

IAMS EUROPE CONFERENCE

AUGUST 23-27, 2019
SANKT AUGUSTIN
GERMANY

LOCATING EUROPEAN MISSIONS

IN A WOUNDED WORLD IN DEEP
TRANSFORMATION

CONFERENCE WEBSITE AND
REGISTRATION
MISSIONSWISSENSCHAFT.EU

Locating European Missions

in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

Conference Theme: Living and believing in an unstable and vulnerable world has become the prevailing experience and challenge for most societies worldwide, and so too for many parts of Europe, as we move further into the 21st century. Progressive thinking has hit real barriers for some time now, with no clear vision for our common future available, giving way to different forms of retrotopian nostalgia which pronounce revisionist hopes of an imagined past (Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia*, 2017). Recent analysis, however, proposes to read the profound changes, risks and vulnerabilities of our current world as being part of a deep, even metamorphic transformation (Ulrich Beck, *Metamorphosis of the World*, 2016).

Against such a backdrop, this conference seeks to locate European missions in that wounded world of deep transformation in a three-fold way:

- We start with naming the wounds and transformations, past and present, which haunt European societies and Christian missions – and re-examine their complex entanglements and complicities in today's wounded and vulnerable world (day 1).
- This allows us not only to revisit theologies of mission, foremost missions *ad vulnera*, but also to rethink them in new perspectives, especially in light of recent shifts in theology and contexts where vulnerability and deep transformation have long been reflected. Here, a special focus is given to new locations and meanings of baptism as part of a missionary spirituality towards deep transformation in Europe (day 2).
- With such locating, distinct areas of vulnerable missions and commitments as resources of healing, renewal and deep transformation for living and believing in today's world come to the fore (ecclesial futures; engagement for religious freedom; practices of deep solidarity etc.) (day 3).

The conference seeks to further interdenominational exchange across Europe's missiological networks and missionary scholar-practitioners. It represents also a regional (European) conference in preparation for the global IAMS 2020 conference in Sydney on "Powers, Inequalities and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World", 9-14 July, 2020.

Coordination: On behalf of IAMS Europe, Institute of Missiology and the Study of Theologies Beyond Europe, University of Münster, and SVD Missiological Institute, Saint Augustin, Germany. Contacts: Norbert Hintersteiner, iamseuro@uni-muenster.de and Christian Tauchner SVD, 2019iams-conference@steyler.eu.

Coordination draws on a support group and open platform of individual members or representatives of various European regional missiological networks and interest groups (NIME, AFOM, CEEAMS, BIAPT(Mission Studies), OMN, IACM Europe, IIMF, DGMW, IIMF, KEK, etc.).

Venue: Missionspriesterseminar Sankt Augustin, Arnold Janssen Straße 30, 53757 Sankt Augustin

Friday 23 August 2016

| 16:00-18:00 | Arrival and Registration

| 18:30-19:30 | Dinner

| 20:00-21:30 | **Opening | Plenary Session 1**

Norbert Hintersteiner (Münster) and Christian Tauchner SVD (St.Augustin)
Welcome

Robert J. Schreiter (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago)

Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

This paper explores the current situation for engaging in mission in Europe at the present time. It notes that Europe is living in a situation "between the times" that is marked by breakdown of established social patterns, widening divisions, and a sense of loss of control. In such times, it is important to see paradox where others see polarities, and look for the clues of a new framework for understanding what the *missio Dei* means. This is explored under two rubrics: the woundedness of the world and the need for deep transformation. The deep wounds Europe carries on many fronts can be addressed by a spirituality of seeing baptism as entering into the death and resurrection of Christ. The need for deep transformation calls forth practices of ongoing conversion, kenosis, building community, and prophetic witness. Such acknowledgment of wounds and these four practices can prepare us to seek a new framework for mission for Europe today.

Robert J. Schreiter is the Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, USA. He is past president of both the American Society of Missiology and the Catholic Theological Society of America. He has also worked in peacebuilding after conflict on all six continents. Among his books are *Constructing Local Theologies; The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local; Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*.



| 21:30-22:30 | Reception

Saturday 24 August 2019

Naming Wounds and Transformations

The first day of the conference looks at processes of history and transformation in Europe that have produced wounds in different fields and behaviours. Traumatic experiences are often barely dealt with and are easily instrumentalized for political aims. The churches have played their roles in ambiguous ways both as victimizers and martyrs. Historical and cultural memory is not self-evident but requires responsible construction and articulation in order to be able to contribute to the hopeful configuration of society.

