



North American  
Paul Tillich Society

Ilona Nord  
President

Benjamin Chicka  
President Elect

Greylyn Hydinger  
Vice President

Bin Song  
Past President

Lawrence A. Whitney, LC†  
Treasurer

Board Members:  
Rachel Baard  
Kathleen Burton  
Charles Fox  
Johanne S.T. Kristensen  
Kirk MacGregor  
Russell Re Manning  
Samuel Needham  
Eric Trozzo

## 2023 Annual Meeting Call for Papers

November 17, 2023  
San Antonio, Texas

For its 2023 Annual Meeting, the North American Paul Tillich Society seeks papers loosely organized around the theme of Paul Tillich and contemporary technologies. This call can be localized into, but not limited by, the three following topics:

### Tillich and Embodiment

Many Tillich scholars, especially prominent feminist scholars, have argued a greater focus on who we are is important for understanding some of Tillich's key concepts. A greater understanding of each human being, the ways each of us are unique and yet in some ways similar, might yield new insights on the meaning of the ground of all being and the "New Being" for such embodied beings, for example. We welcome paper addressing this topic, especially those focusing on:

- scientific understandings of what it means to be embodied;
- embodiment and posthumanism—from defibrillators to "smart" implants, the posthuman has been and will continue to be a real phenomenon;
- embodiment and its relation to art and a theology of culture;
- embodiment and religious pluralism/comparative theology.

### Tillich and Artificial Intelligence

ChatGPT may currently be making headlines, but humans have been creating new artificially intelligent beings since the 1950s. If the recent advances in AI mean it will be competing for human status, is this a challenge for Tillich's thought or perfectly at home given his focus on ambiguity? Does AI have the possibility to overcome or increase estrangement? Beyond such questions, we welcome papers engaging Tillich's thought with current advances in AI, including:

- AI and Tillich's distinction between ontological and technical reason;
- AI, paradox, and ambiguity;
- the implications of AI for ethics;
- the consequences an increasingly digital culture has for heteronomy, autonomy, and theonomy.

**The Society will hold a book panel on Benjamin J. Chicka's 2021 book *Playing as Others: Theology and Ethical Responsibility in Video Games* (Baylor University Press)**

In *Playing as Others*, Chicka provides a sophisticated analysis of video game culture and specific games in relation to individual estrangement and the cultivation of ethical responsibility, especially the ethical engagement of the marginalized. The book argues that video games can and do teach ethical responsibility.

Chicka develops, extends, and harmonizes Paul Tillich's theology of culture and Emmanuel Levinas' theory of the other in order to provide a robust theoretical framework for this theological and ethical inquiry. The Society invites papers on Chicka's book as a whole or papers that deal with Chicka's treatment of the following themes or topics:

- the development of Tillich's theology of culture into a theology of pop-culture, or the connection to art culture and the treatment of video games as art;
- the analysis of video game culture in response to marginalization and the ways the video games analyzed by Chicka (or other games) reveal the depth dimension of existence;
- the relationship between art and technology;
- the employment of technology in teaching ethical responsibility;
- the creative synthesis of Tillich's theology of culture and Levinas' theory of the other;
- Chicka's attempt to get ethical traction from either a ground-of-being theology (Tillich) or apophatic theology more generally (Levinas).

### **Open Call**

Of course, apart from the theme of Paul Tillich and contemporary technologies, papers on other generic themes which are timely and intended to advance the contemporary development of Tillichian studies are also welcomed.

To propose a paper for one of these panels, please submit an abstract of no more than 350 words and a current CV to Benjamin Chicka ([benjamin.chicka@curry.edu](mailto:benjamin.chicka@curry.edu)), no later than May 21, 2023.

Authors of accepted papers will be notified by June 1, 2023. Submissions of a proposal indicates agreement to submit a full paper draft by November 1, 2023 for pre-circulation among the Society members in preparation for the panels. Panel presentation durations will be limited in order to privilege time for Q&A and discussion of the pre-circulated papers.