the direct order of the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic. Over the next year, Soroush lost his three senior academic appointments, including a deanship. Public appearances were banned and he was forbidden to publish new articles. Since 2000, Soroush has lived in the United States and Europe, and has taught at Harvard University, Princeton University, and Georgetown University. RSN

Improvements to Annual Meeting Publications

U PDATE YOUR mailing address now to receive a copy of the new *Annual Meeting Program Planner*, mailed in early June to all members of the AAR. Please allow 3–4 weeks for delivery. *Program Planners* will be mailed to new and renewing members in September. You can update your mailing address by going to www.aarweb.org/Members/My_AAR and clicking on "Change Contact Information."

The *Program Planner* contains a listing of the day, time, theme, participant names, and paper titles for all AAR sessions and a listing of the day, time, and theme for all Additional Meetings sessions. It is a great way to begin your Annual Meeting planning.

The format for the 2009 *Program Planner* is improved from the 2008 format; it will list the participant names and paper titles for every AAR session, as well as contain a participant index. However, it will not include session abstracts for highlighted sessions.

A complete listing of all AAR and Additional Meetings session information, including participant names, paper titles, room locations, and abstracts, will be available in the online *Program Book* on the AAR website at www.aarweb.org by July 1. The keyword, date/time, and other search features will allow you to find the sessions you are most interested in attending. The online *Program Book* includes a utility in which you can select the individual sessions you want to print to make your own custom program.

The *Annual Meeting Program Book* will be distributed to all Annual Meeting attendees onsite in Montréal. This is the familiar publication that includes complete session listings of AAR and Additional Meetings with up-to-date times, room locations, session and participant indices, hotel maps, and advertising about discounts in the Annual Meeting exhibit hall. RSN

Religious Sites Tours of Montréal

Registration for tours is available in the online Annual Meeting registration process or by faxing or mailing the form in the registration brochure (sent in the March RSN issue). Space is limited on all tours, so please register early.

IN MONTRÉAL, religion dominates the landscape. Initially it is the Christian symbols that draw one's attention. From the spires of the Notre Dame Basilica to the dome of St. Joseph's Oratory to the three-story illuminated cross on the mountain, one can find Christian symbolism on churches, in parks, schools, street names, and private homes. However, on closer inspection, it is obvious that the religions of the world are active in this city. The Montréal Venue Committee invites you to join us for two distinct guided tours of religious sites in Montréal, or to explore the city's diverse religious sites on your own.

Sacred and Religious Sites of Montréal Tour: Tradition in Transition

Monday, 1:00 PM–5:00 PM

This religious sites tour will explore several encounters between the old and the new. Beginning with a stop at St. Joseph's Oratory, we will have the opportunity to explore the world's largest Catholic site dedicated to Saint Joseph. This ten-story building, with an impressive footprint on the Montréal landscape, attracts millions of pilgrims (and tourists) the world over. Recently the site has embraced its status as a pilgrimage site for non-Christians too. For more information, see www.saint-joseph.org/en_1007_index.asp.

The second stop will highlight the ongoing transformation of religious sites in the city center with tour guides from Mile End Memories leading us on a forty-five-minute walk that explores the impressive architectural and religious diversity of a dozen places of worship. Collectively, the sites offer testimony to the passage of several different cultural communities through the multicultural neighborhood of Mile End. This part of the tour will be outdoors, so please dress warmly.

The final stop will provide the opportunity to visit a brand new religious site, the Durkai Amman Temple Kovil, a Sri Lankan Tamil Saivite Temple that serves a small but growing community of practitioners. Currently under renovation, the site offers access to a ritual space that from the inside could be anywhere on the south Asian continent. For more information, visit www.mildurkai.com.

Tour Leaders:

Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University
Laurence Nixon, Dawson College, Montréal
Susan Bronson, Mile End Memories

In cooperation with:

Paula M. Kane, University of Pittsburgh
Jeanne Halgren Kilde, University of Minnesota
Peter W. Williams, Miami University, Ohio

Tour fee: USD\$20

Eastern Religious Sites of Montréal: Putting Down Roots

Sunday, 3:30 PM–7:30 PM

This bus tour will take us to the west island suburbs of Montréal, where several Eastern religious communities have taken root.

The tour will include stops at the Tibetan Buddhist Temple Gaden Chang Chub Chöling. This temple, like many sites used by “new” non-Christian traditions in Canada, has converted a bank building into a temple space. Founded in 1980 and established in 1986, the center offers a range of religious ritual practices and cultural development activities. For more information, visit www.khenrab.org.

The second stop will take us to the “most beautiful Gurdwara in Montréal.” Following the trend of other religious communities, this Gurdwara is built in a semi-industrial neighborhood in a suburb twice removed from the city center, where land and zoning bylaws are easier to negotiate. The space includes an impressive example of traditional Gurdwara construction with a community that is ready to answer our questions.

The last stop on the tour will take us further down the island of Montréal into the suburb of Dollard Des Aameaux where we will visit the Thiru Murugan Temple, a Sri Lankan Tamil Saivite Temple constructed in the traditional style of South Indian architecture, clearly the most beautiful example of its kind in the region. Our timing should coincide with a *puja* service, giving us the opportunity to share an experience with this most welcoming community. For more information, visit www.montreal-murugan-temple.faithweb.com.

Tour Leaders:

Mark Bradley, Université de Québec à Montréal
Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University

Tour fee: USD\$30

Striking Out on Your Own: Montréal Religious Sites on Foot

If you are looking for an opportunity for some fresh air between sessions, there are several religious sites within walking distance from the Palais des Congrès.

A five-minute walk to the south will take you to the edge of Old Montréal, where you can visit the Notre Dame Basilica, a replica of the original in Paris. The Basilica is open daily. Paid tours are available, but there is no fee to enter the church. Donations are appreciated. For more information, visit www.basiliquenddm.org/en.

Just outside the doors of the Palais des Congrès on the north side, in just a few steps, you enter Montréal's Chinatown where you can visit several temples, including one supported by the Montréal Chinese Buddhist Society. For more information about this and other sites in Montréal's Chinatown, check out the Montréal Asian Religious Sites Project reports at www.mrsp.mcgill.ca/folk/htm.

Two blocks north of the Palais des Congrès, you will find the newly built and opened Al Oumma al Islamaya Mosque located at 1245 St. Dominique. These and many other religious sites await you in Montréal. We hope you will join us in November!

Discover Old Longueuil and the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

Monday, 8:30 AM–1:00 PM.

Details to come in the *Annual Meeting Program Planner*.

Organized by: Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, Concordia University.

RSN

2009 Annual Meeting International Focus: Globalization of Religion in North America

AS PART OF the American Academy of Religion's centennial celebration, the International Connections Committee's international focus at the Annual Meeting in Montréal is “Globalization of Religion in North America.” In the one hundred years that the AAR has been in existence, the religious landscape has changed alongside demographic shifts in North America. The changing culture has influenced the Academy dramatically as scholars and teachers — especially in individual research and teaching — and all others present and practice religion.

The International Connections Committee will not be sponsoring any North American scholars for this focus, as North American scholars will already attend the meeting. In the past, the Committee would sponsor several scholars from the featured region to attend and address the Annual Meeting. Instead, the Committee encouraged all program units to formulate sessions to address how globalization has influenced the study of, teaching of, and practice of religion.

There are three Special Topics Forums that the Committee is sponsoring for the Montréal meeting, and we encourage you to make a special effort to attend:

- **Global Economies of the Sacred** — Gilya Gerda Schmidt, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, presiding; with panelists Andrea Smith, University of California, Riverside; Amos Yong, Regent University; David Chidester, University of Cape Town; Ginette Ishimatsu, University of Denver; and Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University.
- **Diasporas of Religion and Religions of Diaspora** — Manuel Vasquez, University of Florida, presiding; with panelists Cynthia M. Baker, Bates College; Jacob Olupona, Harvard University; Khyati Joshi, Fairleigh Dickinson University; Thomas Tweed, University of Texas, Austin; and Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida.
- **Transnationalism and Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning beyond Borders** (cosponsored with the Teaching and Learning Committee) — Teresia Mbari Hinga, Santa Clara University, presiding; with panelists Edward Phillip Antonio, Iliff School of Theology; Richard Foltz, Concordia University; Gemma Cruz, DePaul University; and Arvind Sharma, McGill University.

Additionally, AAR President Mark Juergensmeyer has organized three Centennial Plenary Panels on the following themes:

- **Islam and Modernity** — Reza Aslan, University of California, Riverside, presiding; with panelists Tariq Ramadan, University of Oxford; Nilüfer Göle, L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales; and Robin Wright, *Washington Post*.
- **Global Perspectives on Religious Studies** — Vasudha Narayanan, University of Florida, presiding; with panelists Azyumardi Azra, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia; Shrivatsa Goswami, Vrindavan, India; Koichi Mori, Doshisha University, Japan; Sylvia Marcos, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos; and Kim Knott, University of Leeds.
- **Rethinking Secularism** — Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara, presiding; with panelists Charles Taylor, McGill University; José Casanova, Georgetown University; Craig Calhoun, New York University; and Saba Mahmood, University of California, Berkeley.

Tariq Ramadan will address the AAR in a plenary address. It will be his first time to address the AAR in person, though he has participated via satellite linkup during past AAR meetings.

The International Connections Committee encourages all to attend its sessions and those sessions that Program Units have created celebrating and investigating the Globalization theme. It also wishes to thank the Program Units and President Mark Juergensmeyer for helping make this Montréal meeting a truly international event.

The International Connections Committee is chaired by Tat-siong Benny Liew, with members Teresia Mbari Hinga, Santa Clara University; Gilya Gerda Schmidt, University of Tennessee; Edward Phillip Antonio, Iliff School of Theology; Manuel A. Vasquez, University of Florida; Xiaofei Kang, Carnegie Mellon University; and Kyle Cole, AAR Director of Professional Programs, staff liaison.

RSN

AAR Sustainability Task Force to Host Annual Meeting Half-day Workshop

AT THE ANNUAL Meeting in Montréal, the AAR's Sustainability Task Force will host a half-day workshop addressing the roles and methods of religion and theology teachers wanting to infuse sustainability topics into the curriculum. The workshop, "Religious Studies In an Age of Global Warming: Transforming Ourselves, Our Students, and Our Universities" will be from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM on Friday, November 6, and will be led by Roger S. Gottlieb, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and task force member, and Stephanie Kaza, University of Vermont. Task Force members Sarah McFarland Taylor (chair), Northwestern University; Isabel Mukonyora, Western Kentucky University; Laurel D. Kearns, Drew University and Drew Theological School; and Barbara A. B. Patterson, Emory University, will serve as breakout group facilitators at the workshop.

Gottlieb teaches in the Department of Humanities and Arts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and is one of the world's leading voices of religious environmentalism. His works in this area include *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment* (the first comprehensive textbook in the field); *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*

(the first book-length analysis of religious environmentalism); *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*; *Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change*; and *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth*.

Kaza is Director of the Environmental Program at the University of Vermont, where she teaches environmental humanities. She is best known for her work in Buddhist environmental thought and Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Her books include *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*; *Hooked: Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume*; and *Mindfully Green*. At the University of Vermont, Kaza works closely with the Office of Sustainability on campus greening and socially responsible investing.

Teaching the environmental crisis poses unique challenges and opportunities for higher education. The scope and extent of the threat demands that faculty inform themselves about a host of practical, theological, moral, historical, and political concerns that probably were not part of their original scholarly field. At the same time, the encompassing nature of the threat touches all of our lives.

Faculty, like students, experience fear, grief, and despair as we witness the vanishing species, changed weather, and polluted waters of our planet. Yet the very universality and severity of the environmental crisis also provide a unique opportunity to make our teaching intensely relevant to the world outside the classroom, and to experience the deep satisfaction of offering teaching that is personally, morally, and politically important.

