

The Conference on Christianity and Literature

Guidelines for Regional Meetings

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Regional Meetings and the Goals of the CCL

Since its formal organization in 1956, the Conference on Christianity and Literature has had the following set of goals:

- the exploration of the relationships between Christianity and literature;
- the fostering of excellence of scholarship and teaching among committed professionals;
- the encouragement of fellowship among its members.

In addition to special sessions held in conjunction with the annual Modern Language Association convention, the CCL promotes smaller regional meetings of its members in order to fulfill these goals more completely.

Section 11 of Article V of the By-laws provides for the existence of such meetings by means of eight regional organizations, linked to the national organization:

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. Subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, members in a geographical region may organize under a chairperson furthering the purposes of the Society. Members and associate members of the Society may attend any regional meetings without payment of registration fees except such as may apply directly to local services.

Currently Organized Regions

Northeast: New Jersey, New York, Eastern Ontario, Quebec, New England states, and the Maritime provinces.

Mideast: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia.

Southeast: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.

Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Western Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

South-Central: Alabama, Louisiana, Lower Gulf Coast, Mississippi.

Southwest: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas.

Western: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah.

Regions and the National CCL

The clearing-house for information regarding regional meetings is the office of the national Vice President. Approval to organize a regional meeting can be obtained by writing the Vice President who will clear the matter with the appropriate members of the executive committee.

Regional Organization

Each region is administered by a regional chairperson and an on-going steering committee. This steering committee serves on an annual basis and typically includes the regional chairperson, the program chairperson for the current year, the local arrangements chairperson at the host institution for the current year, the past regional chairperson, the past program chairperson, and, if possible, a representative from the host institution for two years hence. The national CCL Board Director who serves as the elected representative of a region shall also serve on the steering committee of that region.

The new regional chairperson and the new members of the steering committee are elected at the business session which is held at each regional meeting. The procedures for this election are to be determined by the members of the region.

It is the responsibility of the regional chairperson to ensure continuity and planning within a particular geographical area, to conduct the business session at the regional meeting, and to locate possible host institutions for future regional meetings.

If a region does not elect a regional chair (or president), the Director who serves as the elected representative of a region shall serve as the regional chair and lead the steering committee of that region. The regional chair has the responsibility of securing invitations for regional meetings at least 18 months in advance.

Hosting a Regional Meeting

The first ingredient of a successful regional is enthusiasm at the host institution or institutions. (Two colleges in the same locale may easily cooperate or a college and seminary may co-host a regional.) It is well to think two years in advance when offering to host a meeting. Past experience suggests that a financial pledge of from \$600 to \$1000, secretarial support, and mailing privileges will need to be provided by the administration of the local institution. Registration fees will cover many local expenses; for some meetings, they could cover all expenses. The program and local arrangements chairpersons work in tandem in determining the schedule, refreshments, etc.

Dates for the regional should follow the traditional pattern of the area in question (e.g., early in the fall for the Southwest) and should not conflict with any other major professional meetings, such as regional meetings of the MLA. It is also advisable to clear the date of the meeting well in advance with the Vice President. (Regional meetings or special sessions sponsored by a region can be linked with a regional meeting of the MLA; in such a case, careful coordination with that organization is necessary.)

Local Arrangements

Local arrangements should include information regarding motels and hotels for all registrants. (It is sometimes necessary to reserve blocks of rooms where housing is limited.) On occasion, special transportation from airports or stations is also necessary. Rooms at the host school must be reserved and arrangements carried out for coffee breaks and for any catered meals. Well-informed greeters should be at the registration desk, and there should be plenty of maps and signs available for out-of-town guests. Hosting a regional is an opportunity to show Christian hospitality.

Establish a deadline for the return of registration forms, but do not be alarmed if registrations are slow in arriving; they usually come in the last mails before the deadline. To accommodate “walk-ins,” set a slightly higher fee for registration at the conference.