Chair:

Geographies of Religion and Politics of the Wounds

As wounds of the past as well as present life in a wounded world continue to shape Europe's collective memories and identities, they become the battle ground for various political, cultural and religious interests and come to be seen as obstacles or resources for transformation, social and religious change. The panels of session 2 and 3 study Europe's entanglement in such Religion and Politics of the Wounds in select European regions and explore Vulnerability as Socio-cultural, Ethical and Theological Concept for living and believing in a wounded world. Both areas of analysis and reflection are key to a future Missiology and Mission *ad Vulnera* in Europe.

András Máté-Tóth (Szeged University)

Within Wounded Worlds: Collective Identities and Missionary Capacity in Central and Eastern Europe

For long positioned at the crossroads of major cultural and political hegemonies, Central and Eastern Europe's collective memory is marked by major haunting historical wounds (traumas), which have a determining impact on its capacity for social and religious transformations: (i) the lack of national sovereignty, (ii) the refusal to allow practicing minority rights, (iii) a politically determined social mobility, (iv) the persecution of religions, churches and dissidents, and (v) genocides and other mass killings. The paper explores how in midst of the presence and political instrumentalization of such wounded collective identities, present-day missionary capacity of the churches and of Christian theology can be perceived.



András Máté-Tóth is professor for the Study on Religions at Szeged University. His research interests include: the mutual interaction between social and religious turns in Central and Eastern Europe, the theoretical interpretation of contemporary religious processes. Latest book: *Verwundete Identitäten. Freiheit und Populismus in Ost-Mittel-Europa* (Herder 2018)

Irina Paert (University of Tartu)

'Keep Your Mind in Hell and Despair Not' (St.Siluoan). The Wounds and Complicities of Orthodoxy in Estonia in the 20th Century

The collective wounds of colonialism, war and repression have underpinned a now secularized theology of the nation's suffering in the Baltic memory. Orthodoxy was a minority religion in Estonia: during the time of the Russian empire it was the faith of the Tsar and during socialism it was the faith of the Russians who were identified with the communists. The current commemoration of the martyrs by the Orthodox churches readily confirms the collective image of the church as victim of an atheist regime, while downplaying issues of collaboration. This paper revisits critically the ambivalent and controversial location of the Orthodox church within the Baltic memory of national suffering. It further offers a distinct

Baltic Orthodox theological prospect of Christian mission to collective wounds, drawing on St Siluoan the Athonite (1866-1938) and his rich interpretation in the works of Archimandrite Sophrony Saharov (1896-1993) and Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935).

Irina Paert is a Senior Researcher at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Tartu. She is the author of two monographs, *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (2010) and *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (2003). She also edited a collection of articles on the history of Baltic Orthodoxy (2018; in Russian) and on Orthodox pedagogy (2013; in Estonian).



| 11:00-12:30 |

Plenary Session 3

Chair:

Vulnerability as Socio-Cultural, Ethical and Theological Concept

Zilka Spahić Šiljak (TPO Foundation, Sarajevo)

Social Vulnerability and the Ethics of Responsibility in the Balkans: Whose Lives Matter?

Very often behind the triumph of truth, justice and prosperity of modern civilization we find so many narratives of violence, marginalization and deprivation of basic rights – and exposure to pain and loss. The human body keeps the score and remembers everything which it has been through. Social vulnerability is a result of our exposure to pain, loss and violence particularly if we belong to a minority. The problem is how we value vulnerability, and how much some lives matter in comparison with the lives of others who are less privileged. In this paper I will explore how the construction of our bodies in the social and political space of war and the post-war transition in the Balkans influences our vulnerability, capacity to grieve and act as an ethical being. Working on peacebuilding in the Balkans in the last two decades has made me re-think the ethics of responsibility. How do we decide whose life is more valuable and why do we grieve only for some people and do not show compassion for others? How do we sympathize with some groups of people and dehumanize and not care for others? How do we decide about it? What are the ethical foundations that shape our sensitivity towards others and how do religion and churches empower or disempower in the discourse of responsibility?



Zilka Spahić Šiljak holds a PhD in gender studies and works on issues involving human rights, politics, religion, education and peacebuilding. She runs TPO Foundation Sarajevo and teaches at several universities in BiH and abroad. Her publications include: *Shining Humanity – Life Stories of Women Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2014); *Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities. Post-Socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (2012); *Women, Religion and Politics* (2010).

