

eREACH

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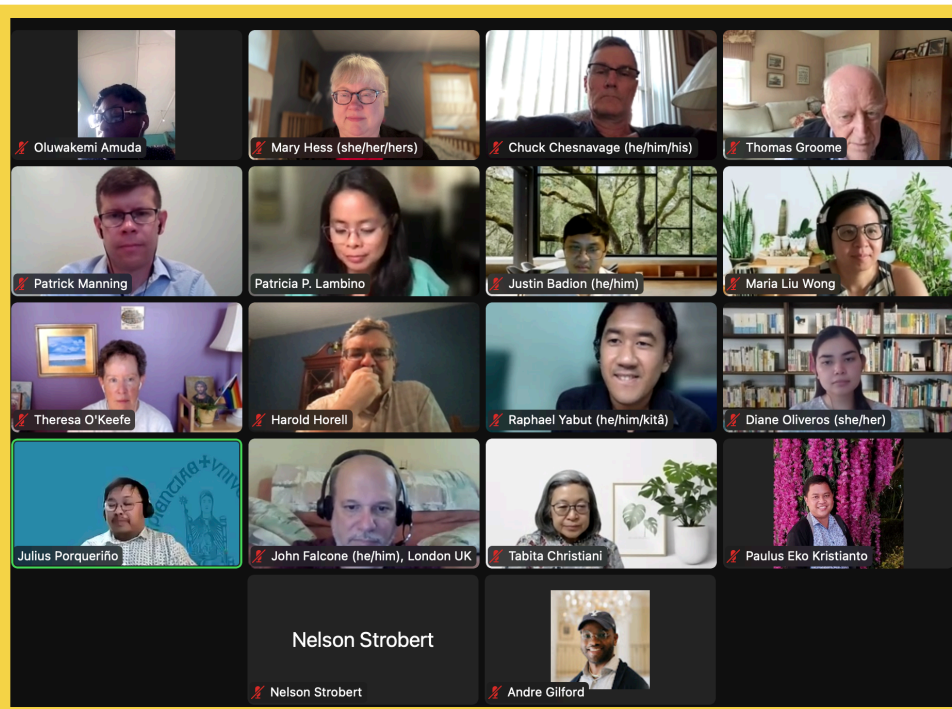
August 2023



Highlights of the recent July annual meeting
CFP for 2024 meeting published
and much more inside!

Highlights of our 2023 annual meeting

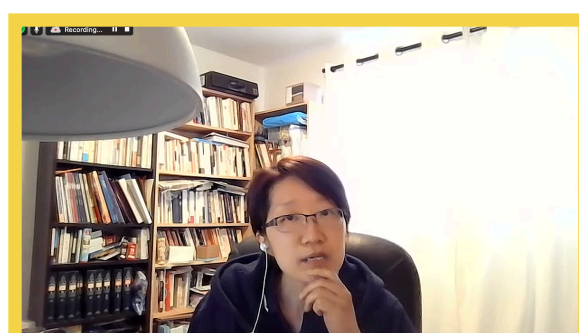
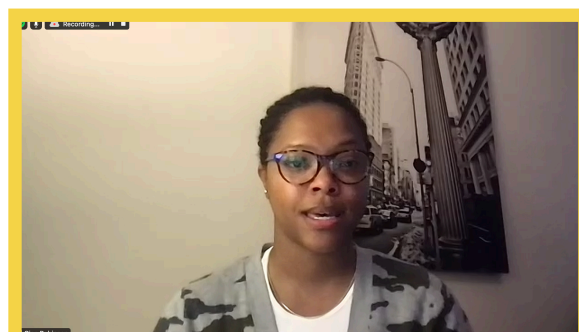
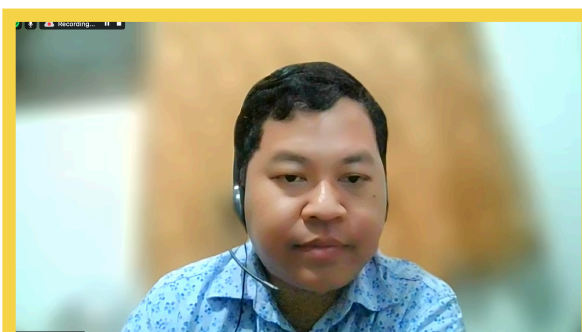
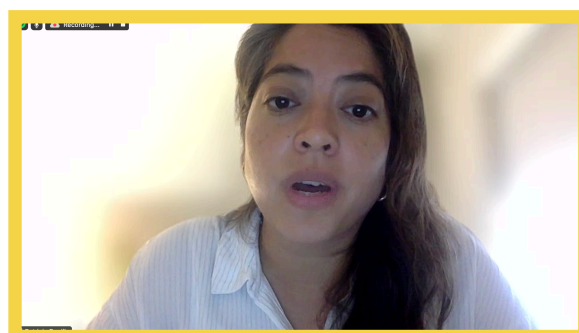
More than 140 people attended our 2023 online annual meeting the week of July 10-14, which included 22 people coming from settings beyond the US. This engagement included 12 breakout sessions comprising 36 papers with 51 presenters. For the first time ever we offered live language interpretation in Korean and Spanish for our plenary sessions, and funding for regional in-person gatherings.



