



eREACH

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Highlights of the upcoming St. Louis meeting
Schools work group becomes Religion and Education group
Member news, diverse resources, and more inside!

From our program chair and vice president, Mualla Selçuk

I invite you to look forward with me to our meeting in St. Louis in November!

I imagine this meeting will be an emphasis on the phenomena of being in encounter and how teaching can advance and/or impede that. Please note that this is more than dialogue, more than learning about another faith tradition, more than intercultural learning. It is about existence!

Encounter is not only about what we do but also about who we are. It is about how we share the world together. How do we invite people to go deeper? How do we ask questions of what it means to be human? How does encounter -- as a metaphor -- help us to become more human? How does it assist our well-being, contribute to our whole-being? What does a specific tradition say about encountering the heart and spirit? How do we make our relationships formative?

By walking our talk and seeing the special challenges of education in encounter, we can share ways in which working in the field helps to bridge differences, to calm fears, and to promote understanding. In particular, how do we help young



people overcome hatreds, and prejudices which are often reinforced by society?

I hope that our upcoming meeting will consider encounter – through breakout sessions, and through shared plenaries -- as a task of our faith and as a clear example of existence before God. That is, not simply a kind of knowledge about the other, but as a more practical response which has the character of wisdom of faith before God. This wisdom does not result from good will only but rather from serious study undertaken in the context of honest and interpersonal relationships.



I imagine our meeting as a hospitable environment where we are all in a hostel, with no one an owner. Or, at least I want us to think in the frame of a host/ guest domain, through inviting interaction, and creative learning activities.

I hope that our meeting will create a sense of encountering strangers as pathways to new understandings of how God and human beings are in relationship. Further, that educational endeavors must serve as

vehicles/media that help individuals and communities to engage in more humanizing movements toward one another (holistic, courageous, empathic, justice-oriented “encounter”).

The Call for Papers committee has accepted a rich and diverse set of papers and presentations. You can peruse the list, and eventually they will be sorted into breakout sessions and will be available in full text on the schedule.

As the program chair of the St. Louis REA conference, I invite you to join us in St. Louis, and bring your own stories of encounter to expand our understanding of how to explore the primordial connectedness of our being together in the World.

Mualla Selçuk
Faculty of Divinity
Ankara University
Ankara, Turkey

Join us in St. Louis in November

All the details you need for registering for our annual meeting in November can be found on [the meeting website](#).

We are excited by the plenaries that are being developed. The meeting will begin with a plenary address by our Program Chair and Vice President, Mualla Selçuk, setting the scene for the rest of the meeting. Flowing directly from her address will be a lightning round, and then a breakout session devoted to encounter groups (we'll share more about this process in our October e-REACH). Our hope is that this early opportunity to meet in smaller discussions will support the kind of networking and collegial interaction for which members have asked. Our community luncheon will be on Friday, and the afternoon plenary will involve encountering activism through art, led by local "artist" De Andrea Nichols.