This workshop will explore these challenges and opportunities, giving participants the chance to examine their own responses to the environmental crisis, to engage with faculty concerning teaching resources, sample syllabi, course modules, and instructional themes, and ways to connect with other academic departments and the wider campus sustainability movement. Material will be provided to support the development of "Religion and Environment" courses, and integration of environmental themes into courses such as "Introduction to Religious Studies," "Social Ethics," "Religion and Politics," or studies of particular religions.

The workshop will take up relevant theological issues (e.g., ecological interpretations of scripture), moral problems (e.g., stew-

ardship versus biocentric ethical models), the role of religious environmentalism in relation to other social movements (e.g., feminism, racial justice), and engaged teaching techniques designed to (re)connect students to these crucial moral issues and their meaning for life on earth.

"This workshop crosses a multitude of sub-field boundaries and appeals broadly to scholars across the curriculum who wish to address the most critical issues facing the Academy — and the world — today," said Sarah McFarland Taylor, chair of the Task Force. "If you attend one workshop in Montréal this year, make it this one!"

You may register for the workshop when you register for the Annual Meeting, or by using the form on this page and faxing it to 301-694-5124. The registration fee for the workshop is \$50 until October 20, 2009. After that, registration is \$75 onsite only. You are encouraged to register early as the workshop is limited to the first seventy-five participants. RSN

Transdisciplinary
Theological
Colloquium IX

polydoxy
Theologies of the Manifold

Laurel C. Schneider
Roland Faber
John J. Thatamanil

Sharon Betcher
Mayra Rivera
W. Anne Joh


Marion Grau
Monica A. Coleman
Mary-Jane Rubenstein

Hyo-Dong Lee
Virginia Burrus
Catherine Keller

1-4 October 2009

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DREW
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL



Religious Studies in An Age of
Global Warming: Transforming Ourselves,
Our Students, and Our Universities

**Friday, November 6, 2009,
1:30-5:30 PM
Montréal, QC**

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/meeting/annual_meeting/current_meeting.

Name _____

Department _____

Institution _____

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants.
Send your registration form and payment of \$50.00 before October 20, 2009 (\$75.00 after and onsite).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Check: (payable to "AAR Annual Meeting," memo "Sustainability Workshop")

Credit Card (Check one):

Visa Mastercard American Express Discover


Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____


CID* _____

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Name on Card (Please Print) _____

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 **Register online** (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/meetings/annual_meeting/current_meeting

 **Register by Fax:** 301-694-5124

For more information, contact Kyle Cole, Director of Professional Programs, at kcole@aarweb.org, or by phone at 404-727-1489.

The Sustainability Workshop is arranged by the Sustainability Task Force of the American Academy of Religion: Sarah McFarland Taylor, chair, Roger S. Gottlieb, Laurel D. Kearns, Isabel Mukonyora, John J. O'Keefe, Barbara A. B. Patterson, and Kyle Cole, staff liaison.

Annual Meeting Leadership Workshop

Three Religion Majors Meet in a Café: What Do They Have in Common?

THE ACADEMIC Relations Committee will begin a three-year sequence of workshops exploring the implications of the Teagle/AAR White Paper "The Religion Major and Liberal Education" at the Annual Meeting in Montréal on Friday, November 6.

This year's daylong workshop, "Three Religion Majors Meet in a Café: What Do They Have in Common?", will address five common characteristics the White Paper identified of a religious studies major: intercultural and comparative, multidisciplinary, critical, integrative, and creative and constructive. In this interactive workshop, participants will have an opportunity to discover and discuss this constellation of characteristics.

Participants will then explore the presence of these characteristics in the design of majors in different institutional contexts (small public, large public, private, and theological). The workshop will conclude with presentations and discussions about how we address these in ways attentive both to our responsibilities as educators and to the students and the reasons they are in our programs.

"In light of the findings of the AAR/Teagle Working Group and from our own conversations with department chairs over the past few years, sustained discussion about the shape of the major in religious studies and its relation to liberal education in the twenty-first century is more important than ever," said Fred Glennon, chair of the Academic Relations Committee.

The interactive workshop will feature several speakers, panelists, and breakout sessions. Eugene V. Gallagher will open the workshop with a discussion titled "The Convergent Characteristics of the Religious Studies Major: Findings of the Teagle Working Group." Gallagher, the Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies at Connecticut College and founding director of the Mankoff Center for Teaching and Learning, was a member of that working group.

A panel will follow addressing how the five characteristics play out in different institutional contexts. A breakout session led by members of the Academic Relations Committee immediately follows, which will allow participants to discuss these issues in depth.

Following lunch, which is provided, will be a session on student dynamics, their motives for study, and how students can be targeted with the characteristics in mind. Another breakout session will allow for participation from attendees.

The workshop will conclude with a plenary address from Gallagher.

"Our hope is that this workshop will not only continue the conversation begun by the AAR/Teagle Working Group but also extend it to illuminate some best practices for curriculum and program development," Glennon said.

Colleagues in your institution, such as chairs, other faculty members, faculty being developed to assume leadership responsibilities, and deans, may be interested in attending this workshop. Chairs may want to bring a team of faculty or send a designated faculty person.

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants. The cost for the workshop is \$100, which includes the entire day of sessions, lunch, and a book on the topic.

The topics for past chairs workshops have been:

2008 Annual Meeting Leadership Workshop — *Taking Religion(s) Seriously: What Students Need to Know*

2007 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Best Practices: Diversifying Your Faculty* — *Honest Conversations*
Leadership Workshop — *The Religion Major and Liberal Education*

2006 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Personnel Issues: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*

2005 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Enlarging the Pie: Strategies for Managing and Growing Departmental Resources*

2004 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Being a Chair in Today's Consumer Culture: Navigating in the Knowledge Factory*

2003 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Scholarship, Service, and Stress: The Tensions of Being a Chair*


Summer 2003 Chairs Workshop — *The Entrepreneurial Chair: Building and Sustaining Your Department in an Era of Shrinking Resources and Increasing Demands*

2002 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Running a Successful Faculty Search in the Religious Studies Department*

2001 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Evaluating and Advancing Teaching in the Religious Studies Department*

2000 Annual Meeting Chairs Workshop — *Assessing and Advancing the Religious Studies Department*

We look forward to seeing you in Montréal!

The Academic Relations Committee: Fred Glennon, chair, Chester Gillis, L. DeAne Lagerquist, Steve Young, Rosetta Ross, Edwin David Aponte, and Kyle Cole, staff liaison. 



THREE RELIGION MAJORS MEET IN A CAFÉ: WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

**Friday, November 6, 2009,
Montréal, QC**

The Teagle/AAR working group, which produced the White Paper "The Religion Major and Liberal Education," identified five common characteristics that suggest the religious studies major is by its very nature intercultural and comparative, multidisciplinary, critical, integrative, and creative and constructive. In this interactive workshop, participants will have an opportunity to discover and discuss this constellation of characteristics. They will then explore the presence of these characteristics in the design of majors

in different institutional contexts (small public, large public, private, and theological). The workshop will conclude with presentations and discussions about how we address these characteristics in ways attentive both to our responsibilities as educators and to the students and the reasons they are in our programs. This is the first in a three-year sequence of workshops that will explore the implications of the Teagle White Paper.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

9:00–9:15	Introduction	10:00–10:45	Institutional Perspectives: How these characteristics play out in different institutional contexts	11:00–12:00	Breakout session (by institutional context)
9:15–10:00	The convergent characteristics of the religious studies major: Findings of the Teagle Working Group (Eugene V. Gallagher, Connecticut College)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theological schools • Large public universities • Small public universities/colleges • Private universities/colleges 	12:00–1:00	LUNCH
				1:00–2:00	Student dynamics (Patricia Killen, Pacific Lutheran University)
				2:00–2:45	Breakout session (random small groups with ARC members as Facilitators)
				3:00–3:45	Plenary wrap-up: What have we learned? (Eugene V. Gallagher)

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/meeting/annual_meeting/current_meeting.

Name _____		
Department _____		
Institution _____	Serving as Chair since _____	Number of faculty in department _____

Registration is limited to the first 75 participants.

Send your registration form and payment of \$100.00 before October 20, 2009 (\$125.00 after and onsite).

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Check: (payable to "AAR Annual Meeting," memo "Leadership Workshop")

Credit Card (Check one):

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CID* _____


Cardholder Signature _____

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For more information, contact Kyle Cole, Director of Professional Programs, at kcole@aarweb.org, or by phone at 404-727-1489.

The Leadership Workshop is arranged by the Academic Relations Committee of the American Academy of Religion: Fred Glennon, chair, Chester Gillis, L. DeAne Lagerquist, Steve Young, Rosetta Ross, Edwin David Aponte, and Kyle Cole, staff liaison.

 **Register online** (as part of Annual Meeting registration): www.aarweb.org/meetings/annual_meeting/current_meeting

 **Register by Fax:** 330-963-0319

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

Québec's Quiet Revolution: From Catholic Hegemony to a Modern State

Donald L. Boisvert, Concordia University

Donald L. Boisvert is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religion at Concordia University, Montréal. His areas are religion in Canada, religion, gender and sexuality, and Catholic culture. He has published two books with Pilgrim Press, *Out on Holy Ground: Meditations on Gay Men's Spirituality (2000)* and *Sanctity and Male Desire: A Gay Reading of Saints (2004)*.

THE EXPRESSION "Quiet Revolution" may seem a bit strange to those unfamiliar with the histories of Canada and of Québec. How can any revolution be quiet? Is a revolution not boisterous by its very nature? Yes, usually. But the case of Québec is different. The province underwent radical and significant social change in the 1950s and 1960s; it was, however, a rather noiseless and placid affair.

For nearly four centuries, the Catholic Church had been the dominant social, cultural, and political force in Québec. The Church was widely perceived — and it certainly saw itself — as the guardian of the Catholic faith, the French language, and the traditional rural lifestyle. After the fall of New France to the British in 1759, and especially following the abortive liberal Rebellions of 1837–1838, Catholicism became the prevailing ideological discourse, and its influence was felt in every corner of Québec society. This reached its apex in the period from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries (and, it can be argued, even later) when clerical ultramon-

tanism became the dominant worldview. The province's entire network of social service agencies and institutions — schools, hospitals, and orphanages — was under the direct control of a large number of Catholic religious orders, many of them homegrown. An estimate of the number of nuns, brothers, and priests working in this vast network ranges anywhere from 45,000–50,000. It is also interesting to note that, per capita, Québec was the largest "exporter," in the Catholic world, of missionaries to other countries. Québec was a very Catholic place, and publicly and defiantly so.

For several decades, there had been an ultra-conservative political party in power with close links to the clergy, headed by Maurice Duplessis. This period is often called, rather simplistically, *la Grande Noirceur* (the Great Darkness). All that was to change in 1960. The year is a useful marker, because it was then that the Québec Liberal Party, headed by Jean Lesage, won an election and formed the provincial government. Their platform called for a significant modernization of the State apparatus in Québec, and this would necessarily imply a major shift in the role and presence of the Catholic Church in many facets of public life. The impetus for change had come decades before, however, as Québec, like other postwar societies in the West, found itself increasingly subject to the vicissitudes of increased urbanization, economic prosperity, a rising middle class, labor unrest, and generational tensions. In some important ways, the election of Lesage and the "revolution" he initiated had their roots in broader and almost irre-

versible social forces. The Quiet Revolution can also be seen as one example among many (the 1960s in the United States; May 1968 in France) of a general loosening of traditional mores in Western societies.

The Catholic Church itself was also changing. With the election of John XXIII to the papacy in 1958 and the convening of the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965, Roman Catholicism began a difficult period of intense soul-searching in an attempt to make itself more relevant to the modern world. Part of the fallout from this was not only a sharp and sudden decrease in Church personnel, but an acknowledgment that the Church no longer had to occupy a dominant position in society; rather, it should seek to serve and support. This would be especially relevant in the case of Québec. It has been suggested that the Québec Catholic Church was instrumental in paving the way for the changes heralded by the Quiet Revolution, and some historians have argued that the source of these changes can be found within the social activism of the Church itself (Gauvreau, 2005).