What a lively and compelling week we had!

You can now access recordings of most of these sessions at the [REA Youtube site](#), and you can read the papers in our [2023 Proceedings](#).

Here are just a few glimpses of our week together – we hope they encourage you to watch recordings of any of the sessions you missed!



([Japjit Kaur Pnaiser](#), [Jen Meta McMahon](#), [Rode Molla](#), [Patricia Bonilla](#), [Paulus Eko Kristianto](#), [Gina Robinson](#), [Michael Shire](#), [Moon Jong Choi](#)) (names linked to videos)

From Program Chair Karen-Marie Yust:

Many thanks to all who participated in the 2023 Annual Meeting. Your critical attention to the spiritual lives of children and youth and their religious education needs and experiences demonstrates your respect and care for these younger members of our global community. I appreciate your willingness to listen to young people, ask hard questions about current RE practices, and explore possibilities for innovation and change. I hope, as we turn our attention to new themes in the coming years, that we will continue to wonder about our responsibilities for and with children and youth. Karen-Marie Yust

Welcome to our new and returning leaders

REA is excited to welcome into leadership – and in some cases, returning leadership! – the following people who have agreed to serve and then were formally elected by our membership in an annual business meeting. [You can access their contact information on our website.](#)

Board of Directors

President: Anne Walker

VP: Patricia Bonilla

Treasurer: Denise Janssen

Recording Secretary: Heesung Hwang

Program Co-Chairs: Dori Baker and Wanda Stahl

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Chair of Academic Disciplines & Institutions: Karen-Marie Yust

Chair of Harper Wornom Committee: Joshua Lunde-Whitler

Chair of Publications Committee: Hosffman Ospino

Chair of Advancement Committee: Tony Vrame

Chair of Standing Committee on RE in Faith Communities: Paulus Eko Kristianto

Chair of Standing Committee on RE in Public Life & Global Community Committee:

Tamar Wasoian

Ex-Officio: Christine Jean Hong (JEDI)

Ex-Officio: Eser Kim (Networking)

Ex-Officio: Joyce Anne Mercer (Journal editor)

Ex-Officio: Lakisha R. Lockhart (Executive secretary)

Steering Committee

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VP: Patricia Bonilla

Treasurer: Denise Janssen

Recording Secretary: Heesung Hwang

Program Co-Chair: Dori Baker

Program Co-Chair: Wanda Stahl

Ex-Officio: Christine Jean Hong (JEDI)

Ex-Officio: Eser Kim (Networking)
Ex-Officio: Joyce Anne Mercer (Journal editor)
Ex-Officio: Lakisha R. Lockhart (Executive secretary)

Advancement Committee

Chair: Tony Vrame
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Member: Mary Elizabeth Moore
Member: Javier A Viera

Harper/Wornom Committee

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Member: Montague Williams
Member: Asyraf Isyraqi Jamil
Member: Elizabeth Helen Nolan
Member: Tom LeGrand

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Member: Heather Ingersoll
Member: Patrick Reyes

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Journal Editor: Joyce Mercer
Horizons Editor: Mai-Anh Le Tran

RE in Academic Disciplines & Institutions

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Member: Jinseop Kim
Member: Imelda Lam
Member: Joung Chul Lee

RE in Faith Communities

Chair: Paulus Eko Kristianto
Member: Eileen Daily
Member: Mark Maddix

RE in Public Life & Global Communities

Chair: Tamar Wasoian
Member: Theo van der Nest
Member: Raphael Yabut

Join REA at AAR this coming November!

There are two opportunities to connect with REA at the American Academy of Religion meeting, which will take place in San Antonio, Texas November 19th and 20th..

REA Dinner @ AAR

Sunday, November 19 at 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Location: A local San Antonio restaurant (TBA)

An informal gathering and conversation about teaching and learning for REA members attending AAR. No cost for the meal, courtesy of the Wabash Center for Teaching & Learning. Sign up via email (kmyust@upsem.edu); limit 15 participants.

