

**Table Notes from “Envisioning” Discussion: November 23, 2009
REA:APPRRE Annual Meeting**

Table	1. What aspects of REA:APPRRE are most important to you?	2. What are the most significant issues and challenges facing the Association?*	3. What kinds of commitments/themes would you like to see addressed at the annual meeting?
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking: personal connections, professionally for myself and others I know, what people are working on currently • Online at meeting • Having a space where we are affirmed/strengthen our identity • Comfort with language/discourse, welcoming, interactive (not transmissive) communication • Heretofore, APRRE was for the meeting, REA was for the journal • Journal: in touch with thinking in the field across a variety of areas • Good quality of writing • Book reviews • In touch with scholarship I can't delve into in depth myself • Being in touch with other RE scholars, esp when we're alone on a faculty • **Identity as a religious educator • Being encouraged as a student was important • The organization has legitimacy and recognition outside the US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhaustion • Competing professional organizations, some of which meet alongside AAR but not us • Time and money in relation to these competing organizations; some people only can go to AAR, APT, denominational meetings/groups • Honoring needs of those who are mainly: practitioners (these are decreasing) and scholars (this is one of our only places to build ourselves up professionally and identity-wise) • What is the value added to each group from the other (scholars vis-à-vis practitioners)? • A more organized/formal format for networking, esp for grad students, so that the assn can reproduce itself • Mentoring is key—developing an identity. But will an identity as religious educators continue to be vital, or is it being eclipsed by other identities like practical theology? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic themes: youth ministry, children, formation in congregations (these might attract some REA journal recipients who find academic themes esoteric? But themes must be nuanced and rich, too, or academic interest will wane), methodologies (since they are important to PhD students, professors in dealing with their students, practitioners' approaches • Exigent themes, e.g. ecology • Address issues that communities of faith are actually asking

* A few reports included responses to the question of preferred annual meeting dates (Friday-Sunday vs. Sunday-Tuesday), noted at the end of this column when available.

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B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gracious, good people • Welcome, mentoring and opportunity to present for graduate students • Opportunity to meet and converse with leaders in the field • Some find it difficult to break into cliques • Coming in as graduate student, they made me feel like colleague • Collegial conversations • A place to connect across doctoral programs • Incorporating graduate students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer and fewer positions and programs in RE • Advancing clericalism in Catholic institutions • Shift to underpaid adjuncts in online programs • We need to strive toward more interfaith participation. How do we reflect the interfaith dimension at our meetings? • How do we worship if we're interfaith? • How do we reduce our carbon footprint? • Hard to find hotels that want us • Diffusion of the field: some think of themselves as practical theologians, some as youth specialists; conceptualization of the umbrella of RE is confused • No more business meetings after banquet • Could we have a joint meeting with the Council of Adults in Jewish Education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite a Jewish plenary speaker • Go to a Jewish organization rather than expecting them to be here • We would like to see a theme addressing retreat houses and sabbaticals • Let's stop beating ourselves up about what we are <i>not</i>, and be an academic organization, predominantly Christian • Spirituality, science and religion, etc., are also appealing to many of us and we go to those organizations • Where is the energy moving now and how do we get on that train?

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C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking, people • Intellectual stimulation • Current research • Receiving feedback in a non-threatening atmosphere • Attendance of pioneers in the guild • Appreciation of young (new) voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial limitations, economy; possibly meeting every other year, rather than annually • The role of Christian ed in our theological schools • The state of Christian ed • The balance of the practical aspect and the theoretical aspect of Christian ed • The role of the practitioner • Figuring out our identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between the academy and the religious community • Faith development of children • Adolescent culture/development • Age level themes/life cycle development • Futuring, thinking outside the box, the future of RE • Spiritual formation • Engaging popular culture • Pedagogies: postmodern culture and the church • Interreligious thinking • Inspiration, self-care • The arts • Contextual ed
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting (sharing of work), journal (interreligious and online); introduction of doctoral students; intergenerational exchange • Journal is more “connecting” than the conference, which lacks cohesion • We need more “center”: basic consensus on the field! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merging REA and APRRE was not successful; the attempt to [save?] of REA with APRRE was not successful. We need a more <i>academic</i> profile (a sense of self-identity), e.g. as “Academy of RE” • <i>**internalization</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult RE • Peace and justice issues (poverty/social issues) • Critical/emancipatory RE • <i>**The public dimension of RE, RE in the public sphere</i> • International perspectives and interreligious perspectives; <i>**impact on the discussion in the USA</i> • <i>**Revisiting Fowler’s stages of faith theory from interreligious perspectives</i>

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E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richness of presentations and collegiality • Stretching, stimulating discussion • Networking and talking with people one-on-one • Plenaries—<i>but</i> depending on speaker/theme; particularly people coming in from outside • Breakouts structure allowed for conversations (not presentations), more active engagement than before • Journal • Immediacy of contact with field (breadth and depth), but <i>accessible</i> • International quality at conference (different voices) • Senior members willing to be in conversation with other colleagues and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field has diminished role in academic institutions; pressures us to be insular and ultimately of little or no value to academic • Interdisciplinarity raises issue of priority with joining other disciplines (ecology of commitments) which divides attention and money • Is there space for new scholars coming in/thinking outside the box as older organizations face the challenge of opening to “new” disciplines/cognates (neuroscience and others) • Can we be genuinely interfaith and is the issue talking “about” interfaith or having topics that draw people of other faiths (what are the topics of the journal?) • Finding avenues to publish beyond the journal; publishing concern that publish theoretical treatments • Balance of historic emphasis of academic and practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports/issues as ecumenical/interreligious current events, e.g., recent statement on justification, Catholic/Anglican movement • New issues impacting <i>education</i>: neuroscience, technology, arts, etc. • Explore <i>why</i> teaching theology and religion (Wabash) <i>separated</i> from REA and explore how to reconnect • Globalization (Lexington Project) • Transgenerational (less age level bifurcation) • New ways to engage practitioners (new forms for conversation <i>outside</i> annual meeting); sending representatives <i>to</i> denominational conversations and <i>invite</i> into research domain

