



REACH

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Winter 2006

A Message from President Ronnie Prevost

I want to begin this message with words of appreciation to several individuals and groups.

First, thanks to all of you, as members of the Religious Education Association, for honoring me with this office for this year. What a challenge to follow in the footsteps of previous presidents of both the REA and APRRE! It has always been one of the highlights of each year to meet with my colleagues in REA and APRRE and to learn from and to share fellowship with you.

Speaking of both REA and APRRE, special word of thanks to both Bob O'Gorman and Lorna Bowman who have done so much during their presidential terms to make the merger of REA and APRRE happen and work. Few people can realize the many extra hours and energy those two have invested in us and our organization.

Another hearty "thank you" to the Program committee and all those who worked on and in plenary,

research interest groups, task forces, and workshops in Toronto. It was a meaningful time for me and met many of my goals for the meeting. I hope and trust it was for all those in attendance. The Call for Papers Committee and three forum committees bore the major burden of program preparation and are deserving of our gratitude and appreciation.

Thanks goes out also to our Executive Secretary, Lawanda Smith, for all of her hard work expediting the various and myriad aspects of meeting arrangements. Those of you who have had similar assignments know what a burden that can be.

One might ask, then, in the wake of the reorganization and merger: Where do we go from here? One of my primary areas of concern this year will be that of growing REA's membership. None of us wants a "quick fix". Seldom does a desirable one exist. Nor do we want our membership

to grow simply for the sake of growing. Rather, it seems that adding members from all areas of our constituencies will be vital for REA to fulfill its vision and purpose. During the coming year, I hope to discover, discuss, and (hopefully) implement some strategic initiatives by which balanced and deliberate growth can and will be realized for REA. I plan to especially explore ideas by which REA can attract and retain younger members from both practitioners and the academic community.

Your REA Board will be having a retreat in mid-February to discuss these and other matters of concern to REA. As your president, I welcome your input and suggestions. And, finally, I look forward to seeing "y'all" in Atlanta next November.

May the next year be a time of growth, justice, and peace for all of us.

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2006 Membership Dues

2006 Memberships are now due! An online form is posted at www.religiouseducation.net

Special points of interest:

- Membership forms are available at www.religiouseducation.net
- Send member updates (promotions, tenure, new positions, retirements, publications, projects) to rea-aprrre@cox.net
- Send special event invitations and notices to rea-aprrre@cox.net
- 2006 Proceedings available at www.religiouseducation.net

Religious Education Association:
An Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education
Renaissance Hotel,
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
November 3-5, 2006

2006 Program Theme

Reconsidering the Power of Story in Religious Education

Someone once said that the four most magical words in the English language are "Once upon a time...." When we gather in Atlanta, Georgia, November 3-5, 2006, you are invited to consider the power of STORY. This theme seems especially appropriate in this southern U S location where the literary tradition is so rich in story.

Story, of course, is not such a new idea for religious educators. Thomas Groome, Ann Wimberly, and others convinced us long ago of the efficacy of story for teaching and learning. But, in 2006 the Religious Education Association is invited to reconsider stories--

Stories of God's encounter with ancient people such as Sarai and Abram

Stories of God's presence among us now

Stories that tell us who we are

Stories that reveal what we must do

Stories that carry cultural memory

Many of us have been challenged and inspired by books like *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* by Anderson and Foley. David Hogue has brought his

pastoral care and counseling expertise into conversation with the fascinating research on how our brains work. His book, *Remembering the Future, Imagining the Past* taught me that stories/memories are not stored whole in some file drawer in one's head.

Rather they are pulled as fleeting images, sensory impressions, emotions, and connections from various sections of our brain to be re-assembled or remembered or "imagined" as Hogue learns from the workings of the brain. Religious educators are challenged to reconsider the nature of story and how it informs pedagogy in light of this new information.

Some questions that come to mind are:

1. How does brain research inform the practices of religious education?
2. How can we religious educators help communities of faith to imagine the stories of the faith as stories that proclaim jubilee and promote peace?
3. What is the dark side of story? How is story different from "spin"? What ethical questions must we raise?
4. How can story help us to cross boundaries of culture, class, time, doctrine, faith in order to seek connection and reconciliation?
5. How do stories change as people change?
6. How is story/narrative shaping research methodologies?
7. How can story convey religious values in the pub-

lic arena?

How can opportunities to share our stories become central practices of communities of faith—stories that bring healing, stories that reveal injustice, stories that promote peace?