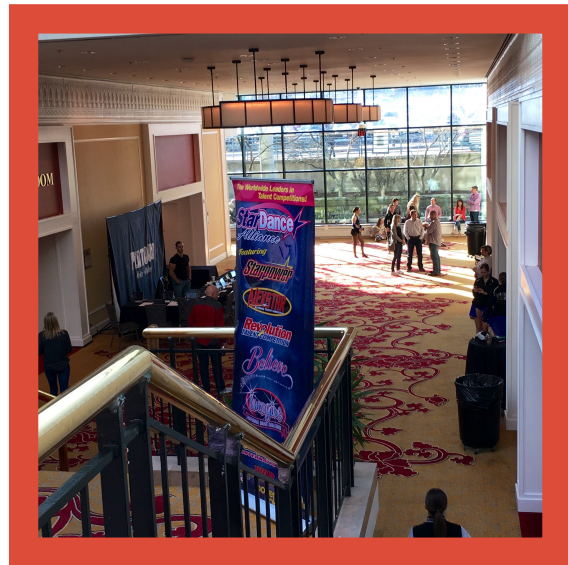
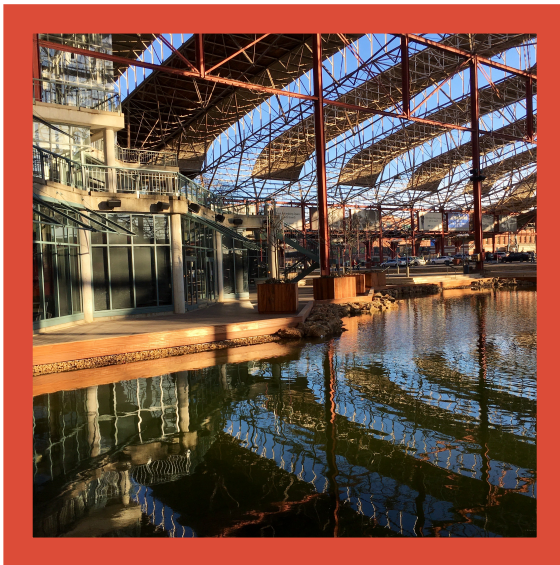
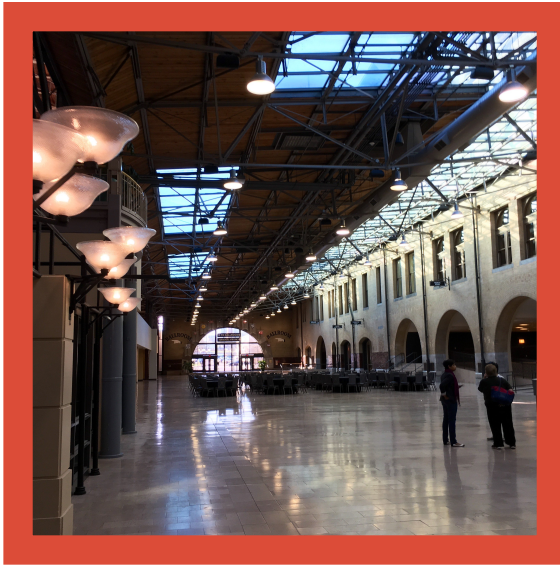
As mentioned in the last eREACH, we are also moving the business meeting to Friday evening following the reception. Our intention is that this year more people will stay involved in the decision-making of our association.

Saturday's plenaries are also designed to engage us pedagogically, with the morning plenary beginning with a conversation amongst four scholars — Deborah Court, Damayanthi Niles, Thomas Reynolds, and Martin Thurner — and developing into a shared discussion with the whole association. The afternoon plenary time will be given over to excursions locally with the support of educators who will lead the learning.

Sunday morning will be a time of gathering and working, with communities of practice and various working groups. There will also be a session led by the Peace and Justice Working Group focused on Religious Education and Public life, featuring Leah Gunning Francis, author of [*Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*](#).

Registration for the meeting is now available. Register at early bird rates, and then sign up for sessions as they become available (you'll receive an invitation via Sched to do so). The [basic schedule is available](#) online, with more details being added all the time. Accommodations are at the [St. Louis Union Depot hotel](#), which is an historic and lovely place.

St. Louis is a lovely place to visit for a variety of reasons. The weather can be quite nice during the first week of November in St. Louis, although people recommend bringing an umbrella and light jacket. Temperatures range from 5 degrees – 16 degrees Celsius (40 degrees – 60 degrees Fahrenheit). Transportation is also easy, with a train from the airport going directly to the hotel (the hotel is at the heart of what used to be a train station).



Several of the more famous attractions in the St. Louis area are:

- [Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site](#)
- [Gateway Arch](#)
- [Missouri Botanical Gardens](#)
- [Missouri History Museum](#)
- [Old Courthouse](#)
- [St. Louis Zoo](#)

And much more information can be found at the [St. Louis Tourist Center site](#).

Please help us spread the word on the meeting! You can get [free pdfs of flyers at the program website](#).

From our Journal Editor

Taylor & Francis, the publisher of our journal *Religious Education*, has put together a handout with guidelines for authors when seeking to re-use their content. The handout includes information which distinguishes between posting online versions of your manuscript as it has been accepted, compared to the version of record (which is the fully proofed and typeset version that appears in the journal), as well as many other uses you might imagine for your work. You can [download the full guide](#) for free.

REA at AAR: Teaching In and For Multifaith Contexts

Save a place on your AAR schedule for our REA session. This year it will be focused on “teaching in and for multifaith contexts.” How shall we educate our faith communities so that they can practice hospitality in the world of many faiths? How are we to prepare religious leaders who are capable of leading congregations and communities in the practice of hospitality in a multifaith context? How are we to equip religious leaders in the practice of ministry in interfaith settings? What curriculum designs, educational programs, and pedagogies shall we pursue to lead and minister effectively in a multi-faith setting? These are the larger questions that framed a shared book project edited by Eleazar Fernandez and published by Pickwick. The session will be an interactive engagement with several of the authors from the book, focused on sharing both conceptual frames and pragmatic practices for doing this work. Authors who will participate in the session include: Justus Baird, Ruben Habito, Mary Hess, Lucinda Mosher, Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, Jennifer Peace, and Daniel Schipani.

