

Proposal for a Joint Reorganization of APRRE and REA  
(Revision Date: September 20, 2002)

1. Introduction

This proposal is presented to the memberships of APRRE and REA so that an informed discussion and decision may take place. The joint committee recommends reorganization as described in this proposal. Subsequent to the proposal the joint committee seeks discussion and discernment from the members of both organizations. Adoption of the proposal will require approval by a vote of each organization.

Discussion of the proposal will take place at the November 2002 APRRE meeting. Changes will be made as needed and a revised proposal will be mailed to the members of both organizations for a mail ballot by January 2003. Many issues will need to be resolved through the implementation phase if the proposal is adopted.

2. Historical Background

2.1 The Road to the Reorganization Proposal

At the November 2001 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Religious Education Association, a motion was proposed to create a committee to enter into conversations with the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education regarding a more formal relationship that advances our mutual benefit and to create a formal motion for action by the 2002 annual meeting. This motion was approved by REA members via a mail ballot. Two constructive teleconferences have taken place. In this process it has been determined that 50% of APRRE members are also REA members and that APRRE members constitute approximately 29% of REA membership.

On June 8th, the joint committee held a five-hour meeting in Chicago discussing issues of vision, mission, membership, programming, finances, and administration for a shared organization. Representing APRRE were: Anne Streaty Wimberly, Jack Seymour, Tom Walters, and Randy Litchfield. Representing the REA were: Ronald H. Cram, Lorna Bowman, Barbara Anne Keely and Ted Brelsford.

The discussion was open, candid, constructive, creative, and hopeful. Participants sought to move beyond just costs and benefits of reorganization for each constituency to how reorganization might position the associations for the opportunities and challenges of the coming decades. A constant concern was to honor the core purposes and passions of each association, in particular the concerns for advancing scholarship about the practice of religious education, about the contribution of religious education in our common public life, about the interplay of religious traditions and practices, and about enhancing teaching in religious education. Ways to embody these concerns in organizational structures were identified. At the end of the day, the group reached consensus that much was to be gained by moving forward with presenting a detailed proposal to the membership of both organizations.

## 2.2 The Continuity of the Reorganization with the Histories of the REA and APRRE

For a century, membership in the Religious Education Association has meant attention to diverse cultural identities, inter-faith collegiality, and scholarly reflection on the practices of religious education. Through its conventions, regional meetings, special programs, research projects, and journal the Religious Education Association has sustained and inspired rigorous reflection and research on religious education. This has been a distinctive difference from many other religious educational organizations, where programming focuses only on the "how-to."

In like manner, the membership in the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education has sought to provide the best ecumenical resources available to the reflective practice of teaching in university, college, seminary, and denominational offices. Nearly half of the membership of the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education belong already to the Religious Education Association. The journal is viewed by both memberships as a medium for research related to scholarship and practices of religious education.

## 3. Rationale for Reorganization

### 3.1 Opportunities created for advancing religious education

- Providing a vital new identity for both organizations, which fosters the interplay of scholarship, practices of research, teaching, leadership, and scholarly reflection
- Strengthening the position of REA/APRRE in a larger network of associations
- Developing forums that are funded and allow the Association to call upon experts in specialties of importance to the work of religious education
- Broadening resources that contribute to the Association's programming and reflection

### 3.2 Direct Benefits

- People who are currently members of both APRRE and REA will pay one membership fee rather than two, which is anticipated to save members money
- Assurance for both groups of the continued publication of the journal
- Current REA members would be encouraged by organizational stability, and available annual funding for continuation of emphases upon diverse cultural identities and inter-faith collegiality
- Sliding scale dues structured for more equity and accessibility
- Current APRRE members would automatically receive the journal with membership
- Broader membership base and consequently stronger financial base
- Unified administrative action, with a better overall approach to stewardship of funds

#### 4. Vision and Mission Statement of the New Organization

##### 4.1 Vision

The Association is an ecumenical, multi-faith and culturally diverse community of conversation and reflection focused on connecting and promoting practices of scholarship, research, teaching, and leadership in religious education. This community includes persons with interest and expertise in the theological, philosophical, socio-cultural, psychological, historical, institutional, and practical dimensions of religious education in varying contexts.

