



# REACH

Volume 39, Number 2 Spring 2009

## IN THIS ISSUE OF REACH

The Spring 2009 issue of *REACH* is filled with important information, including some news about the **PLEASE NOTE: THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22-TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Dallas Near the Galleria. (in Addison, Texas)** Because of a conflict with the American Academy of Religion meeting, which will be held this year on the weekend REA has met traditionally, the Board has decided to move to the weekend preceding the American Thanksgiving. We plan to return to our traditional weekend with the 2010 meeting.

This issue of *REACH* includes the **Call for Papers** for the November meeting. Carol Lakey Hess presents a report from the **R.E.A. Board Retreat** held at our conference hotel in Dallas the weekend of February 27-March 1, 2009. A brief update of **News from the Membership** and current **Position Announcements** in

the field are included as well as other news from the field of religious education.

**2009 ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Dallas, November 22-24, 2009**  
**THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS**  
**EDUCATION: RELATIONAL,**  
**PRACTICAL AND INTERFAITH**  
**DIMENSIONS**

## FUTURE HOST CITIES

Looking ahead for locations of the next Annual Meeting following Dallas? Plan on the first weekend in November for each of the following cities:

- 2010 Denver, CO
- 2011 Toronto, CA
- 2012 Atlanta, GA
- 2013 Boston, MA
- 2014 Chicago, IL

## 2009 Membership Dues

2009 Memberships are now due! An online form is posted at [www.religioeducation.net](http://www.religioeducation.net)

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## Harper and Wornom Awards

At the 2008 Annual Meeting, the REA membership amended the By-Laws to reinforce our shared commitment to the William Rainey Harper Award, which honors individuals whose interdisciplinary work has contributed to the field of Religious Education. The same action created the Herman Eskridge Wornom Award, which recognizes organizations or institutions that have advanced the work of our field. Members of our Association may nominate candidates for either award by contacting the Association's President, Carol Lakey Hess at [carol.lakey.hess@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:carol.lakey.hess@stanfordalumni.org) or your Executive Secretary, W. Alan Smith at [reaappr@msn.com](mailto:reaappr@msn.com). As approved, nominations will be sent to the Harper Committee for discussion and, if approved, presented to the membership at an Annual Meeting. A full copy of the By-Laws, as amended is available on our Web site. Look for more information in an article on page 5.

To teach is to clear a space where the community of truth can be practiced.

— Parker Palmer, *The Courage To Teach*

# Call for Papers

## Theology and Religious Education: Relational, Practical, and Interfaith Dimensions

**2009 Annual Meeting of the Religious Education Association**  
(An Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education)

**November 22-24, 2009**  
Crowne Plaza Hotel (near the Galleria in Addison), Dallas, TX.

**DEADLINE for Proposals is Friday, May 1, 2009.**

Theme description from President-Elect Maureen O'Brien:

As religious educators, we are committed to the world's flourishing, and seek to embody a vision of the Divine, the human, and our place within a dynamically evolving creation. Our theologies, especially our understanding of how God is active in the world, are likely to shape our practices of religious education in major ways; yet, the converse may also be true. Thus we can hope to benefit from a renewed dialogue that highlights theology from the vantage point of our field of religious education.

In this REA annual meeting, I invite your consideration of the theologies that shape and are shaped by religious education today, with particular emphasis on the relational, practical, and interfaith dimensions of this theme.

- The relational: what is the nature of the intersection between theology and education? How is faith formed and expressed within religious communities, and how are religious traditions, doctrines, core teachings, and central practices treated educationally?
- The practical: how does the emerging understanding of "practical theology" as a vital sensibility for theology inform our understanding of religious education, and is religious education, in turn, a form of practical theology?
- The interfaith: how do the "theological" questions engaged by Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other religious educators translate sufficiently to allow conversation with one another, and what is at stake for us and our world in such a dialogue?

Papers, workshops, and colloquia to address the theme include such possibilities as:

- Ethnographic and other qualitative research studies that focus on the theological presumptions among participants and how those contribute to religious education practices.
- Studies of the impact of postmodernity on theology and how this affects religious education (e.g., its challenges to creeds, catechisms, and other compilations of the core beliefs of religious communities).
- Theologies in dialogue: models of religious education that are explicitly interreligious, and how theology shapes and is shaped by them.
- Practical theology vis-à-vis religious education: understandings of praxis, practices, and the theological "root metaphors" that influence these in our pedagogies.
- Diverse cultural expressions of religious beliefs and their impact on education.

- Re-engaging the work of prominent 19th, 20th and 21st century religious educators on theology to assess their value in our contemporary contexts.
- Exploring the political dimensions of our theologies in shaping our approaches to religious education, especially for the sake of transformation in religious community, academy, and society.

