

Highlights of the upcoming November meeting
Resources, Member news
and more inside



From our program chair and vice president, Kathy Winings

I want to invite you to Washington, D.C., the governmental and political heart of the United States, for our November 2018 Annual Meeting. This is the first time for REA to meet in Washington. I see this as significant for our theme, **Beyond White Normativity: Creating Brave Spaces**. Many voices both inside and outside the buildings that house key sections of government on the National Mall have repeatedly focused the world's attention on the challenge of white normativity, white privilege, and intolerance of "the other." It was on the Mall in 1963 that Dr. Martin Luther King shared his powerful "I Have a Dream" speech, providing images of a just society undoing white normativity. We are in the best place to examine and discuss how we, as religious educators, researchers and practitioners, can go beyond white normativity and create the brave spaces that are necessary for living into a beloved community.

Another advantage of being in Washington, D.C. is the opportunity to visit the [National Museum of African American History](#). As one of the latest additions to the Smithsonian system, the museum provides an excellent starting point for the Annual Meeting. We are arranging a pre-conference excursion to the Museum on Thursday. The museum receives more than 8,000 visitors each day and is considered a "must see" for visitors to Washington, D.C. It will certainly be worth your time. I can think of no better way to begin reflecting on our theme.



Our plenary sessions will frame and deepen our discussions of normativity and brave spaces. We will also participate in rigorous conversation in the breakout sessions, poster sessions and our networking time. Two of the plenaries will allow us to engage with special guests, both of whom are well known for their publications and work in unraveling the multiple threads that contribute to the issue of white normativity. [Dr. Gregory Ellison](#), Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, is noted for his books and seminars around the theme of “fearless dialogues.” Be prepared for an engaging session that will be multi-sensory and energetic!

A second plenary speaker is [Dr. Shelly Tochluk](#), the author of *Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk about Race and How to Do It* and *Living in the Tension: The Quest for a Spiritualized Racial Justice*. As a Professor in the Education Department at Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles, Shelly looks at both the personal side and curricular aspects of the issue. Our engagement with both speakers promises to be stimulating and insightful. A third plenary will feature a panel of faculty and practitioners who have been working to create brave and diverse spaces of encounter, in the classroom and within our faith communities. This will be a working session in which all of us will be able to look at how we structure syllabi, workshops, and courses so as to look for ways to create these powerful, courageous spaces in our own contexts. I invite you to bring a syllabus or an outline of a workshop, study series, or course with you to aid in the discussion.



The break-out sessions promise to be insightful and thought-provoking. Submit your own proposal, read through the diverse papers or documents that are prepared for the R.I.G. or Collaborative sessions and come prepared to contribute to our conversation. Plan to engage poster presentations, with their invitation to respond to new and emerging work. As always, we hope to provide ample time to network, connect with colleagues, make new friends and generally share how we can advance our field of religious education and make a lasting contribution through answering the guiding questions for the annual meeting.

I invite you also to respond to the theme between now and November on the Conference Blog that can be accessed through the [conference webpage](#). Join the conversation that has begun around this challenging theme. Share your thoughts about white normativity, your experience of recognizing and working on your own bias, and how you create brave and diverse spaces within your institution or faith community either successfully or maybe not so successfully. I hope to share some of your experiences that you post about in our opening plenary. Do not be shy about contributing to the blog.

You will also find [on the conference webpage](#) a section with diverse resources that are available on the theme. There are texts and websites that address our theme from numerous perspectives, including European resources, faith community resources, issues around specific aspects and perspectives of the theme, and a section on publications and resources written by members of REA. Please take a moment to review the [resource list](#) and feel free to contribute resources that you have read, used in your classes, or learned about through your own research. The list that has been started is certainly not exhaustive, so we need your contribution to flesh it out more. Investing in our theme now before our meeting will heighten your experience in November.

We have a great opportunity to contribute to the global conversation around white normativity because of the rich resources that can be found within the membership of REA. That is why I am truly excited about the program and the possibilities it presents. I hope that you too are excited about the program and that you have already submitted a proposal. We need your voice, your experience, and your wisdom to make this annual meeting unforgettable.

Kathy Winings
Program Chair

Dear Student Colleagues – Why you want to submit a poster proposal for REA 2018

Hello colleagues in religious education! My name is Rachelle Green and I am your student representative for REA. I had the pleasure of meeting many of you last year at our student breakfast and look forward to seeing you again or meeting some of you for the first time in November. I wanted to write a quick note to encourage you to consider one of the most beneficial programs REA has to offer students – the poster session.

For many of us, when we think of conference participation we think of presenting papers. While there are many known benefits and skills gained from presenting papers in RIG's, presenting a poster has invaluable benefits as well. At the REA 2018 meeting, we have revamped the poster session to focus more on meeting student needs, specifically by curating spaces for students to have face-to-face conversation with more senior scholars in the field. At the poster session, presenters will have the opportunity while standing by their poster to engage in dialogue with designated scholars who will provide helpful feedback. It has the possibility of being the most constructive and productive session you will experience for your work.

