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## From our outgoing president, Kathy Winings

Another year and another Annual Meeting has come and gone. The Meeting in Toronto went well with some insightful and thought-provoking plenaries and breakout sessions. As this eReach goes out, the papers that were presented in Toronto are being reviewed to determine which ones will be included in the Conference issue of the Religious Education journal. It will be a daunting task as many amazing papers were submitted.

Even though the Program Chair and President-elect, Hanan Alexander, could not be physically present at the meeting due to his medical emergency, his spirit and presence were certainly felt through the plenary speakers and the theme that reflected his scholarship and heart. The role of religious education in the healing and reconciliation of the many divisions that we are experiencing as a global community was addressed effectively from beginning to end. Beginning the meeting with the KAIROS Blanket Exercise was a bold move that physically and personally immersed us in the First Nations' experiences of division and injustice within the Canadian context. Many of the participants were able to connect their own experiences of division through the exercise.



Each of the plenaries provided rich content and discussion as we looked at the issues of Theologies of Difference, Difficult Histories, Education for Coexistence, and Science and Religious Education. The plenaries offered distinctive insights and food for thought from speakers who spanned the globe from the United States, Europe, Israel and Canada.

We were especially blessed with a wonderful gift from the University of St. Michael's College in their sponsorship of the reception on Saturday evening. It was a truly amazing gift. Thank you St. Michael's! The other experience on Saturday night was the REA Business Meeting where important changes to the governance structure were approved by the membership. While normally one would not call a business meeting "an amazing experience," I found it amazing because we had a most engaging and lively discussion around the proposed changes to the Association in which the members felt free to speak and share their viewpoint – new members, long-term members and everyone in between representing different parts of the globe and the Association. For me, that is a sign of a strong organization in which its members feel free to speak up and to share their viewpoints because they care about REA.

Thank you again to everyone who attended and contributed to the Annual Meeting.

Two important and positive changes for the Association took place during the Toronto meeting – both of which were stimulated by suggestions from the membership. The first change involved the formation of the REA [Diversity and Inclusion Work Group](#). The Diversity and Inclusion group will be working to bring issues of systemic racism and internal barriers to change to the attention of the Association. As noted on the REA website, the Work Group "will then create strategies to dismantle racism in REA on all levels, help develop a new cultural identity based on antiracist values, and redesign structures that share power in ways accountable to people of color and other oppressed groups." Our prayers are with them as they begin this important journey that will support REA in achieving its stated objectives and being true to its members.

The second positive change was the formation and first meeting of the new REA [Advisory Council](#). Representing all areas of membership and partner organizations, the Council provides the means for the voices of its diverse membership to be heard and allows the Association to benefit from their wisdom, insights and experiences. Chaired by the Vice President of REA, the Council met for the first time in Toronto and has already raised ideas and suggestions that were shared with the Board. We look forward to remarkable contributions from the Council as we move into 2020.

As my time as President concludes, I was inspired to think back on my experiences in REA. In particular, I thought back to my very first Annual Meeting that took place in New York City at a small airport hotel at LaGuardia Airport. The theme was "Tikkun Olam: Repair of the World." I was a young doctoral student at Teacher's College. Several of the students in the program at TC and Union Seminary had never attended an REA meeting before, so we were quite excited to attend the NY program. One thing that stood out for me was that here I was face-to-face with many of the scholars that I had been

quoting and citing in my studies up to that point – our “walking footnotes” as Tom Groome once phrased it.

Two sessions in particular stood out for me at that meeting in 1990. One session was with Gabriel Moran and the other was with Jack Seymour. Both sessions offered a discussion on the future of Religious Education. Many of the participants in those two breakouts were doctoral students or young faculty, new to the Association. Neither of the two men had a prepared paper. Instead, the two sessions became informal Q and A discussions on the future of religious education. Both colleagues shared from their hearts while thoughtfully listening to our questions and opinions. While I don't remember everything that Gabriel and Jack shared, I remember their singular conclusion: that all of us are colleagues and fellow travelers working in an important discipline and who have the opportunity to define this amazing field of study called Religious Education. But more importantly, they reminded us that each one of us will ultimately impact hundreds of people in our lifetime who may end up working with and impacting hundreds more through their teaching or ministries. Therefore, they concluded: a) we should be open to learning from each other, b) we should not be afraid to open up new avenues and possibilities in which to apply religious education and, c) we should always make sure that our students' voices are heard.

As I think about their advice, I realize that these thoughts have guided much of my own work as a teacher, a scholar, a pastor and as a member of REA. They have also guided me this past year as your President. If nothing else, I can say most confidently that I have learned so very much from each one of you and will continue to learn from you in the years to come. As I close out this year, I want to thank all of you for allowing me to serve REA and to serve you in this capacity. A motto that has always guided my actions has been this: to leave a situation or place better than I found it. I certainly pray that I have done that this past year as your President and I look forward to our continued work together as religious educators, practitioners and colleagues. May the One who guides each one of us and holds us together in love, bless each and every one of you in this new year of 2020!