##### 4.2 Mission

The mission of the Association is to create forums for exploring and advancing the interconnected practices of scholarship, research, teaching, and leadership in faith communities, academic institutions, and the wider world community.

The Association accomplishes its mission in four ways:

4.2.1 Through sharing, critiquing and encouraging publication of creative research, scholarly activities and practical approaches to religious education (particularly through its journal *Religious Education*);

4.2.2 Through ecumenical, inter-religious, and cross-cultural dialogue that stimulates participants to recall and examine historic traditions and explore fresh visions of religious education for the human family in our complex world community;

4.2.3 Through the creation of networks of communication, cooperation and support in order to strengthen the participants as professionals, and religious education as a distinctive and vital endeavor; and

4.2.4 Through interpreting the nature, purposes, and value of the field of religious education to the wider society as well as to graduate students and others preparing to become professors, researchers, or other leaders in religious education.

#### 5. Membership

##### 5.1 Potential Member Groups

The membership of the Association is composed of individuals with diverse interests and goals working in diverse contexts. The membership includes persons such as:

- teachers, professors, and researchers in religious education
- religious education professionals in local faith communities or in central offices or agencies of denominations/religious bodies

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- administrators in religiously affiliated schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries
- graduate students and others preparing for and engaged in research, teaching, administration or other kinds of leadership in religious education

### 5.2 Membership Dues

Membership dues are established on a sliding scale based upon employment situation (e.g. faculty status, faith community staff, student, retired, etc). Consideration will also be given to how location (e.g. countries beyond the U.S. or developing countries) influences one's ability to be a member.

### 5.3 Forums

Scholarship, research, teaching and administration take multiple forms as they are practiced in a variety of contexts. The Association responds to this variety of forms by inviting its members to become contributing participants in the following Forums. Each Forum engages scholarship, leadership, and teaching in relation to its focus.

#### **5.3.1 *Religious Education and Faith Communities***

This Forum focuses on religious education in local faith communities, and within and by denominations/religious bodies on regional, national, and international levels.

#### **5.3.2 *Religious Education and Academic Institutions***

This Forum focuses on the engagement in and advancement of religious education in schools, colleges, universities, and theological seminaries.

#### **5.3.3 *Religious Education, Public Life and the Global Community***

This Forum focuses on inter-religious education and conversation as well as the role of religious education beyond religious and academic contexts in the interest of the common good.

All three Forums encourage attention to local, regional, and global contexts; cross-cultural interests; inter-disciplinary involvement; and a wide range of participants.

## 6. Programming

### 6.1 Forums

The Forums have chairpersons who coordinate programming related to their Forum and serve as advocates for the concerns of their Forum. Each Forum will be incorporated into the annual meeting and Forum Chairs will serve on the annual meeting program committee. Forums may also organize national or regional events apart from the annual meeting. Funding for Forum programming will be included in the annual budget.

## 6.2 William Rainey Harper Project and Committee

William Rainey Harper was President of the University of Chicago, and first President of the Religious Education Association. Through the years, a "Harper Prize" has been awarded on occasion to significant leaders in the field of religious education (including most recently, Paulo Freire). By naming this permanent standing committee the "Harper Committee," affirmation is given to the roots of the REA while looking forward to innovation in the future.

In order to insure the continued vision of inclusion of diverse cultural identities and inter-faith collegiality, a projected sum of \$6,000 would be available every two years in the new Association for the expressed purpose of innovative programming, research, and regional networking. A special committee in the new Association, the Harper Project Committee, would be responsible for ensuring the inclusion of diverse cultural identities and inter-faith collegiality.