Who is this for? The poster session is best for people who have work-in-progress that would benefit from constructive conversation. All students are welcome and encouraged to submit proposals.

How do I create a poster? Creating a poster will help you clarify your questions and thesis. The REA website lists the specifications of the poster along with helpful websites on how to construct a poster. You can find more information here: <https://religiouseducation.net/meetings/posters>.

Rachelle, are you doing one? Absolutely! I am in the 4th year of my doctoral program and am currently writing my dissertation. I am choosing to submit a poster proposal to gain feedback on the overall structure and argument of my work. I could also imagine someone submitting who wants feedback on a specific chapter or a longer essay. Personally, I look forward to engaging my scholarship with scholars outside of my institution who can offer new and fresh perspectives.

How do I submit a proposal? The proposal begins with a précis of no more than 600 characters (approximately 130 words). You then have an additional 1,000 words to describe your poster. The deadline for poster proposals is **May 1**. All proposals must be submitted [through the REA website](#).

I hope you will join me in submitting a poster proposal for the 2018 conference. See you in Reston, Virginia!

REA Board Student Representative
Rachelle Green

CFP deadline is May 1st

May 1st is the deadline for responding to [our call for proposals](#) for the 2018 REA conference to be held Nov.2-4 outside of Washington, DC in Reston, VA.

This year, as we did last year, we are inviting proposals in the Research Interest Group format (a finished paper of publishable quality is presented and discussed among a group of conference participants), the Collaborative Session Format (a group of three to four scholars propose to build a breakout session in which they model collaborative academic inquiry around a particular topic related to the theme); and also as Poster Presentations (a place to present emerging research, research-in-progress that may lead to a publishable paper, or current practices and program). More details for each of these formats, as well as instructions for how to submit your proposal to our online system are available.

We would like to especially encourage people to consider submitting a proposal for either a collaborative session or a poster presentation. Last year was the first time we had collaborative sessions, and they were remarkably popular as well as clearly connected to practice.

We also intend to continue to schedule specific time on the program for poster presentations, during which time the author of a poster can meet and speak informally

with interested participants about research done, still continuing, or in preparation, thus stimulating the exchange of ideas and networking opportunities.

When the Board met in March, they spent a considerable amount of time and energy working on ensuring that this November meeting will be a rich learning opportunity. They ask in particular that responses to our call for proposals -- as well as presentations at the meeting -- include some self-reflection on the normative assumptions in place in your work.

Exploring the Washington, DC area

We invite you to consider coming early to our conference, or staying an additional day or two. There are 19 museums/galleries/gardens and a zoo that are part of the [Smithsonian complex in DC](#), and all of them are free. You need only stand in line for tickets (or reserve timed entry on the various webpages).

The area is also rich in history and wonderfully diverse neighborhoods spread across the metro region, many of them accessible via public transit. The [Washington, DC tourist office](#) has many free resources for planning day trips.

Looking for members who would like to step into leadership

This is the time of year when the REA board begins the process of seeking members who would like to increase their involvement by stepping into leadership positions. Are you interested in serving on a committee? Would you like to help us increase our outreach efforts? Do you have fundraising experience? Perhaps you know of someone else in REA who you think would be a great addition to our leadership team. Please contact either Mualla Selçuk as president of the board, or Lucinda Huffaker, our executive secretary, to share nominations. This year we are specifically looking for people to fill the following positions: program chair, student representative, proposals chair, Harper/Wornom committee, and a publications chair. Descriptions of these positions [are on our website](#).

Please note, however, that there are lots of other [ways to be involved](#) in leadership as well!

Remembering Dr. Yolanda Smith at Yale Divinity School

Yale Divinity School has announced the newly endowed Professor Yolanda Smith Memorial Scholarship fund, organized to support students at YDS with a demonstrated interest in and commitment to African-American religious traditions, or who exemplify Professor Smith's commitment to promote social justice through public theology.



Prior to her untimely death from cancer in 2016, Yolanda was renowned at YDS as a beloved faculty colleague and mentor, a gifted liturgical dancer, and a learned voice of conscience. She was President of REA in 2011, and many of us remember the remarkable 2012 Annual Meeting in Atlanta that she chaired, [“Let Freedom Ring”: Religious Education at the Intersection of Social Justice, Liberation, and Civil/ Human Rights](#). Those in attendance made squares for the REA Signature Peace & Justice Quilt that is sometimes displayed at meetings.

Having reached the startup goal of \$75,000, the permanent scholarship fund makes possible the award of a Professor Yolanda Smith Scholarship to a student or students at Yale Divinity School every year.

Currently, a challenge fund is matching gifts over a five-year period on a 2:1 basis. To make an online gift to the Yolanda Smith Scholarship fund at Yale Divinity School, visit: divinity.yale.edu/giving. Or contact James Ebert in the Development Office at james.ebert@yale.edu.