*Dr. Kathy Winings, outgoing President of the REA*



## New Board members begin terms

Four new [Board members](#) and four [Standing Committee members](#) were elected in November and began their terms January 1, 2020. We extend our gratitude to their retiring counterparts from the 2019 Board for their generous labor and conscientious service. These offices have undergone transitions:

Position	Retiring	New
<b>President</b>	Kathy Winings	Hanan Alexander
<b>Program Chair</b>	Hanan Alexander	Boyung Lee
<b>Vice-President</b>	Boyung Lee	Patrick Reyes
<b>Chair, RE in Faith Communities</b>	HyeRan Kim-Cragg	Denise Janssen
<b>Chair, Publications</b>	Sybrina Atwaters	Almeda Wright
<b>Chair, Harper/Wornom</b>	Maureen O'Brien	Sarah Tauber
<b>Member, Proposal Selection</b>	Randy Litchfield	Monique van Dijk-Groeneboer
<b>Member, RE in Academic Disciplines/Institutions</b>	Almeda Wright	Karen Marie Yust
<b>Member, Proposal Selection</b>	Mary Young	Carl Procario-Foley
<b>Member, Harper/Wornom</b>	Sarah Tauber	Anne Carter Walker

We are grateful to all who give of their time and expertise to provide leadership and service to REA, and we encourage anyone who has an interest in leadership in some capacity to let us know by contacting Executive Secretary [Lucinda Huffaker](#). For a complete list of the Board of Directors and committees, please see [the description on our website](#).

## By-law changes approved at November business meeting

After extensive discussion over the last two years, and following upon the [wide-ranging survey done](#) in 2016, the Association's members approved significant governance changes at the 2019 business meeting. Beginning in 2022, there will be two lines of leadership in the Association -- one focused on planning and implementing the annual meeting, led by an elected program chair; and one focused on the Association's administrative leadership, led by an elected president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The first such designated program chair will be put forward and elected at our November 2020 meeting for the July 2022 program. The separate presidential line will begin in August 2022. Other changes include leadership position terms of two years, with the possibility of one re-election. More details and the exact changes made to the by-laws are [available on our website](#).

## New collaboration with the KSCRE

Our annual meeting was graced by the presence of several members from the Korean Society for Christian Religious Education, including in this photo: Professor Hyun-Sook Kim (Vice President of KSCRE, Yonsei University), Professor Changho Lim (President of KSCRE, Kosin University), Professor Nanye Kim (Former President of KSCRE, Korea Baptist Theological Seminary and University), and Dr. Moon Son (Executive Director of KSCRE, Yonsei University).



Discussion is now underway concerning the large conference the KSCRE is planning for September 30 to October 2 of 2021 in Seoul, Korea. The meeting's theme is "Beyond Doubt and Uncertainty: Christian Education in Our Time" and includes keynote presentations by REA leaders Dr. Joyce Mercer (editor of our journal), and previous president and program chair Dr. Bert Roebben. More details about the conference are available on the KSCRE [conference website](#), and we will be sharing information as we receive it. We hope to have a large delegation of REA members attending this meeting. Due to our shift from a November meeting to a summer meeting, there will not be a fall meeting of REA in 2021 (aside from our gathering at AAR), so this fall 2021 conference in Korea is very timely.

## 2020 Wornom Innovation Grant award announced



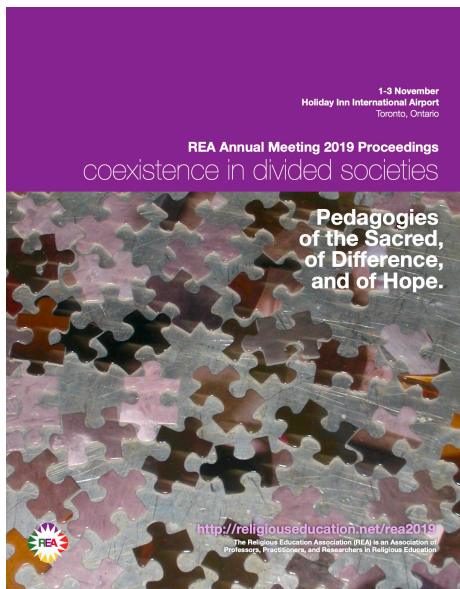
REA is delighted to announce that the 2020 Wornom Innovation Grant has been awarded to Dr. Elliot Ginsburg for a project called "Beloved Land: Israel and Palestine Through the Kaleidoscope," sponsored by The Aleph Ordination Israel and Palestine Program. This practitioner-oriented project is designed to create possibilities among Jewish congregational leaders and religious educators for engaging in peaceful dialogue and mutual understanding between Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank. It requires an intensive online preparatory course followed by an immersion experience in the Land, concluding with an online seminar.