REA @ AAR Session

Session P20-100

Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CST

Marriot Riverwalk, Alamo Ballroom, Salon E

Theme: Religious Education in Higher Education

Religious education at the college, university, and graduate school levels means different things in different settings. Religiously affiliated schools may see everything they do as contributing to religious formation. Other types of institutions may offer opportunities for students to learn about diverse religious traditions without linking religious studies to faith. Faculty and administrators in both types of schools may wonder what strategies and techniques might best support their religious education goals. This session will provide a forum for facilitated conversation about contemporary theories of religious education, as well as specific teaching and learning practices that participants have found effective in their contexts. College administrators responsible for curriculum and/or student formation, instructors of religion interested in improving their teaching skills, and faculty whose portfolios explicitly include religious education courses are all welcome to participate (and to bring along their lunch!).

Theme for 2024 meeting announced: Dear Earth

The world is on fire: we know it in our bones and feel it in our hearts. Science, sociology and other disciplines describe dire scenarios as oceans rise, cities warm, and species decline. We know humanity's most vulnerable populations will suffer most severely. These challenging times demand our attention as religious educators, in and out of institutions, to mitigate harm when possible, create new rituals of grief and lament when needed, and stir human creativity on behalf of all beings.

Out of these concerns, our 2024 program chairs – Rev. Dr. Dori Baker and Rev. Dr. Wanda Stahl – have put together [a broad and compelling call for papers](#) for our next year’s annual meeting. You can find that call at the new 2024 conference website, and both Dori and Wanda welcome your ideas and participation as they plan the meeting. They can be reached at rea2024@religiouseducation.net.

Propose a theme for the 2025 annual meeting

Following extensive study and surveying of the membership in 2016, and then in subsequent retreats and Advisory council discussions, the Board of the REA determined that themes for future annual meetings should be chosen via a wide-ranging solicitation of proposals. The 2023 theme was the first one to engage this process, and the 2024 theme is the next. Both of these were the only program themes the Board received, so once it was clear that a proposal met the Board’s basic requirements, it was implemented.

The Board of the REA hopes, however, that there will be much wider participation in proposing and then choosing a theme for the 2025 annual meeting. You can find [information on how to go about proposing a theme –as well as what is involved in being a program chair](#) – at the REA website. Theme proposals are submitted via an online form, and will be reviewed by the Board before being offered to the membership for a vote.

Proposals will require the following basic elements:

- a title (keep in mind that titles usually have two parts — a short headline, and a few words that explain it);
- a rationale for the meeting in 500 words or less, that is, why the REA should focus an annual meeting on this theme, how this theme emerges from current research in the field, or in a field adjacent to religious education to which religious educators should attend; how this theme can be addressed within multiple religious traditions, and how the theme connects to work being done in multiple contexts;
- a specific person (or persons) who is/are being nominated as program chair(s) (please read carefully the program chair descriptions found on our website, it is a two-year commitment); and
- a draft call for proposals (the “theme description,” with generative questions; and then the “call,” which sharpens theme foci and provides instructions on the what/when/how of submissions).

There is also room in the form to add additional information, such as any possible sources of additional funding you can bring to the process; and ideas for possible speakers, pre-conference workshops, and so on. The deadline for proposing a theme for the 2025 meeting is **January 15, 2024**. Note that we always hold a “program theme information session” during the Fall Gathering. Please contact our executive secretary, [Lakisha Lockhart](#), with any questions.

Member News

Mary Hess, REA Networking Coordinator since 2014 is retiring from that role, and **Eser Kim** is stepping into it on an interim basis. You can reach Dr. Kim via the nc@religiouseducation.net email address, and we welcome her into this role.

Lisa Kimball, newly seated in the James Maxwell Professor of Christian Education chair at Virginia Theological Seminary, [gave the 2023 Reinecker Lecture](#).

New Books by Members

[Children's Spirituality in Early Childhood Education Theory to Practice](#), by Jennifer Mata-McMahon and Patricia Escarfuller, Routledge (2023) was shared [in a plenary panel address that included Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#).

[Educating Religious Education Teachers: Perspectives of International Knowledge Transfer](#), by Jenny Berglund, Bert Roebben, Peter Schreiner, Friedrich Schweitzer, published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag (2023) was recently published as an open access book.

[Social Justice in Multicultural Settings](#), Edited by Deborah Court, Randa Khair Abbas, Zaki Kamal and Riam Abu Much. Published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2023).

Resources

[Big Ideas for Religious Education](#) is a resource from the UK that supports curriculum design for a 21st century education in “religion and worldviews.” Chock full of resources, exemplar units, and much more, this site builds on work done in the UK’s [Commission on Religious Education](#). It offers an interesting entry point into specific challenges faced in that setting, challenges that are emerging across the globe in many distinctly different contexts.

[Sharing Worldviews: Learning in Encounter for Common Values in Diversity](#) is co-funded by the European Union, and offers to encourage a respectful encounter between diverse religious or secular, collective or individual worldviews. It provides teaching materials for schools and universities and an international qualification course for students to prepare future generations for peaceful coexistence.