REA members inhabit many leadership roles

Now is an excellent time to revisit our earlier list of REA members who hold a variety of academic leadership roles throughout the church and the academy. Here is our current list, but we would love to update it. If you or someone you know from our membership holds such a post but is not on this list, please let us know so that we can update it!

- Faustino "Tito" Cruz, Dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education
- Leah Gunning Francis, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, and Associate Professor of Christian Education and Practical Theology at Christian Theological Seminary
- Mary Hinton, President, College of Saint Benedict
- Michael Horan, Professor of Pastoral Theology, Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff Development & Support and for Graduate Education at Loyola Marymount University
- Boyung Lee, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Iliff Seminary
- Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Theology and Education, Boston University
- Evelyn Parker, Susanna Wesley Centennial Professor of Practical Theology and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at SMU/Perkins School of Theology
- Anton Vrame, Director of the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

We welcome ALLLM as a Related Learning Organization

At their Annual General Meeting in December 2017, the members of the [Association of Leaders for Lifelong Learning in Ministry \(ALLLM\)](#) chose to become a Related Learning Organization with the Religious Education Association, and to hold their annual meetings in conjunction with ours. We are excited about this new relationship and believe it offers one direct response to the concerns raised by our membership in the recent association-wide survey which called for more engagement with practitioners in the field. ALLLM members will be able to come to the REA meeting at the member price, and the leadership of ALLLM will be offering sessions that will also be open to REA members.

Wornom Award Application Available

Remember! Every year the REA awards a \$3,000 grant to a person or organization for innovative religious education projects! The purpose is to support 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 deadline for application is September 15th, and all applications must be completed through our online process, described here: <https://religiouseducation.net/wornom-innovation-grant>.

Resources

A special issue of [Episcopal Teacher Today](#) showcases the work of many of our members -- including Kyle Oliver.

Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry regularly offers public events with internationally renowned speakers. They record these events, and [make them available for free online](#). Check out the diverse array of speakers, and consider using them in your own context.

[The Jan Phillips Database for Interreligious Encounter](#) is housed by the University of St. Thomas's Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning in St. Paul, MN and holds over 46,000 entries relating to most of the world's major religions and their interactions - both present and past.

Member news

Dean Blevins is finalizing an ATS grant project on innovation and ministry that will create a new online curriculum on entrepreneurship education for ministers and persons interested in the intersections of faith and innovation while creating new ventures.

Dean Blevins's chapter "When Neuroscientists Speak Religiously: Navigating Neuroscientific Metaphysical Claims" (originally presented at the REA annual meeting) was published in *Connecting Faith and Science: Philosophical and Theological Inquiries*, edited by Matthey Nelson Hill and Curtis Holtzen. Claremont, CA: Claremont School of Theology, 2017.

Joyce Mercer was recently appointed to a named chair: [Horace Bushnell Professor of Christian Nurture at Yale Divinity School](#). Many people in the field recognize how important Horace Bushnell was to religious education. It is wonderful to see that this chair once again has a person holding it!

Bert Roebben will deliver the inaugural lecture for his Chair of Religious Education in the University of Bonn, Germany, on June 8, 2018. Entitled "On the theologicity of religious education," you can find more details online on both [the lecture and full day symposium](#) in which it is embedded.

Our president, **Dr. Mualla Selçuk**, addressed the [Global Affairs Forum](#) in NYC in February; and then also addressed the [International Islamic Institute](#) on the topic of "Ta'aruf and co-existence."

Katharina Welling and **Bert Roebben** announce the publication of a co-authored article based on her poster presentation at the 2016 REA meeting: "Reading and reflecting sacred texts in the presence of the other. An empirical study on the use of 'scriptural reasoning' in teacher education," in *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 39 (2018) 1, 73-85."



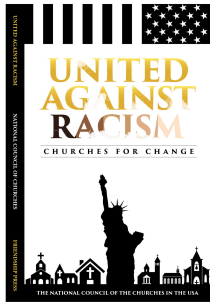
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UNITED AGAINST RACISM CHURCHES FOR CHANGE

The time is **NOW**, as signaled by the United Nations' decade-long commitment to people of African descent. In proclaiming this decade, the international community is recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. Authentic Christianity requires the loving inclusion of all God's creation. An inclusive, beloved community is a community free from racism. United against Racism is a call to an authentic Christianity, a religion that strives to become God's inclusive, beloved community. It summons Christians to pray, think, and act to end racism. This resource aims to support churches, communions, and those who endeavor to share the journey of the Christian faith in the pursuit of an unfinished agenda to embody a more excellent way of racial equity.

Book Units:

Mourning the Trauma

Broken Trust: Racism, White Privilege, and Misunderstanding

When Your Justice Doesn't Look or Feel Like My Justice

Testimonies of Faith – Dr. Rex M. Ellis, National Museum on African American History and Culture

The Bible: It's Use and Misuse

The Search for Justice

The Price of Justice and Its Cost to Us

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Each theme hopes to engender dialogue and includes prayers by leaders, religious educators, and members of churches that are part of the National Council of Churches. Questions to help focus meaningful conversations are part of each theme.

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Conversations that matter