Larger public institutions have conference centers through which it is often obligatory for faculty members to work in hosting meetings. In such cases, the conference center takes care of most local arrangements.

Program Planning

Reports of each regional conference are printed in *Christianity and Literature*; samples of past programs can be obtained from the national vice president. The key to an interesting program and a good registration total is variety. Traditional papers can be interspersed with panels (e.g., “Christian Writers and Their Audience”), workshops (e.g., “Teaching the Bible as Literature”), films, poetry readings, and student sections. An evening session provides the opportunity for a major guest lecturer or even a drama. (On occasion, regional meetings have been linked to the presence of a known lecturer already on campus.) Be sure to provide breaks during the day during which registrants can talk with one another and ask further questions of participants. People also need time to relax.

Traditional sections with papers read by academics may be organized by topics, genres, periods, etc., but more and more regional meetings are including comparative and interdisciplinary approaches, theoretical and socio-political concerns, as well as papers on non-English authors.

Two- or three-day conferences provide ample time for plenary sessions with a keynote address (or two), a banquet and/or luncheons. But one of the greatest advantages of a two- or three-day conference is the opportunity for interaction among conference participants. With a four-day conference, some registrants come late or leave early, just arriving to present a paper rather than engaging in a longer conversation. With a one-day gathering, a longer conversation has little opportunity to emerge. But a regional gathering that offers a mix of plenary sessions, social occasions, poetry readings, keynote addresses, scholarly papers and times for discussion fosters a collegial opportunity to listen, consider and interact.

For the same reason, organizers should be careful not to schedule too many concurrent sessions. Some regions have adopted a policy that all sessions will be plenary sessions. While that limits the number of papers that can be offered, it enhances the likelihood that participants will have a shared basis for interaction. Most larger conferences will need to offer two and sometimes three concurrent sessions. Scheduling more than three concurrent sessions—which tends to fragment the audience—should be avoided. (It can be discouraging to all involved for a panel of presenters to outnumber the audience at a given session.)

A printed schedule is essential. With the help of desktop publishing, some regions have been able to finance very attractive booklets which include not only the schedule of papers and activities, but also abstracts of the papers and a listing of participants; however, a neatly word processed, photocopied sheet is quite adequate.

Publicity

Calls for papers may be announced through flyers sent to CCL members and literature departments of colleges and universities in the region. The call for papers may also be posted on the CCL website (www.pepperdine.edu/sponsored/ccl/) and announced in *Christianity and Literature*, although the latter must be sent at least a year, preferably 18 months, before the deadline to allow for publication delay. Include the date and location of the conference, preferred topics, length of papers or abstracts, paper deadline, and the name and address of the program chairperson. It is also useful to list the conferences with *PMLA* and the Bulletin of the Council on the Study of Religion, and, of course, other societies, publications, and memberships—local, regional, and national—who might be interested in the conference theme or featured speaker(s).

A photocopy of all announcements should be sent to the vice president. Upon request, the editors of *Christianity and Literature* will send the conference organizer a set of pressure labels for either the region itself or the national list of CCL members for the call for papers, and for later registration materials. The national organization will provide one copy of mailing labels without charge to each regional organization each year. The region itself must bear the cost of additional sets of labels, which will vary, depending upon the costs of providing the materials. Contact the editors of *Christianity and Literature* for current prices.

Calls for papers should be mailed by the program chairperson at least eight months prior to scheduled meeting; registration materials and final program announcements should be mailed about ten weeks before the meeting.

Each region should maintain its own supplemental mailing list of persons who have attended regional gatherings in past years. It is also vitally important to develop lists of prospective participants who are not already CCL members. To start or augment such a roster, make a list of church-related colleges and universities in your region. A visit to each college's web site can secure the names, institutional addresses, and email addresses

of English and Modern Languages professors. It is also useful to mail announcements to the language and literature departments at all colleges and universities, both secular and Christian, in one's region. These departments are listed in the September issue of *PMLA*. Additional mailing lists can be obtained through contacting other organizations such as the American Academy of Religion.

