



**REA Board Issues Statement on AAPI Hate
Call for Candidates: Join REA's Leadership
REA Annual Meeting 2021, online July 5-9
and more inside**

From the REA Board

The Religious Education Association condemns anti-Asian racism, and the shooting of eight people including six Asian American women in Atlanta on March 16th, 2021. The tragic and senseless murder in a violent hate crime is the result of anti-Asian racism which targeted Asian women. The act of anti-Asian racism was aided and abetted by gun violence, another ongoing tragedy in the United States. The lack of strong gun policies in the United States continues to shock and horrify people. We are enraged as more people continue to become victims of gun violence in Boulder, Indianapolis and elsewhere. We need legislators to implement serious gun control policies.

Racism against Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) has a long and invisibilized history in the United States. The Page Act of 1875 was the very first American anti-immigration law aimed at preventing Chinese women from immigrating to the U.S because of hypersexualization. The Chinese Exclusion Act followed in 1882. The roots of anti-Asian racism lie in white supremacy and US trans-Continental militarism as well as pernicious Orientalism, hypersexualization, and fetishization of Asian women. This has been fostered in American culture, media, and academia. We witnessed this trope in comments denying the racism of the perpetrator after the targeting and murder of these six Asian American women among the eight killed in Atlanta. We are at a moment where we urgently need to call out and work against the ways Asian and Asian American people and especially women continue to be erased in our institutions and classrooms today.

As an international association of Religious Educators, we are committed to teaching with the understanding that life is sacred. As such it is a travesty to erase, invisibilize, and objectify any person in our human family. We are in solidarity with our colleagues who are Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders. We name the ways their stories have been invisibilized in both the public sphere and in academe. We commit ourselves to growing in solidarity with AAPI and with all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities. We encourage our guild to reach for greater amplification of AAPI scholars and voices in academic studies and research. We counter historic invisibilization with the explicit act of visibilization in our work with Asian American colleagues and students. We counter the white supremacist distortion of AAPI women throughout history and in academe by amplifying their lives and their scholarship.

As a professional association of educators, researchers and practitioners, we call upon our membership to educate for change in our society and dedicate ourselves to the collective work of eradicating white supremacy and hate. We call upon our members to commit to solidarity and consider joining these calls to action and learning as part of our common understanding:

- Review the resources provided by REA and others on Stop AAPI Hate: History and Narratives and share them with colleagues and students
- REA members who identify as AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) are invited to a closed round table for a shared opportunity of hope and healing on Wednesday, May 12th from 7-8:30pmET. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
- REA will offer a roundtable for those who wish to be in solidarity with AAPI people against anti-Asian racism, including ways for REA to continue to support its members in this work on Tuesday, May 18th from 7-8:30pmET. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
- Renewed calls and direct action for legislation on Gun Control and Gun Policy

As acts of commitment and love, remember their names:

Xiaojie Tan
Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez
Daoyou Feng
Paul Andre Michels
Soon Chung Park
Hyun-Jung Kim (Grant)
Yong Ae Yue
Suncha Kim

Board of Directors of the Religious Education Association

Patrick B. Reyes, Ph.D. , V. Rev. Anton C. Vrame, Ph.D., Rev. Heesung Hwang, Ph.D.
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Join the REA Leadership team: An open call for candidates!

The Religious Education Association is issuing an open call for candidates in leadership. We have several open positions within our organization and are extending an invitation for interested members to apply for nomination and election. The open positions available are:

Vice President, for a 2 year term from September 1, 2021-August 31 2023

Student Representative, for 2 year term from September 1, 2021-August 31 2023

Chair of Academic Disciplines & Institutions Committee, for 2 year term from September 1, 2021-August 31 2023

Member-at-Large of Nominations Committee, for 2 year term from September 1, 2021-August 31 2023

If you are interested in being considered for one or more of these positions please provide us with your information by **April 30th**. Thank you in advance for considering being a part of the leadership for our organization.