Schools Group now Religion and Education Group

In this issue of eREACH we are initiating a new feature where we will be doing interviews with members of our organization. This interview explores the beginning of REA’s relationship with the Religion and Education Collaborative, and the evolution of the Schools Working Group into the Religion and Education Working Group. Networking Coordinator Mary Hess interviewed Callid Keefe-Perry, an REA member and the Outreach Coordinator of the Religion and Education Collaborative.

How did the Religion and Education Collaborative come to be?

The origins of the Religion and Education Collaborative (REC) live in a series of relationships between folks whose research is at the intersection of religion and education. A variety of us from different approaches really felt like we were often the odd person out in terms of the kind of work we’re doing. So, for example, I’m a theologian that researches public schools and not in a way that’s about any kind of re-Christianizing them, or needing more school prayer, or needing to talk about intelligent design or

something like that, because actually I think pedagogy, or how we learn, impacts the spiritual life of youth. It's really an under-reflected category.

Likewise, some of the other members who are part of the Collaborative are educators who want to study the way that we teach religion. Even though religion is a protected category, and we can teach about religion in school, very few places actually cover it in teacher training programs. As a result of that, it's a little bit of a chicken and egg thing; there's very little graduate work being done in what good pedagogy could look like for public religious education in the United States context.

Of course we have scholars, friends from Europe and Canada and other folks who are accustomed to this, but even in those places this category of research is sometimes a little bit underwhelming, and for those people who are education scholars who study religion, the literature is not always widely cited. So you get people who are educators who want to write about religion, who then aren't writing with real knowledge about education and religion. They're educators, they kind of willy nilly pull from things, and sometimes they miss key texts.



The initial conversation was between Kate Soules and a guy named Nate Walker, who works at the Newseum in Washington, DC, specifically at the religious freedom center. Both of these scholars are education folks. One does policy, and one does curriculum mapping. In their early conversations they said, "Wouldn't it be nice if there were a place to really engage specifically with people who are dealing with schooling and religion?"

Those conversations broadened, and we found that there are a lot of people who are interested in that. And, of course, there are limited numbers of ways that researchers find each other, so it was pretty easy, before long, to map out fifty or sixty people who had sent us information because they were interested in this particular kind of overlap.

It started out as young scholars or graduate students who wanted to meet with one another, but we shortly found that it wasn't just young scholars or graduate students who were interested. Even some folks who had been involved with the field for quite some time were saying, "Actually, I'd love to plug in."

We're trying to make use of technology in better ways. So, for example, we meet more or less monthly via Zoom, and we do seminars. People who want to talk about their own contribution present a paper for discussion, and then people ask questions. Because this topic is such a niche topic, if it weren't for the kind of access we can have to one another via technology, we'd probably have to meet only once a year.

The other piece of it, and this is a parallel with the kind of scholarly religious education thing, is that we've got practitioners who are interested. These are people who are

scholars but they're doing teacher training programs or work training principals. They're doing workshops or continuing ed stuff for high school teachers, for principals who are wondering if they can add a class to their curriculum, or for lawyers.

We are a group of people that represent a whole variety of academic commitments. We've got legal scholars, curriculum analysts, and educational philosophers. I think I'm the only theologian, but we have sociologists, critical pedagogy folks, etc. The only real thing we have in common is our interest in schools—in schooling and religion. And we're pretty clear about differentiating that.

How is REC related to REA?

REC is really primarily interested in school systems, schooling in the context of schools, and the ways in which there is a relationship between education and religion as it's variously construed and practiced. So that was happening on one track, and on the other track I was getting plugged into the Schools Working Group in REA. Ryan Gardner and Matthew Geiger had been the conspirators behind that project from the start, and when Matt began getting sick, there was a necessity to figure out what the next step of things would be.

It turned out that a number of folks who were on the list for the REA's schools working group had already plugged into the Religion and Education Collaborative.

The academic landscape is such that we all feel as if the collaborative nature of this should be key. We have three things on the horizon. One is when we met at REA this past year, Kate Soules, Ryan and I presented to the Schools working group, bringing everyone up to speed, and we said, "Can we acknowledge that this is the work we want to do?" So the group decided that we are now the REA meeting of the Religion and Education Collaborative, and we are now calling the working group "Religion and Education."

That means that there are particular interests within the REA membership who are wanting to be part of the Collaborative and can explore them in this space at REA. For example, there are far more people who are interested in private religious schools and education and pedagogy within REA than there are anywhere else in the Collaborative. But that's just another facet of this research. So there's a particular flavor to what REA members of the Collaborative bring.