Local publicity through newspapers, circulars, posters, and classroom announcements is also extremely important in extending the appeal of the CCL and in providing a service to the local community. Students should be encouraged to attend; the CCL provides a subsidized subscription to *Christianity and Literature* for student members.

Brochures of the CCL should be displayed at each regional meeting. These may be obtained from the vice president. Sample copies of *Christianity and Literature* may be obtained from the editorial office of the journal.

Grants in Aid for Speakers

To help encourage the development of healthy vibrant regional gatherings, the CCL Board of Directors has agreed to provide a grant of \$400 to any host institution that

- holds a CCL regional conference of at least two days' duration;
- features a keynote speaker of national reputation;
- ensures that all registrants are CCL members or become new CCL members;
- provides a prompt, complete conference report as specified below.

A grant application form is available on page 9 of these Guidelines.

The grant from the national CCL is intended to defray the honoraria that host institutions pay to keynote speakers of national reputation. In recent years, CCL regionals have included such distinguished keynote speakers as Kathleen Norris, Dana Gioia, Denis Donoghue, Li-Young Lee, Robert Scholes, Patricia Waugh, Julia Kasdorf, Stanley Fish, Louis Simpson, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, John R. May, Anthony Low, Patricia Ward and David Lyle Jeffrey. By offering speakers of that caliber, a regional CCL gathering will attract a larger number of participants, who in turn will contribute to a lively and engaging conversation that we all want to foster.

Policy for Regional Conference Fees

The host institution will establish and charge a basic registration fee for use in defraying the costs of the program.

All registrants at regional meetings must be members of the CCL. Regions are encouraged to offer a widely disseminated call for papers and to accept papers solely on the basis of their merit. However, once a paper has been accepted, in keeping with common professional practice, the author must join CCL if he or she is not already a member.

About four weeks before the conference, the conference organizer should request a current membership list from the editor of *Christianity and Literature* and use this list to verify that all registrants at the regional are members of CCL. The organizer is then responsible for collecting membership fees from those registrants who become new CCL members. Renewals are usually administered through mailings from the subscription office, but they can also be collected for those CCL members whose renewal is due shortly. The regular membership fee is \$25 (which includes a subscription to *Christianity and Literature*). Graduate student membership (which also includes a subscription to the journal) is \$20. These fees are in addition to the basic registration fee. All moneys collected for memberships should be sent directly to the *Christianity & Literature* editor along with a copy of the final report form found on page 9 of these Guidelines.

The only exceptions normally made to this fee schedule are for keynote speakers and for undergraduate students (who will not receive a subscription to *Christianity & Literature*). Any questions or requests for exceptions to the fee policy outlined above should be addressed to the national vice president who, in consultation with the president, will act on such requests. Exceptions can be granted only in unusual circumstances.

Note: Only fees for national CCL memberships belong to the national organization. Other moneys collected (registration above these memberships, banquets, etc.) are the property of the region and should be used as seed money for the next conference.

Graduate Student Grants

In order to encourage graduate students to participate in Regional Conferences, CCL offers one grant of up to \$500 for each regional meeting to meet travel expenses and conference registration fees (to be distributed to as many students as the region sees fit). Applicants must be CCL members in good standing and are expected to stay for the full conference at which they present a paper. Students may not receive an award more than twice. Preference is given to dissertation-level students whose research will be most enhanced by conference participation. The conference director and the regional board representative should ensure that grant is adequately publicized before the conference.

Applicants should send the following material to the CCL Board representative of the region in which the conference is held no later than four months before the meeting in question:

1. A letter, not to exceed 400 words, stating the session in which the student is enrolled and explaining how this session relates to the student's dissertation in progress.
2. An informational (not evaluative) letter from the student's Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair providing date of approval of the student's dissertation topic; expected date of completion; date when all other degree requirements were completed; statement of departmental policy on travel support for graduate students; and amount of funding applicant will receive (if any) toward attendance of the meeting for which the student seeks assistance.