Annual Meeting to be held July 5-9 in an online space

As previously reported in this newsletter, the Board of the REA has made the decision to hold our annual meeting this year entirely online due to the uncertainties that continue to be a part of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Registration for this meeting will open in May, once the various paper sessions have been scheduled (keep your eyes open for e-lets!). The meeting will spread across the entire week, making it possible to avoid the challenge of competing paper sessions. In addition, the planning committee is working on finding ways to make participation easy and affordable — we hope to encourage students and practitioners in particular to join us. We will be offering significant scholarships, please see below in this newsletter.



**RUN
THE
WORLD**

The Steering Committee has chosen an online platform called Run the World in which to hold the meeting, and there are several opportunities in advance of July to enter this space and to explore how it will work. The first two opportunities are May 19th at 11:00 am ET, and May 20th at 10:00 pm ET. Click on the date you wish to attend, and fill in the form found there. These are free and open times of exploring the platform, and have been specifically created for REA members. We genuinely hope that this platform will be an engaging way to move beyond what have become the default tools to date.

Exciting line-up of speakers for the Annual Meeting

The theme of this meeting, as previously announced, is “Gender, Sexuality, and Wholeness: Religious Education for Confrontation and Healing.” This will be the first time our association has engaged issues of gender and sexuality in such a direct way, and program chair Dr. Boyung Lee has organized a stellar set of plenary speakers, alongside of a host of excellent breakout sessions that will be offered. Registration will open up in May. We are particularly pleased this year that people who register for the meeting will receive one free registration to share with someone who is new to the organization. Our hope is that we can build additional awareness and energy for our organization despite the pandemic challenges.

Here is a taste of what is in store!

On Tuesday, July 6th beginning at 9:30 amET, Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock, a leading international expert on moral injury in combat veterans, will speak. She is Senior Vice President and Director of the Shay Moral Injury Center at Volunteers of America. A

noted religion scholar and the first Asian American woman earning a Ph.D. in Theology/Religion, Dr. Brock was the Founding Director of the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, where she also was a Research Professor of Theology and Culture. She has offered trainings for mental health providers, for professional chaplains, and for veterans and their families on moral injury and healing from trauma.



For 18 years, Dr. Brock was a Professor of Religion, Philosophy of Religion, and Women's Studies, and held the Endowed Chair in the Humanities at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN, from 1990-1997. In 1997, she became the Director of the Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College (now the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University), a research fellowship program for distinguished scientists, scholars, humanitarians, and artists. Her publications include: *Soul Repair: Recovering from*

Moral Injury After War (Beacon 2012); *Saving Paradise: Recovering Christianity's Forgotten Love for This Earth* (Canterbury Press UK 2012); *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Beacon 2008. The best religion book of 2008 by Publisher's Weekly); *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us* (Beacon 2001); *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States* (Fortress 1996); *Journeys By Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (Crossroad 1988).

On **Thursday, July 8th at 9:30 amET**, Dr. Mark D. Jordan will speak. Dr. Jordan is internationally known as a scholar of Christian theology, European philosophy, and gender studies. He is the Richard Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School. Over the last three decades, Dr. Jordan has written extensively on sexual ethics, producing books that are widely regarded as opening important new conversations. But he has also continued to explore longstanding topics at the boundaries of philosophy and Christian theology. His latest book, *Transforming Fire: Imagining Christian Teaching* (Eerdmans 2021; a part of Theological Education between the Times series) tells a brief history of the imagined scenes of theological education.



With support from the Ford Foundation, Dr. Jordan led a seminar on public debates about religion and sexuality for rising scholars from the United States and abroad. In 2019, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His publications include *The Ethics of Sex* (Blackwell 2001); *Telling Truths in Church: Scandal, Flesh, and Christian Speech* (Beacon 2002); *Recruiting Young Love: How Christians Talk about Homosexuality* (U. of Chicago 2011; Randy Shilts Award winning book in nonfiction); *Convulsing Bodies: Religion and Resistance in Foucault* (Stanford 2011); *Teaching Bodies: Moral Formation in the Summa of Thomas Aquinas* (Fordham 2016).

On **Friday, July 9th at 6 pmET**, three scholars will share the plenary space in a creative conversation. They are Dr. Mark A. Hicks, Dr. Yohana Junker, and Dr. Su Yon Pak.