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F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations and networking with special quality of supportive and caring relationships • Meeting events feed conversations/networking • Interdenominational nature • Stretching • Listening • Check myself/reflection • Perspective/format • Topic • Intellectual engagement • Collaboration • Affirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer and fewer people attached to churches each year, so less need for RE • Economics/fewer positions • Journal has become interfaith and international, but that's not making the annual meeting more interfaith and international • Growing competition, e.g., AAR Teaching Religion and Practical Theology Groups • Resources for institutional support of travel • Flux in Protestant seminaries • Economic viability issues lead to consolidation and new partnerships and potential new markets • Catholic trend toward Master's degrees in Pastoral Ministry and away from RE • Different understandings of Catholic/Protestant formation and thus different needs for theological educators • Whether the move to a Sunday-Tuesday schedule was good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like variety of themes • Get continuity through task forces and denominational meetings • Could we/should we define tracks for some of the breakout sessions? E.g., have 2 history papers at each meeting • Educational methodology/theory • Inculturation • Generational studies (a la Terry Tilley's theme at Catholic Theological Society meeting on generations of theologians, James Davidson's generational studies of American Catholics) • Keep away from the consumer lens present in many other organizations such as National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, National Forum for Catholic Youth Ministry [these are Catholic examples], etc.

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G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation in the field. A sense of history, community, roots in the field • Conversation partners in the field/ sharing research/ stimulating ideas back and forth • A healthy sense of identity/ not a sense of turf guarding going on • Cross denominational conversation • Multiple perspectives on key tensions and issues in the field • Embodied engagement with issues. The process and ethos of the organization (as represented by colleagues at annual meeting) is congruent with its theoretical positions. • Intentionally participatory dialog and dialogical approaches. Small enough to nurture deep conversation and real participation. (But we also questioned whether we might be too homogenous— i.e., this is fun because there are people here who think like me) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance. Seem to have lost people in the merger. (We struggled to identify material and conceptual and structure challenges related to the fact of lower attendance at meeting and membership in assoc.) • Perhaps APT and AAR have drained off participation in REA • Need to actively invite people who have stopped attending (esp. big names such as [scholar's name]...) Need to find out why some have left. Need to invite others in related fields such as Education... or preaching • Perhaps the field itself is waning, or at least changing. And seminaries are changing... and churches... and culture • Need to coordinate with ATS categories and initiatives • Need to work on identity. Practical theol. v. RE distinctions, etc. • Should there be pre-conference for practitioners? • Should we be renamed? How to strengthen academic credibility? • Sun-Tues vs. Fri-Mon: most favored Fri-Sun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year's theme extended • Ways of thinking about or avenues into RE; i.e., invited varieties of perspectives on and articulations of core issues of RE; e.g., Cognitive Science (transmission and reception of religious beliefs and knowledge), sociology of religion (construction of religious identity/ religious socialization), cultural studies (cultural/religious identity formation), developmental psychology (faith development/formation), education (religious teaching and learning), etc. • Postmodern inclusive vs. traditional denominational approaches to RE • RE in public domain; Christian ed for public good • Contemporary social and ethical questions; what is meaning of RE in contemporary social context? • Dialogue with cognate fields in theological ed, such as homiletics

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H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting people in the field, writers • Learning what the upcoming thinking is (RIGs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of those who used to come • Too much undeveloped work • scholarship that used to be presented • Bonding with REA did not work, APRRE got [funded?] • Getting numbers—the guild is shrinking • Cost an issue—meet every 2 years? • Lack of REA types • Practitioners have denom. groups • Isolation as self-looping; AAR, Adult Ed • Split personality • Short term presidency: REA and APRRE; lack of vision of symbiosis • Use of new media by REA • Overcoming yrs of neglecting Jewish, Islamic, other relig traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should be a cutting edge scholarship organization • Laying the academic foundations of the field • The “field” is looking to us for leadership for their tasks • Interreligious dialogue to address [particularism?] • Welcoming particulars • Working the theme throughout the year • Getting cutting edge speakers in, for instance, neural studies; threading the plenaries and some small groups thoroughly around the theme

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I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing old friends • Current research in RE • Encouragement of doctoral students • Ability to develop and present papers • Know leading voices in REA and across the religions • International contacts • Women's luncheon • Acquaintance/demystification of REA • Denominational caucus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low attendance of practitioners, interreligious members, clergy, teachers, DREs, chaplains, publishers • Opportunity to register as a researcher • Identity • Lack of organization-wide large research projects • Public policy (lacking) • Continuity in dialogue/topics of meetings • Journal could use more conversation and response • Graduate student opportunities • Scheduling: keep Fri.-Sun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year's theme is good; next year's is good • Societal issues: poverty, immigration, environment • Integrate Forums more fully into description of the theme for each other (RE in Public, Faith Communities and Academy) • Future of faith communities and the role of RE in faith communities • Transcending every topic: social justice, interreligious ed, history