The CCL Board Member for the region, in consultation with the director of the conference and anyone else he or she chooses, will award one or more grants. Awards should be announced no later than one month prior to the meeting for which the applicant seeks assistance. Recipients of the grant should submit their receipts to the conference director or the board member (whomever is so designated) who will forward them to the Treasurer of CCL for reimbursement. **NO MONIES WILL BE DISBURSED WITHOUT RECEIPTS.** The name of the recipient, his/her institution, and the amount awarded should be reported to the Vice President of CCL on the Conference Report Form, along with the student's application and supporting letter from the graduate advisor.

Reporting

Within two weeks of the regional conference, a report on finances, memberships, attendance, and a general assessment of the meeting should be sent by the regional chairperson to the national Vice President, with a copy to the *Christianity and Literature* editor (see pages 10-11). The results of the business meeting should also be included in this report.

**Conference on Christianity and Literature
Application for a Regional Grant in Aid**

Region: _____ Meeting Dates: _____
Site: _____

We hereby apply for a grant of \$400 from the National Conference on Christianity and Literature to be applied to the honorarium for our keynote speaker:

Conference program chair: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Conference arrangements chair: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Name of keynote speaker: _____

Affiliation of keynote speaker: _____

The check should be made out to: _____

The check should be mailed to: _____

We agree

- to organize a conference that lasts at least two days;
- to require all registrants to be or become members of CCL;
- to submit a "Regional Meeting Report" within two weeks of the conference.

Signature of conference arrangements chair _____

Signature of institutional approval: _____ (dean, provost, or VPAA)

date: _____

Submit to: Susan M. Felch, CCL Vice President
Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship
Calvin College
3201 Burton Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 59456

Conference on Christianity and Literature Regional Meeting Report

Region: _____ Meeting Dates: _____
Site: _____ Total attendance: _____

Report checklist:

1. **List of all the conference registrants' names, addresses, status, and institutional affiliation. Please attach.**
2. **List of new members' names and addresses, denoting clearly whether they are new, renewals, or student memberships. Please attach.**

In addition, complete the following summary:

#	\$ Amount	
_____ New memberships @ \$25.00	_____	
_____ New 2-yr. memberships @ \$45.00	_____	
_____ New student memberships @ \$20.00	_____	
_____ New 2-yr. student memberships @ \$35.00	_____	
_____ Renewals @ \$25.00	_____	
_____ Renewals, 2 yr., @ \$45.00	_____	
_____ Renewals, retirees, @ \$20.00	_____	
_____ Total	_____	

3. **Was a \$400 grant in aid for the speaker requested and received?**

YES/NO

4. **If travel award(s) for graduate students were requested, please list the name, academic institution, and amount grant for each student and include with this report a copy of the student application and a letter from his/her advisor attesting to good standing as a graduate student. Send receipts directly to the Treasurer of CCL for reimbursement. NO MONIES WILL BE DISBURSED WITHOUT RECEIPTS.**

5. **How many presentations were given at the conference?**

_____ In plenary sessions

_____ In concurrent sessions

6. **Please attached the printed program.**

7. ___ Please provide a brief assessment of the conference.

8. ___ Results of Business Meeting:

Place, anticipated date, and regional meeting chair of next meeting:

Next Location _____ Date: _____

Next regional meeting chair: _____

9. ___ Regional chair, steering committee members, and their institutional affiliations:

Name	Institution
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Additional comments and suggestions:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: This form, along with lists of registrants and members, information about graduate students who receive travel grants, and a copy of the program should be sent within two weeks of the regional meeting to the CCL Vice President. In addition, please send a copy of this form, the lists of registrants and members, and a check for the membership fees to the C&L co-editor. Checks should be made out to the Conference on Christianity and Literature.

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