So "revolution" because the change was sudden, profound, lasting, and irreversible; "quiet" because it took place in an atmosphere of relative calm, with little or no serious social or political conflict. After their election in 1960, Lesage's Liberals put in place an active process of modernization of the State apparatus in Québec — everything from the nationalization of hydroelectric power, to the creation of a number of State-controlled economic agencies, to the establishment of a Ministry of Cultural

Affairs (in 1961) and a Ministry of Education (in 1964). In the case of the latter, power and jurisdiction passed from religious orders to government-sanctioned confessional school boards (much later, in 1998, to be converted to linguistic school boards). Moral authority therefore shifted from the Catholic Church to the government of Québec, which became the major and sole arbiter of the common good. Culture also flourished, whether in literature, cinema, or the visual and performing arts.

Simultaneously, the years of the Quiet Revolution saw a significant growth in the nationalist feeling in Québec, finding its ultimate expression in the 1968 founding of the social-democratic Party Québécois (PQ), which advocates sovereignty for Québec. (The PQ was founded by René Lévesque, one of Jean Lesage's foremost cabinet ministers, who led the battle to nationalize hydroelectric power. Lévesque served as Premier of the Province from 1976 to 1985.) No longer was it the traditional themes of family and faith that served as the loci of collective identity, but rather those of language and State. The people of Québec moved from identifying themselves as French Canadians to the more defiant Québécois. The bridge had been crossed. The Catholic Church entered a period of decline, something with which it continues to grapple.

Bibliography

Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Québec's Quiet Revolution* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).



Rendez-vous in Montréal ...

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

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A Conversation with the President

Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara



Mark Juergensmeyer is professor of sociology and global studies, and affiliate professor of religious studies, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he also serves as the director of the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies. Previously, he served as dean of the School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies at the University of Hawai'i, the coordinator for the religious studies program at the University of California, Berkeley, and the director of the Office of Programs in Comparative Religion at the Graduate Theological Union. He received a PhD in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, a MDiv from Union Theological Seminary, New York, and a BA in philosophy from the University of Illinois. He is author or editor of more than twenty books, including the recent *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, and Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence, for which he received the Grauemeyer Award in 2004. He has also received the Silver Medal from Spain's Queen Sofia Center for the Study of Violence, and an honorary doctorate from Lehigh University. Among his edited books are The Oxford Handbook of Global Religion; Religion in Global Civil Society; and the forthcoming coedited Encyclopedia of Global Religion and Society.*

RSN: How did your parents and extended family influence your early career and education?

Juergensmeyer: Religion and politics were in my family's veins. My mother came from a line of preachers and missionaries and my dad was a small-town politician, both from a German immigrant community that had settled in central Missouri and then moved across the river to Illinois.

My family was quite pious but were convinced that faith was nothing without good works, and this meant social responsibility and attempts to reach out to the wider world. One of my earliest memories was a visit from an uncle who had taught in a missionary school in China, and was favorably disposed toward Mao Tse Tung. So in a curious way, I have always associated religion with progressive social attitudes and a global view of the world.

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

Juergensmeyer: Someone stole my motorcycle. That was a critical turning point in my professional career — but I suppose I should explain.

I went to seminary after college — Union Theological in New York City — where I fell under the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr and his way of thinking about the interaction of religion and public life. But then I roamed around Southeast Asia and India for a couple of years before coming to Berkeley in a graduate program in political science, hoping to continue the religiopolitical interests I had developed under Niebuhr at Union.

I hadn't a clue as to what I was going to do after that, but this was the 1960s and I had gotten deeply involved in the antiwar movement. The unjust war at that time was the one in Vietnam, and I soon decided to abandon graduate school and return to the region as a freelance journalist, since I had filed some radio interviews from Saigon on my earlier trip to Vietnam and they seemed to have been well received. I was going to sell my motorcycle to make enough money for the airfare, but the week before I was to leave my motorcycle was stolen. So I couldn't go.

As a result, I ended up not becoming a journalist, but finishing my PhD, combining my interests in religion, politics, and India in a thesis on the role of religion in the social aspirations of the people in India known as Untouchables. And this launched my academic career in the comparative study of religion and politics. All because of that darned motorcycle.

RSN: What has compelled you to research, publish, and lecture in the area of religiously motivated violence?

Juergensmeyer: My interest in religious violence began with the Sikhs — a lively and welcoming people among whom I had lived for several years in the Punjab region of North India. So it was personally disturbing to see so many young Sikhs caught up in a militant movement during the 1980s. Having worked with Gandhians in India and written about nonviolent approaches to conflict, I expected religion to champion nonviolence, and was perplexed to see the role that religion was playing in this militant movement and in other violent social movements around the world.

I wanted to know why — why this violence was happening now, and what religion had to do with it. Eventually I went from India to Sri Lanka to the Middle East, and then to Tokyo and Belfast and Oklahoma City — wherever there was a religious dimension to violent social conflict, to interview the participants and supporters of the activism, and to understand their view of the world. Invariably it was a view of a world at war, where their understanding of a decent social order and a meaningful life was challenged by the social and political conditions of our contemporary age.

Out of these interviews and case studies came a series of articles and several books, most recently *Global Rebellion*, which reviews thirty years of religious activism around the world and shows that in most cases it is a response to the perceived deficiencies of the secular notion of the nation-state. An earlier book, *Terror in the Mind of God*, explores recent cases of what are often seen as religious terrorism and shows that they are public performances of violence intended to bring to reality a sense of the world embroiled in a cosmic war of good and evil. I am currently finishing a book

based on a series of lectures given at Princeton University under the title "God and War," which probes the dark attraction between religion and violence and tries to explain why our understanding of each seems to need the other.

RSN: Can you tell us about your current academic life at the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara?

Juergensmeyer: Santa Barbara is a wonderful environment, and I don't mean only the surf and the sun and the Santa Ynez mountains, though I do mean that. But it is also a good place to think and make intellectual connections among a remarkable group of scholars.

I have been fortunate throughout my life to be associated with institutions that have been generous and supportive in my work. For years, I was a part of the comparative religion programs at the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California, Berkeley, that supported my own work and a project that I codirected, the Berkeley-Harvard program in comparative religion, in which I first began my study of religious violence. During my four years as the dean of the School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies at the University of Hawai'i, I was able to complete a book on the recent rise of religious nationalism, *The New Cold War*.

And at Santa Barbara I have been privileged to join with an inspiring group of colleagues to create one of the first academic programs in global studies in the world, and this has been a significant element in my intellectual and research development in recent years. Our concern is with the way that global forces — economic, technological, political, social, and cultural — are interacting in a dynamic way to create new ways of thinking and acting in public life. We have created graduate as well as undergraduate academic degree programs, and a research center, which I currently direct.

Our Orfalea Center is now launching a new project, supported by the Luce Foundation, that explores the role of religion in global civil society. By "global civil society," we mean the movements of citizen activism and nongovernmental organizations that have arisen to challenge and shape public life in a global era. The role of religion in this new world is vital, but ambivalent — it plays both destructive and creative roles, as we all have seen. The challenge is to imagine how these religious forces can be redirected and reconceived in a positive way in a postsecular world.

RSN: What is your greatest joy in teaching?

Juergensmeyer: The fun of teaching is to learn from your students and from what you are teaching. I teach more courses than I am supposed to, in part to help our fledgling new global studies program, and in part because I enjoy it.

Our students are terrific. They are bright, socially concerned, intellectually curious, and only somewhat academically lazy, but even that changes when they get excited about a subject or challenged by a problem they want to understand. If you like your students and like what you teach, how can you go wrong?

When I first began to teach, I was under the illusion that my job was to impart knowledge, but I abandoned that misconception long ago. Students can go to Wikipedia for that. Instead I think our job as teachers is to share our love of learning and of critical thought. If we can light that fire of intellectual excitement, we will inspire the flames of knowledge that will last a lifetime.

Several years ago I won a distinguished teaching award on campus, and the student who nominated me was a conservative, pro-Bush, anti-Muslim, right-wing Israeli activist. I asked him why he nominated me, since we seemed to disagree on almost all political issues. "I know," he said, "but I think you respect me." And it's true — I did respect him. He was a very thoughtful guy who I would frequently ask to stand up in class and give a counter-perspective to an opinion I had advanced, since I wanted the class to know that intellectual life is all about questioning and challenging ideas — including one's own.

RSN: What do you think of the new United States administration?

Juergensmeyer: I am tentatively hopeful.

One of my greatest criticisms of the previous Bush administration was its invention of the "war on terror" — a war that was not just a metaphor but a real war. It became the Cold War of the twenty-first century, for behind the "war on terror" phrase was an ideological position on world politics, the idea that the secular West was locked in a hopeless spiral of conflict with Islamic militancy.

The problem with this "clash of civilizations" view of the world was that it was rigid, a caricature, it vastly exaggerated the threat, and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy. It not only scared the Muslim world by characterizing it as the enemy — or the potential enemy — but also angered it by America's militant invasion and occupation of two Muslim countries. America's militant actions were perceived by many in the Muslim world as terrorism. And they produced terrorism in response.

There is no question in my mind that the attitude and actions of the United States government following 9/11 helped to foster the conditions for the very terrorism that they were intended to diminish. This was the great irony of the Bush foreign policy; that it created the enemy it was trying to combat.

Now that Bush is gone, the Obama administration's outlook is quite different, much more realistic, and less ideological. Gone is the rhetoric of "the war on terrorism," "destroying the evil-doers," and "if you're not with us you're against us." This is not just a shift in rhetoric, it is a paradigmatic change of policy, one based on negotiation with those regarded as potential friends rather than combat with those dismissed as perennial foes. Though the Obama administration's policies are not perfect, it understands that the Muslim world is diverse and reasonable, and that there, as elsewhere, religion can play a positive role in public life.

Leadership Summit Synopsis

IN FEBRUARY 2009, AAR held its first ever Leadership Summit. The Summit comprised more than sixty committee and task force members. The President, President-Elect, and Vice President were also in attendance. Groups present included:

- Academic Relations Committee
- Executive Committee
- Graduate Student Committee
- International Connections Committee
- Job Placement Task Force
- Nominations Committee
- Public Understanding of Religion Committee
- Religion in the Schools Task Force
- Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force
- Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee
- Status of Women in the Profession Committee
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Theological Education Steering Committee

Each group held their own biannual meeting to discuss their plans for future events and work. What made the Leadership Summit so unique was that the groups were also able to meet with each other to discuss plans to work together on future projects. Some of the exciting developments of the cross-partnerships include a mentoring lunch at the Montréal Annual Meeting cosponsored by the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee, the Status of Women in the Profession Committee, and the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force; several cosponsored Special Topics Forums planned over the next two years at upcoming


Annual Meetings; and a future topic for *Spotlight on Teaching* highlighting issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation in the classroom.

A reception was held on Saturday night in which the seventy-seven volunteers and AAR staff gathered to hear Jack Fitzmier, AAR Executive Director, speak about the future direction of the AAR. The Academy will give attention to the following objectives in the coming months:

- Increasing attention to membership development;
- Adding innovative new components to the Annual Meeting;
- Building global connections and positioning the AAR to be an international partner and resource;
- Reimagining governance structures;
- Celebrating our centennial, beginning with the 2009 Montréal Annual Meeting and ending a year later in Atlanta;
- Enhancing the public understanding of religion;
- Experimenting with more forms of technology for scholarly communication; and
- Enhancing the work of the AAR's ten regions.

Fitzmier then invited the volunteers to think beyond the near term. Once we meet our near-term goals, what should we focus on next? What will the Academy look like in 2020? Given the dynamic and radical changes taking place in the economy, technology, higher education, and in the larger framework of humanistic inquiry, it is foolish to think that the AAR's business model, Annual Meeting model, and larger goals will remain unchanged. The volunteers were split into small focus groups to discuss some of the things the AAR should think about now to set the Academy up for a successful model in 2020.