Dr. Mark A. Hicks is a long-time REA member, and the Angus MacLean Professor of Religious Education at Meadville Lombard Theological School. Drawing on his experience as a classroom educator, musician, university administrator and advocate for social change, Dr. Hicks has designed a nationally-recognized professional development degree that transforms the teaching and learning lives of public school teachers and children ([Initiatives in Educational Transformation](#), George Mason University). He has been a leading challenging voice in religious education to expand our conception of faith development to include the developmental needs of people targeted for social oppression. He brings insights from human and faith development, experiential learning, critical pedagogy and theories of transformative learning to his research and teaching that both nest students in philosophy and theory while

modeling how to create similar experiences in religious and secular settings. As a curriculum developer, Dr. Hicks' work creates "aesthetic spaces" wherein participants can break through what John Dewey called "the crust of conventionalism" in order to find new ways of thinking and being. These ideas can be experienced in some of the curricula he designed such as "Building the World We Dream About," "Beloved Conversations: Meditations on Race and Ethnicity," and "Our Place in the Web of Life." Dr. Hicks also collaborated with PBS to develop the curriculum companion to the PBS

documentary, *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War*. The interfaith curriculum, *We Who Defy Hate*, is being used by congregations, college faith groups, and community organizations seeking to find common ground on social issues.



Dr. Yohana Junker, an educator and visual artist, is Assistant Professor of Art, Religion, and Culture at Claremont School of Theology. Dr. Junker's research probes the intersections among the fields of art history, eco-criticism, and decolonial studies, with special attention to contemporary Indigenous and diasporic art practices. In her writing, art, and activism, she explores the human capacity to imagine and retrieve generative ways of being even in the face of impossibility. She also investigates the ways artists create poetic spaces that allow

viewers to come together, to reclaim agency and restore a sense of purpose, a thirst for justice, and a desire for transformation. Her artwork is central to her scholarship and activism. Dr. Junker has contributed chapters for the forthcoming volumes *Georgetown Companion in Interreligious Studies* (Georgetown), *Sustainable Societies: Interreligious & Interdisciplinary Responses* (Springer), and *Painted Portrayals: The Art of Characterizing Biblical Figures* (SBL Press). She is also co-editing, with Dr. Aaron Rosen, *Modern and Contemporary Artists on Religion: A Global Sourcebook* (Bloomsbury). She serves on the boards of Art, Religion, and Culture (ARC), the Center for the Arts and Religion, La Comunidad, and Feminist Studies in Religion Blog. You can find some of her visual art work and art-based critical reflections on contemporary issues [at her website](#).

Dr. Su Yon Pak is the Senior Director and Associate Professor of Integrative and Field-based Education at Union Theological Seminary. A native of South Korea, Dr. Pak immigrated to NYC at the age of 10. She has since lived in Scotland where she worked at Shakti Women's Aid in Edinburgh, a women's shelter and center for women of color. In 1993, Dr. Pak made her home in NYC and received her doctorate from the joint Teachers College – Union



Theological Seminary program in Religion and Education. She has taught at Teachers College Columbia University, Mercy College, and Auburn Theological Seminary. Her life and research passion include: criminal justice, the elderly and spirituality, chaplaincy, women's leadership, and integrative and critical pedagogies. Dr. Pak's recent publications include: *Sisters in Mourning: Daughters Reflecting on Care, Loss, and Meaning* (Co-edited with Rabbi Mychal Springer, Cascade Press, 2021); "Cultivating Moral Imagination in Theological Field Education" in *Asian and Asian American Women in Theology and Religion: Embodying Knowledge* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); *Leading Wisdom: Asian, North American Asian Women Leaders* (Co-edited with Jung Ha Kim; Westminster John Knox Press, 2017); "Coming Home/Coming Out: Reflections of a Queer Family and the Challenge of Eldercare in The Diaspora" in *The Journal of Theology And Sexuality*. Dr. Pak co-authored, *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land: Korean American Practices of Faith*. Dr. Pak served as the chair of Professional Conduct Task Force and the chair the Status of Women in the Profession Committee of the American Academy of Religion (AAR).

