

Guide to the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education Records

RG 154



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1998, revised 2019

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
409 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301
divinity.library@yale.edu
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 154

CREATOR: Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education

TITLE: Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education Records

DATES: 1963-1998

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear feet (14 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence and organizational records document the work of the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education and its predecessor organization from 1963 to 1995. The Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education grew out of the Professors and Research Section of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches. The group decided to move in the direction of a separate autonomous society that would become more ecumenical and interfaith.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.154>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.154>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Deposited by the APRRE.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education Records (RG 154), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

The Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education (APRRE) grew out of the Professors and Research Section of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches. For an account of the early history of the Section, see the Paper in Box 1, Folder 1 that was presented at the 1963 meeting by Paul H. Vieth, Horace Bushnell Professor of Christian Nurture at Yale University Divinity School. For a more complete history of APRRE, see the essay in Box 2, Folder 14, which was written by Donald F. Williams, Executive Secretary, 1970-1990.

In 1969 the Professors and Research Section decided to meet independently of the National Council of Churches, and its last meeting was held February 6-8, 1970 in St. Louis. The group decided to move in the direction of a separate autonomous society that would become more ecumenical and interfaith. Instead of staying with the predominantly Protestant, interdenominational Council, they wanted to reach out to Roman Catholic, Jewish, and other educators. Their goals were to be: scholarly in focus, international in scope, collegial in structure, and inclusive in stance.

Donald Williams suggested a name for the new organization, Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education, in a Feb. 18, 1970 letter to Allen J. Moore. Plans were made for the inaugural meeting on Oct. 23-25, 1970 at the Statler Hilton in New York city, at the same time that other scholarly societies in the field of religion were meeting. About 34 persons attended one or more of the sessions. The officers elected in February continued for another year: Allen J. Moore, President; Neely D. McCarter, President-Elect; Harriet L. Miller, Treasurer; and Donald F. Williams, Secretary.

The purpose of APRRE was to provide scholars in the field of religious education with a forum for the interchange of ideas and projects and the mutual support for their research and teaching. Instead of a Constitution or By Laws, the group decided to be guided by a statement of principles and structures, which was written in 1971 by Neely McCarter. This grew into a set of "Operating Policies and Practices," which was adopted in 1974 and revised in 1991. Also in 1971, a newsletter was published for the first time; it was edited by the Executive Secretary and featured announcements of the annual meetings and news of the scholarly work and activity of its members.

Since 1971 APRRE has worked very closely with the Religious Education Association of the U.S. and Canada. A meeting in Washington, DC, in June 1971 was attended by representatives of both groups and it set the stage for a number of cooperative ventures. Many APRRE annual meetings were held in tandem with those of the REA. APRRE representatives sat on the REA Editorial Committee, and papers from the annual meetings were often published in the journal *Religious Education*. The March/ April 1980 issue was devoted to APRRE papers, and later that year it was decided to make the journal a joint publication of the two organizations. Randolph Crump Miller, editor of the journal for twenty years, was an active member of APRRE; he was Professor of Religious Education at Yale Divinity School and followed Paul Vieth as the Horace Bushnell Professor of Christian Nurture.

Since 1976 APRRE has been a full constituent member of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion, and announcements of APRRE meetings and activities were published in the CSSR Bulletin. Some meetings were held in conjunction with the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association, and occasionally with the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature. Abstracts were published with the papers presented at these joint meetings. In addition, APRRE was a charter member of the National Council on Religion and Public Education, and sent delegates to their meetings.

Ever since 1970 annual meetings of APRRE have been held in major cities of the U.S. and Canada. Programs have been planned each year by the President-Elect, with help of a number of colleagues. A Call for Papers

was issued at the beginning of each year and decisions were made regarding a theme and schedule. Ellis Nelson began the practice of a formal Presidential Address at the 1973 annual meeting. Task forces were introduced in 1973-74 and the popular Breakfast Roundtables were started in 1973. Other features were added through the years, such as Research Interest Groups, denominational assemblies, gender groupings for breakfast or lunch, liturgies, Doctoral Student Recognition presentations, and formal tributes recognizing the retirement or death of members. Travel grants were initiated in 1975 and they were enhanced by a capital funds campaign. Scholarship assistance was offered to a number of graduate students so that they could attend the annual meetings.