Miriam Leidinger (Missio, Aachen)

The Power of Vulnerability: A Systematic Approach to an Ambivalent Term

As the present times are marked by an increased sense of insecurity and vulnerability, talking about vulnerability is *en vogue* across many academic discourses. The aim of this presentation is to systematically reveal the diverse layers of the term vulnerability by disclosing its ambivalence and cognates across various fields. Why and how should theology talk about vulnerability? Conceptualizing vulnerability as distinct theological thought, do we need a “theology of vulnerability”, a “theology for the vulnerable” or a “vulnerable theology”? In sum, the paper will map theology’s contribution to the discourse on the “power of vulnerability” and indicate where caution about it is critical.

Miriam Leidinger works at the Theological Research Desk at Missio Aachen. Her research interests include gender and queer studies, body and religion, contextual and liberation theologies. She holds a PhD in Systematic Theology, with her thesis published as *Verletzbarkeit gestalten. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit 'Verletzbarkeit' anhand der Christologien von Jürgen Moltmann, Jon Sobrino und Graham Ward*, Regensburg 2018.



| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions I

| 16:30-18:00 |

Plenary Session 4

Chair:

Complicity and Mission in a Wounded World: Theological Perspectives

This topic will be interpreted from two perspectives: On the one hand, historical and post-colonial studies reveal how Western Christian missions have been complicit in wounding the world. On the other hand, Christian faith inspires a mission of resistance to the complicity of big business, economic globalization, and greediness that causes exploitation, forced displacement, and environmental destruction. For each perspective, we will interrogate a particular example theologically. First, one of the most insidious ways in which mission compromised with the evils of colonialism is in its complicity with racism and white supremacy. To what extent is the theology of mission infected with this damaging worldview? Second, involuntary migration is related to forces of economic globalization and super-power conflicts. What analysis of the problem does theology offer and what solutions does it propose?

Anthony G. Reddie (Wesley House, Cambridge)

African Caribbean religo-cultural retention as riposte to mission Christianity

The rise in prominence of Contextual theologies has reminded us also of the ideological basis of much that can be construed as theology. Any casual observance of the role that Christianity played in the construction of the British Empire cannot but help notice the ways in which Eurocentric, Christian theology provided the buttressing for the ideological claims to

subjugate and occupy lands and people's minds. In the now famous dictum of Stanley Livingstone the British Empire was founded on the triumvirate of 'Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization.' This paper explores how an experiential engagement with African Caribbean religio-cultural retention can assist in deconstructing the bourgeois civilizing code of respectability of Mission Christianity that has given rise to a conservative, spiritualized disembodied mode of faith that ignores the materiality of Blackness.

Anthony G. Reddie is an Extraordinary Professor and Research Fellow of Theological Ethics at the University of South Africa and a Fellow of Wesley House, in Cambridge. He is a prolific writer whose work explores the interface of Black theology and Practical theology. He is editor of *Black Theology: An International Journal*.



Judith Gruber (Leuven)

"I pray instead to be haunted, bypassing the arrogance of the cure" (G. Spivak)

Addressing Post/Colonial Trauma through Christ's Wounded Resurrection Body.

I will situate the issue of forced migration in a broader framework by examining how post/colonial societies deal with the legacies of colonialism that live on in the form of racism. The guiding question is this: What analysis of the problem of post/colonial trauma can theology offer and what solutions does it suggest? I will develop an answer by comparing two memory discourses in the wake of empire that set out to develop counter-narratives to the colonial discourse: I will, first, examine the post/colonial relationship between Belgium and the DRC as it is imagined in the Royal Museum of Central Africa. Founded by Leopold II as propaganda for his colonial efforts, the RMCA is currently closed for renovation and is developing new modes for the representation of Belgium's colonial past. Bringing in a theological perspective, I will, contrast the RMCA's shifting memory politics with postcolonial re-tellings of NT stories about cross and resurrection. My goal is to discern what kinds of memory politics are effective in contesting the discursive sovereignty of the colonial gaze and the violent mechanisms through which it maintains its power in post/colonial societies.



