

RCA NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter of the Religious Communication Association

Winter 2005

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Call for papers for
NCA Boston 2005

Highlights from 2004
Convention

NCA CALL - BOSTON

Deadline Feb 16!

[http://www.natcom.org/
default.htm](http://www.natcom.org/default.htm)

More information later

VISIT YOUR WEBSITE ...

[www.americanrhetoric.
com/rca/index.html](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rca/index.html)

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

"The purpose of the Association shall be to provide a common organization for the study of religious communication by teachers, practitioners, and scholars"

~ RCA Constitution

RCA, An Aerial View

When we celebrate anniversaries, as RCA did this past year, we reflect on the past. But history is also about the future—more so to the extent that understanding the past helps us to better discern what we're doing now and what our destiny may be.

Several years ago my wife Ruth and I invested in some property alongside one of Georgia's waterways—where we hope to build one day. I recently discovered that the U.S. Geological Survey provides a comprehensive photographic map of our country on the internet, and the other night I looked for and found our little two-acre tract along the Oconee River. There was the steep ridge where our house will stand one day looking down through the pine and sweet gum trees toward the water's edge. But where does the river lead? With this internet service I was able to "surf" the river from the Piedmont foothills down through the state's center, and then to follow its winding course east through the peanut country and coastal marshlands of South Georgia—and ultimately to its outlet in the Atlantic.

In doing this my perspective on the few hundred feet of river that passes along my property was transformed. I'll never think of it as I did before. Now it is a pathway to somewhere else—somewhere grand. It is not that surprising that the Oconee River should run into a great ocean. All streams find an outlet somewhere. Water is the earth's lifeblood. Its rivers comprise a vast circulatory system of veins and arteries; our oceans are the chambers of the planet's great heart.

I'm quite certain that an aerial view of RCA would show something similar. If we could follow the scholarly conversation that has been passing before our eyes all these years to its logical conclusion we would see that it empties out somewhere down stream into the very heart of the communication discipline. This isn't its only destiny. En route to this destination, it serves many other worthy roles, especially in irrigating the minds of students and in promoting thought on this subject as it wanders down a multitude of those tributaries that lead in and out of the secular and faith-based institutions where we teach.

But ultimately the scholarship of religious communication plays an even more fundamental role. I suspect that there could never be a basic theory of human

communication that was not informed by an understanding of religious communication. Why? Because religious communication has to do with how human beings give expression to the most basic questions, the starting points of all inquiry. It is the spring from which all forms of human intellection rise. History bears this out at every turn. While the popular idea may persist that religion is just a pond, a body of water set off by itself in the wilderness, in reality this is just a secular superstition. Religious communication is actually a main artery of human experience—many of us in RCA would say the main artery. The life that flows to mind and heart passes through its channels.

So we have a big job to do. We need to get the news out on this. Let's not lose sight of our importance, nor shrink from our responsibilities as public servants. I thank all of you for your contributions to this mission, and I look to the future with great expectancy.

Tom Lessl, President

FROM THE SECOND VICE PRESIDENT...

Nominations for Annual Awards ~ Book, Article & Dissertation Awards

The Religious Communication Association is accepting nominations for its annual outstanding Book, Article, & Dissertation awards. The Book Award is granted for the outstanding scholarly book on religious communication published between 2003 and 2005. Nominators should send one copy of the book and a letter of nomination outlining the value of the book in its area of study. For consideration, please include a short synopsis of the book (3-5 pages). The deadline for the submission of materials and nominations for the Book Award is June 1, 2005. The Article Award is granted for an outstanding article on religious communication published during the past two years. Nominators should send five copies of the article along with a 1-2 page letter of nomination outlining the significance of the article. The deadline for the submission of materials and nominations for the Article Award is June 1, 2005. The Dissertation Award is for an outstanding dissertation in religious communication completed during the previous academic year. 1-2 page nominations may be made by the dissertation advisor or department chair. Nominees are asked to forward four copies of the completed dissertation. Eligible dissertations will have been completed during the period from August 1, 2004 to August 1, 2005. The deadline for the submission of materials and nominations for the Dissertation Award is August 1, 2005. Self nominations for all three awards will be accepted.

