RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION  
First-Day Conference Schedule ● November 15, 2023  
Metropolitan AME Church ● Washington DC

OPENING ACTIVITIES

8:00am-8:00pm  
Continuous Registration  
*Registration and membership are processed at www.relcomm.org*  
*Registration is required for access to conference sessions*  
*No additional cost is required beyond membership*

8:30-9:00am  
Fellowship Hall  
Conference Opening (includes continental breakfast service)

PANEL SESSION 1 ● 9:00 to 10:15 am

Session 1A  
Metropolitan AME  
Douglass Hall A  
Chair: John H. Saunders, University of Alabama, Huntsville  
Co-Chair: Christopher J. Oldenburg, Illinois College  
Respondent: Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University  
*Men Don’t Retreat: Freedom, Dominion, and Masculinity in Christian Rhetoric*, Sarah J. Kornfield, Hope College; Sage Mikkelsen, Independent Scholar  
*(Re)conceiving Freedom: Judaism Deploys the First Amendment in Protecting Abortion Rights*, Adrienne E. Hacker Daniels, Illinois College  
*Freedom to Save the Body (of Christ): False Wisdom, True Wisdom, and the Rhetorical Chemotherapy of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone*, Gregory Brandon Knight, William Carey University  
*We Demand Good News for the Poor: William Barber’s Liberation Theology Rhetoric Goes to (March on) Washington*, James W. Vining, Governors State University

Session 1B  
Metropolitan AME  
Pruitt Board Room  
Religious Communication and the Church  
Chair: Wallis Baxter III, Maple Springs Bible College and Seminary  
*Emotional Investment and Social Identity in the Context of Pastoral Social Loss*, Roman Brandon, Cedarville University; Andrew Harris, Cedarville University; Eric Mishne, Cedarville University  
*Persuasion Strategies in Vintage Rally Day Postcards: Postal Religious Communication*, Josh Compton, Dartmouth College  
*Space, Place and the Communicative (re)Production of Christian Practices: How Material Agents (re)Constitute Churches*, Sacha Gragg, Baylor University  
*The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America and the Adoption of a Shifting Dialogic Method*, Andrew Connolly, Duquesne University

Session 1C  
Holiday Inn  
Mayors 1  
Religious Communication from Religious and Political Figures  
Chair: Denise Edwards-Neff, LLC International University  
*Freedom, Surety, and God’s Onesimi: A Close Reading of H.A. Ironside’s “Charge That to My Account” Sermon*, John Dunkle, Liberty University
Racial Tensions in the Rhetoric of W.A. Criswell, Pastor First Baptist Church Dallas: Leading the Southern Baptists from Segregation to Integration after Brown v. Board of Education, Cecil Kramer, Liberty University

The Iron Lady’s Capitalist Christianity: Margaret Thatcher’s Rhetorical Theology, Leland Spencer, Miami University, Hamilton; Timothy Forest, University of Cincinnati

Session 1D
Holiday Inn
Mayors 2

Implications of Ornament in Church Architecture: Imaging, Memorials, and Media Extensions
Chair: Joel S. Ward, Geneva College
Respondent: Elaine S. Schnabel, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Technological Texture: Contemporary Evangelical Ornamentation at the Interface of Past and Future, Megan L. Zahay, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fix Your Gaze Upon Him: The Pastor as an IMAG Ornament, Jim Trammell, High Point University

Reinventing Sacred Spaces: The Transformative Power of Memorialization and Architecture in the St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church Historic Site, Sarah J. Constant, Pennsylvania State University

Ornament as Articulate Gestural Extension: Virtual Worship in the 21st Century, Joel S. Ward, Geneva College

Panel Session 2 ● 10:30 to 11:45am

Session 2A
Metropolitan AME
Douglass Hall A

Chair: Jeffrey D. Brand University of Northern Iowa

US Muslims, COVID-19 Hesitancy, the War on Terror, and Social Media, Omar Hammad, Rutgers University

Harnessing the Power of Religion in Crisis Communication; Content Analysis of Presidential Address During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Ghana Experience, Ernest Ansah Eshun, University of Missouri-Columbia


Decision Making Practices of African American Pastoral Leaders During the Early Months of COVID-19 in the United States, Darius M. Benton University of Houston, Downtown; LaMont Johnson, Shaw University; James Plenty, Morris Brown College