## 6.3 Annual meetings

Annual meetings have both thematic and non-thematic elements. A theme serves to focus the Association's attention on an issue important to the field and provides a common point of interaction. Non-thematic elements provide opportunities for the pursuit of unique member interests. The meeting theme is addressed in plenary sessions and some interest group sessions. Non-thematic issues are addressed in interest group sessions, task-forces, and meetings of particular and contextual religious traditions.

### 6.3.1 Plenaries

Each Forum is responsible for one of the plenaries and addresses the meeting theme from the perspective of the Forum's focus.

### 6.3.2 Interest Group and Colloquia Sessions

Interest group sessions are presentations of developed research or resourcing. Colloquia involve research in beginning stages. Typical meetings may have four (4) blocks of these sessions with five (5) to six (6) sessions per block. Included in the blocks are sessions related to the Forums.

### 6.3.3 Task Forces

Task Forces are groups who agree to stay together and to continue to work on certain issues over a period of several years. Presenters are chosen by each task force or by conveners. The initial Task Forces will be those pre-existing in APRRE.

### 6.3.4 Meetings of Religious Tradition Groups

These meetings are provided for members of particular denominations or religions to network with each other.

## 7. Organizational Details

### 7.1 Incorporation and Tax Status

The Association will remain a non-profit organization and utilize a revised version of the REA's legal papers of incorporation.

### 7.2 Office Staffing

The Association will utilize a single Executive Secretary whose job description is based upon APRRE's Executive Secretary. Funding is provided for general secretarial and book keeping services. All staffing is on a "contract" rather than an "employee" basis.

### 7.3 **Religious Education** Journal and Taylor & Francis Relationship

All members of the Association receive a subscription to **Religious Education**. The current editorial and publishing arrangements for the journal would remain unchanged. The Association appoints and pays an editor and managing editor and utilizes a partnership with publishers Taylor & Francis.

Taylor & Francis has been advised of the reorganization proposal and sees no reason to substantively amend the agreement. Taylor & Francis:

- Maintains membership and subscription lists, handles renewals, and markets the journal
- Copyedits, sends proofs to authors, prints and distributes the journal
- Pays to the Association royalties on subscriptions, an agreed upon portion of membership dues collected, and a contribution to maintaining the editorial office

### 7.4 Integrated Website

The Association will maintain a website combining functions and services currently provided on the REA and APRRE websites.

### 7.5 Governing Board (16 members)

#### 7.5.1 Governance functions (7):

- President: Public representative and conducts meetings
- President-Elect: Responsible for current year's programming and meetings in absence of President
- Vice-President: Responsible for next year's programming
- Treasurer: Oversees budget, audits, taxes and endowment
- Executive Secretary: Responsible for daily operations, implementing policies, membership, finances, and support of programming
- Treasurer: Oversees budget, audits, taxes and endowment
- Recording Secretary: Keeps official minutes

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### 7.5.2 Publication/Networking functions (2):

- Editor of *Religious Education* journal
- Networking Coordinator: Responsible for structures, particularly electronic, that network members together. The website content and design are central responsibilities.

### 7.5.3 Program and Membership functions (3):

- Religious Education, Public Life and the Global Community Forum Chair
- Leadership in Religious Education Forum Chair
- Religious Education in Academic/Higher Education Forum Chair

Each Forum Chair has responsibilities to:

- Develop program for their forum at annual meeting and/or regionally
- Propose scholarship and resources for publication
- Advance and develop membership within the Association and their forum

A Program Committee is constituted by the President-Elect (chair), the Vice-President, the three Forum Chairs, the Call for Papers Committee Chair, the Harper Project Chair, and the Executive Secretary. Members from the vicinity of the meeting should be invited to the committee as well.

### 7.5.4 General Representative functions (4):

- At-Large members (3)
- Doctoral Student Representative (1)

Board membership will be inclusive of diverse perspectives including inter-faith.