2021 Annual Meeting scholarships available

The REA is very aware that 2020-2021 has caused a great deal of dislocation and financial stress, inhibiting participation in academic events. In response, the REA has set aside funds to support students and others with the cost of registration for the 2021 Annual Meeting. Members of the REA – students or others – may apply for a 50% scholarship of their registration fee. Those facing financial hardships should know, in addition, full registration scholarships are available and can make that part of a request. Members presenting papers will be given preference. The deadline for application for a scholarship is **Friday June 4, 2021**. [Please apply using this online form.](#)

ALLLM webinars available to learn with

REA's "related learning partner" – the [Association of Leaders in Lifelong Learning for Ministry](#) – recently held several compelling webinars, which are now available are recordings to view and share. They included:

[Coaching Online Facilitators](#), led by Rev. Stephen Fetter, The United Church of Canada

"Teaching online is hard! You can't see your students; you don't know when they're engaged and when they're tuning out; the students have trouble interacting with each other; and the technology so often gets in the way that the experience can be frustrating rather than engaging.

How can we help teachers learn to teach online in ways that are engaging, interactive, and fun? How can we coach our presenters so they'll feel comfortable moving away from the "talking head with a PowerPoint" model of teaching, towards pedagogies that will provoke thought, encourage questioning, and hone judgement?"

Play, on Purpose, led by our own Lakisha R Lockhart, Ph.D. Executive Secretary, Religious Education Association

“In this virtual interactive workshop participants not only learned about the theological, spiritual, and neurological dimensions and benefits of play, but they engaged in various pedagogical play practices.”

Collaborating for Lifelong Learning, led by Sophia K. R. Angarap, Laura Cheifetz, Amy Steele of Vanderbilt Divinity School

“Vanderbilt Divinity School is reviving its Lifelong Learning under new leadership during a pandemic. Why now? How can faculty provide valuable input? How can LLL serve a strategic purpose? How can LLL cultivate more public religious discourse in your area? This discussion focussed on what can be learned from the process, using a “tripod” team approach, guided by particular commitments to inclusion, public engagement, and social change.”

Multiple ways to support the field of religious education

The COVID-19 pandemic is vastly reshaping higher education across the globe. As scholars struggle to observe, understand, and interpret these changes, religious educators often find ourselves at the forefront of this transformation. We are scholars who frequently straddle the boundaries between daily life and the academy. We are scholars who regularly work in inter-disciplinary or even trans-disciplinary ways. You may well notice that much of the work we do — whether it has to do with learning in embodied and heart-open ways, whether it explores the challenges of living amidst many and multiple faith traditions, whether it interrogates the languages we use for speaking of transcendence, and much much more! — the work of the field of religious education is often not well publicized or found in the center of higher education. There are several ways in which you can support the field, particularly the visibility of research being done by scholars. For instance:

- read and cite our journal (and remember that every time you assign an article from the journal and it gets downloaded, we reap some small benefit)
- read and cite scholarly books and other work offered by our field
- assign literature from our field in your classes, and share the work we do in your congregational/organizational spaces
- claim your identity as a religious education scholar in the other scholarly settings
- speak of the field as an organized whole, and remind people of the complexity we regularly engage
- bring literature (flyers, journal notices, and so on) from our field to the other scholarly and practice associations you attend (you can download these directly from our website)
- publicize our Horizons book series and encourage people to submit proposals
- share information about the Wornom Innovation grant

- do not assume that people outside of the field even know anything of the field, let alone how broad and deep and important the research we conduct may be to their questions
- use our videos in your teaching!

Learn the resources of the REA website!

More than ever before, people are aware of the necessity of finding and sharing resources that are digital in nature. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it has taught us that learning can continue even if it has to be embedded in zoom rooms and digital slide decks. Did you know that the REA website has hundreds of useful resources available for you to draw upon?

Consider the many videos we have created over the years of speakers in our plenary sessions at the annual meeting. You can find on our website recordings of speakers such as Dr. Emilie Townes, Dr. Willie James Jennings, Dr. David Hansen, and many, many more. Most recently there is a recording of an energetic discussion of the brand new book, From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry which was held during REA's more informal online fall gathering in November of 2020.