Session 2B
Metropolitan AME
Pruitt Board Room

Becoming Human: The Rhetoric of Race and the Holy Spirit
Chair: Rodney Adam Lyde, Duquesne University

Presenters:
William Burgess Gallaudet University
Victor Grigsby, Duquesne University
Richard Wingfield, Duquesne University

Session 2C
Holiday Inn
Mayors 1

Initializing a Systematic Approach to Scholarship at the Intersection of Communication and Religion: Epistemological and Methodological Considerations
Chair: Andrew Harris, Cederaville University

Presenters:
Adrienne E. Hacker Daniels, Illinois College
Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University
**Session 2D**  
**Holiday Inn**  
**Mayors 2**

**Visual Communication and the Rhetoric of Freedom**  
Chair: Sam M. Guajardo, University of Memphis

*Napalmed Christ*, Julie Grandjean, Texas Tech University

“Christian Girl Instagram”: *More than a Meme*, Virginia Monroe, Gonzaga University


*Seeing Freedom: The View of Religious Rhetoric*, Mark A. E. Williams, California State University, Sacramento

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**BUSINESS MEETING | BOX LUNCH ● 12:00 to 1:15 pm**

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**PANEL SESSION 3 ● 1:30 to 2:45 pm**

**Session 3A**  
**Metropolitan AME**  
**Douglass Hall A**

**Pilgrimage and Dialogic Freedom in the Thought of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, and Flannery O’Connor**  
Chair: Christopher J. Oldenburg, Illinois College

*Dorothy Day’s Literary Pilgrimage: Dialogic Freedom and Saint Thérèse*, Susan Mancino, Saint Mary's College; Natalia E. Tapsak, Duquesne University

*Pilgrimage as a Silent Surrender into the Heart: Wayfaring with Thomas Merton across Nature, Culture, and Religion*, Inci Ozum Ucok-Sayrak, Duquesnes University; Annette M. Holba, Plymouth State University

*Walker Percy and the Tactics of Defamiliarization*, Justin Bonanno, Ave Maria University

*A Pilgrim of Tenacious Hope: Flannery O’Connor’s Final Freedom*, Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University

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**Session 3B**  
**Metropolitan AME**  
**Pruitt Board Room**

**The Freedom of Critique Exploring, Challenging, and Confronting Christian Practice**  
Chair: Naaman Wood, St. Paul College  
Co-Chair: Sean Connable, Christopher Newport University

Presenters:
- Joy E.A. Qualls, Biola University  
- Sarah J. Kornfield, Hope College  
- Annette D. Madlock, Sister Circle Writers  
- Annalee R. Ward, University of Dubuque  
- Elaine S. Schnabel, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
- Mark A. Steiner, Christopher Newport University  
- Sean Connable, Christopher Newport University

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**Session 3C**  
**Holiday Inn**  
**Mayors 1**

**Diversity, TicTok, and Black Prophetic Rhetoric: A Discussion About Speaking Religious Truths Inside and Outside in the Academy**  
Chair: Michelle E. Shaw, Northwestern University
Presenters:
Kristina M. Lee, University of South Dakota
Walter Iriarte, Lander University
Lionnell "Badu" Smith, University of Memphis
Earle Fisher, Memphis Theological Seminary

Session 3D
Holiday Inn Mayors 2

In Memory of Katie Geneva Cannon: The Role of Womanism and African Spiritual Cosmology
Chair: Annette D. Madlock, Sister Circle Writers

Presenters:
Kami Anderson, Sojourning While Black
Dianna Watkins-Dickerson, University of Memphis
Kimberly P. Johnson, Tennessee State University
Ayo Mariama Morton, University of Memphis
Natonya Listach, Middle Tennessee State University

PANEL SESSION 4 • 3:00 to 4:15 pm

Session 4A
Metropolitan AME Douglass Hall A

An Exploration of the Boundaries of Communicative Freedom for the Practice of Religious Communication
Chair: Anthony M. Wachs, Duquesne University
Respondent: N. Benton Parish, Texas A&M University

Critique & Constraint: Beyond Emancipation, Blake Faulkner, Hillsdale College
There is a Tree in that Seed: Lessons for Religious Communication, Boundaries, and Freedom in David Bentley Hart’s Tradition and Apocalypse, James W. Vining, Governors State University
Biblical Text as Tether: The Freedom in the Regulative Interpretation of Holy Scriptures, Joel S. Ward, Geneva College