### 7.6 Institutional Memberships and Relationships

The Association will maintain its membership within the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) and the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion (CSSR). Allowance will be made for representatives from related associations to participate as “observers” in Board meetings (e.g. NAPCE and LREDA).

## 8. Initial Budget Estimate

A budget estimate for the Association is found in an attached spreadsheet. This estimate suggests that the Association should be financially solid even if there is membership attrition. Cash flow should allow annual transfers to the principals of endowment funds—potentially \$2,500 to the Travel Grant principal inherited from APPRE and \$3,500 to the general endowment principal inherited from the REA. The combined cash reserves also provide financial stability.

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8.1 Assumptions and notes regarding the estimate

8.1.1 Membership levels

550 members in the Association come from 530 current REA members less potential 25% attrition in light of reorganization plus 150 APRRE members who were not previously REA members. Hopefully the process will not result in such attrition but this was assumed to create a conservative budget projection.

8.1.2 Taylor & Francis income

Taylor & Francis retains \$14 from individual membership dues for cost of the journal and overhead. This is subtracted from the dues received amount for each membership type income line.

8.1.3 Sliding scale membership dues

A sliding scale is used for membership dues dependent on one's working context and rank (where appropriate).

8.1.4 Staffing

All personnel are on a contract basis. One Executive Secretary serves the new Association. A book keeper position has been added.

8.1.5 Harper Project and Forums

The Harper Project is funded at \$6,000 for a biennial event. \$3,000 per year is set aside for the project. Each Forum is funded for \$2,000 per year, which may be used as honoraria for non-member speakers and resources.

8.2 Projected account balances

REA endowment		<b>\$31,000.00</b>
APRRE travel fund		<b>\$12,700.00</b>
<u>Reserves</u>		
REA operating reserves	\$17,000.00	
APRRE operating reserves	<u>10,000.00</u>	
	Combined initial reserves	<b>\$27,000.00</b>

9. Implementation and Transition Plan

September 2002      Distribution of proposal to members of both organizations in preparation for discussion at the November meeting.

Preliminary questions are invited from members no later than October 15 for circulation within the joint committee (or designated ones), review by the committee (or designated ones), compilation into categories, and organization for distribution and discussion at the November meeting.

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October onward	Planning for 2003 meeting (joint year and REA centennial) Coordinated by REA President Ron Cram, APRRE President-Elect Lorna Bowman, and APRRE Executive Secretary Randy Litchfield. Attempt to structure the meeting per proposal.
October 15, 2002	Responses from members of both organizations are compiled into categories, organized and prepared for distribution and discussion at the November meetings
October 31, 2002	Discussion of proposal at REA Board meeting
November 1-3 2002	Discussion of proposal at APRRE meeting Friday Executive Committee Friday Evening Banquet Sunday Business Meeting Discussion of proposal at REA meetings Saturday Board Meeting Saturday Annual General Meeting Elect officers for REA and APRRE separately as existing and approve budgets for 2002-03 as usual Appoint a contingent implementation team (equal REA & APRRE representation)
December 2002- January 2003	Joint Committee revises proposal in light of APRRE and REA membership responses
January 2003	Revised proposal and ballot mailed to members of both organizations
February 2003	Ballots due from members of both organizations
	If the proposal is approved, the implementation team becomes active to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nominate full slate of Board members, which may include current office holders</li><li>• Revise existing By-Laws</li></ul>
	If the proposal is approved, the APRRE Executive Secretary will begin to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Merge the websites</li><li>• Discuss with Taylor &amp; Francis, with the help of the journal editor, membership management. This includes the possibility of beginning journal subscriptions for APRRE members in 2003.</li><li>• Initiate consolidation of REA and APRRE offices</li><li>• Pull together Program Committee for 2004 meeting</li></ul>
November 2003	Approve By-Laws and elect officers of new Association