The volunteers returned to present the top three points from their focus groups. The most popular points made include developing vital regional meetings; promoting the academic study of religion in terms of jobs and healthy undergraduate departments; expanding further into video and web media; expanding membership diversity across geographical and international lines; and using different technologies to build relationships among members and across networks and cultures.

The energy and dynamic interactions amongst the various committees and task forces was invaluable. A follow-up survey to members who attended the Summit indicated a keen interest in this format and a desire to find more ways to have AAR working groups collaborate on common projects. 



The Teaching and Learning Committee discusses future *Spotlight on Teaching* topics and cosponsored Special Topics Forums with the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force.

The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the

2008 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards

In the Category of Gender Studies:

ELISHEVA BAUMGARTEN

Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe
(Princeton University Press)

In the Category of Philosophy and Jewish Thought:

MARTIN KAVKA

Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy
(Cambridge University Press)

The AJS is now accepting submissions for the

2009 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards

DEADLINE: JUNE 26, 2009

Further information can be found at: www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html.

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The Graduate Student Committee and Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Task Force meet to discuss future cosponsored projects.



Committee and task force members at the Leadership Summit reception.



“Reading Scriptures, Reading America:

Interruptions, Orientation, and Mimicry among
U.S. Communities of Color”

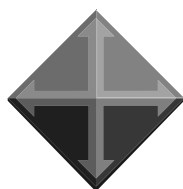
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Keynote address by award-winning journalist,
Richard Rodriguez

Institute for Signifying Scriptures
Claremont Graduate University
Claremont, CA

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Save the Date

In partnership with the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, The Fund for Theological Education will host workshops for students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups who are considering the pursuit of a Ph.D. or Th.D. in religion, theology or biblical studies. Faculty nominations and student applications will be required.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting

November 6, 2009
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting

November 20, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana

Join us in identifying a new generation of talented scholars and educators. For more information, e-mail doctoralinfo@thefund.org to receive updates and nomination/application materials as they become available.

Statement of Best Practices for Academic Job Offers

The American Academy of Religion acknowledges that the search for faculty positions in the field of religion is a complex and sensitive process for candidates and employers. At its October 2008 meeting, the Board of Directors approved the following Statement of Best Practices for Academic Job Offers. The statement, composed and submitted by the Job Placement Task Force, provides some guidelines by which prospective employers and employees might navigate the job placement process. The Statement of Best Practices will be available on AAR's website, and all departments and programs who seek to use AAR's Career Services, including Job Postings and the Annual Meeting Job Center, will be asked to indicate whether they abide by these best practices. We encourage you to discuss these best practices with faculty in your department. To add your institution to the list of those supporting this statement, contact Tim Renick at trenick@gsu.edu.

THE AMERICAN Academy of Religion recognizes that the process of selecting new colleagues is one of the most important undertakings in the life of a department. The hiring process also represents a crucial and challenging moment in the lives of the candidates being considered for faculty positions. In order to balance the interests of both groups, the American Academy of Religion supports the following best practices concerning academic job offers.

Competing Concerns: The circumstances under which job offers are made are so various that no rule will cover all cases, but norms of professional courtesy suggest some helpful advice. The employer and the prospective employee should be respectful of one another's legitimate concerns. Prospective employees are properly concerned to make important career decisions in light of information about which offers they are actually going to receive. Employers are properly concerned about planning for the contingency of making another offer in a timely fashion if one is turned down. All parties should be concerned about the interests of other applicants for the position who may be awaiting timely information about the status of the opening so that they, in turn, may make informed decisions about their options.

These considerations are further complicated by the fact that different employers, often due to budgetary and administrative factors beyond their control, can be on very different time schedules with regard to extending job offers. In some cases, these competing concerns may set employer and prospective employee at cross-purposes unless professional courtesy is exercised by both parties. Ideally, at the time an offer is made, if not earlier, employer and prospective employee should discuss their particular concerns with the aim of arriving at a mutually agreeable deadline for response.

Guidelines for Employers: In normal circumstances, offers for appointments for the subsequent Fall should be made by employers no earlier than the closing day of the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Typically, a prospective employee should have at least two weeks for consideration of a written offer from a properly authorized administrative officer. When an employer is unable to honor any of these conditions, the prospective employee should be given a written explanation of the special circumstances that warrant a deviation. At all times in the process, all applicants for the position have a right to frank and honest information about the status of their candidacies.


Guidelines for Job Candidates: Prospective employees should not delay unnecessarily in responding to an offer once it has been made and should recognize that it simply may not be possible to have information about all job possibilities before a decision about a particular offer must be rendered. When a prospective employee requests more time to consider an offer than the employer is inclined to give, a candid statement of the reasons for the request is in order. Whether positive or negative, the final response of the prospective employee to the job offer should be in writing (though an accompanying phone conversation is highly recommended and is considered a professional courtesy).

Oral Offers and Acceptances: There are at least two distinct types of situation that cause difficulties with oral offers and acceptances. The ideals of professional courtesy suggest advice for dealing with these circumstances.

One is the case in which a prospective employee orally receives what appears to be a job offer and subsequently learns that the offer does not in fact exist; for instance, because ultimate budgetary or administrative approval for the position is denied. In order to prevent misunderstandings of this sort, the prospective employer should make it absolutely clear to the

prospective employee whether a formal offer is being extended or not. If a prospective employer is only in a position to say that a formal offer will be forthcoming provided that the departmental recommendation receives administrative approval, the prospective employee should be told explicitly that this is the situation. It is the responsibility of the employer to represent the circumstances fully and accurately to the prospective employee.

Another kind of difficulty arises when a formal offer is orally made and accepted and the prospective employee later receives and accepts another offer or declines the position for other reasons. Such cases can present both legal and moral problems. It is worth bearing in mind that there are circumstances in which oral contracts are legally binding. Oral acceptance of a formal offer by a prospective employee generates a strong obligation to take the job; highly extenuating reasons are needed to justify not doing so.

Note: Portions of this Statement of Best Practices are based on the American Philosophical Association's statement "Offers of Employment" and the American Historical Association's statements "Best Practices for Interviewers" and "Guidelines for Job Offers in History." 

Don't Let Time Get Away from You!

Register for the AAR Annual Meeting Job Center by October 12. The Job Center is an efficient way for candidates and employers to communicate and participate in job interviews. Those who register by the deadline will receive full benefits of the Center.

EMPLOYERS:

Unlimited use of the interview hall

Placement of job advertisement in the Annual Meeting edition of *Job Postings*

Seven months of online access to candidate CVs organized by specialization

Ability to use the message center to communicate with registered candidates

CANDIDATES:

Opportunity to place CV online for employer review

Personal copy of registered job advertisements and employers' interview plans

Ability to use the message center to communicate with employers

For more information about the Job Center, and to register, see www.aarweb.org/jump/jobcenter.

Request for Proposals

The Pedagogy of Transnational Education

- ◆ What are the pedagogical challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of students from a variety of countries in your North American classrooms and at your institution?
- ◆ What project, activity, or faculty conversation can help you address these challenges and opportunities in ways that strengthen teaching and learning at your institution?

The Wabash Center invites proposals for projects up to **\$20,000** and three years in length from faculty teaching theology and religion in seminaries, divinity schools, colleges or universities in the United States or Canada.

Deadline: September 1, 2009

Application procedures are the same as for our general grants programs. Read instructions and procedures: <http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/grants/how-toapply.aspx>

We encourage you to discuss your ideas and questions with us.

Contact:

Paul Myhre
800-655-7117
myhrep@wabash.edu



Teaching Is an Aspiration Not an Encumbrance

A Conversation with Spotlight on Teaching Editor Tazim Kassam



Tazim R. Kassam is associate professor of religion at Syracuse University. A historian of religions, she specializes in Islamic cultures and South Asian religions. Her book, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismaili Muslim Saint, Pir Shams, focuses on the performance and devotional songs of Ismailis. Kassam has formerly chaired the Department of Religion and directed its Graduate Studies Program. Currently, she is a principal coinvestigator of the LUCE-funded program on Religion, Media, and International Relations and the founding Director of Syracuse University's interdisciplinary Muslim Cultures program in London.*

RSN: The first issue of *Spotlight on Teaching* was published in 1992. In his editorial, W. Lee Humphrey stated that the purpose of this new section in *RSN* was “to encourage creative and sustained reflection, research, and innovation in the teaching of religion and religions in many contexts.” How would you assess *Spotlight’s* success?

Kassam: Since its inception seventeen years ago, the publication has grown from four pages to an insert of eight to twelve pages. Many members have told me that they pull out the inserts and keep them. I’d say the success of *Spotlight on Teaching* demonstrates that teaching has won recognition as being a fundamental dimension of scholarly life; that teaching is a legitimate, if not essential, focus of the Academy. *Spotlight* is part of a broader set of initiatives that were undertaken by the AAR, very forward looking for that time, to address issues of pedagogy in practice and theory, and to do so in a sustained, institutional manner; for instance, by constituting the Committee on Teaching and Learning. *Spotlight’s* editor is an ex officio member on that committee.

RSN: When you say forward looking, what do you mean? Why was it necessary to pay attention to teaching when advancement of one’s scholarly career depended primarily on research and publications? Two decades later, promotion and tenure is still largely decided on that basis.

Kassam: Well, isn’t that the perennial question? It has come up repeatedly in AAR workshops and panels on teaching. There are the nuts-and-bolts aspects of teaching, such as designing course syllabi, learning teaching skills, grading assignments, and so forth. But, inevitably, discussions about the how of teaching go on to the why: Why do we teach? What are the larger issues at stake? What cultural constructions of teaching and research bear upon how and what we teach? What power

dynamics are obtained in the classroom? How do you strike a balance between research and teaching? So putting the spotlight on teaching brings into focus how teaching is conditioned by the stages of one’s academic career. Pedagogy cannot be addressed in a vacuum.

As for tenure and promotion, do we have to accept the premise that research and teaching are mutually exclusive? Ernest L. Boyer’s 1990 report for the Carnegie Foundation, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate*, deserves renewed attention. His parsing of scholarship into four areas — discovery, integration, application, and teaching — offers a more generous and inclusive appreciation of how we actually function in our academic lives. It takes time for ingrained practices of peer reviews, criteria for tenure, and promotion decisions to change. Scholarship, I feel, must continue to be the critical factor, but perhaps these other facets should be given some importance. I think practices are evolving.

RSN: Speaking of the various initiatives on teaching, since the early nineties, the AAR has sponsored a series of teaching workshops funded in part by the Lilly and Luce Foundations. You were among the first cohort of Lilly–AAR Teaching Scholars. What led to your interest in teaching?

Kassam: The same reasons that newly minted graduates have when they enter the professoriate. I had to learn how to teach before I could teach my students how to learn. It’s a simple fact — an academic life requires one to learn the nuts and bolts of pedagogy. That training was not an integral part of graduate education when I was a doctoral candidate around the late eighties. I was lucky I got to teach an existing course.

At that time, there was a fairly established view that research was the be-all and end-all of academic life, and teaching the price you had to pay for living it. In reality, this wasn’t really true. I had fantastic teachers, and they clearly thought a lot about what and how they taught. Mainly, you wanted to be like them — experts, reputable, and published scholars in their fields. Everyone’s dream was to land a job at a research university with a strong graduate program in religion or theology.

The AAR’s newsletter, *Openings*, was a god-send, as was the Employment Center — undeniably important then as it is now — the job fair where ABDs and PhDs in religion and theology waited nervously for their interviews. Those booths still make me tremble! To test the waters, I put myself through the wringer as an ABD and made a few shortlists. And the first question after “So why is your dissertation important and when will you be done with it?” was “What will you teach and explain how you developed this syllabus?” It didn’t matter if it was a public university, liberal arts college, or research university, most campus interviews required a class lecture. You had to show you could teach your research and make sense. Now surely this calls into question the research-versus-teaching divide.