Once upon a time the Religious Education Association met in Atlanta and shared stories of their work that inspired, enlightened, and transformed the world into a place of justice, peace and love.....

Questions and comments about the theme and offers to assist in the design of the meeting may be directed to President-Elect, Margaret Ann Crain. Email: margaretann.crain@garrett.edu

Suggested Reading:

David A. Hogue, *Remembering the Future, Imagining the Past; Story, ritual, and the Human Brain*. Pilgrim Press, 2003.

2006 Board of Directors

Officers (Steering Committee)

- **President and Chair of the Board** Ronnie Prevost, Logston School of Theology, Hardin Simons University, Abilene, Texas 2006

- **President-Elect/2006 Program Chair** Margaret Ann Crain, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, 2007

- **Vice President/2007 Program Chair-Elect** José R Irizarry, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, 2008

- **Treasurer** Diane Hymans, Trinity Lutheran Seminary Columbus, Ohio, 2007

Recording Secretary
Kathy Winings, Unification Theological Seminary

Barrytown, New York, 2007

Members of the Board

- **Religious Education in Faith Communities Forum Team Chair** Tony Vrame, Graduate Theological Union, Orthodox Institute, Richmond, California, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 2006

- **Forum Coordination Team Chair Religious Education in Public Life and the Global Community Chair** Mary Elizabeth Moore, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, 2006

- **Religious Education in Academic Disciplines & Institutions Forum Team Chair** Maureen O'Brien, Duquesne University, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 2006

- **Member at Large** Janet Parachin, Philips Theological Seminary,

Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2008

- **Member at Large**

Lucinda Nolan, The Catholic University of America, Lincolnshire, Illinois, 2007

- **Doctoral Student Representative** Robert Parmach, Fordham University, New York, New York, 2006

- **Publications** Leona English, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, 2006

Ex officio Members

- **Executive Administrator** Lawanda Smith, Louisiana State University, Alexandria, Louisiana 2006

- **Networking Coordinator** Randy Litchfield, The Methodist Theological School in

2006 Forum Coordination Teams

Religious Education in Faith Communities:

- Tony Vrame, Graduate Theological Union, Orthodox Institute, Riverside, California, 2006
- Nelson Strobert, Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2007
- Beth Cook, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, 2008

Religious Education in Public Life and the Global community:

- Mary Elizabeth Moore, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, 2006
- Burton Everist, Northeast Iowa Community College, Dubuque, Iowa, 2007
- Thomas Groome, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts, 2008

Religious Education in Academic Disciplines and Institutions:

- Maureen O'Brien, Duquesne University, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 2006
- Yolanda Smith, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 2007
- Cate Siejk, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, 2008

Position Postings

Internship for Ministry to Youth and Young Adults at The American Church in Paris

The American Church in Paris, an international interdenominational congregation in the heart of the city is seeking a mainline Protestant seminary student or graduate to be the youth pastor intern for the 2006-07 year (August through July). Youth leadership experience required and multicultural experience preferred. Responsibilities are to minister to young people ages 12 to 29 through an active program which is in place, assisted by experienced volunteers and a pastoral team. A fully furnished apartment including all housing expenses, a stipend and airfare are provided. Additional financial support is required from the intern's own resources. If interested, please contact the Chair of the Search Committee, Ursula Perrier, for further information. Email: Application deadline is February 20, 2006.

Methodist Theological School in Ohio is pleased to announce the search to fill an endowed chair in **Christian Education and Youth Ministry** to begin July 1, 2006. The appointment to this fully-endowed position can be at any rank that matches the credentials of the successful candidate. Both vision for the development of the semi-

nary's Christian religious education program and academic credentials in the field of study will be important considerations in the evaluation of potential candidates. A position description is available on the website www.mtso.edu or upon request. MTSO is a United Methodist seminary with an ecumenical mission committed to diversity and to preparing persons for a variety of ministries in the global church. Applications should include a letter of interest, three letters of reference, a curriculum vita and official transcripts. Review of applications will begin January 1, 2006 and continue until an appointment is made. Queries and applications should be directed to John Kampen, Academic Dean, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 3081 Columbus Pike, Delaware, Ohio 43015 (jkampen@mtso.edu or 740-362-3482). EOE.

