A Conversation at the Boundaries of Affiliation
REA 2021 Annual Meeting

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Abstract
In the early decades of the 21st century there is a decreased likelihood that young people will claim affiliation within the Christian churches, a trend that has caused great apprehension within these churches. Rather than responding in fear, this panel seeks to address these issues more openly and holistically by posing questions such as, What does it mean for young people to be at the borders of our churches? What are our hopes for them? How does this impact ministry and catechesis? Panelists draw from their perspectives as scholars and practitioners of religious education and ministry.

Session Outline

I. Introduction of and brief opening statements by panelists (15 minutes)

II. Dialogue among the panelists: Each panelist will pose a question to another panelist in order to draw out the respondent’s expertise on the issue. (45 minutes)

III. Large group conversation: The panelists will engage the audience in conversation around the following questions and/or others raised by members of the audience. (60 minutes)
   A. What are your hopes and/or concerns for these people at the boundaries of affiliation?
   B. What language is most and least helpful for talking about such persons, their experiences, and their relationship with the faith community?
   C. What is your/your faith community’s motivation for educating/accompanying these individuals (fuller integration within the community, their personal growth, etc.)?
   D. What does it look like to educate/accompany them well?
   E. How do some of these concerns and strategies with the boundaries of affiliation intersect with issues of gender or sexuality?
   F. How do you expect those at the margins to challenge and enrich your community?