RSN: Before your appointment at Syracuse University, you had tenure-track positions at Central Michigan University,

Middlebury College, and Colorado College. These are quite different contexts. How has this influenced your reflections on teaching?

Kassam: Well, that’s a good question. Obviously, it is difficult to move from one institution to another, but I really count myself fortunate because of the exposure it gave me to disparate academic environments and practices. I have had the privilege of working closely with faculty in each department on such things as revising the religion major, designing senior capstone projects, making cross-disciplinary connections, organizing faculty colloquia, integrating new learning technologies, etc. It is quite amazing to see that no matter where you are, many questions come up consistently, and there can be many different valid responses. When you move from one place to another, you also realize that a career is shaped not only by one’s department but also the overall character, structure, and leadership of institutions. This exposure has helped me think about teaching and academic life within a much broader, comparative framework.

“Teaching is conditioned by the stages of one’s academic career. Pedagogy cannot be addressed in a vacuum.”

RSN: Your career spans a long period of time, but could you offer some examples? Are there particular moments or experiences at each of these places that left an impact on your teaching and development?

Kassam: Well, yes, in every environment there is so much to learn, especially from colleagues. As you know, the first full-time teaching job is formative in one’s attitudes to teaching and research. Departments may not realize how vitally important it is to support and socialize their newly hired junior colleagues. I went to Central Michigan University as an ABD and faced head-on the challenge of teaching — actually it was more like learning to teach — and at the same time, wrote my dissertation. Public universities often have heavy teaching loads. The religion department had a load of three, rather than four, courses a semester.

As I watched my colleagues work in a context of higher class enrollments, variable student abilities, and modest institutional resources, I developed a tremendous appreciation, from their example, of teaching as a vocation, as an aspiration and not an encumbrance. At the same time, within this environment, they had fostered a lively intellectual ethos. We regularly read each other’s works-in-progress, and met every month for dinner to discuss, debate, and offer comments. For a struggling ABD, I couldn’t have asked for a more enabling environment.

Past Spotlight Topics

Past *Spotlight* issues edited by Tazim Kassam:

- Signifying (on) Scriptures: Text(ures) and Orientations
- Diversifying Knowledge Production: The Other Within Christianity
- News, Media, and Teaching Religion
- Teaching Difficult Subjects
- Reflections on a Teaching Career in Religion
- Embracing Disability in Teaching Religion
- Teaching with Site Visits
- Teaching about Religions, Medicine, and Healing
- Teaching about Religion and Violence
- Teaching about Material Culture in Religious Studies
- Teaching Religion and Music

RSN: From Central Michigan University, you went on to teach at Middlebury and Colorado College, both liberal arts colleges. What differences did you find in teaching pedagogy?

Kassam: Both are liberal arts colleges, but they are quite different. I’ll talk about Colorado College because of its idiosyncratic structure called the block plan. The academic calendar is divided into eight blocks. Students take one course at a time, and faculty teach one course at a time. Imagine the initial challenge of trying to teach a semester course in a concentrated eighteen-day segment! One figures out quickly that covering material isn’t the primary goal; writing, discovery, and critical thinking are. You can really get into sustained analysis of a single text when you meet students every day for three hours! This intensive format is not everyone’s cup of tea, but I loved it. I could assign sixty to seventy pages a day and students were expected to complete the readings and assignments. They had no excuses because they had the rest of the day to themselves and no other courses.

When you have a format like that with an average of twenty students, all sorts of creative, nontraditional pedagogical possibilities open up — extended field trips, in-class writing and peer reviews, focused textual analysis, team teaching with colleagues in other departments, study trips abroad, etc. This goes back to the point of an institution’s structure and curriculum and how they shape teaching and research. Also at Colorado College, I developed a vivid sense of how one might approach knowledge as a whole, wide-open, inclusive universe, not as discrete and compartmentalized bodies of knowledge with the humanities on one side and sciences on the other. The type of students that Colorado College attracted also demanded this of us. They wanted a well-rounded liberal arts education.

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RSN: You did your doctoral degree at the Department of Religious Studies at McGill University and then taught in undergraduate programs. At Syracuse University, you have come full circle. What observations do you have in terms of the goals and pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate level?

Kassam: Earlier I mentioned that I was struck by the fact that there are basic questions that come up in every undergraduate department: What is religion? Why teach it? What should be the requirements of a religion major? What is the position of the religion department in the college or university?

The AAR has sponsored several studies on undergraduate programs in religion, bringing together faculty from different departments to discuss how they tackle such questions. I was amazed to learn from a 2007 report on the “Religion Major and Liberal Education,” funded by the Teagle Foundation, that in just the last decade, religion majors have increased by 22 percent to an estimated 47,000 students. We aren’t talking about how many students take religion courses but how many major in religion!

It isn’t hard to account for this exponential interest. From politics to international relations, religious pluralism to creationism, the war on terror to human rights, it’s impossible to make sense of the world today without knowing something about religion. Many college students know that. They also have personal reasons; i.e., their own quest. If this trend continues, we may have an uptick of undergraduate students with religion majors applying to doctoral programs.

“*I had to learn how to teach before I could teach my students how to learn.*”

RSN: What about graduate students? What reasons and expectations do you think they have when applying for admission to graduate programs in religion?

Kassam: My impression is that they are acutely aware of contemporary events and many have fairly skeptical readings of religion, its uses and abuses in society, politics, media, etc. It’s hard to generalize why students want to specialize in religion or why they favor one graduate program over another. That would be an interesting conversation to have with other programs. Obviously there are many factors that influence them, such as faculty specialization, available funding, program requirements, national reputation, etc. I think funding is often the trump card.

How one responds to funding issues goes back to the point I made earlier about the standing of a department in a college or university. In my roles as former director of Syracuse University’s graduate program in religion and then as department chair, it was crucial to discuss these challenges with other chairs, to bolster the department’s profile, and to work with deans

and upper administration to attract resources. Undergraduate programs face funding challenges in terms of faculty lines; but, in addition to hiring new faculty, graduate programs simply must have funding to attract the best students. In a research university, this means competing hard for TA lines and scholarships.

RSN: It seems that graduate students are much more aware of and anxious about the job market, and preparing for it. Has this had any influence on your graduate program in terms of its curriculum and doctoral requirements?

“*We must develop an appreciation of teaching as a vocation, as an aspiration and not an encumbrance.*”

Kassam: It is apparent from the moment they enter the program that graduate students also have their eyes on the prize, a tenure-track appointment in a religion department. An important step we took to respond to this was to integrate teaching courses as a key component in the requirements of their four-year program of study. Doctoral students develop one upper-level course, usually in their subject area, and one introductory-level course, both under the mentorship of a faculty member. The class enrollments are capped. I have found that students are eager to teach, and more often than not, love it.

Graduate students in our program are also represented on the Graduate Committee, and have substantial input on a variety of issues pertaining to the graduate program, including admission and faculty searches. It is clear that preparing for the professoriate is an important part of their goals, and they participate in a Future Professoriate Program that exposes them to the gamut of career issues. Such training and opportunities were unheard of two decades ago.

RSN: As *Spotlight’s* editor, you have produced eleven issues of *Spotlight* on a range of topics [see accompanying table]. How did you go about selecting topics and contributors? Were there some fundamental guidelines? How did you work with the guest editors?

Kassam: I worked closely with guest editors both at the early stages to focus the theme, set the overall framework, identify contributors, and decide on the format; then I kept track of, reviewed, and edited the submissions from contributors. In terms of substance, I encouraged a balance between pedagogy and theory. That is, contributors describe actual realities and innovations in the classroom, and provide resources for teachers. At the same time, they discuss theoretical and critical issues they are grappling with in their fields or teaching environments.

The guest editors took up themes that were often marginal at the edge, bringing up sticky issues in the classroom or their field; for instance, our ignorance of disability issues in the classroom, or teaching controversial subjects that “offend” students who are Muslims, Hindus, etc. I think you will find in almost all the issues

In the Next Issue of
Spotlight on Teaching:
A Decade of the AAR Excellence
in Teaching Award: New Teaching Statements
and Resources from the Awardees

that contributors were pushing, blurring, or upsetting boundaries in their field and rethinking pedagogy.

Another guiding principle for me — and this really comes out of my experience teaching in different contexts and participation in various sections at the AAR — was that the selection of contributors be diverse in as many ways as possible: specialization, viewpoints, pedagogies, institutions, gender, race, junior versus senior members, and so forth. This was of course an ideal, but I think having it clearly stated worked well.

RSN: What topics and themes would you like to see addressed in future issues of *Spotlight*? What new challenges do you anticipate faculty will face in light of broader trends in the academy and the global age?

Kassam: That’s a big question. I have found that themes dealt with in previous years reappear because of altered contexts, changes in society, developments in our fields, and of course, the student population. Take for example the introductory survey course in religion. Should this be a world religions course? Is it theoretically justifiable to teach such a course? If so, how does one go about it in the context of the explosion and instantaneous access to the virtual jungle of information? I think graduate students — who form a bridge between generations, whose ways of accessing and thinking about information and knowledge are very different — could teach us about this in a *Spotlight* issue.

Another older theme currently resurfacing is the question of teaching and activism. Is there a place for activism in the Academy? What is meant by transformative pedagogy, pedagogies of resistance, and consciousness raising? Have new insights and lines of scholarship emerged from these teaching practices? How do scholars navigate the potential minefield of introducing politics and personal identity in the classroom? In “The New Climate of Timidity on Campuses,” A. Lee Fritschler argues that risk-averse pedagogy shortchanges students (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 13, 2009). This timidity isn’t altogether unfounded. He mentions a religion colleague who was called to the carpet by a dean because a student complained he had criticized his faith.

Another topic worth attention is how scholars in other disciplines teach courses on religion since such courses on offer in the social sciences, law, medicine, and even business schools have also increased. I would like to see a cross-section of colleagues in other disciplines give their views and discuss their experiences. Conversely,

what do those scholars trained in anthropology, sociology, and feminist studies who end up in religion departments have to say about their experience and challenges teaching religion? This would come to the question of “What does interdisciplinary mean in practice?” in a different way.

A third topic is the way that faculty use blogs, vlogs, social networking websites, etc. We are vastly at an advantage today in terms of accessing research materials electronically. That’s the upside. What about the downsides? A 2007 NEA report, “To Read or Not to Read,” says that seventeen-year-old nonreaders doubled from 9 percent in 1984 to 19 percent in 2004. The modus operandi for learning nowadays is scanning not reading. We may need new ideas of what constitutes knowledge. The question now is not what we don’t know but how much of what we know just isn’t so. It is plain wrong. Sara Lippincott, a former editor of the *New Yorker*, describes the state of affairs as “an explosion of errata” (quoted in *Checkpoints* by John McPhee, February 9th, 2009).

“*The question now is not what we don’t know, but how much of what we know isn’t so.*”

RSN: Since you became a member of the AAR in 1987, you’ve served almost every year in some capacity — cochair of the Study of Islam and Religions of South Asia Sections, president of the Midwestern region, Women and Religion’s steering committee member, on the *JAAR* and *JFSR* editorial boards, and *Spotlight’s* editor. In retrospect, would you do so again?

Kassam: Absolutely! The AAR is simply a fantastic place to serve, learn, and grow. *Spotlight’s* next editors have much to look forward to, and in AAR’s true tradition of renewal, will bring fresh ideas and break new ground. RSN

Executive Committee Establishes Support for Sustainability Research Efforts: Three-pronged Initiative Announced

INFLUENCED by the Sustainability Task Force request to encourage more research in the area of Religion and Sustainability, the Executive Committee has announced a comprehensive plan that will put sustainability issues at the forefront of the Academy.

The Committee set forth three initiatives that will showcase the AAR's commitment to infuse sustainability throughout the Academy:

- The Committee has asked the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion (JAAR)* to put out a call for a special issue on sustainability and religion;
- During the next three years, the AAR Annual Meeting Program will highlight papers that deal with sustainability in one form or another; and
- During the next three years, the AAR will dedicate up to three of its research grants for proposals that address sustainability, with the recipients of these grants, and others, recognized at the awards ceremony at the Annual Meeting. To facilitate adjudication of these grants, an expert on sustainability will be added to the research grants committee, with nominations for this appointment welcomed from the Sustainability Task Force.

