

# Announcements

IRAS  
The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

**Purpose**—IRAS is an independent society of scientists, philosophers, religion scholars, theologians, and others who want to understand the role of religion in our dynamic scientific world.

**Activities**—each year IRAS holds a week-long conference on Star Island, ten miles off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Topics are selected to be relevant to current scientific thinking and to fundamental religious questions. (IRAS members pay a reduced rate for conference registration.)

IRAS organizes events at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). IRAS has sponsored more than two hundred fifty meetings at universities, colleges, and theological schools.

**Publications**—*Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* and *IRAS Newsletter*. IRAS members receive subscriptions to these publications free of additional charge.

**Special Relationships**—Affiliated Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Member, Council of Societies for the Study of Religion (CSSR).

## Membership Dues

\$60.00 Individual Member

\$65.00 Joint Member (two memberships but one set of publications)

\$40.00 Student Member (requires copy of student ID)

\$110.00 Institutional Member (supports IRAS's work: \$54.00 is tax deductible)

Overseas members are assessed a surcharge to cover mailing costs.

**Invitation to Join**—If you are in accord with the purposes of IRAS and would like to become a member, please submit an application to the IRAS Council, which reviews and votes on applications at biannual meetings in February and July. For an application write to:

David Klotz, 14 Tyron St., South Glastonbury, CT 06073  
DAKlotz@cox.net

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<b>Institute on Religion in an Age of Science</b>
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Fifty-second Annual Star Island Conference

July 30 to August 6, 2005

**Varieties of Spiritual Transformation: Scientific and Religious Perspectives**

Spiritually transformative experiences are among the most compelling and powerful experiences human beings can have. Because of the significance of these experiences, many scientists are engaging in groundbreaking studies of spiritual transformation from biological, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives. The goal of this conference is to develop a multi-perspective analysis that includes the findings of contemporary sciences along with the understandings of world religions and the reflection of contemporary religious and philosophical thought. Among the questions to be considered are:

- What is spiritual transformation? How is it different from other kinds of human transformation, from other forms of religious experience, and from biological, psychological, and sociological parameters?
- What are the neurological correlates of spiritual transformation? Under what conditions and with the aid of what practices do transformative changes in the human brain occur?
- How are spiritual transformation and its conditions and outcomes understood from the perspectives of various religious traditions? How do these understandings compare with scientific understandings?
- How do events beyond a person's conscious control, such as the loss of loved ones, near-death experiences, and sleep paralysis, shed light on spiritual transformation?
- What physiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes result from spiritual transformation? How do transformative processes contribute to health?
- What are the benefits and/or costs of spiritual transformation experiences for individuals, groups, and societies?
- What are the theological meanings of experiences of spiritual transformation?

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS: **Andrew S. Newberg** and **Karl E. Peters**.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE: **Andrew S. Newberg**, brain imaging and medicine; **Solomon Katz**, biological anthropology; **Ashok Gangadean**, philosophy; **Yudit Greenberg**, Jewish studies; **Joan Koss-Chioino**, anthropology; **Bruce Greyson**, psychiatry; **David Hufford**, medical humanities; **Richard C. Schwartz**, psychotherapy; **Jean Kristeller**, psychology; **Philip Hefner**, theology. *Chapel speaker*: **Karl E. Peters**, philosophy of religion.

PROGRAM FOR YOUTH: There will be a professionally designed and led program for children and youth, ages 3–17.

COST: CONFERENCE FEES: *adults* \$125/person (\$100 for IRAS members who register by March 10 and nonmembers who apply for membership by March 10); *youth ages 3–17* \$100; children under 3 are free, but parents are responsible for their care at all times. PLUS room and board deposit of \$100/person over age 2; maximum registration/family \$500, plus room deposit. ROOM AND BOARD: payable in American currency on the island, ranging from (tentative) \$517–670/adult, depending on accommodations, and \$112–440/child, depending on age. Checks and cash accepted; *no* credit cards. Transportation to the island is by ferry from Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

For further information, see [www.IRAS.org](http://www.IRAS.org)  
or contact Bonnie Falla, Registrar, 810-1/2 N. 9th St.  
Allentown, PA 18102, (610) 432-8711; e-mail [bfalla@enter.net](mailto:bfalla@enter.net)