The project brings its Jewish participants into dialogue with Muslims, Christians and others in order to wrestle with the varied claims on the Land and the consequences for faith identity and practice in a region suffering long-term fractures. It thus addresses the REA's concern for diversity, interreligious engagement, and orientation toward building a world of greater justice and peace. The designers are deeply convinced that "as religious educators, we will not, cannot, succumb to living in a post-hope world." REA is privileged to join other organizations as a sponsor of this important initiative.

Stay tuned for details regarding the 2021 Wornom Grant, with an application deadline of Sept. 15, 2020.

## Revisit the 2019 Annual Meeting held in Toronto

Do you want to revisit a plenary presentation? Perhaps you were not able to join us in Toronto, and would like to get a sense of the scholarship presented there? You can now find on our website video recordings of four of the five main plenaries (the Blanket Exercise plenary did not lend itself to recording), along with in many cases the powerpoint slides of each presenter:



Plenary 2: [Hermeneutics of the Other and theologies of difference](#)

Plenary 3: [Disrupting the consequences of difficult histories through education](#)

Plenary 4: [Education for co-existence: Pedagogies of the sacred, of difference, and of hope](#)

Plenary 5: [Science and religious education in divided societies](#)

You can also read the various papers, which are now available in the [Proceedings](#) of the meeting.

We work hard to make these materials easily accessible -- you do not need to be a member to access them, for instance -- because we hope that members will use them in classes, share them with colleagues, and generally help us to make more visible the powerful research being done in our field.





## Theme and CFP announced for REA2020

The Board of the REA, at its November board meeting, approved the theme and call for papers for the [2020 annual meeting](#), which will be held in St. Louis, MO, from November 6-8, 2020. The theme is "Gender, Sexuality and Wholeness: Religious Education for Confrontation and Healing." Details of the [call for proposals](#) can be found at the meeting website.

In particular, the Association hopes to provide a context in which authentic dialogue and constructive pedagogical inquiry can emerge. Program chair Boyung Lee states in the call for proposals:

"Various fields of study have done a great deal of critical research on gender and human sexuality in general, and on sexual violence, trauma and healing, LGBTQIA, and queer studies in particular. Through inter-, cross- or trans-disciplinary conversations with these other fields, religious educators are invited to further define and explore concepts in a more holistic way that honors human wholeness. We can also shed light on gaps in the work in other fields.

I understand that these are topics that are uncomfortable, difficult, or not encouraged ones, depending on contexts. What I hope and ask is that you will avoid taking sides and, instead, explore the issues at stake, hold space for those in need, discuss topics with human wholeness in mind, and share healing and generative religious education models and approaches with one another."

## REA Executive Secretary Dr. Huffaker announces retirement

Our highly effective and respected executive secretary, Dr. Lucinda Huffaker, has announced her retirement from the post as of the summer of 2020. Dr. Huffaker has faithfully served our Association since 2010. The REA Steering Committee is hard at work preparing a search process for our next secretary. If you have ideas or suggestions, please be in touch with Dr. Hanan Alexander, REA President.



## Resources

The [Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey](#) has just completed its first year run under the auspices of the Interfaith Youth Core. You can access their reports and other findings at the [IFYC website](#).

The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, provides [a range of resources](#) for teaching inclusively.

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and the largest library in the world by number of items catalogued. Among the resources it makes available is a [library of short videos on sacred texts](#).

Good Ground Press, run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet makes available [free printables](#) on a variety of Catholic education topics.

## Member News

There have been a number of new books published, and we are delighted to celebrate with our members:

[Experiments in Empathy: Critical Perspectives on Interreligious Education](#), by **Najeeba Syeed** and Heidi Hadsell (Brill, 2020).

[Another Way: Living and Leading Change on Purpose](#), by Stephen Lewis, Matthew Wesley William, and **Dori Grinenko Baker** (Chalice Press, 2020)

[Islam as Education: Pedagogies of Pilgrimage, Prophecy, and Jihad](#), by **Aaron Ghiloni** (Rowman, 2019)

[What We Leave Undone](#), by **Johanna M. Selles** (Wipf&Stock, 2019)

The Special Issue reprint book [There is a Crack in Everything Education and Religion in a Secular Age](#) edited by **K. H. (Ina) ter Avest**, has been published online and is freely accessible on the MDPI Books platform.

## Appreciation to the University of St. Michael's College

The REA is deeply grateful for the generous support of the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto for their sponsorship of our reception during the annual meeting. Abundant and delicious food was enjoyed by all, with a warm welcome from the Dean, Dr. James Ginther, of USMC.



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

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*All other photos* (REA members)