Our hope is that there will be folks coming to REA who never would have come to REA before, who are there because they are Religion and Education scholars who are tied to the Collaborative and then are plugged into the work that's broadly happening in REA. And likewise, our hope is that there will be some REA members who are part of the Religion and Education Collaborative who, because of the Working Group, will also learn about ways to participate additionally outside of REA in other events.

We're looking forward to seeing where this shared energy will go.

More information: <http://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/partners/rec/>

Wornom Grant Application process open

In 2016 the REA voted to cease presenting the Herman A. Wornom Award to institutions or organizations, and instead to use the funds to support innovation in religious education. Towards that end, the newly instituted Wornom Innovation grant is a \$3,000 award for innovative religious education projects and initiatives that further knowledge and deepen the practice of religious education, or that expand the field of religious education to a new area that is not traditionally associated with religious education. The annual application deadline is September 15, and must be [submitted online](#).

The grant recipient(s) will be offered a breakout session or poster acceptance to present their work at the following year's annual meeting of the REA. The Harper-Wornom Committee will award \$250 toward the travel expenses of the grant recipient(s). If the recipient(s) is not able to be at the annual meeting, the allotted travel award will be used for technology arrangements for the recipient(s) to present via an online medium

Resources

The [Dictionary of Encounter now is online](#). The Dictionary has been published in German and Turkish in 2013, and now an English version is available.

“The Dictionary is a clear and authentic example of encounter, acquaintanceship and understanding between Christianity and Islam. This book brings Christians and Muslims closer to the main foundations of one another's religions, creating the conditions from which to understand one another better while promoting a culture of harmonious coexistence,” notes Mualla Selçuk, one of the editors of the Dictionary.



We remember along with our Canadian colleagues that this is Canada's 150th anniversary. Towards that end, you can find many Canadian resources for community education — particularly about decolonization — at the [Council of Canadians site](#). Also as part of the celebration, the National Film Board of Canada has created [a free app for exploring what faith means in the lives of young Canadians](#).

The Vatican and Georgetown University are collaborating together to place [videos of interviews and other resources](#) from the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious dialogue online in a freely-available format.

Renee Hobbs, long-time scholar and advocate for media education, announces a new site full of biographies and other resources exploring scholars and other activists who have served as [Grandparents of Media Literacy](#). In that vein it is also worth noting that there are several major media education events occurring just prior to and following our REA November meeting:

[October 25 - November 1, Global Media Literacy week](#)
[November 2-3 in Utah, the Digital Citizenship Summit](#)
[November 6 - 10, US Media Literacy week](#)

Then, in April of 2018, the [2nd International Media Literacy Education Symposium](#) will be held in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Church of England held a major conference in May in Birmingham exploring [current research on faith communities](#). They have posted most of the presentations online, in a freely available format.

Teaching for Change has put together a [lovely collection of social justice books for kids](#).

NYU has developed a set of modules for teaching about [religion in civic settings](#) in the US.

Member news

Following in the footsteps of other RE faculty who have taken up academic leadership, three of our members have recently accepted such positions:

Faustino Cruz has moved to Fordham University, to take up the position of Dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education.

Boyung Lee has moved to Iliff School of Theology to become the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty.

Mary Young has moved to the Association of Theological Schools as the Director of Leadership Education.

Several other members have recently shifted to different schools:

Mara Brecht has taken the 2017-2018 Patrick and Barbara Keenan Visiting Chair in Religious Education at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto.

Mai-Anh Le Tran has moved to Garrett Evangelical as Associate Professor of Religious Education and Practical Theology.

Emily Peck-McClain has taken the position of Visiting Professor of Christian Formation and Young Adult Ministries at Wesley Theological Seminary.

We also celebrate the achievements of our members:

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier gave the annual Barton Lecture keynote address "Latin@ Jovenes: Children of the Reign of God" at the Hispanic/Latin@ Ministries Program at SMU Perkins School of Theology on April 6.

Courtney Goto has been tenured as Associate Professor of Religious Education, as well as being the co-director of the Center for Practical Theology at Boston University.

Mai-Anh Le Tran published Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope.

Joyce Mercer and Katherine Turpin both contributed to the recent book edited by Kathleen Cahalan and Bonnie Miller McLemore, Calling All Years Good: Christian Vocation Through Life's Seasons.

Hosffman Ospino has been tenured as Associate Professor of Hispanic Ministry and Religious Education at Boston College.

Evelyn Parker published Between Sisters: Emancipatory Hope Out of Tragic Relationships.

Nancy Lynne Westfield has been promoted to Full Professor at Drew Theological School.



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

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