Judith Gruber is Research Professor of Systematic Theology at KU Leuven, Belgium. In her research, she brings Catholic theology into conversation with critical cultural theories. Recent publications include *Intercultural Theology. Exploring World Christianity after the Cultural Turn* (V&R 2017).

| 18:30-19:30 |

Dinner

| 20:00-21:00 |

Plenary Session 5

European Platform of Missiological Networks

IAMS Europe Business Session

A Missionary Spirituality Towards Deep Transformation: Locating Baptism in Vulnerable and Transforming Europe

A missionary spirituality towards deep transformation is grounded in a profound humility. It is carried by an understanding that the *missio Dei* will bring the world to its deep transformation and final reconciliation. Human cooperation in it is marked by kenosis through baptism, ongoing conversion, building community, and prophetic witness. What kenosis entails in search of deep transformation is learning to live radically with the fact that, in baptism, we carry the death of the Lord in our bodies (2 Cor 4:11). This is most manifest when our mission is with those carrying wounds. Baptism commits us to this manifestation of the death of Christ so that, as Paul reminds us, the resurrection of Christ might be made visible. The paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ is not a seamless move from one state to another for Jesus; it is a radical disruption and emergence of something quite new that is paradoxically also in continuity with the past. The practice of kenosis and baptism keeps freeing us from clinging to the wrong ideas and the wrong things. It also conforms us more closely to the action of God in the Word becoming flesh, thereby helping us put on the mind of Christ.

From scholarly analysis, baptism has become a major issue in the rapidly changing societies in Europe in recent years. Discussing baptism in Europe through the lens of the secularization theories calls attention to the socio-political and religious realities of nation-states, denominations, and church-state relationships. Discourses on nationalism, the so called Volkskirche, proselytism, apostasy, as well as individual human rights come to the fore. The so-called de-churching processes and the emergence of new forms of churches are other areas in which the question of baptism becomes relevant. Additionally, complex socio-political processes and changes in the religious landscape of Europe caused by diverse migration processes call for a rethinking of baptism in relation to other faith traditions. As part of migration dynamics, the issue of conversions of asylum seekers and their relation to migration management also opens up new discussions about the meaning of baptism. While these debates include socio-political, ecclesiological and religious aspects, they also actualize questions and analyses of power, vulnerability, religious identity/ies and create a broader concern for a missionary spirituality towards deep transformation in a wounded world.

In light of such complexity, the *Special Topic Day* seeks to bring together both practical and interdisciplinary academic knowledge and provide a forum where topics of baptism in contemporary Europe can be explored in three distinct **roundtable discussions**.

Chair:

Mapping Baptism in Territorial Churches and Nation Building

The first roundtable embarks on addressing baptism in Europe with two introductory presentations on the state of research around baptism in Europe. Further, experts will discuss how the link between the nation state, national identity and baptism. National identity is concerned with the emotional need for authenticity, identity and belonging. At the same time, national identity is also concerned with foundations for legitimate power to create and maintain social order. Thus, a number of narratives, which have been instrumental for their creation, form modern European nations. Especially, starting with modernity, religious and national ideas/narratives have been intertwined and baptism has been used as a symbol of nation making within historiography (E.g. baptizing the nations in the ethnic narrative, the elite narrative, the patriotic narrative, or the covenant-narrative).

Although in different forms, (e.g. dynamics of the Nordic region might differ from dynamics in Easter or Southern Europe), churches have been instrumental in creating national identity and belonging; church membership has been understood as part of the national identity. In recent decades, several of the established and old churches struggle with declining number of baptisms. This has led to increased focus on understanding church members views on baptism, including why members choose not to let their children be baptized, their expectations from churches, and the 'lived ecclesiology' of church members in so called secular contexts. But it has also lead to revisiting questions concerning the relation between e.g. 'Danish-ness' and Christianity' or 'Polish-ness and Christianity'. The link between baptism and national identity is observable in France as well. Baptism is a matter of free choice. Yet many cases show that especially when it comes to people who immigrate to France, baptism becomes a symbol if integration into the larger society. Christian communities struggle with the question of how to explain the meaning of baptism to people who see it as a symbol of citizenship of belonging to French society. At the same time, there is also the issue of social pressure and baptism, if in no other ways, than through a familial pressure, especially in 'traditional families'. How to rediscover and promote the theological meaning of baptism in a secularized context of the nation state, as well as for French traditional families and for newly arriving people?

Roundtable resource persons: To be confirmed.

