

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION
First-Day Conference Schedule ● November 19, 2025
Embassy Suites by Hilton Denver International Airport

OPENING ACTIVITIES

8:00am-7:00pm	Continuous Registration
8:30-9:00am	Conference Opening (includes continental breakfast service)

PANEL SESSION 1 ● 9:00 to 10:15 a m

Session 1A Room TBA	<p>The Religious Embodying of Resistance: Gender, Sexuality, and (Anti)Coloniality Chair: Sarah de la Garza, Arizona State University</p> <p><i>Stories of Impurities: Post-Purity Diaries and the Tracing of Body Boundaries</i>, Karly Poyner-Smith, Columbia College (Missouri)</p> <p><i>The Digital Rhetoric of LGBTQ+ Oppression: Exploring Religious Logics and Colonial Legacies of Compulsory Heterosexuality in South Asia</i>, Mohammed Rashid, University of Southern Mississippi</p> <p><i>Colonizing the Body, Romanizing the Flesh: Critical engagements with the hagiographic discourses surrounding the first Indigenous female Roman Catholic Saint of Kateri Tekawitha</i>, Alex Holguin, University of Pittsburgh</p>
Session 1B Room TBA	<p>Scholarly Responses to Eugene McCarraher's "The Enchantments of Mammon" Chair: Eric Miller, Bloomsburg University Respondent: Sarah Kornfield, Hope College</p> <p>Presenters: Jonathan Edwards, University of South Carolina James Vining, Governors State University Theon Hill, Wheaton College</p>
Session 1C Room TBA	<p>Myth, Media, and Middle Earth: Exploring the Communication Significance of Tolkien's Legendarium Chair: David Dockery, Texas A&M University</p> <p>Presenters: Kevin Schut, Trinity Western University Mark A. E. Williams, California State University, Sacramento Chase Mitchell, East Tennessee State University</p>
Session 1D Room TBA	<p>The Intersection of Religious Communication and Political Engagement, Part 1 Chair: Andrea E. Johnson, University of Memphis</p> <p>Presenters: Kelsey Ingold, Duquesne University Kimberley Travers, Memphis Theological Seminary Eugene Gibson, Methodist Theological School in Ohio Jessica Abell, Memphis Theological Seminary Jeff Miller, University of Memphis</p>

PANEL SESSION 2 • 10:30 to 11:45 am

Session 2A
Room TBA

Religious Identity and Crisis Management

Chair: To Be Announced

Escaping the Frame Trap of a Cult: Identity-Work in the Waco Standoff Negotiations, Robert Agne, Auburn University

The Calculus of Contrition: Reintegration Strategies in Megachurch Pastoral Scandals: James Duncan, Anderson University

Returning to Faith: Communicative Sensemaking and Resilience in Faith Restoration Stories, Maggie Vail, University of South Florida

Session 2B
Room TBA

Liturgies of (In)attention: Media Practices for Christian Formation and Cultural Transformation

Chair: Gregory Knight, William Carey University

Respondent: Katie Good, Calvin University

Presenters:

Chase Mitchell, East Tennessee State University

Kevin Schut, Trinity Western University

Michael Finch, Southern Adventist University

Mark Steiner, Christopher Newport University

Session 2C
Room TBA

Elevating Intergenerational Impact in Religious Organizations

Chair: Robert Beaty, University of Oklahoma

Presenters:

Arianna Molloy, Biola University

Diane Badzinski, Colorado Christian University

Briana Ellerbe, University of Southern California

Autumn Buzzetta, Department of Communication Studies

Amanda Fischer, Texas Christian University

Session 2D
Room TBA

Religious Communication in Health, Environment, and Global Contexts

Chair: Andre E. Johnson, University of Memphis

Presenters:

Jacqueline E. Lyde, Duquesne University

Annette Madlock, Sister Circle Writers

Diana Maame Agyeiwaa Agyei, University of Memphis

Jessica Abell, Memphis Theological Seminary

Renu Swamy, University of Memphis

Abena Asemanyi, University of Memphis

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

PANEL SESSION 3 • 1:30 to 2:45 pm

Session 3A
Room TBA

Preaching that Elevates: Sermons Designed to Elevate in Various Rhetorical Situations

Chair: Gregory Knight, William Carey University

Race and People of the Second Commandment: A Close Textual Analysis of Ligon Duncan's Sermon, "The Whole in Our Holiness," at the 2018 Together for the Gospel (T4G) Conference, John Dunkle, Liberty University

