

RCA NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter of the Religious Communication Association

Fall 2004 (1:2)

Enclosed: THE RCA PROGRAM FOR NCA CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

INSIDE:

Conference Notes from the Program Planner

An important conversation about EBSCO, our journal, and CIOS ...

Journal of Communication & Religion
Call for Student Papers

First RCA Preconference

Annual RCA Banquet Information

Nominees

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

JOIN THE LISTSERV ...

You may join the e-mail based listserv by sending a message to "majordomo@calvin.edu"

Memories and Celebrations

*Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'.
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'.*

Bob Dylan

Dylan's 30th Anniversary Album reminds us "the times they are a-changin'". The Religious Communication Association celebrates 30 years this fall--30 years of changing times, of prophesizing, critiquing, and educating. This anniversary falls appropriately in the broader context of NCA's theme, "Moving Forward/Looking Back." As an organization the RCA has much to be grateful for and much to look forward to.

As President of RCA, I want to take a moment to express gratitude to all those who have gone before me and who have given of their time and their passion to create a place where scholarship is valued and religion is respected. While we celebrate 30 years since RCA's Constitution was created, the roots of our organization go back much further and suggest that we celebrate over 50 years of interest in religious communication. Already in 1954 a group was meeting that called themselves, A Study Committee on Problems in Teaching Speech to Preachers. This group received approval December 1955 from the Speech Association of America (SAA--today NCA) for official status as the Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group (SRW). It wasn't until 1974 that RCA as we know it was established through the creation of the Constitution.

Today, RCA is an independent organization that associates with NCA, sharing convention space, co-sponsoring panels, accepting papers from non-RCA members, and dialoguing with scholars of all interests. This was not always true. In fact, in 1970 the future of the SRW appeared bleak. SRW sought commission status from the newly named Speech Communication Association (SCA), but it was denied. Struggling to survive the group met independently in 1971, but sought to participate with SCA again in 1972. That year the SRW sponsored two panels. This year RCA is sponsoring 20 panels! Yes, we have much for which to be grateful. (Thanks to Ed Hollatz for his notes on our early history and to Charles Bartow for his essay, "How RSCA Got Started: Personal Recollections.")

with no subject line and the words "subscribe rca" in the message body text. (Don't include the quotation marks in the address or the message). You can unsubscribe by sending a message to "majordomo@calvin.edu" with the text unsubscribe rca" in the message body. (Once again, don't include the quotation marks). To post a message, simply address it to "rca@calvin.edu".

Plan now to attend the BUSINESS

MEETINGS:

Friday, 11/12

3:30 - 4:45 and

Saturday, 11/13

3:30 – 4:45

Pr. Dining Rm 17, 5th
Floor, Palmer

PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION TO FOLLOW SATURDAY'S MEETING

I would be at fault if I didn't celebrate the people that have done so much to make this year's convention meaningful. Planning the program is an enormous job! Tom Lessl has faithfully invested hours into creating a program of integrity. He is assisted by the program planners: Matthew Althouse, Skip Rutledge, and Paul Lakey, who are in turn assisted by reviewers. Read more from Tom in his fine article that reflects on the theme and highlights the program. (Please note that all our programs are scheduled in the Palmer House, several blocks from the Hilton.)

Your executive committee as a whole has been hard at work this year. Paul Soukup, second VP has been working on membership and on the awards. The Awards committee, that he chairs, faces the challenge of processing

and reading the nominated articles, books, and dissertations to determine the award winners.

The Councilors have put in extra time this year in multiple roles. Michael Eidenmuller has developed a new look for our web site and has the job of Coordinator of Electronic Communication. Calvin Troup challenged us to sponsor a pre-conference and then he and Alyssa Groom volunteered to develop and organize it. Please show your support by joining us Wednesday afternoon, (a short walk from the Palmer House or from the Hilton at 11 E. Adams at State – Suite 1200), at our Pre-Conference: "Identity and Vision: Grounds, Challenges, & Implications for Religious Communication." Further information is in this news-

letter and on our web at:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rca/rcapreconferencefinal2004.html>

Some people who labor behind the scenes that are integral to the survival of RCA include Becky Johns, Executive Secretary, and Marcia Everett, Newsletter Editor. Becky is completing her term of office after many years of faithful service in which she has trained Executive Committee members--new every year, kept the minutes and the journal archives, paid the bills, answered queries, and generally kept us going. Marcia, also concluding a term of office, has seen to it that these newsletters are produced and mailed. Both have also counseled the Executive Committee and given generously of their time and talents.

Finally, we've had some extra help this year. Our thanks go to several institutions for their support in underwriting expenses of the Banquet, Pre-Conference, and President's reception: Moody Bible Institute, Regent University, Duquesne University, Baylor University Press, and Trinity Christian College.