The Executive Committee enthusiastically supports the work of the Sustainability Task Force, and its goal to stimulate more research on religion and sustainability," the Committee's motion said. Executive Director Jack Fitzmier added, "I am very pleased with this outcome and think that this decision puts the sustainability issue more clearly on our institutional map."

"We are thrilled with the strategic shifts that have been made in such a short period of time," said Sarah McFarland Taylor, chair of the Sustainability Task Force. "With the adoption of these and other sustainability measures, the AAR moves to the vanguard of academic societies and leads the way in setting the frame for scholarly focus in the twenty-first century."

Fitzmier said that the Executive Committee believed it was imperative to dedicate an issue of *JAAR* to the topic. "We will schedule this as soon as seems feasible, given the needs, schedules, and commitments of the *JAAR* publishing calendar," he said.

Fitzmier also said that the Executive Committee action does not guarantee that such research will appear in a special issue. "Religion and sustainability submissions will have to meet the same criteria and standards of excellence set by the *JAAR* editorial board, which is charged with accepting, rejecting, or calling for revisions of articles for *JAAR*. A special issue of *JAAR* will also require that a sufficient number of quality articles are submitted and accepted. It is our hope, of course, that a direct result of the AAR encouraging research in this area will be an increase in excellent scholarship worthy of appearing in *JAAR*."

The announcement of the Annual Meeting program highlights follows an established pattern. The AAR often highlights, in one way or another, special themes or topics that are featured at a given Annual Meeting. This can occur in the *Program Planner*, the online version of the *Program Book*, or in the printed *Program Book*. As a relatively straightfor-

ward administrative task, the AAR aims for this to occur in advance of the 2009 Annual Meeting in Montréal.

The Executive Committee is directing its most expansive support to the AAR's research grants program. Each year the AAR devotes approximately \$35,000–\$40,000 to its research grants program, which typically garners from forty to sixty-five grant applications. There are about a dozen that are funded, ranging from awards of \$500 to \$5,000. The Committee's plan would allow up to three of these awards to be given to sustainability research projects for the next three years.

To help the jury assess sustainability proposals, the Executive Committee will ask the President to appoint an additional juror, with specific expertise in sustainability matters, to join the research grants jury. Like all other appointments to AAR committees, juries, and task forces, this falls to presidential appointment.

Fitzmier again said that the initiative does not guarantee that any AAR research grant monies will go to sustainability proposals. Rather, it stipulates that if sustainability proposals are deemed worthy of funding by the jury, up to three of those worthy sustainability proposals can be funded in a given year.

"I believe that if we make announcements soon, we might alert AAR members of this opportunity in time for them to submit sustainability proposals for selection in the fall of 2009 round of awards," he said.

The Executive Committee is placing a three-year limit on this package of sup-

port. "Hopefully, this support package will result in an increased awareness of the importance of sustainability and that such a happy outcome will reduce the need for extraordinary efforts," Fitzmier said.

Fitzmier praised the work of the Sustainability Task Force. "I think it is entirely reasonable to interpret the eagerness of the (Executive) Committee to establish this program as evidence of the positive impact your Task Force has made on the Board and on the AAR membership. I am sure that I speak for the entire Board and Executive Committee when I extend to you my thanks for your passion and hard work."

Taylor in turn expressed the Task Force's gratitude for the Committee's swift action and Fitzmier's leadership commitment to the area of sustainability. "This places the AAR at the forefront of institutions shaping the future of academic research in this critical area," she said. "We will look back on the decisions our AAR executives have made today and will no doubt regard this as among their greatest legacies to the Academy and to the planet." RSN

Religion Newswriters Identify Year's Top Ten Religion Stories

Editor's Note:

Information for this article was provided by RNA Extra Online, the newsletter of the Religion Newswriters Association (www.rna.org).

IN DECEMBER, the Religion Newswriters Association conducted its annual poll of nearly 300 active members. More than 100 journalists responded and identified the following as the top ten religion news stories of 2008.

1. Controversial sermons delivered in recent years by the Reverend Jeremiah Wright surface, resulting in pressure on Barack Obama, who eventually withdraws his membership in his church, Trinity UCC, Chicago. Meanwhile, John McCain rejects the endorsements of evangelists John Hagee, a critic of Catholicism, and Rod Parsley.
2. Democrats, especially Barack Obama, make a conscious effort to woo faith-based voters. Obama participates in a faith-based debate with John McCain moderated by California megachurch pastor Rick Warren. Unusual attention is paid to evangelicals at the Democratic National Convention.
3. Sarah Palin's nomination as Republican vice president leads many evangelicals, who had planned to sit out the election, to support the GOP ticket. The choice causes a dilemma for some religious conservatives who oppose women in leadership roles.
4. The California Supreme Court rules gay marriage is legal, but voters in November approve a constitutional amendment overturning the decision. Gay marriage also fails at the polls in Arizona and Florida.
5. In his first visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI brings a message of hope during stops in Washington, D.C., and New York. During the trip, he meets with victims of clergy misconduct.
6. United States conservatives alienated from the Episcopal Church say they will ask Anglican Communion leaders for permission to create the Anglican Church in North America, allowing dioceses unhappy in the Episcopal Church to operate under the authority of a North American bishop instead of Anglican bishops in Africa and Latin America, as is now done. The move is considered the most significant threat to the Episcopal Church's unity since a gay clergyman was ordained bishop five years ago.
7. Terrorism believed motivated at least in part by religious fervor results in the deaths of almost 200 people in a three-day siege in Mumbai, India; one of the major targets is a Jewish center, where an American rabbi and his wife are killed. Meanwhile, attacks on Christians in the eastern India state of Orissa and its neighbors, which began in late 2007, continue during 2008.
8. China cracks down on Buddhists seeking Tibetan independence in a prelude to producing a peaceful Olympics games; demonstrations mar some of the torch passages.
9. The crumbling economy and subsequent drop in contributions force many faith-based organizations to cut back on expenses, at the same time as the need for social services increases.
10. Violence continues in Iraq as Sunnis and Shiites attack each other and Christians are also targeted; Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Rahho is kidnapped and murdered in Mosul. However, some progress toward peace is apparently made.

The Religion Newswriters Association, founded in 1949, strives to help journalists cover religion in an accurate and balanced way by providing free tools and training. RNA members have been selecting the top ten religion stories of the year for nearly thirty years. RSN

100 Years

JAAR CALL FOR PAPERS THE AAR AT 100: A CENTENNIAL REFLECTION

The American Academy of Religion has been in existence for one hundred years. How has our understanding of religion changed in that time, and what can the past teach us about the future? We invite considerations of the implications of the trajectory of the AAR over the past one hundred years for future scholarship in the study of religion.

We are particularly interested in papers that address changes in the field of religious studies over the last twenty-five (or even one hundred) years. Possible topics might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The effect of the rise of academic interest in religion outside of religious studies;
- The resurgence of religion in the world and its implications for understanding the religions;
- The increasing internationalization of the field;
- New subfields that have emerged in the last twenty-five years;
- The increasing interdisciplinary nature of scholarship;
- Islam's influence on the study of religion, or, the study of religion and its influence on Islam;
- The continual shift of the academic study of religion from theological schools to colleges/universities;
- The influence of social science methodologies (especially anthropology) on the study of religion;
- The flourishing of the science and religion dialogue, especially the nascent field of the cognitive neuroscience of religion; and
- The effect of philanthropic institutions on the study of religion.

JAAR invites proposals for a focus issue that explores what the AAR's past can teach us about what will be, or should be, its future.

Deadline for submission is December 1, 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.

Future AAR Annual Meeting Dates and Sites

2009 — Montréal, QC, Canada
November 7–10

2010 — Atlanta, GA
October 30–
November 2

2011 — San Francisco, CA
November 19–22

2012 — Atlanta, GA
November 3–6

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 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, and 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:

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.



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; 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.



Luce Summer Seminars Cohort One Fellows Announced

The American Academy of Religion is pleased to announce Cohort One of the Luce Summer Seminars in Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology: American Academy of Religion/Henry Luce Foundation Summer Seminar Fellows.

-
- Michel Andraos**
CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION
- Edward Phillip Antonio**
LIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
- Loye Ashton**
TOUGALOO COLLEGE
- Julia Watts Belser**
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
- Sharon Betcher**
VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
- Clifton Clarke**
REGENT UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
- Marion Grau**
CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC/
GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
- Kathleen Greider**
CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
- Ravi M. Gupta**
COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
- Lisa M. Hess**
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
- Mary E. Hess**
LUTHER SEMINARY
- Emily Holmes**
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS UNIVERSITY
- Tat-siong Benny Liew**
PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION/
GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
- Anna Bonta Moreland**
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
- Reid L. Neilson**
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
- Stacy L. Patty**
LUBBOCK CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
- Miriam Perkins**
EMMANUEL SCHOOL OF RELIGION
- Yolanda Pierce**
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
- Paul F. Sands**
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, GEORGE C. TRUETT
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
- Angel Santiago-Vendrell**
MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
- Devorah Schoenfeld**
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
- Gerald Shenk**
EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY
- Karla Suomala**
LUTHER COLLEGE
- Gregory Walter**
ST. OLAF'S COLLEGE
- Homayra Ziad**
TRINITY COLLEGE

Summer Seminars on Theologies of Religious Pluralism and Comparative Theology: Cohort Two

*The American Academy of Religion
is pleased to announce the formation of
Cohort Two of our Luce Summer Seminars*

THESE WEEKLONG SEMINARS will provide training to theological education faculty who often prepare students for future religious leadership and ministry. The Theological Education Steering Committee invites applications from theological educators interested in pursuing questions about the meaning of religious diversity. The seminars will help address the question of religious diversity as a properly theological question: What is the meaning of my neighbor's faith for mine? While we expect that the bulk of applicants will come from seminaries and divinity schools, we also welcome theological educators who teach in theology and religious studies departments.

The seminars, composed of twenty-five participants and eight instructors, are designed for those relatively new to the theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology, allowing them to learn from expert scholars and advance their understanding. The result of the summer seminars will be to increase the number of theological educators who can teach in the areas of theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology in a variety of institutions in which theological education takes place. All accepted applicants will be awarded a cash stipend of \$1,000, plus the grant will cover their expenses incurred during their participation in the seminars.

Cohort Two will meet June 13–20, 2010, at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, then on October 29, 2010, at the Annual Meeting, Atlanta, and, finally May 29–June 5, 2011, at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago.

The application deadline for Cohort Two is January 15, 2010. All accepted applicants will be notified by late February or early March 2010.

Further information on the seminars can be found at www.aarweb.org/Programs/Summer_Seminars or by contacting the Project Director, John J. Thatamanil, Vanderbilt Divinity School, john.j.thatamanil@vanderbilt.edu.

Call for AAR Series Book Editor


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

The Teaching Religious Studies series locates itself at the intersection of pedagogical concerns and the substantive content of religious studies. Each volume provides scholarly and pedagogic discussion about a key topic (e.g., a text, theme, or thinker) of significance for teaching and scholarship in religious studies. Volumes typically comprise essays setting the topic within its historical context and locating the work within the traditions of religious studies, and an array of brief essays that discuss pedagogical and theoretical problems relevant to teaching the topic in a range of contexts. Volumes may also include primary sources and guides to reference tools. Taken together, the pieces collected in each volume place the topic firmly within the religious studies context and raise challenging questions about its role in teaching and in the field more generally. The series is designed to be useful and of interest to several groups, including new teachers, those who are teaching a subject for the first time or in a new context, teacher-scholars, and students interested in the specific topic. The Teaching Religious Studies series seeks creative ideas that represent the best of our work as teachers and scholars.