Methodist Theological School in Ohio is pleased to announce the search to fill a tenure-track position in **New Testament** that will begin July 1, 2006. Preference will be given to candidates with a specialization in the Synoptic Gospels or Johannine literature. Both introductory and upper-level exegesis courses will be expected. Occasional instruction of New Testament Greek is also possible. Preference for an appointment at the Assistant level. A position description is available on the website www.mtso.edu or upon

request. MTSO is a United Methodist seminary with an ecumenical mission committed to diversity and to preparing persons for a variety of ministries in the global church. Applications should include a letter of interest, three letters of reference, a curriculum vita and official transcripts. Review of applications will begin January 1, 2006 and continue until an appointment is made. Queries and applications should be directed to John Kampen, Academic Dean, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 3081 Columbus Pike, Delaware, Ohio 43015 (jkampen@mtso.edu or 740-362-3482). EOE.

The Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael's College

(Toronto, Ontario) invites applications for a **tenure-track position in Religion and Education** at the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor (depending on qualifications and experience), to begin 1 July 2006. Requirements: Doctorate in Education or Theology with some expertise in the other (e.g., a Master's degree, relevant experience, etc.) The successful candidate will have demonstrated ability in teaching, research, and publication. S/he will be expected to provide innovative leadership in the programs of the Faculty of Theology especially but not exclusively for the MRE and MACL. We are looking for a candidate with the energy and desire to make a substantial contribution to the continued enhancement of the Faculty of Theology, its academic programmes and

its students. For the successful candidate the opportunity exists for supervision of doctoral students. St. Michael's is a Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology in the Toronto School of Theology, an ecumenical federation of theological schools affiliated with the University of Toronto, and is strongly committed to promoting theological research and publication in the Catholic tradition. It prepares men and women for various forms of pastoral and academic ministry in the Church. The Faculty welcomes applications from all qualified men and women; however, preference will be given to Canadian citizens and landed immigrants.

Send letter of application, CV, and three letters of reference to:

Chair - Appointments Committee
Faculty of Theology
University of St. Michael's College
81 St Mary Street
Toronto, ON
Canada
M5S 1J4

Application Review will Begin: 2 January, 2006.

Position Postings

Outstanding Opportunity for Creative CHURCH EDUCATOR –

Do you have a passion for educating children? Are you looking for a church that views the Christian education of children as top priority and has the personnel and financial resources to support it?

1,500-member Congregational church in Fairfield County, CT, seeks a creative, energetic candidate to lead our ministry to children and families. Must have 10+ years experience in Children and Family Ministries, knowledge of best practices in the field of religious education, and ability to supervise staff. Master of Divinity degree or advanced degree in Christian education or related.

Offering competitive compensation package, including pension, health benefits, vacation, relocation and housing allowance. For more information about our church, please go to our website <http://www.godsacre.org>. (Click on "About Us/Our Minister Search" to view the job description for Minister of Children and Family Life.) To apply, send resume and cover letter to: search@godsacre.org or mail to: Congregational Church, 23 Park Street, New Canaan, CT 06840. Attn: Kelly Morrissey .

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NEW CANAAN

JOB DESCRIPTION
MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE

The Minister of Children and Family Life is selected by a majority ballot of the members present at any annual or special meeting called for this purpose. The Minister of Children and Family Life reports directly to the Senior Minister. The Minister of Children and Family Life should have a strong and growing personal faith and the ability to minister to, with, and on behalf of the needs of children and families.

PURPOSE

The Minister of Children and Family Life shall lead the Church in the development and execution of a comprehensive vision for Christian ministry to children and their families. He or she must be committed to involving children in the life of the church and in developing practices which will nurture children in their faith journey. Additionally, the Minister of Children and Family Life shall assist the Senior Minister in caring for the spiritual welfare of the Church and shall perform such other duties or functions as shall be assigned by the Senior Minister and the Board of Deacons or the Board of Trustees.

SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS

The Minister of Children and Family Life shall:

1. Guide the congregation in continual visioning and evaluation of its ministry with children and families. He or she will engage in ongoing personal and professional development to enhance his or her visionary leadership role.
2. Serve as an ex-officio member of Church boards and committees that support a ministry with children and families, including the Children and Family Ministries Committee and the Middle School Ministries Committee. Additionally, the Minister of Children and Family Life shall have direct responsibility for supervising and managing staff members who support children and family ministries, including the Director of Children's Ministries.
3. Supervise and support the Director of Children's Ministries in the planning and administration of Church School for children ages crib room through 8th grade, as well as Vacation Bible Camp and other special programs and practices aimed at promoting and celebrating the spiritual growth of children.
4. Work with the lay-led Children and Family Ministries Committee in the development and implementation of programs that minister to, with, and on behalf of

children and their families by providing creative opportunities for a shared worship experience.