This issue is full of information. Please take note of the many opportunities at the convention this year. Participate in the preconference; support our panels; attend the business meeting and elect new officers; come to the Friday night Banquet and hear Quentin Schultze; attend the planning meeting and brainstorm for next year; schmooze at the President's reception following the planning meeting; network and meet new colleagues; invite each other to lunch or dinner and know that the Religious Communication Association is your organization.

Annalee Ward, President Religious Communication Association

SEND IN YOUR BANQUET RESERVATION NOW! See details that follow!

2004 RCA

BANQUET ...

The annual banquet will be held **Friday night**, November 12 at Moody Bible Institute. Transportation will be provided by Moody. We will meet at the Monroe St. side of the Hilton Lobby at 6:00 p.m. The Banquet begins at 6:30.

Our special speaker this year is Dr. Quentin Schultze, one of our own members! Quin is the author of numerous books and articles, a frequent consultant on matters of media and technology, a careful thinker on the place of technology in the church, and most recently, the author of *Christianity and the Mass Media in America: Toward a Democratic Accommodation*. His speech is titled, "The Problem of God in Modern Models of Communication: Is the Field too Materialistic and Naturalistic?" If God exists, and God speaks, how in the world can we conduct research on merely human communication? Is God in or out of the human "system" of communication? Should we limit our claims about human communication if the system is "open" beyond human beings? Do we have an obligation as researchers, individually or collectively, to listen for God in our study of human beings? Should we ever try to incorporate God—as thesis, person or holy

other—into our models and theories of communication? This issue has a long history predating even in the ancient world, yet it tends to be ignored in both modern and postmodern thought for different reasons. Perhaps it is time to either resurrect the issue or let it die once and for all.

Cost of the banquet is \$25. Please send your checks in early to Becky Johns as we need to have an accurate count to provide the best meal possible.

JOIN US FOR THE FIRST RCA PRE-CONFERENCE: "Identity and Vision: Grounds, Challenges, and Implications for Religious Communication"

to be held on Wednesday, November 10th, 2004, beginning at noon. The Pre-Conference will be held at the new facilities of The Chicago Semester, 11 East Adams, 12th Floor. The Chicago Semester facility is located about five blocks from the NCA Convention Hotel, the Chicago Hilton & Towers.

Registration Fee: \$15 if you register & pay by November 1; \$20 after November 1

Registration fees should be sent to:

Becky Johns
RCA Exec Secretary
1605 University Circle
Ogden, UT 84408-1605

- ◆ Checks are to be made payable to RCA.
- ◆ Please specify that your check is for the RCA Pre-conference.
- ◆ Please list the names of all those included in the payment (for those sending in money for multiple participants/attendees)

**SEND IN YOUR REGISTRATION FOR THE BANQUET AND THE
PRE-CONFERENCE TODAY!**

Banquet At-A-Glance:

WHEN: Friday night

**MEET: at 6:00 pm in front of the Monroe St. entrance of the Palmer House
for transportation**

**6:30 Banquet at 820 N. LaSalle on the Second Floor of the Student/Alumni
Center**

EBSCO AND OUR JOURNAL: AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION

Have you been exploring your campus's on-line journal access? Our contract with EBSCO for our journal, *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, is well under way. All issues of our journal are searchable and available in full text. We are located in EBSCO under the Communication and Mass Media Complete database. This also has all of NCA journals in full text as well as numerous other journals.

As many of you are aware, to associate with EBSCO we could no longer maintain our relationship with CIOS. CIOS does own the rights to our full text old journals from 1987 – Jan. 2003, but our contract with EBSCO went into effect in May of 2003. At that time the Executive Committee, under the Presidency of David Klope, debated the pros and cons of leaving CIOS for EBSCO. Both the outgoing and new journal editors were consulted in that decision-making process. While the decision was not unanimous, the committee voted to sign the contract based on the desire to provide wider access and the promise of remuneration. Since

that time, EBSCO has digitized all of our journals and included them in the broader database. In addition, we have a link on our website which allows you to access all of the issues even if your school does not subscribe to EBSCO (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rca/rcajournals.html>), although we are under the impression that most libraries have access to EBSCO (either provided free by their state or subscribe to it).

This decision caused some turmoil, and it does raise concerns about corporate control over materials that were previously free in CIOS. CIOS was particularly unhappy with RCA's decision to go with EBSCO and put up an inflammatory message about us on their site. After we talked with CIOS, they removed the message. CIOS served us well in the past years and broke much ground in furthering access to journals. We do not wish to harm CIOS, but the Executive Committee of 2002-2003 tried to make a decision that would bring the widest access and benefit the organization.