Session 4B
Metropolitan AME Pruitt Board Room

The Rhetoric of Christian Liberty
Chair: Gregory Brandon Knight, William Carey University

Jacques Ellul’s Dialectic of Freedom (Christian Liberty), Brian Mattson, Lee University
Are We Free to Worship? The State of Religious Liberty in the Response to the Asbury Revival, Hanisha Besant, Regent University
The Eleventh Commandment: “Thou Shalt Not Dance”, Cecil V. Kramer, Liberty University
The Evangelical: A Proud Past, an Unclear Future, Chris Underation, Gordon College

Session 4C
Holiday Inn Mayors 1

Social Media, Islam, and US Muslim Counterpublics
Chair: Omar Hammad, Rutgers University

Presenters:
Sahar Khamis, University of Maryland
Rosemary Pennington, Miami University
Sangita Shresthova, University of Southern California
Omar Hammad, Rutgers University
Session 4D
Holiday Inn
Mayors 2

The Ethics of Good Speech: Religious Communication Making the Africana Communication Turn
Chair: Napoleon A. Bradford, Virginia Union Seminary

Presenters:
Freddie Haynes, Christian Theological Seminary
Moya Harris, Christian Theological Seminary
William H. Lamar, IV, Christian Theological Seminary
Jennifer Carner, Christian Theological Seminary
Michael Waters, Christian Theological Seminary
Andre E. Johnson, University of Memphis

PANEL SESSION 5 • 4:30 to 5:45 pm

Session 5A
Metropolitan AME
Douglass Hall A

RCA 2023 Scholarship Awards Panel
Chair: Annette Madlock


Article of the Year: The Politics of Media Format: Printing Poor Sarah During the Removal Crisis in Cherokee Nation, Sonia Hazard, Florida State University

Dissertation of the Year: Of Identity, Spirituality, Community, and the Sacred Chronotope in Bhutan, Dorji Wangchuk, University of Macau

Top Student Paper: White Christian Nationalism’s Rhetorical Strategies and Their Impacts on Marginalized Communities, Erica Kolson, University of Illinois

Session 5B
Metropolitan AME
Pruitt Board Room

God and Guns: Free Speech, Religious Freedom, and the Second Amendment
Chair: Andre E. Johnson, University of Memphis

Presenters:
Freddie Haynes, Christian Theological Seminary
Andrea Terry, Sacramento State University
William H. Lamar IV, Christian Theological Seminary
Jeff Miller, University of Memphis
Earle J. Fisher, Memphis Theological Seminary
Regan Robinson, Christian Theological Seminary

Session 5C
Holiday Inn
Mayors 1

Competing Narratives of Freedom: Religious Communication in the Neoliberal Academy
Chair: James W. Wining, Governors State University

Presenters:
Theon Edward Hill, Wheaton College
Amy L. King, Charleston Southern University
Sarah J. Kornfield, Hope College
Annette D. Madlock, Sister Circle Writers
Joshua Miller, Texas State University
Christopher J. Oldenburg, Illinois College
Elaine S. Schnabel, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Mark A. Steiner, Christopher Newport University

Session 5D
Holiday Inn
Mayors 2

Religious Communication: Chaplaincy, Dating, Miracles, and Testimonies
Chair: To be announced
How Chaplains Communicate Religion Within a State Organization, Ann Strahle, University of Illinois, Springfield

Perhaps Not to Be Discussed on A First Date: Negotiating Gender Roles in Protestant Dating Couples, Mikayla Covington, Duquesne University

Unbelievers: A Grounded Theory Analysis of Miracle Skepticism, David Dockery, Texas A&M University

“My Life After I Received Christ”: Evangelical Culture in Popular Guides to “Preparing Your Personal Testimony,” Mark Ward Sr., University of Houston-Victoria

AWARDS BANQUET • 6:00 to 8:00 pm

6:00pm Dinner Served in Fellowship Hall
6:30-7:00pm RCA Scholarship Awards Program
7:00-7:30pm RCA Scholar of the Year Keynote Address
   Language as Blessing: Challenging a Dominant Narrative, Amardo Rodriguez, Syracuse University
7:30-8:00pm Post-Conference Mingle