Chair:

Baptism in Multi-Faith Europe

Discussing the link between baptism and multi-faith Europe, the second roundtable focuses on migration processes that raise questions about baptism. Migration dynamics in Europe when addressed through the migrant- non-migrant dichotomy, lead to the creation and sustaining of the so-called “migrant churches” (a very problematic label, which mirrors that labelling and implies imbalanced power relations). Baptism in “migrant churches” is being practiced in manifold ways. Moreover, people baptized in one of those communities, when changing communities may not be accepted as baptized. Beside the theologically unsettled issue of baptism in communities labelled as migrant churches, baptism becomes an issue also in the relationship between the so-called “already existing churches of a country” and the “migrant churches”. Theological-missionary reflection on these issues is much needed. What kind of theological understandings of baptism lie at the foundation of actual practices? How do and what kinds of power relations ascribe meaning to baptism?

Another concern, which links migration with the earlier highlighted phenomena of nation building, is the (Eastern) Orthodox churches’ presence in parts of Europe where they started to emerge due to the large number of migrants from countries with a majority of Orthodox believers. How is baptism being addressed and practiced in those communities? What is the meaning and function of baptism? What new practices arise?

In a number of European countries, baptism has become a hot issue due to conversions of asylum seekers and their requests for baptism. Baptism becomes a question, which Christian communities need to address outside ecclesial structures, in legislative settings. In a number of EU countries, e.g. the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and the UK, an asylum seeker whose case had been rejected could reapply for asylum if she/he can have plausible arguments that his or her conversion to Christianity might cause him/her persecution in his/her homeland. What are the theological implications of placing baptism in the legal procedures of the asylum law? What are the implications for churches, Christian communities and their leaders when challenged to deal with baptism in such a context? Is there common reflection on Christian identity in European contexts? Do theological reflection and ecclesial guidelines and policies follow or contrast political agendas? How is this situation a challenge theology/mission?

Roundtable resource persons: To be confirmed.

| 11:00-12:30 |

Third Roundtable – Session 7b

Chair:

Baptism and Secularization

The third roundtable seeks to address issues related to baptism with special attention to the “rights” of the individual. Keywords within this session are individual identity, individualization, (re)engineered humanity, and de-baptizing.

In October 2011, a French court decided in favour of an individual who had requested to have his name permanently removed from the baptism registration of the local Catholic Church in Normandy. The ‘de-baptizing’ of this individual became a starting point for a national ‘de-baptizing’ movement of persons protesting against the Catholic Church by requesting to be removed from records. The secular drift of society and individual protests seems to stand in sharp contrast to the sacramental theology of the church, and raises new questions such as ‘can baptism be undone?’

Transgender sexuality is another aspect, which this section seeks to explore in relation to baptism. The speed of technological developments in medicine and changes in human rights legislations trigger questions about the identity of a person during and after medical treatment. Some transgender people express their desire to have their baptism re-confirmed or be re-baptized when receiving a new social identity. How do churches respond to such questions? How do churches create space for discussion on baptism and transgender questions?

Individualization and baptism are linked in many different forms; one last issue to be named is the materialization of baptism in terms of god-parenthood. In a theological sense god-parenthood implies the responsibility of the god-parent to care about the spiritual formation of the baptized one. However in many contexts in Europe god-parenthood is being practiced in terms of materiality, e.g. the god-parents providing the baptized one and his/her family with money and/or other sorts of gifts at certain moments of life. How can a rethinking of baptism focusing on such materialized practices gain new meaning beyond materiality?

Roundtable resource persons: To be confirmed.

| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch |

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions II

| 16:00-19:00 |

Visit of Migrant Churches in Cologne-Müllheim,
with Dinner

Light for all Peoples

Iraqi Women's Church Choir Sun of the Arameans
& Women's Schola Ars Choralis Coeln

Directed by Maria Jonas, Beate Alsdorf and Ghedaa Sami



"Light for all peoples" is the motto of the collaboration of an Iraqi women's choir, "Sun of the Arameans", of the Syrian Catholic migrant church in Cologne and the Cologne women's choir "Ars Choralis Coeln".

This collaboration was initiated in 2015 by Sister Rebekka (Community of Jerusalem, Groß St. Martin) and is based on her interest in oriental church history. Together with Cologne musician Beate Alsdorf, Sister Rebekka visited a liturgical service of the Syrian Catholic migrant community in Cologne Mülheim, where a local Iraqi women's choir led by Ghedaa Sami beautifully carried the liturgy. They were deeply moved by the faith of these Christians from Iraq, their ancient traditions, and their Aramaic and Arab prayers and songs. The idea arose to invite these Iraqi women's choir and develop a program together with other women vocalists and musicians based in Cologne. Professional support was provided by Maria Jonas, medieval music expert and head of the Cologne women's choir: Ars Choralis Coeln. Since then, they have developed several joint concerts and performed in joint liturgical services.