With a grant from the Lilly Endowment, APRRE held a consultation on revitalizing itself on July 15-16 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Concerns had been expressed regarding the identity and purpose of the association, as well as its relationship to the REA and other organizations. In 1995 APRRE celebrated its 25th anniversary in Chicago. A banquet honored all the past presidents and a special booklet was published for the occasion. Over 150 persons were in attendance.

Donal F. Williams served as Executive Secretary from 1970 to 1990. The year 1990-1991 was a transition year, with Clarisse Croteau-Chonka and Burton Everist serving in the interim. Padraic O'Hare was called to a three-year term for the period 1991 to 1994, and he was followed by Charles F. Melchert.

Scope and Contents

[I. Pre-APRRE](#)

[II. History, Organization and Policy of APRRE](#)

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The bulk of the material dates from 1963 (pre-APRRE) to 1995, with a few documents from the years 1996-1998. Current records of APRRE are in the possession of the Executive Secretary.

The largest portions of the documentation relate to the correspondence of one Executive Secretary, Donald F. Williams, (1970-1990) and the programs of the APRRE annual meetings. Closely associated with the APRRE during all its years of operation was the Religious Education Association of the U. S. and Canada, which had its executive offices at Yale Divinity School from 1973 to 1984 and its editorial and membership offices for a much longer period. The REA archives constitute Record Group No. 74 at the Yale Divinity School Library. The files of the National Council on Religion and Public Education have been placed in YDSL Record Group No. 34.

Other records at the Yale Divinity School Library also complement the archives of the APRRE, especially the personal papers of Paul H. Vieth and Randolph Crump Miller. Another APRRE leader who was on the faculty at YDS from several years was Iris V. Cully. Graduates of Yale University who were prominent in the life, work, and correspondence of APRRE include John H. Peatling, David S. Steward, Charles F. Melchert, Sara Little, Neely McCarter, and William B. Kennedy. Other Yale graduates identified in the records are Boardman W. Kathan, REA General Secretary 1970-1982, and Kenneth Stokes, director of the REA Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle Project.

Series I includes some records of the last years of the Professors and Research Section before it became independent and re-constituted itself as APRRE.

Series II is a miscellaneous collection of files related to the history, structure, organization, and policy of APRRE. Included are documents pertaining to a membership questionnaire, travel grant development, endowment fundraising, and two external policy issues, the 1971 "Prayer Amendment" before the U.S. Congress, and the Marianne Sawicki case in 1989. Also included are the records of the 1994 Revitalization Conference, which dealt with the identity of the organization and relationships with the REA and other groups.

Series III contains the records of the Executive Committee, arranged chronologically, and the records of various other ad hoc committees and task forces. Also included are the records of the very active Doctoral Student Recognition Committee, which began in 1989.

Series IV consists of the Secretarial Files. The files of the Donald F. Williams era are in two parts: 1) General Correspondence, arranged alphabetically by name or organization, and 2) Administrative Files, dealing with membership promotion and annual meeting hotels. These are followed by a single file for the transition year of 1990-1991 with Clarisse Croteau-Chonka and Burton Everist, and the files of Padraic O'Hare (1991-1994) and Charles F. Melchert (1994-).

The voluminous files of the Annual Meetings, Series V, are arranged chronologically. For the most part, programs, annual business meetings, and financial reports have been kept together. Occasional Abstracts of papers are included in separate files, but there has been no attempt made to include the complete text of the many papers that were presented, except for some Presidential Addresses and the winning Doctoral Student Recognition essays.

Series VI, Publications, consists of the biennial newsletters that were started in 1971, and the Proceedings that were gathered and published for the first time in 1997. Copies of related journals, such as *Religious Education* and *Religion and Public Education* are in the library's cataloged collection, and publications of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion are also cataloged elsewhere.

Series VII contains the membership lists, directories, and mailing lists of APRRE, arranged in chronological order.

Series VIII contains financial documentation of APRRE activities.

Arrangement

- I. Pre-APRRE
- II. History, Organization and Policy of APRRE
- III. Committee Records
- IV. Secretarial Files
- V. Annual Meetings
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- VII. Membership
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b. 1, f. 3-5	Executive Committee	1965-1970
b. 1, f. 6	Ad Hoc committees	
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Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Religious education

Corporate Body

Religious Education Association