Confessing Empire's Sins: How Spurgeon's Rhetoric Sought to Elevate National Repentance During the Indian Mutiny Crisis, John Katsion, Northwest Missouri State University

A Genre Analysis of Civil War Sermons Using an Inductive Approach, Cecil Kramer, Liberty University

What Do Great Sermons Have in Common Rhetorically? Four Great Christian Sermons From Four Centuries, Chris Underation, Gordon College

Session 3B
Room TBA

Social Justice, Identity, and Inclusion in Religious Contexts

Chair: To Be Announced

Toward a Rhetoric of the Spirit in Addressing Assault and Abuse Through a Theology of Women's Leadership and Empowerment, Joy E. A. Qualls, Biola University

A Redeemer Family? Transracial Adoption, Christian Media, and Metaphor, Chelsea Bruno, Samford University; Theon Hill, Wheaton College

Taking Motown to Church to "Save the World": The Afro-Christian Genius of What's Going On, John Hatch, Eastern University

Elevating Rhetorical Criticism in Biblical Studies and Communication Studies: Common Ground, New Ground, Leland Spencer, University of South Carolina

Revisiting Greenleaf: Utilizing Media to Elevate Difficult Dialogues of Faith and Spirituality, Cerise L. Glenn, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Session 3C
Room TBA

The Intersection of Religious Communication and Political Engagement, Part 2

Chair: Andre E. Johnson, University of Memphis

Presenters:

Russell Woods, Southwest Tennessee Community College

Andrea Terry, California State University, Sacramento

Natonya Listach, Middle Tennessee State University

E. Michelle Ledder, Independent Scholar

Jeff Miller, University of Memphis

Session 3D
Room TBA

An Analysis of Max Weber's Work: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Chair: Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University

Presenters:

Kelsey Ingold, Duquesne University

Jacqueline E. Lyde, Duquesne University

Lina Erekat, Duquesne University

PANEL SESSION 4 • 3:00 to 4:15 pm

Session 4A
Room TBA

Digital Religion and Contemporary Worship

Chair: To Be Announced

"I Plug the Service into Planning Center": Contemporary Evangelical Worship as Local Digital Culture. Mark Ward Sr., Texas A&M University-Victoria

The Lexicon of Global Evangelicalism: A Discourse Analysis of Gather25, David Enns, Liberty University

Elevating the Elevated: Making Theorhetoric Accessible to the Masses, Meghan Dunn, St. John's University

Session 4B
Room TBA

Theoretical Foundations, Philosophy, and the Religious Self

Chair: To Be Announced

Tracing Communication and Religion Historically, Michael Kearney, Dordt College; Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University; Natalia Tapsak, Duquesne University

The Holy Linguistic Paradox: Toward a Theoretical Perspective on Christian Organizing, Casey Stratton, Salisbury University

Christian Spirituality, the Rhetorical Self, and Foucault, Edward Weaver, Wheaton College; Kenneth Chase, Wheaton College

Foucault's Mystics: Subjectivation, Hermeneutics of the Self, and the Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, Nicholas Russell, University of Utah

Session 4C
Room TBA

Communicate to Elevate Using a Womanist Perspective to Confront Toxic Christianity

Chair: Annette Madlock, Sister Circle Writers

Dianna Watkins-Dickerson, University of Memphis

Ayo Morton, Virginia State University

Kimberly P. Johnson, Tennessee State University

Kami Anderson, Kennesaw State University

Natonya Listach, Middle Tennessee State University

Madison Hunter, University of Memphis

Session 4D
Room TBA

The Role of Religious Communication in Media

Chair: Andre E. Johnson, University of Memphis

Presenters:

Solomon Cochren, University of Memphis

Lionnell "Badu" Smith, San Francisco State University

Andrea Terry, California State University, Sacramento

E. Michelle Ledder, Independent Scholar

Jeff Miller, University of Memphis

AWARDS PANEL • 4:30 to 5:45 pm

Room TBA

RCA 2025 Scholarship Awards Panel

Chair: James Vining

Book Chapter of the Year

Dissertation of the Year

JCR Article of the Year

Article of the Year

Book of the Year

AWARDS BANQUET • 5:45 to 8:30 pm

5:45-6:45pm

Happy Hour

7:00pm

Dinner Served

7:30-8:00pm

RCA 2025 Scholarship Awards Program

8:00-8:30pm

RCA 2025 Scholar of the Year Keynote Address

To Be Announced