Winners will be recognized at the annual RCA meeting occurring in conjunction with NCA in Boston. Cash awards are presented in each category.

Send nominations and materials to:

Dr. Kevin T. Jones, Dept of Communication Studies
Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866

714-744-7921

kjones@chapman.edu

Nominations for
awards ...

Membership Promotion

Paper submissions, attendance at RCA sponsored panels, and general interest draws people from throughout the NCA, many of them non-members of our association. Each of us probably knows one or more colleagues who show an interest in religious communication but have not yet joined. Most of our papers are submitted by non-members! As Tom stated in our 2nd business meeting, all of us know people who really ought to be involved with RCA. Many of these individuals probably would come into our ranks with just a little encouragement. Personal contact usually works better than any other kind of recruiting. In addition, Tom is taking the lead in developing a promotional pamphlet that could be distributed to prospective members and attendees at panels in Boston. If your membership is up for renewal, use the form at the bottom of the newsletter to renew and/or pass copies along to others!

CALL FOR THE 2005 CONVENTION IN BOSTON: "THE HEALTH OF THE DISCIPLINE"

Paul A. Soukup, S.J, Communication Department, Santa Clara University, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053; 408-554-4022; psoukup@scu.edu

Submission method: All papers and proposal must be submitted on-line to the All Academic site.

Initial instructions and link at <http://www.natcom.org/default.htm>

Deadline: February 16, 2005

The Religious Communication Association invites thematic panel proposals on "The Health of the Discipline" and competitive papers concerned with communication and religion. Members are also encouraged to submit proposals and papers for discussion panels and poster sessions, as well as program ideas or papers that might fit panels co-sponsored with other units. The areas of scholarship in RCA are organized within three broad headings of Mediated Communication, Communication Studies, and Rhetorical Studies.

The paragraphs below should help you to decide to which RCA division your papers and proposals should be sent. You should submit to the appropriate RCA area on All Academic.

Mediated Communication: Thomas Carmody, Communication Division, Vanguard University, 55 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626; TCarmody@vanguard.edu. Submissions in the areas of public relations, advertising, theory, and curriculum/instruction (as related to media) should also be sent to this division.

Communication Studies: S. Alyssa Groom, Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, 340 College Hall, 600 Forbes Avenue, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA 15282; 412-396-6436; grooms@duq.edu. Submissions in the areas

Membership Promotion

Call for Papers and Panels NCA Boston

Call continued

of interpersonal and organizational communication as well as relevant panels and papers dealing with theory, curriculum/instruction, gender and cultural studies should be sent to this division.

Rhetorical Studies: Robert McManus, Communication Arts Department, Judson College, 1151 N. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123; 847-628-1065; rmcmanus@judsoncollege.edu. Submissions in the areas of public address and performance should be sent to this division, as well as panels and programs pertaining to rhetorical theory and curriculum/instruction.

All submissions should be done online via All Academic. Papers authored solely by students or persons who have never presented at the NCA convention should be marked "student" or "debut" in the appropriate All Academic box. Requests for audio-visual equipment should only be made only if this is genuinely vital to the proposed presentation. Such requests must be made with the paper and panel proposals by the February 16 deadline. Participants are asked to submit no more than one paper per unit.

For additional information refer to "How to Submit Papers and Panel/Program Proposals" in the general NCA call. Also see "Competitive Paper Submissions," "Poster Sessions," and the call's description of "discussion" panels.

2004 Convention Highlights

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2004 CONVENTION IN CHICAGO...

- Awards Recipients: Quentin Schultze received the Scholar of the Year Award, David A. Frank received the Article of the Year Award for "The Jewish countermodel: Talmudic argumentation, the new rhetorical project and the classical tradition of rhetoric", *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 26: 163-94, Quentin Schultze received the Book of the Year Award for *Christianity and the Mass Media in America: Towards a Democratic Accommodation*, Thomas J. Carmody received the Dissertation of the Year Award for "Arise and Stand Forth": A Fantasy Theme Analysis of American Clergy and Their Calls for Social Action in the Nineteenth Century Anti-dueling Movement, 1804-1856, Regent University, and Samuel McCormick, University of Iowa, received the Outstanding Student Paper award for "On Awakening the Numinous in Others."
- Elections: Kevin Jones was elected Second Vice-President, Darlene Graves, Councilor and Paul Lakey, Newsletter Editor.
- Comments from President Tom Lessl: At the 2nd business meeting, Tom observed that RCA is 50 years old, existing as an invisible college of individuals before becoming a formal organization. He reminded us of two views of religion held at the turn of the last century: religion for the religionist and religion for those outside formal religious bodies. Applying these to the Religious Communication Association he noted that for our first 50 years of history we have been an Association for the religionist, for ourselves, already interested in the

