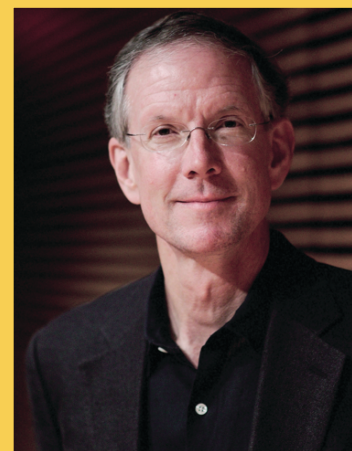# eREACH

6.4 **October 2016**

Loads of resources!
Highlights of our upcoming November meeting
Details for Pittsburgh
and more inside

Key note speakers will make a change!

by Bert Roebben, 2016 program chair and vice-president

For this year's conference I am proud to present to you four excellent keynote speakers. Let me tell you how I met them personally on my academic journey.

On Saturday morning the keynote speaker will be David T. Hansen, the Weinberg Professor in the Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education, at Teachers College, Columbia University (NYC). The promising title of his contribution is: "Cosmopolitanism as Education: A Philosophy for Educators in Our Time." Many years ago I started reading David's book on the moral heart of teaching, recommended to me at an REA Conference by Chuck Melchert. During my sabbatical in March 2015, I went to New York and visited David in his office on Broadway. I was impressed by his welcoming words, his philosophical thoughts on education in the public sphere, and his deep concern for the future of our children and young people in a scattered world. Being a Past-President of the John Dewey Society, David is a speaker *par excellence* to connect us virtually with John Dewey and the early years of the REA.

As the respondent for David's presentation I invited Aaron J. Ghiloni, Dean of Research at Trinity College Queensland (in Australia) and author of the marvelous book *John Dewey Among the Theologians* (2012). I have never met Aaron personally, but I was impressed by two excellent articles, which I use in my classroom in Dortmund, one on "Interreligious Education: What Would Dewey Do?" (2011, published in our journal) and the other one "On Writing Interdisciplinary Theology" (2013, published in *Practical Theology*). As far as I am concerned Aaron has an innovative and creative approach to our field – building bridges between systematic and practical theology, between philosophy of education and religious education, between different religious voices to the field. I am sure that Aaron and David will provide us with mind stretching ideas for the future.

Our final plenary will begin with Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, Dean of Esperanza College in Philadelphia. She will help to send us forth through a conversation on "Teaching and Globalization" on Saturday afternoon. I first met Elizabeth during a visit at Claremont School of Theology in November 2004, right before the REA conference in Denver. We talked extensively about the narrative dimension of every form of practical theology, which was something I was very unfamiliar with in my own academic work in Europe. From that moment on I started connecting storytelling and religious education – not just as a method, but as a central concern in every form of contextual theology – and developing my own "essayistic" approach to teaching and learning.

The second presenter in that same session will be Reginald Nel, Professor of Missiology at UNISA. We met many times in the board of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry and during visits to his beautiful campus at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. Reggie is an academic theologian with a sincere and deep relationship to field work – as a pastor, a youth worker, a justice leader, and so on. I deeply admire his critical, post-colonial approach to the political situation in his country and in Africa as a whole. He is truly a public theologian with a prophetic voice and a vision on the future of young people. I especially like the way in which he perceives, generates and contemplates hope in his research – even in situations of e.g. youth at risk and interreligious struggles in his country. The two of them, Elizabeth and Reggie, will definitely invite us to localize deeply our own hope-based work in schools, congregations and the public sphere.

It is a privilege to preside at this conference with such eminent speakers and, in doing so, to add bits and pieces to the story of my own academic journey into the world of moral and religious education.

Innovation in the heart of the field — come prepared to share!

In the first breakout session of the conference, immediately after the first plenary on Friday morning, you will be invited to explore and to exchange innovative research in the heart of the field of religious education. We will start this session with a lightening round: every participant who wants to announce a new project, a recently published article or book or something that still needs to be written, a conversation, etc. gets 30 seconds to make his/her case and invite people to meet up with them. The 12 posters of innovative research will also be given time for discussion during that session. We hope that the room will be converted into a marketplace of new and hopeful projects – research, pedagogies, conversations – and that people can pick up as many ideas as possible, as they walk around the room. We also believe that new spontaneous connections and even structural cooperation will emerge. Come to Pittsburgh and bring your unique ideas with you!