This year, we ask you to check out your journal access and come to the convention prepared to discuss this current arrangement in order to advise the Executive Committee. At next year's convention we'll continue the discussion. The Executive Committee will gather your advice on whether or not to re-sign the contract in the spring of 2006 or to leave EBSCO and return to CIOS.

Lunch or Dinner Date?

Hate eating alone at conventions? One member suggested we have a pre-arranged meal meeting place. No guarantees here folks, but if you're looking to meet some RCA people and have no one to lunch or dinner with, stop in the lobby of the Palmer House by the Monroe St. entrance. Meet at 12:30 for lunch. Meet at 6:00 for dinner. There may or may not be anyone there, but at least it's a good fall-back to possibly connect with people.

Submit to the Journal of Communication and Religion

Be sure to encourage your institution's library to subscribe to our journal! It's a great deal at only \$50.00 per year for U.S. mailing and a great way for RCA to support our association and especially the publishing of our journal. Make a point right now of contacting your institution's library to check if they subscribe and if not, encourage them to do so. Have the library personnel contact Becky Johns directly at the address below for more information.

Please fill out this form and mail to Becky Johns, RCA Executive Secretary, Weber State University, 1605 University Circle, Ogden, UT 84408-1605. Make checks payable to RCA. Thanks!

[Overseas memberships: Add \$10 in US currency to amount listed]
Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

THE JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION AND RELIGION

welcomes your submissions. We publish high quality communication research that takes the intersection of religion and communication seriously. Please look at the RCA website for submission guidelines:
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rca/rcajournals.html>.

Call for student

papers: In an upcoming issue of The Journal of Communication and Religion, undergraduate and graduate student papers will be featured. To be considered, please submit the paper by May 15, 2005. These papers should follow the normal guidelines for submission to JCR, although they may be shorter than the normal submissions.

Helen Sterk
Editor, The Journal of
Communication and
Religion

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete the following
(please print):

- Renewed
Membership
- New Member

Last Name :

First Name:

Title:

Institutional Affiliation:

Mailing Address:

Business Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Type of Membership:

- Regular (\$25)
- Institutional (\$50)
- Emeritus
- Student (\$12.50)
- Sustaining (\$45)
- Life (\$250 once – a great deal!)

Any questions? email: bjohns@weber.edu

2004 Convention
Pre-Conference
Final Schedule

"Identity and
Vision: Grounds,
Challenges, and
Implications
for Religious
Communication"

Wednesday,
November 10
Chicago Semester –
Trinity Christian
College
11 E. Adams at State
– Suite 1200

12:00 – 12:45
p.m.

Welcome and
Registration

12:45 – 2:15
p.m. Panel
Sessions

R
e
l
i
g
i
o
u
s

R
h
e
t
o
r
i
c

a

and Public Acts of Faith"

"Religious Discourse in Multimedia Environments"

"Worship, Word, and Sacrament: Rhetorical and
Performance Perspectives, Challenges, and
Implications"

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Panel Sessions

"Religious Contexts for Rhetorical Theory and
Criticism"

"Moving Forward/Looking Back: Films and Stage Revisited, Revised, and
Re-Framed"

4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Break

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Panel Sessions

"Looking Forward & Looking Back: The Episcopal
Church USA Confirms and Consecrates Bishop Gene
Robinson"

"Teaching Communication at a Catholic College: What
Difference Does It Make?"

6:15 – 7:00 p.m.

Plenary Session

7:00 p.m.

Reception

~ Food and refreshments will be served throughout the conference ~

Pre-registration

\$15.00 if postmarked no later than November 1; after that date \$20

"

Mail to: Becky Johns
RCA Executive Secretary
1605 University Circle
Ogden, UT 84408-1605

Other Inquiries:

S. Alyssa Groom
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
412.396.6436 grooms@duq.edu

EBSCO? CIOS?
We need you to be a part of this conversation -
Come and tell us about your library access and what your view is!

FROM THE PROGRAM PLANNER ...

NCA Conference Notes ~ Moving Forward/Looking Back

Don't forget the President's Reception on Saturday following the 3:30 - 4:45 business meeting!

The theme chosen for the NCA convention this year reflects the passing of its 90th birthday. This also happens to be the 30th anniversary of the writing of our association's constitution in 1974, all, I am optimistic that this method will grow more functional as NCA and its members grow more accustomed to it.

Thanks also to all of you RCA members who participated in the planning process as reviewers.