For the full program description for the annual meeting, visit <http://www.religiouseduction.net/>

Guidelines for Submitting Proposals:

Step 1: Once you have an idea of a topic that interests you, determine which type of proposal you wish to submit.

There are three types of presentations at the annual meeting.

**Research Interest Group (RIG).** A finished paper of approximately 3,000 words and of publishable quality is presented and discussed among a group of conference participants. If your proposal is accepted, the final paper must be submitted by **September 1** in order to be posted in the REA Annual Meeting *Proceedings* before the meeting.

**Colloquium.** Emerging research, research-in-progress that may lead to a publishable paper, or current practices and programs is presented to and discussed among a group of conference participants. Since this format is less formal than the presentation of a paper, conference participants come to hear a presentation and are then led in discussion. While the early submission of an outline is encouraged, it is not necessary.

**Workshop.** A highly interactive session engaging conference participants in scholarly and practical resources or approaches supporting the multiple practices of religious education. These sessions are facilitated and led by the presenter. They may increase awareness or enhance performance of specific religious education practices. The contexts for these practices vary widely and may include faith communities, classrooms, or other settings. While the early submission of an outline is encouraged, it is not necessary.

Step 2: Write your proposal. The proposal begins with a 150 word abstract. You then have an additional 800 words to make the case for your proposal. Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

- A. Relevance to the theme.
- B. Contribution to the advancement of the study and practice of religious education.
- C. Clarity and creativity.
- D. Diversity in the voice, context, and perspective of the proposal.

For a Research Interest Group proposal, please include your thesis, your method (e.g., literature-based, qualitative or quantitative research, historical, or insights from your community of practice), and a selected bibliography (e.g. two or three primary sources that ground your work).

For a Colloquium proposal, please include your main concepts or issues, your method for addressing the concepts or issues, the major sources grounding the research, and the current status of the research.

For a Workshop proposal, please include your context, the main concepts, issues and/or practices being addressed, the context for these practices (e.g. faith community, higher education, wider community, schools), and outline for the workshop, and resources presented and used.

Step 3: Submit your proposal. **Proposals must be submitted by Friday, May 1, 2009. All proposals must be submitted electronically through the REA website. Proposals sent by other means will not be considered.**

## **Instructions for submitting online proposals through the REA web site**

- Go to <http://www.religiouseducation.net> .
- Under 'Membership Login' select "please login"
- Enter your membership email address and password (this is the email address and zip code you used to renew your membership in 2009; for further questions see FAQ)
- Hit "sign in"

*You are now at the REA Membership Portal*

- Go to '2009 Annual Meeting'
- Select 'Submit 2009 Proposal'
- This is the 2009 Annual Meeting Proposal page. It is important that you complete all applicable fields AND hit the "submit" button (rather than using the return key on your computer to submit).
- Once completing ALL information correctly on the Proposal Cover Sheet page AND hitting the "submit button" you will be directed to a second screen where you will be asked to enter additional identification information and your **800 Word** proposal.
- In order to ensure anonymity during the review process, please do not identify presenters, authors, or institution in the proposal field box
- After you have successfully entered ALL required information, you will receive a confirmation page.
- Please note: attempts to submit proposals in any other format (such as email attachments) will not be accepted for review.

Step 4: Notification of your proposal's acceptance status for the Annual Meeting will be sent by **Monday, June 1, 2009**.

If your proposal is accepted, guidelines for formatting the paper will be included in your notification. Research Interest Group papers are **due September 1, 2009 and should be sent electronically as a Word (doc or docx) or Adobe (pdf) file to W. Alan Smith, Executive Secretary at [reaapprre@msn.com](mailto:reaapprre@msn.com)**. PAPERS NOT RECEIVED BY THAT DATE WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE *PROCEEDINGS* AND WILL BE CANCELED FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM.

### **Participation requirements at the Annual Meeting:**

- In order to be eligible to submit a proposal, you must be a current member of the association. You may join the association or renew your membership through the web site. All participants accepted to the program must be REA members and registered for the Annual Meeting.
- Persons may submit no more than two (2) proposals in response to the Call for Papers.