Thematic streams through the conference

When you have a closer look at the schedule of the conference through Sched you will find out that there is a thematic organization of the RIG's — designated as "pathways." For instance in R 2.01, R 3.01 and R. 4.01 there will be research presented specifically on religious education in schools. In R 2.02, etc. the theme will be religious education in congregations and Sunday schools. In R 2.03, etc. mainly theoretical approaches will be presented. R 2.04, etc. will cover critical issues in the field. R 2.05, etc. will deal with interreligious learning. In R 2.06, etc. specific pedagogies will be presented and finally in R 2.07, etc. specific learning contexts are brought together (incarceration, faith schools and youth work). With this we hope that people interested in one specific topic can have many possibilities to visit the sessions of their preference. There are also workshops in each time slot, for those who want to gain a particular skill or explore a specific content focus in depth (W 2.01, etc.). You can find the "streams" by clicking on a session you're interested in, and then clicking on "pathway" at the bottom of that session.

Sunday morning schedule

We're trying something new this year, based on the extensive feedback we received last year. The main sections of the conference — our breakout sessions, general plenaries, and business meeting — will all take place on Friday and Saturday, making it possible for people who need to rush off on Sunday to do so. Given the excitement and engagement people spoke of following the interfaith prayer time last year, we will be repeating that opportunity, and will be led by local members of differing communities of faith. We are

also envisioning Sunday morning as a chance to be involved with a specific community of practice (what in the past were called "denominational groups") meeting, and to take part of a specific form of professional development. Both sessions which begin at 10:30 am on Sunday are oriented towards exploring pressing issues. The first is a panel composed of leaders from the Association of Theological Schools, sharing their insights into the future(s) of theological education; and the second is a hands-on workshop entitled "Making learning visible: Digital badging in faith contexts."

Preparing for this year's annual meeting in Pittsburgh

Read in advance!

All of the papers, workshop outlines, and poster abstracts are now available at our conference website. Please remember that Research Interest Group papers need to be read in advance of the session at which they will be discussed. Moderators and presenters will assume you have read the papers, and will begin the discussion accordingly. You can find the various papers, outlines, and abstracts linked to the specific sessions you have chosen, through Sched. Click on the session, then look for the blue highlighted link, immediately following the title and type of session. Following our meeting, this information will be collated together into an official proceedings, available as a publication at our main association website.

Update your conference choices

There have been several small changes in our program schedule, as people's travel plans have shifted. Please go to our conference schedule, log in to Sched (use the email address from which you registered for the conference), and update your choices. There is much more information about what is happening in the various working groups, for instance, and also information on who will be moderating specific communities of practice. You can build a personal profile at Sched, which is yet another way to network effectively within our association. You can post a photograph, share a bio statement, list your interests, and so on. The more members who create profiles at this site, the more effectively we can support networking and collaborative scholarship.

Prepare for the business meeting

There will be a number of items that will need votes during our business meeting, and this year that meeting will take place during lunch on Saturday. Please keep your eye on the website news stream, where we will post the slate of nominees, the association's proposed budget, and other items requiring a vote.

Bring your devices

Free wifi is part of our hotel contract at this year's meeting. Bring along your devices which can access the net — we will be offering evaluation forms through Sched (along with drawings for small prizes, if you fill them out), and any last minute adjustments or

additional information will be posted through Sched. Sched is also a great way to find members you may not yet have met, but who share common interests.

Hotel reservations

As this newsletter goes to press the deadline for reserving a room within our hotel block has passed, and there are no more rooms available. If you are still in need of a hotel room for the conference, we recommend using one of the hotel booking sites like TravelAdvisor or Hipmunk. There are also still a few people who are interested in sharing a room — you could specify that choice when you register for the conference. If you did not do that when you registered, but are interested in seeking a roommate you can contact Barbara Senacol, our Board member who is helping to facilitate that process.