Further information on books published in this series can be found at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books/teachingreligiousstudies.asp.

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 at www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books. 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 at www.aarweb.org/About_AAR/Committees/Publications.

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, cduggan@shawu.edu. The application deadline is September 1, 2009. 

BRIEFS

Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements

On October 15–16, 2009, the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements will assemble scholars and practitioners from across the globe to explore the historical and contemporary expressions of revitalization within the world Christian community. This event, to be held on the campus of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, is one of three consultations designed to take the pulse of current Christian revitalization now occurring internationally. Designed to provide Christian leaders with beneficial resources for their work around the world, this event is funded by a strategic grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. For more information, visit <http://revitalizationmovements.net/>.

Theologos Book Awards

The Association of Theological Booksellers recently announced the 2008 winners of the Theologos Awards. The awards represent the unique, professional evaluations of people who sell academic

religious books. The Association of Theological Booksellers is a collaborative organization of diverse theological bookstores and publishers working together to enhance the quality and ensure the future of theological bookselling. Only the bookseller members of the association are eligible to vote.

Best General Interest Book

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism
Timothy Keller
Dutton Books

Best Academic Book

Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament
G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Editors
Baker Academic

Best Children's Book

Psalms for Young Children
Marie-Helene Delval
Illustrated by Arno
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Book of the Year

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism
Timothy Keller
Dutton Books

Publisher of the Year

Baker Publishing Group 

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.

The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the

2008 Cahnman Publication Subvention Grants

IN SUPPORT OF FIRST BOOKS

Mara H. Benjamin, St. Olaf College
Rosenzweig's Bible: Reinventing Scripture for Jewish Modernity
(to be published by Cambridge University Press)

Rebecca Kobrin, Columbia University
Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora: Between Exile and Empire
(to be published by Indiana University Press)

James Loeffler, University of Virginia
The Most Musical Nation: Jews, Culture, and Modernity in the Late Russian Empire
(to be published by Yale University Press)

Avinoam Patt, University of Hartford
Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust
(to be published by Wayne State University Press)

The AJS is now accepting applications for the **2009 Cahnman Publication Subvention Grants**

DEADLINE: JUNE 26, 2009

Further information can be found at: www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html.

AJS • 15 West 16th Street • New York, NY 10011 • Tel: 917.606.8249,
Email: ajs@ajs.cjh.org • www.ajsnet.org

In the Public Interest

Exhibiting Religion

Sally M. Promey, Yale University



Sally M. Promey is professor of American studies in the faculty of Arts and Sciences and professor of religion and visual culture in the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University, where she directs the Yale Initiative for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion. Current research projects include book manuscripts titled *Religion in Plain View: The Public Aesthetics of American Belief and Written on the Heart: Protestant Visual Culture in the United States*.

THIS ESSAY considers the complex situation of religion on display in history and art museums. This exchange got its start in response to the set of provocative papers on this subject delivered at the AAR meetings in Chicago in November 2008. Convened and chaired by Colleen McDannell, panelists included Elizabeth Pope (Art Institute of Chicago), Jill Grannan (Chicago History Museum), and Gretchen Buggeln (Valparaiso University). Each of the three speakers provided a set of reflections on a specific exhibition or, in Buggeln's case, a cluster of exhibitions. Pope described and analyzed "Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South" (Art Institute of Chicago, November 2004–January 2005); Grannan summarized the process of curating "Catholic Chicago" (Chicago History Museum, March 2008–January 2009); and Buggeln presented case studies from the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum (Decorah, IA), the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (Old Salem, NC), and Colonial Williamsburg (VA).

A common assumption hovered, for the most part, just below the threshold of the panel's spoken conversations: contributors stood at varying degrees of proximity to a shared notion of the ideal "neutrality" of museum spaces. As attractive as this ideal may appear, however, it not only fails to describe contemporary museum practice, but also obscures the historical shape and cultural technologies of these institutions. Museum space is anything but neutral. Any given exhibition, in any given museum, represents multiple constellations of constituents (e.g., curators, educators, patrons, donors, and a range of publics) with diverse and often competing interests, needs, and demands. Looking beyond this array of individuals and groups, many other aspects of museum practice complicate claims to neutrality. It is perhaps not surprising that scholars of religion should wonder where and how religion "fits" in museum display, for the "neutrality" of museum space is especially suspect when it comes to this subject of inquiry.

The culture of enlightenment that produced museums in their current forms framed these institutions as quintessentially modern entities [see *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Duke University Press, 2007) for a useful recent account of the situation]. An enlightenment crucible projected museums into a progressively secular culture of modernity, and one ultimately predicated on religion's disappearance. In this redaction, as numerous scholars have suggested for well over a decade, religion became a vestigial organ or appendage, a relic of the past, or a token of "less advanced" civilizations. Emptied of contemporary "religious" content, museums instead elevated and sacralized art and culture and traced civilizing trajectories that replicated this kind of ascent [about which, see Carol Duncan's persuasive argument in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (Routledge, 1995)]. Especially when it comes to religion, then, museums represent an inherently political enterprise, having assumed their present shape, in large part, by locating religion securely in the past and replacing it with an elevation of its presumed modern aestheticized counterparts.

Striking gaps open occasionally between this set of strategies in museum origins and the contemporary human material lives they seek to represent to the museum-going public. Sometimes objects resist the sorts of cultural elevations "secular" museums seek to enforce; sometimes they implement their own variations. In 1963, for example, Chester Dale gave Salvador Dalí's *Sacrament of the Last Supper* (1955) to the National Gallery of Art (NGA). In this case, and in this context, "art" should have trumped the religious subject matter — but art status failed to "protect" the object from religious practice. Stories (some perhaps apocryphal) have circulated for years about museum visitors praying in front of the image, and even leaving offerings beneath it. For a number of reasons, including its apparently oxymoronic pairing of "religion" and "modern art," this painting does not fit the narrative of modernity that the National Gallery otherwise presents. Museum-goers complain, however, if they cannot find the painting and this Dalí, in reproductions of various sorts, sells very well in the museum gift shop. The NGA's solution has been to display the Dalí, but to hang it in an out-of-the-way, lower-level service space, also housing the elevator, "between" the West and East Buildings. *Sacrament of the Last Supper* thus does not compete for more valuable real estate in the proper galleries where it would also disrupt the narrative flow suggested in the arrangement of modern works of art — and where the occasional pious devotee might disrupt other museum fictions as well.

Slippage between museum exhibition and religious practice occurs with some frequency; this is often most emphatically apparent when display moves outdoors, as happened, for example, in the spaces reserved for showcasing Tibetan Buddhism at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2000. Here monks (as practitioners of "art" and religion) demonstrated the making of a mandala and an observant local woman left offerings and engaged in ritual performance

at a *stupa* constructed for the festival on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The sensory abundance of this woman's practice (lighting candles, inhaling incense and the scent of flowers, seeing the sacred shape of the structure, hearing the sounds of adjacent prayer wheels and musical performances as well as the noise of the festival crowds) calls to attention, by contrast, the degree to which the customary culture of museum spaces is heavily informed by a Western enlightenment investment in visibility as the premier sensory experience, most exalted among the senses, the primary mode of the production of knowledge. In relegating religion to an "other" present (here Tibetan Buddhism) or a premodern past, academics have long granted it greater access to senses deemed more "primitive" (smell, touch, taste) than the highest sense (sight) or its penultimate (sound) [see Constance Classen's *Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender, and the Aesthetic Imagination* (Routledge Press, 1998) for an illuminating history of Western sensory hierarchy]. As the academy renegotiates understandings of the relation of secularization to modernity, as it acknowledges the significant presence of religion in contemporary local and global cultures, it has also begun to reevaluate vision's domination of the enlightenment sensory landscape and to attend to the multisensory situation of human experience.

The challenge to conventional museum practice here is enormous. We have learned in art and history museums how to look at objects, and how to value "looking" in contexts that assert its neutrality and ubiquity. In Gretchen Buggeln's discussion of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, she remarked on its emphasis on visibility, describing the museum's aims and impact in these terms, "the primary draw is what there is to see there." Despite clichéd claims that seeing is believing, the difficulty is that sight alone doesn't always reveal everything we want and need to know. Religious practices are embedded in a multisensory world and simply looking at things, from a Western ocularcentric perspective, is a distinctly partial avenue of engagement. What are audiences to make, for example, of an altar in the exhibition "Catholic Chicago"; an altar that, while situated in a niche that reiterates its "original" location in a church or chapel, offers exclusively visual display of an object whose meaningful use requires multisensory ritual performance (gesture, movement; the heat and scent of lighted candles; the fragrance of flowers and incense; pictures and statues to be clothed and kissed). The recent "sensory turn" in material and visual culture studies, as well as museum studies, seeks to address a related set of issues.

If seeing is but one important sense among others, it is also "partial" in still another way. In the calculus of enlightenment "neutrality," looking registered as a most disinterested sense. As James Elkins argues in *The Object Stares Back* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1997), however, "there is no looking that is not also directed at something, aimed at some purpose" (21); looking is "tangled with living and acting" (31); and "looking is hoping, desiring, never just

taking in light, never merely collecting patterns and data" (22). Beyond the valuations assigned in individual acts of looking, sensory experience of every sort is, as David Howes (ed.) suggests in *Empire of the Senses* (Berg Publishers, 2005), "permeated with social values" (3). Perception "has a history and a politics that can only be comprehended within its cultural setting" (5).

While it may appear that museums present objects as evidence from which visitors are invited to draw their own conclusions, knowledge is heavily mediated in museums, mediated by the sorts of institutions they are (and have been), the kinds of spaces they construct, the materials of display those spaces accommodate and those they do not accommodate, the selections of objects in their collections, the people who have made these selections, the categories these selections are presumed to occupy, the conditions of encounter over time and in any given moment, and so on.

An exhibition, like "Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand," that set out to establish "cultural continuities" over great spans of time, for example, likely obscured equally significant "discontinuities." This is particularly troubling in the context of understanding Native American cultures where proximity to "tradition" has long been a dominant cultural measure of legitimate claims to authority and identity. What might have happened had the exhibition's organizers wished to explore, instead, degrees of cultural continuity and discontinuity? Even then, however, the focus still would have been trained on the politics of "like" and "unlike" rather than on the spaces between — or on surviving monuments and artifacts and best understandings of their use and interpretation over time.

In art and history museums, visitors have learned not just how to look at objects, but how to value objects — and how to most highly value some kinds of objects, especially those objects called "art." Museum collections have taken shape around inclinations and imperatives to collect and display certain kinds of things — and not others. This has meant that especially attractive "other" objects often get misplaced into historically more highly valued categories for purposes of display. For example, past habits of collecting and categorization relegated Native American artifacts to natural history museums or to "museums of man." Recognizing the imperialist inadequacies of this practice, curators today have worked to address this situation — and art museums have mounted major displays of Native American objects. Because the category "art" is most "sacred" within the Western museological cultural/institutional context, denying "art" status is frequently understood as something akin to a moral affront. By this valuation, if an object is "good," if it deserves our attention, it must be "art." Thus, one of the most peculiar things about Elizabeth Pope's illuminating analysis of the AIC exhibition, "Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand," is the insistence with which the Art Institute of

Research Briefing

Making a Homeland: Imagining Sacred Spaces in the Nineteenth Century African Methodist Episcopal Church

Julius H. Bailey, University of Redlands




Julius H. Bailey is an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Redlands. He received his PhD in American religious history from the University of North Carolina. His first book, *Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1865–1900* (University Press of Florida, 2005) examined African-American familial religious life in the home. He has also written on African-American new religious movements, such as in his article, “The Final Frontier: Secrecy, Identity, and the Media in the Rise and Fall of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors,” (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 74, no. 2 [June 2006]: 302–323).

black Americans in West Africa, the journal entry of an African-American emigrant on the voyage across the Atlantic, or advertisements promising black southerners cheap fares to Africa if only they sold their possessions and made their way to New York for departure tell us about imagined sacred space in the nineteenth century? These are the kinds of questions and disparate sources that the AAR grant allowed me to explore as I analyzed descriptive and visual representations of Zions that were offered by African Americans as alternatives to a return to Africa in the nineteenth century. My search led me to the Library of Congress where I examined the African American Pamphlet Collection, 1822–1909, and the Maps of Liberia Collection, 1830–1870. These cartographic depictions of Africa, images, public orations, personal accounts, advertisements, diaries of ministers, and the portrayal of Africans in sermons and missionary tracts all reveal the ways nineteenth century African Americans constructed varied imagery to reconcile an African past, American present, and an evolving Christian identity. In addition, the *Christian Recorder*, the official denominational newspaper of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, also reflected the changing understandings of Africa. In 1870, the masthead was transformed, heralding the denomination’s missionary efforts with the words “Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Out Her Hands Unto God,” wrapped around a globe depicting the continent of Africa. Similarly, AME Sunday School literature, such as the *Child’s Recorder*, presented children with drawings of African “heathens” before and

after receiving the Christian Gospel. This research constitutes a significant portion of the African-American material culture and visual representations of Africa that are interwoven throughout my current book project, *Race Patriotism: The Meanings of Africa in the Nineteenth Century African Methodist Episcopal Church*.

