

Our Centennial Celebration will conclude at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Ann Taves, 2010 President, has planned an interesting series of Plenary Addresses. The Atlanta program will return to single plenary speakers who will address the broad theme of religion and science, with particular attention to the ways that new research on the brain/mind and new scholarship on primatology can inform thinking about religion. Plenary speakers for the Atlanta meeting will include Frans B. M. de Waal, Emory University, and Anne Harrington, Harvard University. In addition, the AAR will hear from Jonathan Z. Smith, University of Chicago, who will deliver our “learning of a lifetime lecture.”



[Ann Taves](#), an internationally recognized historian of Christianity and of American religion, is the Virgil Cordano Chair in Catholic Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Taves holds a PhD from the University of Chicago Divinity School. A prolific scholar and award-winning author, she is well known for her work on religious experience.

Over time, the focus of Taves’s research has shifted from answering historical questions about religion to using historical materials to explore how people make sense of ambiguous events and experiences that inhabit the indeterminate space between imagination and reality, craziness and inspiration, as well as fiction and faith. Increasingly her attention has turned to the underlying processes whereby people decide that experiences and events are religious and then, in some cases, develop traditions of practice to recreate them in the present. In exploring these processes, she works comparatively to generate the detailed descriptive analyses favored by scholars of religion and to explore the naturalistic explanations developed by researchers in the social and natural sciences.

Taves’s current research project, *Channeled Entities and Revealed Texts: A Group Psychology of Revelation*, looks at the process whereby new entities and/or new texts emerge. The focus of her analysis is on selected twentieth century new age channelers compared and contrasted with earlier new religious movements, such as Mormonism, and nonreligious phenomena, such as

alter personalities, imaginary companions, fictional characters, and computer based avatars.

A30–404

Presidential Address — Ann Taves: “Religion” in the Humanities **Saturday, 8:00 PM–9:00 PM** **Hyatt Regency – Centennial II–IV**

In recent discussions of the concept of religion, scholars of religion have paid considerable attention to t

Kwok Pui Lan, Episcopal Divinity School, Presiding

Ann Taves, University of California, Santa Barbara, Panelist



[Frans B. M. de Waal](#) is a Dutch primatologist and ethologist. De Waal received his doctorate in biology from Utrecht University in 1977 after training as a zoologist. In 1981, he moved to the United States for a position at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center, and in 1991 took his current position as the Charles Howard Candler professor of Primate Behavior in the Emory University psychology department in Atlanta, Georgia, and director of the Living Links Center at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center.

The contributions of de Waal to primatology started with *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex Among Apes* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1982), which offered the first description of primate behavior explicitly in terms of planned social strategies. De Waal has never shied away from attributing emotions and intentions to his primates. Recently, de Waal's work has emphasized animal empathy and even the origins of morality.

His research into the innate capacity for empathy among primates has led de Waal to the conclusion that non-human great apes and humans are simply different types of apes, and that empathic and cooperative tendencies are continuous between these species. His book *Our Inner Ape: A Leading Primatologist Explains Why We Are Who We Are* (Penguin Group, 2005) examines human behavior through the eyes of a primatologist, using the behavior of common chimpanzees and bonobos as metaphors for human psychology.

A30–140

Frans de Waal: Morality before Religion — Empathy, Reciprocity

Saturday, 11:45 AM–12:45 PM

Hyatt Regency – Centennial II–IV

Homo homini lupus – “man is wolf to man” – The Evolution of the Empathy Mechanism in Animals

Ann Taves, University of California, Santa Barbara, Presiding

Frans de Waal, Emory University, Panelist



A1-141
Anne Harrington: Religion and the Placebo Effect — Historical Is
Monday, 11:45 AM–12:45 PM
Hyatt Regency – Centennial II–IV

We know that the human body sometimes responds to a doctor's reassuring words and the solace of su

Ann Taves, University of California, Santa Barbara, Presiding
Anne Harrington, Harvard University, Panelist



[Jonathan Z. Smith](#) is a historian of religion whose research has focused on such wide-ranging subjects as ritual theory, Hellenistic religions, nineteenth century Maori cults, and the notorious

events of Jonestown, Guyana. Smith graduated with a PhD in the history of religions from Yale University in 1969; with a dissertation on anthropological thought, focused on James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and the method that Frazer used in the comparison of different religions. Since then much of Smith's work has focused on the problem of comparison and how best to compare data taken from societies that are very different from one another.

After holding positions at Dartmouth College and the University of California, Santa Barbara, Smith began teaching at the University of Chicago, where he served as Dean of the College from 1977–1982 and was appointed Robert O. Anderson Distinguished Service Professor of the Humanities. He has also written on pedagogy and the reform of undergraduate education in the United States. Smith's recent research has focused on Western theories of difference ranging from contemporary accounts of alien abduction to Greek and Roman ideas about the way climate shapes human character.

A31–137

Jonathan Z. Smith — Reading Religion: A Life in Scholarship **Sunday, 11:45 AM–12:45 PM** **Hyatt Regency – Centennial II–IV**

Jonathan Z. Smith is a historian of religions whose research has focused on the use of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* in the study of religion and the history of ideas. He has also written on pedagogy and the reform of undergraduate education in the United States. Smith's recent research has focused on Western theories of difference ranging from contemporary accounts of alien abduction to Greek and Roman ideas about the way climate shapes human character.

Ann Taves, University of California, Santa Barbara, Presiding
Jonathan Z. Smith, University of Chicago, Panelist