Traveling to the hotel

There are three primary ways to get from the airport to the hotel:

- local bus, called the "Airport Flyer" (#28x), which runs every half hour and has a stop about a 10 minute walk from the hotel. This bus runs on a mostly dedicated busway, so is at least as fast as a car, and costs approximately $3.75
- Super Shuttle (download this flyer for a discount code, and make your reservation in advance)
- taxi, which will take anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour and a half, and we estimate will cost around $65

If you drive, please note that there is limited parking at the hotel, and it costs $30 a day. There are a number of local parking garages that are cheaper. You can search for options at this website: http://www.bestparking.com/pittsburgh-parking/

Harper Committee proposal vote

As noted in the July 2016 eREACH, the Harper Committee of the REA has been reviewing how the REA approaches awards. After two years of strategic review and input from REA members, the following plan has emerged. (1) Keep the William Rainey Harper Award, a lifetime achievement award in the field. That award would be given out every three to five years, both for financial reasons and to keep the award special. (2) Combine the two lesser-known awards under the committee's purview, the Wornom Award (originally intended to recognize institutions leading in the field) and the Harper project (originally intended to promote collegiality across the field), into a new, annual small grant for innovation. This "innovation grant" would be awarded through an annual application and selection process and gift $3,000 to a program or initiative that exemplifies innovation in the field of religious education. The final details and official announcement of the innovation grant will be reviewed at the REA board meeting and presented to the REA membership at the annual business meeting during the Pittsburgh conference. For further information, contact committee chair Justus Baird.

Journal basics

From our journal editor, Joyce Mercer

For the benefit of REA newcomers, here is some basic information about our journal, *Religious Education,* which might be helpful. (This is also for those who have been part of REA for a while but who may find a 'refresher' useful.)

Religious Education is the official journal of the REA. Subscriptions are part of annual membership in the REA. We publish 5 issues per year. The journal is available in both print and online formats. The online version may be accessed by members through their library if the library subscribes to *Religious Education*, or via the REA's journal access page.

One issue in each volume year is dedicated to publication of papers from the annual conference, along with the meeting's presidential address and, space permitting, one or more plenary addresses. For this conference issue, a special committee reviews all papers submitted for possible publication after the annual meeting. Authors have time to revise their papers in relation to feedback received from colleagues at the meeting before submitting it to this committee. The committee then selects papers to recommend for publication in the journal's "conference issue."

Another issue includes a pre-conference forum, a way to help REA members to begin thinking about the theme of the upcoming conference. A forum is a section of the journal intended to offer several voices in a kind of conversation about theme, by a group of scholars who write their reflections on that theme in relation to their work. The president-elect and program chair joins them, setting out her or his vision for how the conference theme might be developed.

Other issues in each publication year include articles accepted for publication and book reviews. David White is the journal's book review editor. The journal also has an editorial board who function in an advisory role to support the editors. All submissions to the journal (both articles and book reviews) are now handled through our publisher's online platform, Editorial Manager. If you would like to submit an essay for possible publication, you will find information for authors and guidelines for submission on the webpage for Religious Education. All submissions to the journal undergo a double-blind peer review in order to encourage a fair review process of the highest possible quality. "Double blind" means that the reviewers do not know the name of the author, and authors do not know the names of their reviewers. Authors receive feedback from these reviews whether or not their articles are selected for publication in the journal.

So, that's a quick summary of journal basics. I look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh in November!

Member news

Our hearts are heavy as we grieve the passing of Allen Moore, senior scholar in the field and beloved spouse of Mary Elizabeth Moore, on Sunday, September 18, 2016. A substantial biography, along with a bibliography of his key works (with excerpts), is available at the [Talbot School of Theology's Encyclopedia of Christian Educators of the 20th Century](#).

Elizabeth Caldwell announces the publication of a new book, [I Wonder: Engaging a Child's Curiosity About the Bible](#) out this March from Abingdon Press.

Request for research support

The [Center for the Economics of Human Development](#) at the University of Chicago is seeking help on a project they are currently engaged in which is evaluating the Reggio approach to child development. They write:

"In order to make this project scientifically valid, we need to be able to characterize the differences in the curricula and approaches to pedagogy in the Catholic schools in Reggio Emilia, Parma, and Padova (as well as the approaches of the other schools in Reggio Emilia and in Parma and Padova that do not use the Reggio Approach) at each point in time corresponding to the periods attended by each cohort going back to the early 1960s. We need to know the evolution of the curricula over time. We know there has been change in the curricula in these schools with the Reggio approach currently being widely emulated, but as of the time of this writing, we cannot document the curricula used in each type of school for each cohort or describe them precisely. This greatly handicaps our efforts. I am writing to solicit suggestions from you on individuals or institutions that might have the requested information on the curricula and organization of state, municipal, Catholic and private preschools in Reggio Emilia, Parma, and Padova over the past 50 years. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Sincerely, James Heckman."