The REA publishes a series of scholarly monographs in our Horizons in Religious Education book series, in collaboration with Wipf&Stock Publishers. You can find information about these books on our website, and you could invite their authors to present in your setting.

All of the Proceedings from meetings dating back to 2001 are available on our website in an open access format which makes them easily used in courses and other learning settings. Indeed, all of the meeting websites dating back to 2010 are still available in their archived format, through our website. You can look at past schedules, consider the themes that were discussed, get a sense of who presented and much, much more.

There is an archive of E-REACH newsletters (you are reading this newsletter right now), which stands for the electronic version of the Religious Education Association clearing-house of resources.

We regularly post openings in a variety of settings, everything from higher ed to K12 to congregational and military religious educator positions.

You can also find a long list of organizations and associations which have some link to, or interest in, questions that emerge in our field; as well as journals and other publications from around the world that address religious education.

Member news

Jennifer Ayres and **Bert Roebben** are excited to announce that they have received a collaborative research grant from Emory's Halle Institute for Global Research. As Dr. Ayres noted, "The cultivation of ecological concern is a profoundly local project, dependent on developing a strong sense of place and commitment," Ayres says. "The climate crisis, however, is a profoundly global challenge, dependent on international cooperation and understanding. Our project will use transnational scholarly collaboration to develop a link between place-based local ecological practice and global cooperation for ecological change."

Christine Hong, REA Board member, is pleased to announce her latest book: Decolonial Futures: Intercultural and Interreligious Intelligence for Theological Education (Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies in Religion and Theology) from Lexington Books. She has also been tenured and promoted to associate professor at Columbia Theological Seminary.

HyeRan Kim-Cragg has been tenured and promoted to full professor at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. She is the first racialized faculty to become full professor at Emmanuel's almost 100 year history. She also recently published Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect, Lexington Books, 2021.

Patrick Reyes is pleased to announce his latest book, The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive. You can view a brief interview with Dr. Reyes online.

Jeffrey Schein is excited to announce a set of learning resources collected together in a new book released by the Mordecai M. Kaplan Center for Jewish Peoplehood. The book is entitled Lifelong Spirituality and Connection: A Kaplanesque Suite of Learning Resources.

Resources

Given the recent uptick in acts of hatred against the Asian, Asian-American, and Pacific Islander communities, we are sharing some of the many resources that are available for learning to resist, intervene in, and transform such hatred.

- Statement on Anti-Asian Violence: a statement made by the Asian Descent Presidents and Deans, of the Association of Theological Schools
- search the scholarship of Wenh-In Ng and Mai Anh Le Tran (former presidents of the REA) and Boyung Lee (current president of the REA)
- connect with AANARE (the REA working group on Asian and Asian North American Religious Educators)

- [search our journal](#) using the keyword Asian
- [Stop AAPI Hate](#): a coalition addressing anti-Asian hate amid the pandemic
- [Asian-Americans Advancing Justice](#): an institute that uses litigation to advance civil rights for AAPI communities and individuals
- [Young, Proud, and Sung-Jee](#): a children's book on fighting anti-Asian racism during COVID-19
- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#): building a community and resources specific to mental health support for Asians
- [#StopAsianHate](#): a hashtag with which many people and organizations are publishing links to their advocacy through twitter

Please support REA financially

There are many ways to support REA financially during this difficult time. Every page of our website has a “donate” button on it, and many of you add financial support to your membership renewals. That’s very helpful! But we also know that many of us are feeling the strain of lost work, funding that is not renewed, and so on.

Keep in mind that you can also support us by using designating REA as your “[Amazon smile](#)” partner. Doing so will bring a tiny percentage of your purchases there, into our funding stream. It is also relatively easy to set up [a fundraiser through Facebook](#) — celebrate a birthday! honor a colleague who’s retiring! — by selecting “nonprofit” on the Facebook fundraising page, and designating the Religious Education Association (Walnut Creek, CA) as the recipient.



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

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