The rehearsals are like a voyage of discovery: at first the music of the Aramaic-Arabic and Medieval choral cultures sounded completely different, not only because of the languages and musical traditions, but also because of the different process of learning new songs: Western musicians are accustomed to learning with music written down, whereas the Iraqi women base their learning on an oral tradition. This difference quickly was understood as enrichment, while it was recalled that also in the Middle Ages songs were conveyed orally and

instrumentalists improvised to the songs, as it is still common in the Orient today. This allows for a creative exchange and togetherness.

A bridge between the two worlds is also offered by the musician Bassem Hawar, who was born in Baghdad, where he had received his professional music education. He lives in Cologne for well over 10 years and does not only speak both languages, but also feels at home in both cultures.

The concerts include songs in Aramaic and Arabic, Portuguese, Latin and Italian: Iraqi, Syriac and Aramaic Marian hymns; Cantigas de Santa Maria and Laudes from the 13th century; Gregorian chants and songs by Hildegard von Bingen. Both ensembles are accompanied by Western and Oriental instruments: flutes (Beate Alsdorf), Djoze / Iraqi knee violin (Bassem Hawar), Oud and Viella (Dominika Maria Alkhodari) and Harp (Uta Kirsten). Passages from Ephraim the Syrian and other church fathers of the tradition of the Oriental churches add to the programme.

In a wounded world of deep transformation, Light for All People sends a signal of hope that integration can succeed, when one meets with curiosity, grows together in a collaborative project, and radiates the joy that comes from it to all.



Monday 26 August 2019

Missions ad Vulnera: Solidarity and Transformation

The conference so far has proposed that we use two aspects of the current situation as points of entry to locate the challenges to European missions today: the wounded character of the world, and a quest for deep transformation. Locating European Missions in a “*missio ad vulnera*”—“mission to wounds” is a response to living within the *missio Dei* in today’s situation. To be sure, the Christian mission has always had some sense of this, in its concern for healthcare, relief from natural catastrophe, care for the stranger, the migrant, and the orphan—indeed, in much of its *diakonia*. Drawing on this tradition and given the current challenges, here we will explore how a mission to wounds today requires new locating and refiguring of Christian communities; aims at creating resilience among those who carry wounds; pursues spaces of religious freedom; engages in deep solidarity, transformation and renewal.

| 09:00-10:30 |

Plenary Session 8

Chair:

Christian Communities in Mission

The theme for IAMS 2020 follows “Powers, Inequalities and Vulnerabilities”. Reading these words in Europe in the early twenty-first century brings to mind the end or at least the ‘twilight’ of Christendom that has been occurring across the continent for the last one hundred years or so. The Christian churches find themselves in a changed relationship with “the powers” and therefore are also “vulnerable” – even to actual death, in some places. However, if taken seriously, this new situation raises fresh possibilities in mission - not least in solidarity with those who find themselves on the wrong side of inequality and are therefore equally vulnerable. This part of our conference addresses the state of European Christian communities in relation to both our current realities of decline and the eschatological promise of the future reign of God. Therefore, we will engage with European Christian Communities in mission through the lens of ‘reality, grief and hope’. Reality, because, as Stefan Paas has shown, current research is often far from being related to what is actually happening, and because we need to learn to live in a new reality without the props we have relied on for more than a thousand years. Grief, because if only we could truly lament and mourn the passing of Christendom and all that was truly good about it, we might be free to re-envision and innovate future possibilities. Hope, because there are green shoots of something new emerging in many places and we must, as missiologists attend to them with appreciative, honest, critical and rich research.

Stefan Paas (Amsterdam)

Missional Christian Communities in Conditions of Marginality

What does it mean to be a missional Christian community in a context where missionary successes are few and far between? How can the church reinvent itself on a local level in such a context? For this to happen it is important to have a spirituality that does recognize the

hard facts, yet is not defeated by them. In my contribution I will focus on such a missional spirituality of small Christian communities in societies where not many people are interested in God and the church. I believe it is possible to be a joyful and energetic community especially in such circumstances.