If you can help this research, please contact [Dr. Heckman](#) directly (jjh.info@uchicago.edu).

REA session at AAR

If you will be attending the AAR/SBL meeting in San Antonio in late November, please make plans to come to our REA session at that meeting. Scheduled for Saturday, November 19 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, it will be held in the Convention Center, Room 006A (which is at the River Level).

The session continues our theme for this year, and is entitled "Teaching for Hope in a Global Age. Carmichael Crutchfield of Memphis Theological Seminary will introduce and moderate a panel composed of Jose R. Irizarry, of Villanova University, Boyung Lee, of the Pacific School of Religion, and Evelyn L. Parker, of Southern Methodist University.

The panel will discuss the need of the educator to be both concentrated and flexible at a time when deep, complex pluralism reigns. This is a paradox, coined by the American philosopher of education David T. Hansen (2001) as "tenacious humility": the educator concentrates on the learner, steps aside, but simultaneously needs to offer him/herself through the content so that the learner can flourish. People need a "cosmopolitan" education: the educator needs to be present and learn together with learners in "reflective openness to the world and reflective loyalty to the local" (Hansen 2009). It goes without saying that this old pedagogical paradox is now accelerated by the same cosmopolis, surrounding us and future generations. It also goes without saying that the aims of education and the normativity of the educational act need to be discussed again in that very process.

Resources

The American Refugees Project at Seattle University is a collection of compelling short videos made by award-winning animators which explore the stories of people who are experiencing homelessness in the US. The videos contradict stereotypes, evoke empathy, and document the resilience of the people interviewed. There is a study guide available at the site, as well as other teaching resources.

Average Mohamed is a collection of animated short videos exploring various excerpts of the Qur'an that directly contest the hateful messages of Islamist extremism. Based in Minnesota, the website and videos were created by Mohamed Amin Ahmed as a way to reach out to the youth he was encountering to help them resist extremist appeals.

Circle Practice Graphics. The Living Justice Press, a publisher focused on sharing resources in restorative justice, has recently made available for free a set of high resolution graphic posters of various circle practices.

The Collegeville Institute has just published a book —Calling in Today's World — where experts in diverse faith traditions explore the idea of calling through sacred texts, key figures, practices, and concepts from Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and secular humanism. In conjunction with this publication, the Institute has placed videos of the authors, discussing their ideas, on their website.

The Henry McNeal Turner Project is a digital humanities project dedicated to the writings and study of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, the 12th Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. The site includes extensive links to free online versions of his writings, stretching from 1859-1865, as well as links to scholarship, photos, and other rich primary resources.

Images of Empowerment is a huge collection of photographs from around the world documenting empowerment. The first set of images are from Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda and document the work of grantees of the Hewlett Foundation and the way their reproductive health care information and services transform women's lives and the lives of their families. All photos were taken by Jonathan Torgovnik of Reportage by Getty Images. The second set of images are from Ghana, South Africa, India, Thailand, Peru and Colombia and capture women and men working in the informal economy as domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors and waste-pickers. The individuals in the photographs are members of Women in Informal Employment: Organizing and Globalizing (WIEGO), a Hewlett Foundation grantee, that works to improve the lives of informal workers and their families. Photos were taken by Jonathan Torgovnik, Paula Bronstein, and Juan Arredondo of Reportage by Getty Images. All of the images carry Creative Common licenses, and may be used for free noncommercially.

Research on youth retreats. The Australian Catholic University has published a substantial report on the Retreats Research Project which investigated the views of teachers and students about the nature, purposes and conduct of senior retreats in Catholic secondary schools.

The Scarboro Mission Society is a Roman Catholic organization in Canada that has long supported and nurtured respectful engagement with other faiths in contemporary society. They have a lengthy list of interfaith dialogue resources.

eREACH is a newsletter of the Religious Education Association, an Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education.

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