### **Audiovisual Requests:**

The REA recognizes the importance of using digital equipment during presentations. However, the number of meeting rooms in which we can provide LCD projectors, DVD players, etc. will be limited, as will the number of rooms in which there is a wireless "hot spot". In order to accommodate "best practices" in presenting the significant work being done by our members, we will work hard to schedule presentations requiring such equipment together so we can keep our costs for the event at a responsible level. We cannot provide laptops. We encourage participants to bring personal or departmental LCD projectors and would appreciate your willingness to allow others to share in the use of that equipment if you are using your own projectors in a session. *There is a place to note audiovisual requests in the proposal submission*

*process.*

- For additional questions about the Call for Papers, please contact Dr. Rodger Nishioka via email at [Nishio-kaR@ctsnet.edu](mailto:Nishio-kaR@ctsnet.edu)
- For technical questions regarding the online submission process, please contact Sybrina Atwaters via email at [syat-wat@gatech.edu](mailto:syat-wat@gatech.edu)

## Harper Committee Awards Revitalized

### **2009 Meeting: Making New Theological and Technological Connections** **By Maureen O'Brien, 2009 Program Chair and President-Elect**

Look forward to new modes for our dialogue before, during and after the November annual meeting! We plan to enhance our work with the meeting theme, "Theology and Religious Education," through interactive technology. Features will include:

- The first plenary session on Sunday, Nov. 22, will feature several senior scholars from our association. In the weeks prior to the meeting, they'll be invited to "prime the pump" with you through a blog linked to our Association web page.
- From the plenary we'll break into "mini-plenaries" with each scholar, and our conversations there will be transcribed and posted on the blog.
- Your input to the blog throughout the conference will help to shape the presidential plenary address, scheduled for Tuesday morning, Nov. 24.
- To facilitate interaction, free wireless access will be available on Sunday and Monday in the plenary hall (and you can check email there, too!)
- The plenary sessions will be videotaped and posted following the annual meeting to allow for ongoing viewing and conversation.

Stay tuned to REACH and our web page for more information in the months ahead.

With gratitude to long time Harper Committee chair Boardman Kathan, the revised by-laws of the REA/APPRRE have been ratified by the general membership. The Harper Committee consists of four persons who are nominated by the Nominating Committee of the REA/APPRRE Board of Directors and approved by the general membership at the Business Meeting during the annual conference. The present committee members are Lucinda Nolan, chair, Kathy Winings, Deborah Court and Thomas Groome.

The Committee's task is to make recommendations for recipients of three separate and distinct awards to the board for approval. Nominations may come to the Harper Committee from current REA/APPRRE members. These awards are given occasionally rather than annually and are described in the newly revised by-laws:

**The William Rainey Harper Award** will be given occasionally, as the Committee deems appropriate (but no more than once per year), to outstanding leaders whose work across disciplines and fields of service has had a profound impact on religious education. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Board.

**The Herman Eskridge Wornom Award** will be given occasionally to an organization or institution that has provided outstanding support and leadership to religious education. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Board.

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**The Harper Project** promotes the values of inter-faith collegiality and religious education in the public arena through constructive programming, research, and regional networking. Projects may be part of the annual meeting or independent from it. The Committee may decide to plan and execute such special projects under its own initiative or award grants from the Harper Project Fund to individuals or groups from within the Association's membership. Applications may be reviewed at the Annual Meeting for proposed future projects.

The Harper Award is named for William Rainey Harper who was among those to found the Religious Education Association in 1903 and the Wornom Award is named for Herman Wornom who was General Secretary of the Association from 1952 to 1970. These prestigious awards have honored numerous outstanding individuals and organizations in years past and will continue to do so in the years ahead.



### **SARA P. LITTLE (1919-2009)**

Dr. Sara P. Little, a master educator and long-time member of the Association, passed away in Charlotte, NC on March 4, 2009— just five days short of her 90th birthday. She served as a teacher of English and Math in public schools in North Carolina prior to working with the Presbyterian Synod of North Carolina in various religious education roles. She taught at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, VA and eventually became the first female professor at the neighboring Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, where she taught Christian Education until her retirement in 1989. Sara also taught at Columbia Theological Seminary and at the Pacific School of Religion where she served as interim Vice President and Dean from 1990-1992. She then returned to Richmond where she directed the doctoral program at PSCE and taught in doctoral studies at Union.

Sara Little's scholarly contributions have been significant ones. Her small book, *To Set One's Heart* (John Knox Press 1983) encouraged us to remember that religious education is both *intentional* and a form of *ministry*. She called the discipline to take the task of teaching seriously. In 1994, she became the fourth person and the first woman to receive the Distinguished Service Medal of the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada. Her beloved Presbyterian Church (USA) recognized her contributions to the field when she was named the Educator of the Year in 1979 by the Association of Presbyterian Educators. In 2002 she was presented the Award for Excellence in Theological Education at that body's General Assembly .

Sara Little was a warm, brilliant, nurturing, and gifted educator. We will miss her smile and her presence in our midst. Godspeed, Sara P. Little.

