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Religious Education Association

The REA is an Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education.

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We, the Board of the Religious Education Association, an international organization made up of scholars and practitioners of multiple faiths, are deeply concerned by recent actions of the Trump Administration that express racism and religious intolerance. We acknowledge the call from academics across the globe to boycott attendance at conferences held in the United States while entry of persons from predominantly Muslim countries has been made difficult and in some cases impossible by an executive order, court proceedings notwithstanding. As thousands of scholarly colleagues state:

“The Order institutionalises racism, and fosters an environment in which people racialised as Muslim are vulnerable to ongoing and intensifying acts of violence and hatred. Among those affected by the Order are academics and students who are unable to participate in conferences and the free communication of ideas. We the undersigned take action in solidarity with those affected by Trump’s Executive Order by pledging not to attend international conferences in the US while the ban persists. We question the intellectual integrity of these spaces and the dialogues they are designed to encourage while Muslim colleagues are explicitly excluded from them.” (<https://goo.gl/YRw4rV>)

Sensitive to this important issue, the Board, in its spring retreat, discussed the ramifications of relocating future conferences in 2017, 2018, and 2019 out of the United States in light of the concerns of our members traveling from other countries. With the recognition that our 2017 program is focused on the theme of Encounter across multiple faiths, these issues are particularly poignant. In the end, we have decided to host our 2017 Annual Meeting in St. Louis as planned, including excursion and conversation with local leaders in Ferguson. The extensive planning we have already done to contextualize the theme of Encounter in St. Louis with local leaders, concerns about international students who are unable to safely travel outside of the US at this time, and potential financial losses in canceling our contract with the hotel led to this decision.

For similar reasons, we have also decided to keep our 2018 annual meeting in the Washington, DC, metro area. Our theme will be related to confronting hegemony and creating brave spaces as a prophetic stance against the racism and religious intolerance being emboldened by such policies. We as the Board have unanimously and enthusiastically approved hosting our 2019 annual meeting in Toronto, Canada as a small but intentional move towards solidarity with our colleagues.

Voted unanimously this 5th day of March 2017
REA Board of Directors