[Leveraging Open Educational Resources to Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A Guide for Campus Change Agents](#) is a free, downloadable resource written by

C. Edward Watson, Lisa Petrides, Anastasia Karaglani, Selena Burns, and Judith Sebesta, and published through the AAC&U (American Association of Colleges and Universities). [Open educational resources](#) are an important route to wider global access.

A good example of a recent open education resource is a free e-book edited by media scholars Heidi Campbell and Pauline Cheong entitled [Thinking Tools for AI, Religion and Culture](#). The collection is made up of reflections from key figures in the fields of media and religion, and is a good starting point for learning more about generative AI. Consider the table of contents:

- Introduction (Heidi A Campbell & Pauline Hope Cheong)
- How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Question the Apocalyptic AI (Beth Singler—University of Zurich, Switzerland)
- When Machines Need Humans: Considerations of Religious Human-Machine Communication and Bounded Religious Automation (Pauline Hope Cheong—Arizona State University, USA)
- AI in the Middle East: Balancing Cultural Identity, Gender Dynamics, and Religious Perspectives (Fadwa Abdel Rahman—Ain Shams University, Egypt & Reeham R. Mohammed—Arizona State University, USA)
- Evoking & Creating Theological Dialogue around the AI-Nonhuman-Other for the Sake of our Human-Technological Future (Heidi A Campbell—Texas A&M University, USA)
- Exploring the Intersection of AI, Religion, and Culture: Questions and Principles for Examination (Anne Amegbeha—University of Kentucky, USA)
- AI and Religion: The Voice of God in everyday life (Ruth Tsuria—Seton Hall Univ, USA)
- AI & the Historical Intractability of Human (Kate Ott—Garrett Seminary, USA)
- Artificial Intelligence meets ‘The Three Teachings’: Chinese and Buddhist Perspectives (Stefania Travagnin—School of Oriental and Asian Studies, UK)
- The Appreciation of “Things” in an Ambiguous World: On AI & Religion (Ilona Nord—Würzburg University, Germany)
- Religion, Culture and Artificial Intelligence: A Critical Inquiry into identity formation in the Global World (Koyal Verma—Bennett University, India)
- Breathing Frontiers at AI Complexities: Thinking Deeply about AI, Religion & Culture (Pauline Hope Cheong & Heidi A Campbell)

Finally, on a related topic, [NetFamilyNews is a blog and resource site](#) run by scholar and media educator Anne Collier. Her recent post [on generative AI](#) is full of useful links to thoughtful essays and exploration of some of the more pressing issues that are being raised publicly about these new tools.



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

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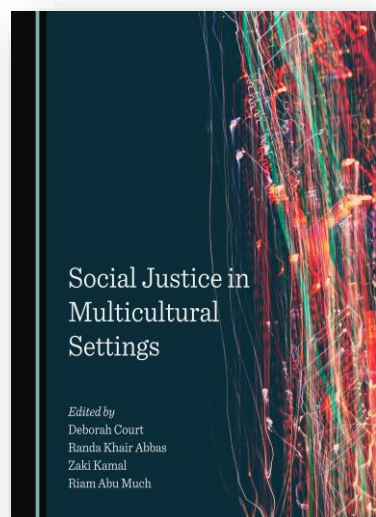
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Social Justice in Multicultural Settings

Edited by Deborah Court, Randa Khair Abbas, Zaki Kamal and Riam Abu Much



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Book Description

This book presents insights into social justice issues through the work of educators in Israel, the US, the UK, Italy, Canada, Turkey and Kazakhstan. Each chapter provides local or global theoretical insights, and these combine to provide a rich international perspective.

The book offers practical strategies for the classroom, methods of teaching social justice to future teachers in various curriculum areas, and knowledge for researchers and those working in higher education. The book is unusual in its combination of local and international perspectives, practical and theoretical wisdom, and its inclusion of a variety of voices. Readers will gain new insight into concepts like radical pedagogy, interculturalism, multiculturalism, failed citizenship and cultural identity.

Please [click here](#) to view the Table of Contents.

About the Editors

Deborah Court is Associate Professor of education at Bar-Ilan University and an academic consultant at the Arab Academic College in Israel. Her research centers on multicultural education, epistemology, and qualitative research methodologies.

Randa Khair Abbas is Associate Professor and President of the Arab Academic College in Israel. She researches multiculturalism in education, social justice in higher education, and the cultural, religious and family structure of the Druze community in Israel.

Zaki Kamal, a well-known and highly respected lawyer, is Governor of the Arab Academic College in Israel and senior lecturer in education and law. An expert in political and public policy matters, he has published seven books on the topics of thought, education, literature, politics and law.

Riam Abu Much is Vice-President of the Arab Academic College for Education in Israel, where she is a senior lecturer. Riam holds a PhD in chemistry from Bar-Ilan University. Her research centers on science education.

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