### **LET US KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING!**

A feature of the Summer volume of *REACH* will devote space to sharing news from our membership. But the Lord has not blessed the editor with ESP (although he does receive ESPN— sorry, poor joke!) Please send your professional or personal updates to W. Alan Smith at [reaapprre@msn.com](mailto:reaapprre@msn.com) and the information will be shared with your colleagues. So, if you have new publications, promotions or changes of professional position, have delivered recent major addresses, or have recently retired or anticipate an imminent retirement please do your friends in REA the courtesy of sharing that important information with us!

# R.E.A. BOARD RETREAT

The R.E.A. Board met the weekend of February 27-March 1, 2009 at the site of the forthcoming Annual Meeting, the Crowne Plaza Dallas, near the Galleria in Addison, Texas. Weather conditions in the Midwest and Northeast made travel to and from the event a challenge, with delayed arrivals (and missing luggage) on Friday and extra days stay when Eastern airports were closed by snow. Even our host city of Dallas had cooler than normal temperatures!

Despite these issues, the Retreat itself proved a productive experience. Because we held this event in the same venue as the Annual Meeting, the Board and the primary planning team of President Carol Lakey Hess, incoming President (and meeting planner) Maureen O'Brien, Executive Secretary W. Alan Smith, and Network Coordinator Sybrina Atwaters have a much clearer understanding of the layout of the facilities for our November meeting than in the past. We also had direct contact with the key personnel with the hotel and were able to resolve planning issues with the hotel directly. We will have very specific recommendations for transportation to and from the hotel from the Dallas area hotels as well as area restaurants and other amenities in our conference volume of *REACH* this Summer.

Carol Lakey Hess opened the Retreat by asking the members of the Board who were present to reflect on the relationships between Religious Education and Theology. After identifying memories of early theological experiences, Carol asked in what ways each person's current theological positions had been affected by those earlier experiences. The role of religious education in that theological development became the next step in the discussion. The highlight of the evening was an exercise in which each of three small groups was asked to develop a "charade" in which a particular phrase or key term that emerged from group discussion was "mimed", challenging the other groups to identify each term.

The Saturday sessions began with an evaluation of the November 2008 Annual Meeting at the Crowne Plaza O'Hare, Chicago. The evaluation was aided by the results of the online meeting evaluation that Sybrina Atwaters shared with the group. Several Research Interest Group, Colloquia, and Workshop sessions had been singled out as excellent and the overall event was rated as a positive experience. The Board noted a number of specific suggestions offered in the evaluations that will aid in planning the

the meeting in November 2009.

A discussion of the three major Forums that are represented at each Annual Meeting led to a clarification of the role of each as well as members of the Board who serve on each Forum team. Alan Smith presented a financial report that showed total expenses as well as income figures for the 2008 Annual Meeting and offered a year-end Budget report that showed the REA having fallen short of its projected income, but also having spent less money than budgeted for the year.

Maureen O'Brien led the afternoon session in a discussion of the theme for the 2009 Annual Meeting which was presented at our meeting in Chicago and was published in the Winter volume of *REACH*. Readers can also find a summary of the theme in the "Call for Papers" on pages in this edition of *REACH*. Maureen also presented a helpful document outlining the specific responsibilities of members of the Board. Rodger Nishioka presented a report from the Call for Papers Committee that resulted in agreement on the timeline for Call for Paper printed in this newsletter. One important new feature of the 2009 Annual Meeting will be an opportunity for a more interactive use of computer technology, including blogs, that is described elsewhere in Maureen's article in this *REACH*.

Sybrina Atwaters led the Board in an update on the REA Web site and summarized the purchase of a new laptop computer and portable projector for use by the REA. The search process for the position of Network Coordinator at the conclusion of Sybrina's contract was also discussed.

The Harper Committee led a discussion about the Harper and Wornom Awards that is reflected in the article on page one of this volume. Lucinda (Cindy) Nolan was chosen to chair this Committee. The Peace and Justice Forum evaluated the IFYC pre-session in Chicago and has worked with Maureen in planning one of the plenary sessions for the Dallas meeting. Jack Seymour, who was unable to attend the Board retreat, submitted his report on the journal in written form. Mary Hess, Vice President, presented her proposed themes for the 2010 meeting in Denver and led a lively discussion of the possibilities that may be opened up by this theme.

Prior to concluding the meeting on Sunday, the Board reaffirmed the order of meeting locations for the next five years that can be found on page one. Uncertainty about travel did not dampen a splendid planning retreat!

## REA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2009

**President** Carol Lakey Hess [carol.lakey.hess@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:carol.lakey.hess@stanfordalumni.org)  
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### **From the Forums**

#### **Religious Education in Faith Communities**

Jane Regan [jane.regan.1@bc.edu](mailto:jane.regan.1@bc.edu)  
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#### **Religious Education in Public Life and Global Community**

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#### **Religious Education in the Academic Disciplines and Institutions**

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