intersection of religion and communication. During our next 50 years, he challenged us to become missionaries to NCA taking the religious perspective to the wider scholarly community. RCA needs to be a “voice crying in the wilderness.”

President Lessl identified four issues for NCA for the following year:

1. Membership: current membership is approximately 300. He would like to increase membership to 350-400.
2. Participation: He hopes to see more participation by members in RCA between conventions. One example is more discussion on the RCA listserv.
3. Outreach. He encouraged RCA members to submit papers and panels to other NCA divisions.
4. Pre-conference. He reported the consensus of the Executive Council that RCA should offer a pre-conference on a bi-annual schedule. During the next year we will begin planning for a 2006 pre-conference.

➤ RCA Banquet: Quentin Schultze, Calvin College, spoke at the annual RCA banquet held Friday night, November 12 at Moody Bible Institute. An evening that facilitated fellowship and provided opportunities to connect with other scholars, the event was organized by Michael Orr of Moody Bible Institute along with President Annalee Ward. MBI graciously provided transportation, a beautiful dining area, a string quartet, punch and hors d'oeuvres, and a wonderful meal, all within our small budget (supplemented by Regent University).

Schultze, 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 was titled, “The Problem of God in Modern Models of Communication: Is the Field too Materialistic and Naturalistic?” Schultze began his speech with an extended story of how he and his son spent hours searching for a strange buzzing sound in their house only to eventually locate it in his pocket. Using it as metaphor, with his humor and self-deprecating style, Schultze compelled the audience to both think and feel with him as he struggles with question of the place of God in communication historically and currently.

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 Jim Crocker-Lakness directly at the address below for more information.

Pres. Lessl Looks Ahead

RCA Executive Council:

President: Tom Lessl, University of Georgia, tlessl@uga.edu

First Vice President: Paul Soukup, Santa Clara University, psoukup@scu.edu

Second Vice President: Kevin Jones, Chapman University, kjones@chapman.edu

Councilors:
Calvin Troup (05), Duquesne University, ttroup@duq.edu
Alyssa Groom (06), Duquesne University, agrooms@duq.edu
Darlene Graves (07), Liberty University, dgraves@liberty.edu

Executive Secretary: Jim Crocker-Lakness, University of Cincinnati, James.Crocker-Lakness@uc.edu

Immediate Past President: Annalee Ward, Trinity Christian College, annalee.ward@trnty.edu

RCA Newsletter Editor: Paul Lakey, Abilene Christian University, lakeyp@acu.edu

JCR Editor: Helen Sterk, Calvin College, hsterk@calvin.edu

HOMILETIC Editors: John Holbert, Alyce McKenzie, Perkins School of Theology, jholbert@mail.smu.edu ALYCEMCK@aol.com

Journal
Submissions

**JOIN THE
LISTSERV ...**

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

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

hsterk@calvin.edu

RCA MEMBERSHIPS: NEW AND RENEWALS

Please fill out this form and mail to Jim Crocker-Lakness, RCA Executive Secretary, Department of Communication, PO Box 184, University of Cincinnati , Cincinnati, OH 45221. Tel. 513-556-4479 James.Crocker-Lakness@uc.edu

Make checks payable to RCA. Thanks!

[Overseas memberships: Add \$10 in US currency to amount listed]

Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

RCA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete the following (please print):

Renewed Membership

New Member

Last Name : _____ First Name: _____

Title: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Business Address: _____

Office Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Type of Membership: Regular (\$25)

Sustaining (\$45)

Institutional (\$50) Emeritus

Student (\$12.50)

Life (\$250 once – a great deal!)

Any questions? email: James.Crocker-Lakness@uc.edu