Chapters address the ascension of the denominational press as a central discursive site in which AME congregants engaged one another on the most pressing issues of the day, providing a distinctive arena for African Americans to enter into sustained conversations about the future of the race and, in so doing, reshaping the public discourse of the broader American public sphere. Taking seriously the importance of spatial location and the positionality of the historical narrator, there is a chapter on “Western Zions,” that begins to chart the religious map of African Methodism in the American West by sketching the multiple visions of the region. The chapter entitled “Reckoning with Darwin” examines the ways social Darwinian thought complicated notions of racial origin and biblical authority and the efforts of African Americans, through sermons, speeches, and writings, to respond to theories that they felt threatened to shake the foundations of their faith and reframe their relationship with Africa. One chapter investigates the parallels that AME leaders and laity drew between the history and experiences of the ancient Israelites and the relationship of African Americans to Africa. Even further, many black ministers understood the progress of contemporary Jews around the

world as a framework for their own Pan-African efforts, a measure of potential African-American achievement, and the prognostication of the future advancement of the race. The final chapter analyzes the arguments surrounding Back-to-Africa movements as those on each side of the debate not only read the evidence put forth through the lens that supported their own position, but sought to discredit their opposition by challenging their cultural authority to speak for the race. Material culture provides me with a constant reminder that this was not solely an intellectual exercise and debate; real men and women uprooted their lives to settle in Liberia in the hopes of finding a better life and many southerners lost all that they owned as they journeyed to the East Coast only to find that the emigration company that they had put their trust in had swindled them of their money. Placing visions of sacred spaces, Zions, and sites of redemption in concert with other forms of historical imaginings such as cartography, sketches, illustrations, letters, orations, articles, personal accounts, editorials, and news reporting in the black press reveals new voices and perspectives inherent in the diversity of black communities and opens up whole new areas of inquiry into the importance of place and homeland in African-American religious history. I would like to express my appreciation to the American Academy of Religion for the grant that allowed me to complete key pieces of my research that would have otherwise likely been long delayed absent the support of the financial award. 

WHAT MIGHT a map of Liberia produced by the American Colonization Society, an organization formed to resettle free

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From the Student Desk

"I Study Physics": Denying My Identity as a Religion Scholar

Kathryn Carriere, PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa



Kathryn Carriere is a PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa, specializing in migrant religion in Canada. Her BA in religious and cultural studies is from Wilfrid Laurier University, and her Master's degree in Christian ethics/theology and ecology is from St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto.

NO MATTER how much some assert that religion is a private matter, as scholars of religion and global citizens we can no longer deny that religion is everywhere. It reveals itself in the most unlikely places: in professional sports, in hit-song lyrics, on fashion runways in Milan, and in Inauguration Day ceremonies. People love to talk about religion — whether the question is gay marriage, *hijabs* at school, or capital punishment. The supposed relegation of religion to the personal realm has left a colossal

void in people's daily discussions, and people are yearning to be given the green light to discuss faith and its place in society. But during a recent taxi ride, I discovered just how expensive a proposition giving that green light can be.

A few weeks ago I was heading off to the airport to go to a conference. Typically, a cab ride to the airport runs me fourteen dollars, including a very generous tip. It was just after dawn, and my extra-long shower had cost me my morning cup of brew. The driver pulled up to my apartment punctually and swiftly loaded my luggage into the trunk. After a few kilometers of silent driving, he casually asked me what I do. "I'm a graduate student," I responded without any notable enthusiasm. He asked what I study and looked at me inquisitively through the rear-view mirror. "Religious studies . . ." I began, before I could catch myself.

I should have known I was in trouble when I saw his posture straighten enough to make any chiropractor proud. "Do you know about the Ethiopian Church?" he asked me. Before I could answer that, yes, I have in fact studied that tradition, the taxi driver embarked on a lengthy history lesson. I recognized his tone of voice: it reminded me of my father's when I was about to be the lucky recipient of one of his parental "life lessons." Beginning with his faith's origins, winding through the Middle Ages, and continuing to present-day Ethiopia, he talked about his faith's rituals and beliefs — even its eighty-one-book canon.

Immediately, if unintentionally, I jumped into "fact-checking" mode, my brain struggling to edit the accuracy of his words. *Was it the Council of Chalcedon, or the Council of Rome? Were the Jesuits really expelled or was it the Franciscans? Oh, I don't know . . . I'm too tired.* Leaning back on my seat, I realized it was impossible to be a critical graduate student prior to 8:00 AM. *Maybe I'll just sit back and listen,* I thought, as I allowed the driver to continue uninterrupted. *I'll be a Good Samaritan today,* I decided, struggling to keep my heavy eyes open.

After quite some time, I noticed that we were no closer to the airport. It seemed that my Ethiopian church history instructor was taking me on the scenic route in order to prolong the one-sided conversation that he was enjoying so much. Glancing over at the meter, I panicked. It already read forty-five dollars, and we still had quite a distance left. Remembering that I only had sixty dollars cash on hand, I began to wonder how much my good deed was going to cost me. I frantically interrupted his discussion of Ethiopian

millennium celebrations to implore him to hurry. "Look at me!" he responded, laughing. "I can spend all day talking about religion with you!" He smiled compassionately and stepped on the pedal. "Don't worry. There is no traffic; I will get you there on time." Gradually, I began to appreciate his wisdom more. "When was the Ethiopian millennium, again?" I asked.

The trip to the airport ended up costing fifty-six dollars. The driver accepted my four-dollar tip as though it was four hundred and humbly told me that it was a pleasure driving me. Placing my bags on the sidewalk, he handed me his card and asked me to call should I ever require another ride. I realized then how much our conversation had meant to him. By identifying myself as a student of religion, I'd given him the opportunity to talk about what mattered most to him. *I've done well,* I thought to myself. *My Mum would be proud.* "But from now on," I said out loud as I realized I had no money left for coffee, "I study physics." RSN

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

From the Student Desk is currently seeking submissions for upcoming issues of *RSN*. 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 e-mailed to cshughe@emory.edu.

PROMEY, from page 19

Chicago (AIC) presented ancient Native American ritual objects as "masterpieces" of "art." As Pope recounted, the AIC wished to foreground the "sacred beliefs and ritual activities" illuminated by "earthworks and city layouts" and the "works of art" on display. Perhaps categorization of the works as "art" was deemed a necessary first step to exhibition in an art museum — but it was a step that limited the objects in the context of their early production and use (though admittedly it also revealed something consequential about twenty-first century reception). As part of the educational initiative of this exhibition, curators and museum professionals selected fifteen objects to be reproduced on flashcards for circulation to public schools. What were the criteria in relation to which "masterpiece" status was established for the objects selected? By whose estimation was masterpiece status assigned? Also, in this regard, was there concern about canonizing as "masterpieces" of "art" the chosen fifteen

objects, especially given their appearance on the education cards to be used in the public schools?

Practices of selection, moreover, raise questions not just about what to do with objects that survive, but also how to account for and reimagine those that did not. Many objects are rendered invisible in the kinds of museum displays to which Western audiences have grown accustomed. Things in motion or performance, for example, present special challenges, as do the kinds of things that have disappeared because collectors did not consider them attractive. There are also many instances in which objects remain, but do so below museum radar. While museums make some things visible, they also consign others to invisibility — and these, historically, have often concerned religious belief and practice.

Especially in instances likely to produce disagreement or controversy, curators and publics may be disinclined to fully engage the problematic object. In 1999 and 2000,

for example, Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary*, on display at the Brooklyn Museum, was subject to accusations of blasphemy for its inclusion of feet and a breast made of elephant dung. Here mediation by the press untethered display (disconnected it from its original materiality and offered it a new disembodied, mostly verbal reality). In the media circus surrounding the Brooklyn Museum's "Sensation" exhibition, virtually no one called attention to the explicitly pornographic cut-outs of female genitalia pasted to the surface of the image. Protestants and Catholics representing the conservative side of the controversy failed to mention the cut-outs because they had not seen them: they boycotted the exhibition and so knew the painting only in its postage-stamp-size reproductions in which the subject matter of the cut-outs was impossible to identify. Liberal religious groups and the New York art critics largely declined to talk about the little bits of pictures, apparently snipped from magazines like *Hustler* and *Penthouse*, because they did not wish to add

fuel to the fire: "as pure as a Byzantine Madonna" was one art critic's description of Ofili's work. How ironic that Ofili does not aim to produce art that is neutral or even necessarily benign; he would be among the first to admit that, among other things, his art engages a market fed by notoriety.

Scholars have long recognized the absence of neutrality in museums and collecting institutions, in objects, in collections, and collecting practice, in categories and their related genealogies, in looking, and in sensory cultures. This recognition has had insufficient impact on the ways museums display religion. In the wake of the new critique of secularization theory, as we recalibrate (intellectually, categorically, and institutionally) estimations of religion's longevity and consequence, and as we acknowledge the critical importance of material and sensory practices of religion, the representation of religion in museum exhibitions, and the very notion of exhibition itself, will require serious intellectual, categorical, and institutional attention. RSN

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JUERGENSMEYER, from page 9

RSN: What are your goals as the Academy's President in 2009?

Juergensmeyer: The terrific thing about the AAR is that its leadership is diverse and decentralized. There are a lot of leaders in the Academy, and some of the most creative of its new directions are being forged in the program units — the sections, groups, and consultations — and in the regional meetings.

I am impressed, for instance, with the internationalization of virtually all units of the AAR in the last several years, and this has come about almost spontaneously, simply because the AAR members want to reach out to colleagues and ideas around the world. Similarly, most units are realizing that the enormous public interest in religion these days requires scholars to be interpreters of their scholarship to the wider public, and they have sought ways to aid in the public understanding of religion.

The job that we have in the Board and the staff of the AAR is to help facilitate and encourage these trends and this creativity, to help good things happen. This means finding ways to support individual research and institutional growth, but it also means ways of nourishing our intellectual conversation.

One of the main ways that we will help to facilitate our members' interactions with each other and the public is through the Internet. The AAR staff and Board are working on some exciting new ideas about a vastly expanded Internet site that will allow for extraordinary opportunities. I hope that some of these changes will be initiated soon, and that the web interaction will continue to evolve with the newest technology that is available.

You know, I think that the future of the AAR is in cyberspace. My guess is that a few years from now we will think of the AAR not just as a journal in the mail and an Annual Meeting with a physical interaction, but as a streaming source of information and a social network with a vibrant ongoing Internet interaction. Increasingly this will allow the AAR to play a more useful role in our intellectual development and in our collegial relations with kindred scholars. And isn't this precisely what we want our professional association to be? It is exciting to be a part of the AAR in this historical moment of transformation, and humbling to share in its leadership with such creative and interesting colleagues.



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