

CALL FOR PAPERS

ASCH 2026: “My Kind of Town”

American Society of Church History Annual Meeting

January 8-11, 2026 || Chicago, Illinois, USA

Program Chair: Timothy Larsen, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The theme for the American Society of Church History’s 2026 annual meeting is **My Kind of Town**. This is a lighthearted way to say that the theme is **a sense of place**, that is, *the difference that nation, region, or location makes in the history of Christianity*. Frank Sinatra’s “My Kind of Town” is a pop anthem for Chicago, the city where we are going to have a thoroughly good time meeting together in 2026. Sinatra’s other tribute to the Windy City, “Chicago (That Toddlin’ Town),” to the delight of historians of Christianity, even includes a reference to a well-known evangelist: “The town that Billy Sunday could not shut down.” Maybe the revivalist would have had better success in some other town.

What difference does place make in the history of Christianity? For instance, a proposal could be a study not just of twentieth-century Presbyterians, but specifically Korean Presbyterians; or a study might be not just of Southern Baptists, but of Southern Baptists in Texas; or a study not just of the Jesuits, but Jesuit missions to India. Comparative studies are also welcome. For example, comparing and contrasting Pentecostals in the United States and in Brazil, or fourth-century Christianity in Antioch and Alexandria (which of those two is more your kind of town?) As ever, strong proposals unrelated to the theme will also be considered. In addition to the presidential address, there will be two plenary presentations, one by the early medieval historian **Sarah Foot** (Christ Church, Oxford University), and another by the Reformation historian **Brad S. Gregory** (University of Notre Dame).

Proposal Categories—Proposals from the following periods and categories are particularly welcomed:

- 1) Early Christianity and Patristics
- 2) Medieval and Byzantine Period
- 3) Reformation and Early Modern
- 4) American: Colonial to 21st century, including Native American, African American, Latinx, and Asian American religious histories
- 5) Modern and Contemporary Period
- 6) World Christianity
- 7) Religious / Godless Chicago

*It is our desire to have as many people on the program as possible. Therefore, any one scholar should not be on the program **more than two times**. Those making proposals are highly encouraged to use the slots for chairs and respondents as an opportunity to include more scholars in the program. You should aim to recruit a chair rather than having a presenter also*

*serve as chair. If the same person shows up in multiple proposals, it will work against those proposals being accepted. **Once you have already committed to a proposal, please decline additional requests, and instead recommend others who thereby might also be included in the program.***

Types of Proposals: We invite three types of proposals: regular panels, roundtables, and individual papers. While all proposals will be considered, **we strongly encourage the submission of full panels and roundtables. Applicants seeking to maximize their chances of acceptance are advised to organize and submit a complete panel.** (You can use [this spreadsheet](#) to connect with others who might be interested in organizing a panel.)

- 1) **Regular Panel:** Structured presentations from three scholars of original research papers. Each paper presentation must be no longer than twenty minutes. Moderated by a chairperson, these presentations are often commented upon by a respondent, after which there is a conversation with the audience.
- 2) **Roundtables:** Short presentations on a topic, question, theme, the career of a historian of Christianity, or book significant to the discipline of the history of Christianity. Roundtables are limited to five participants, including the chairperson. The aim of the roundtable is a discussion among the participants, who may present opening remarks (~five minutes each) to frame their further contributions. The roundtable format should reserve a substantial amount of time for interaction with the audience at the end of the formal discussion. We especially welcome professional development roundtables related to research, teaching, public scholarship, and career pathways.
- 3) **Individual Paper:** While the Program Committee strongly prefers regular panel and roundtable proposals, one can also propose an individual paper. If accepted, an individual paper will be placed into a panel—usually constructed from multiple individual paper submissions—by the Program Committee. Most individual papers that are accepted will align well with the theme of “My Kind of Town” or be subfields in the history of Christianity that need strengthening at the ASCH conference, such as Early Church, Medieval, and World Christianity.

Deadlines for Proposals: March 31, 2025 Panels and individual proposals should be submitted to our online platform using the instructions below. The Program Committee will do its best to announce the results of all submissions by the end of June 2025.

Proposal Submission Guidelines:

Panel Submissions

Proposals for regular panels begin with the [panel submission form](#). You will be prompted for a panel title, panel description (up to 300 words), a mini-abstract (up to 50 words; to be included in the conference program if accepted), email addresses for all participants (inviting them to submit abstracts for their papers), and names for the panel chair, respondent and all panelists. (If no Respondent is required, simply list the name of the Chair twice.) **Please note:** After a panel

proposal has been submitted, all participants (but not chairs or respondents) will need to submit abstracts for their papers using the invitation to submit a standard submission form.

Roundtable Submissions

A roundtable is a panel that either contains short papers or no papers, both of which begin with the [panel submission form](#). You will be prompted for a roundtable title, roundtable description (up to 300 words), a mini-abstract (up to 50 words; to be included in the conference program if accepted), and the information for a Chair and Respondent. (If no Respondent is required, simply list the name of the Chair twice.) **Please note:** After a panel proposal has been submitted, all participants (but not chairs or respondents) will need to submit abstracts for their papers/contributions using the invitation to submit a standard submission form.

Individual Paper Submissions

Proposals for a paper (either as part of a panel or as an individual submission) will use the [standard submission form](#). Submitters will be required to enter basic information about their proposal, including a title, an abstract of their presentation (up to 300 words), a mini-abstract (up to 50 words; to be included in the conference program if accepted), and information about the author.

Note

If involving multiple presenters, all proposals must specify how their panel demonstrates diversity (gender, ethnicity, rank, scholarly location, etc.) in their composition. The ASCH is always delighted to have panels that span career stages from graduate students to senior scholars. Sessions are typically 90 minutes in length and allow for three papers (or occasionally four shorter papers), a formal response, and audience interaction. The committee reserves the right to reconfigure sessions as needed.

Membership and Registration Requirements

All session participants, including session chairs and respondents, (with the exception of participants living and working outside the United States) must hold a 2026 ASCH membership by November 15, 2025 to remain on the program.

All session participants, including session chairs and respondents, must also register for the 2026 Annual Meeting by November 15, 2025 to remain on the program.

A/V Support

Panels or papers that do not need A/V support are greatly appreciated and need to be a majority on the conference schedule. Presentations requiring video or audio projection should provide a clear rationale for doing so, as the expense involved is considerable. While we will make every effort to accommodate requests, **the Program Committee cannot guarantee that A/V support will be available for every presentation.**

Additional Questions

If you have any questions related to the Call For Papers or the conference program, please email the Program Committee asch2026@churchhistory.org.