

WORLD CHRISTIANITY CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS 2027

TRANSLATABILITY, TRANSMEDIALITY, AND VERNACULARIZATION IN WORLD CHRISTIANITY

Eighth International Interdisciplinary Conference
Co-sponsored and Co-organized by
World Christianity and History of Religions Program and
Overseas Ministries Study Center at Princeton Theological Seminary, and
Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary
Seoul, South Korea
March 2 – March 6, 2027

The eighth World Christianity Conference invites scholars from all interested fields and disciplines to examine the pivotal role of translation in shaping religious traditions. Rather than being a simple act of linguistic transfer, we are proposing a conversation that approaches translation as a dynamic, historically situated practice of mediation, unfolding across languages, media, and semiotic forms. In particular, the conference seeks to examine how translation fundamentally constitutes religious life and structures how traditions understand and express themselves.

Central to this inquiry is the question of how and why translation functions in the reconfiguration of religious practice, and for whom such translational processes are enacted. What happens if translation is not only a means of transmitting a message, but a set of practices that reconfigure the very conditions of religious expression? The conference attends to a wide spectrum of sacred texts in translation, broadly conceived: from oral utterance to written inscription; manuscript to print; paper to digital interface; architectural form to objects of sacred art; and intersemiotic scriptural expressions in which text, image, sound, and gesture converge.

We invite contributions that examine how perceptions and imaginaries of time, persons, objects (including texts and ideas), and languages participate in the production and negotiation of boundaries between traditions, communities, epistemologies, and media ecologies. Translation, in this sense, emerges as a generative site of boundary-making and boundary-crossing, of both differentiation and relationality. The conference explores how the movement—or strategic arrest—of people, texts, sounds, rituals, and material forms reconfigures religious worlds. We are interested in how trajectories of circulation give rise to new epistemic formations and aesthetic practices. Concepts such as translanguaging, vernacularization, trans/inter-mediality, and intersemiotic translation provide productive avenues for rethinking the modalities through which religious expressions are embodied.

We particularly welcome contributions that revisit and critically engage foundational concepts of translation that have shaped the field of World Christianity. Seminal frameworks such as Lamin Sanneh's theory of vernacularization and Andrew Walls's "Translation Principle" have profoundly influenced scholarly understandings of how Christianity becomes locally embedded across linguistic and cultural contexts. While these paradigms continue to offer valuable insights into religious encounter, we invite scholars to extend and challenge these conversations in light of new theoretical developments. How might contemporary approaches to translation, mediation,

materiality, mobility, and semiotics open new directions for thinking about religious transformation? What conceptual possibilities emerge when translation is examined beyond linguistic transfer? We encourage contributions that carry these foundational discussions into new terrains and help chart future directions for the study of religion and World Christianity.

We welcome papers that explore translation across speech, text, performance, and material culture, and that attend to how these practices reshape networks of exchange, produce forms of religious subjectivity, and structure participation in wider religious publics. Interdisciplinary work drawing on translation studies, religious studies, anthropology, history, literary and media studies, theology, and related fields is especially encouraged.

Some possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Translation as mediation, transformation, and epistemic practice in religion
- Multilingualism and translanguaging in religious communities
- Intersemiotic translation and intermediality in religious texts and practices
- Vernacularization, mission, and the politics of linguistic hierarchy
- Commentary, exegesis, and translation as co-constitutive practices
- The mobility and materiality of religious texts, objects, and media
- Oral traditions, performance, and the transmedial transmission of religious knowledge
- Digital media and the reconfiguration of sacred textuality
- Language, power, and the ethics of translation
- Mistranslation, opacity, and untranslatability in religious contexts
- Circulation, networks, and global religious exchange

Keywords: translation; multilingual Christianities; mediation; transmediality and intermediality; language and linguistic practice; mobility and circulation; translanguaging; vernacularization; intersemiotic translation

- Paper or Panel proposals should be submitted online:
https://ptsem.formstack.com/forms/world_christianity_conference_2027
- Proposals Deadline: September 15, 2026
- Notification of successful proposals by October 15, 2026
- Conference Registration: early-bird registration begins on October 15 and ends on December 30. Full registration fee will be charged thereafter.
- Limited travel subsidies will be available for participants from the Global South with accepted paper/panel proposals.

Conveners: Afe Adogame, Raimundo Barreto, Soojin Chung, Sharon Park, Chang Ho Lee, and Sung Hyun Nam