5. Work with the lay-led Middle School Ministries Committee, as well as the Directors of Youth Ministries, in creating a vision for our church's ministry to and with middle school-aged children.

6. Lead and teach Confirmation Classes to the Church's 8th graders throughout the school year, culminating in the Confirmation of those young people in May of each year.

7. Work with the lay-led Luckhurst Committee to review and recommend to the Board of Trustees appropriate uses for the Luckhurst Fund, a \$2.6 million gift provided by Florence Luckhurst with the specific intent of benefiting the children of the Church.

8. Work with Minister of Pastoral Care to provide pastoral counseling to Church members, both children and their parents, as needed.

9. If a licensed or ordained minister, assist the Senior Minister in religious services held by or at the Church. The Minister of Children and Family Life shall normally participate in Sunday worship services, and preach as needed, primarily during the summer months when the Senior Minister is absent. At the request of parishioners and others, or at the direction of

the Senior Minister, the Minister of Children and Family Life shall perform weddings and baptisms, and officiate at funerals and memorial services.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. 10+ years experience in Christian Children and Families ministries or related field
2. Master of Divinity or advanced degree in Christian education or a related field
3. Knowledge of and experience with innovative practices for nurturing children's faith and involving children and families in the life of the church
4. Passion for working with children; heart for crib to 8th grade age group
5. Has a vision for Christian educational ministry which recognizes children as valuable members of the faith community
6. Has the energy and initiative to develop and implement creative and dynamic practices and programs in children's ministry and has the charisma and passion to inspire commitment and participation by parents and their children
7. Experience managing staff members and leading a teaching team

8. Possesses a strong and growing personal faith

9. Familiar with the traditions of the United Church of Christ

10. Willingness to relocate to Fairfield County area

Updates

The REA website at www.religiouseducation.net has recently undergone a server upgrade to allow for more space and flexibility. Randy Litchfield is still working on the password protected section of the website and on the membership database. We hope these will be available soon.

A total of 140 people attended the annual REA meeting in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Proceedings of the conference are posted on the website at www.religiouseducation.net.

Notables

Dear friends and colleagues,

We need your help to build up a good library for studies, researches and training educators for Church and school in the field of *(Christian) Religious Education* in Sweden. This is in short the reason for me as a member of REA and a deeply committed person for RE in Sweden to put this inquiry before you. Some of you already have got a personal mail from me. I am deeply moved for the generously response we already got. One of my friends encouraged me also to try this way. So, read carefully, think constructively and act generously after the voice of your heart.

RE has an extremely weak position at universities and seminaries in Sweden. Courses are given here and there on the first, basic level. Nowhere you will find an institution for studies on a higher level or research in the RE field. Especially for the Churches but also for the RE in schools this deficit is a hard problem. As the director of a national network for RE in Sweden I have been involved in discussions about this over years. Now I try to do what I can of help and support. What we need is a lot of things in a process over many years. One of the basic tasks is to build up a good library at an institution with high ambitions, competence and good prospects to be a strategic center for education, training and research in the field of RE in Sweden.

After years of preparations we have found such an institution: *Stockholm*

School of Theology (THS). It is an independent university college, located at Bromma, a suburb to Stockholm. THS is a small school with approximately 600 students studying full time or part time. The study programs are: *The Theological Program*, a four year program leading up to a Bachelor of Theology; *Religious Studies* as part of a teachers training program; *Human Rights and Democracy*, a two year program leading to a University Diploma in Human Rights. Over the last years the THS has developed concrete plans for a developed RE field and decided to start the process of building up a RE library. This is a sign of great hope for all of us but there are also many problems to be handled with.

With money – if you have enough – you can buy new books and journals. But a good library needs also publications, which cannot so easily be found. We need your help with both!

Our question to you is the following: *Do you have books or journals you think could be a part of our RE library? We are sure you have a good feeling for what kind of stuff could be useful for different levels and fields of academic RE studies from the basic level to the research, from the philosophy and theology of RE to the more practical parts.*

For more information, address and other questions, contact Rune Larsson:

rpi.larsson@telia.com

or Owe Kennerberg at the THS: owe@ths.se

With warm greetings

Rune Larsson