Last year RCA controlled thirty-one program slots at the NCA convention program. This year we will have twenty--including one that RCA is co-sponsoring with the Spirituality Division. NCA's reduction in the number of panel slots made available for RCA presentations is a bit of a blow to us, but I think it is important that RCA members also see this as a challenge urging us to make our presence even more visible within the association. Since, at least in theory, the intention of the NCA leadership is to make time available for scholarly presentations dependant upon representation in the association, it becomes especially important that we make our voices heard in every way we can. A

and so this may be an opportune time for us to do some looking back and moving forward of our own. Anniversaries are times that afford perspective, and I hope that in the midst of all the business-as-usual things that we do this year in Chicago we might find some time to reflect on what we've become and, more importantly, upon what we might yet be. Like NCA, the Religious Communication Association is a product of our collective making. What it is, is what we all together make it. It exists because thirty years ago a small handful of thoughtful and selfless individuals were willing to think about the future, and to take creative action that would only bear fruit in the long run. They built something not just to benefit themselves but to benefit all of us. Some current RCA members were probably not yet born in 1974. I was a sophomore in college when it was founded and was quite unknown to its founders. And yet they were thinking of me. They were working to make sure there would be a place of conversation in the future for scholars interested in religious communication. Let's all thank these founding members when we see them in Chicago, and let's honor their contributions by rolling up our sleeves and seeing what we can build.

We look forward to hearing an excellent slate of papers and programs both at the convention this fall and at the RCA/NCA pre-conference scheduled for the afternoon and evening of November 10. Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a list of programs for this November 2004 Convention. These scheduled panels reflect the great diversity of interests and approaches to the scholarship of religious communication that exist within our group. Perhaps what is most notable about this year's panels will be the number of papers (seven in total) that look at *The Passion of the Christ*. It seems appropriate that the very first panel scheduled for RCA will be on this topic. I should also mention that we had an unusually impressive slate of student papers this year. If you're in attendance at any of the panels in which these excellent papers are presented, I hope that you will give these young scholars your encouragement.

You may remember that the NCA organizers this year have strongly promoted the idea of **discussion panels** as an alternative to the conventional convention program format. Several of the RCA programs will take this form. Those participating in discussion groups are asked to post their papers on the All Academic site so that both participants and audience members may be able to read them in advance. We should all take advantage of this great opportunity to preview this material so that we can have better discussion in Chicago.

I would like to personally thank all of those who have contributed to the scholarship of religious communication by submitting their work for the NCA convention. I would also like to thank the three division chairs who handled so much of the work of having these submissions reviewed and ranked. When you see these three division chairs at the convention, please be sure to thank them for their tireless labor in managing the review process. They are: **Rhetorical Studies**: Matthew Althouse; **Mediated Communication**: Skip Rutledge; **Communication Studies**: Paul Lakey. These three veterans were especially helpful to me as a novice program planner. I also benefited from the wise counsel of Annalee Ward, who did the really hard work last year of pioneering our use of the All Academic system. Although this will continue to create certain challenges for

good way to start is by making sure to keep up your RCA membership. This past year roughly 77% of the paper submissions to RCA came from nonmembers. That's rather a staggering figure! I am gratified to know that so many outside of RCA are interested in religious communication. This

also shows that there are many out there who may be potential members of RCA.

Thomas Lessl, 1st Vice President

WHEN PLANNING YOUR SCHEDULE FOR THE CONVENTION ...

Wednesday 12-7:00 pm	RCA PRECONFERENCE	1 E. Adams, Suite 1200
-------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------

Friday 3:30-4:45 pm	RCA BUSINESS MEETING	Pr. Dining Rm 17, 5th FL., Palmer House
------------------------	-----------------------------	--

6:00 pm	Leave for BANQUET	Monroe St. Lobby, Palmer House
---------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------

6:30 pm	BANQUET begins	820 N. LaSalle, Moody Bible Institute
---------	-----------------------	--

Saturday 3:30-4:45 pm	RCA PLANNING MEETING	Pr. Dining Rm 17, 5th FL., Palmer House
--------------------------	-----------------------------	--

4:45-6:00 pm	PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION	
--------------	------------------------------	--

RCA Executive Council:

President: Annalee Ward, Trinity Christian College

First Vice President: Thomas Lessl, University of Georgia

Second Vice President: Paul Soukup, Santa Clara University

Councilors:

Michael Eidenmuller (04),

University of Texas at Tyler

Calvin Troup (05), Duquesne University

Alyssa Groom (06), Duquesne University

Executive Secretary: Becky Johns, Weber St. University

Immediate Past President: Dave Klope, Trinity Christian College

RCA Newsletter Editor:

Marcia Everett, Malone College

JCR Editor: Helen Sterk, Calvin College

HOMILETIC Editors: John Holbert, Alyce McKenzie, Perkins School of Theology