Stefan Paas (b. 1969) is Professor of Missiology and Intercultural Theology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Professor of Missiology at Theologische Hogeschool Kampen. He authored and co-authored a number of books, including *Church Planting in the Secular West* (2016), *Sharing Good News* (2017), and *Pilgrims and Priests* (in preparation).

Marie-Hélène Robert (Lyon)

Catholic Responses to the Vulnerability of the European Parish Church: Threads, Disruptions and Hopes

Are Catholic parishes in Europe more vulnerable now than at the beginning of the 20th century? Are they reduced to managing their decline or are they able to provide constructive responses to that decline? The reception of many non-European Christians, social mobility and the fragmentation of families challenge the traditional parish model. But a large number of continuities also appear: parishes promote a living associative world, are attentive to social vulnerabilities, rely on other ecclesial realities or target the public of their mission.

The Catholic parish model, “because it possesses great flexibility can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 28, 2013). A number of initiatives are spreading in the 21st century (training missionary disciples, pastoral care on the web, experiences inspired by the evangelical Churches). We will study the responses to the vulnerability of parishes in three complementary experiences in France.

Marie- Helene Robert, Professor of theology, missiologist, Faculty of theology, Catholic University of Lyon. Congregation of Our Lady of the Apostles



| 11:00-12:30 |

Plenary Session 9

Chair:

Religious Freedom in Missions *ad Vulnera*

There is growing awareness of the multiple intersections between Christian witness and harassment, discrimination, pressure, violence and persecution against Christians. Recent consultations and research have focused on “Christian Women Under Pressure for Their Faith”. On another note the emerging “Observatory on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries” is focusing on Portuguese speaking countries.

The former Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique have both experienced or are still experiencing post-colonial violations. This poses particular challenges to the Churches.

Helene Fisher & Christof Sauer (FTH Gießen/ ETF Leuven)

Gendered Religious Persecution and its Repercussions for Missions ad Vulnera in Europe

Emerging understanding of gendered religious persecution in some of the world's most difficult countries for Christians offers timely insight into complex dynamics in which the Church and Missions have too often been unwittingly complicit due to limited visibility of complexities and unaddressed theological distortions. Fresh research into this deeply wounding global phenomena stands as both a warning and an avenue of hope for churches in Europe and Christian ministries based in Europe which are working in the most severely affected areas of the world. Drawing on the latest trends identified by World Watch Research as well as outcomes of *Christian Women under Pressure for their Faith*, we will explore practical opportunities for a holistic approach to bring healing and restoration to three populations: Christian refugees in Europe who have fled persecution, Christian refugees who are currently experiencing persecution in their countries of refuge and Christian populations outside of Europe with which European missions work.



Helene Fisher is Senior Specialist on Women and Persecution in Open Doors International and analyst for World Watch Research on Gendered Persecution Dynamics.



Christof Sauer is Professor of Religious Freedom and Research on Persecution of Christians at Giessen School of Theology in Germany and part time professor of Religious Studies and Missiology at the ETF in Leuven.

Fernando Caldeira Da Silva (University of South Africa)

Postcolonial Violations of Religious Freedom in Mozambique and Angola and Neo-colonial Influences

Both in the SADC region, Angola and Mozambique depict similarities and differences in issues pertaining to citizenship, human rights and religious freedom. The impact of Portuguese colonization continues to exert its influence in legislation and the social mindset, resulting in unique views and ways to apply international law regarding religious liberty. That is, the reinvention of a culturally Lusophone world is bearing its effects also in human rights. However, other ideological forces joined in to alter the colonial influence, which were effective to shape legislation and the mindset behind politics and economics. It is under these circumstances that violations of religious freedom in Mozambique and Angola affect the witness of the churches and individual Christians.



Fernando Caldeira da Silva is the Deputy-director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Director of the International Institute of Religious Freedom for the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and regions (CPLP) in the process to establish the IIRF-CPLP Observatory for religious freedom.

| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions III

| 16:30-18:00 |

Plenary Session 10

Chair:

Missions of Deep Solidarity and Renewal

Christian theology teaches us that solidarity is of existential importance for Christianity and for the whole human family. Interpreted theologically the concrete actions of Christians are a practical consequence of the divine existence, of the *Missio Dei* and God's "deep Solidarity" with humanity and all creation. The existential significance of the divine being and the highest act of love was demonstrated through the life of Christ. The aim of love demonstrated in and by Christ was to show that a life of fulfilment or a good life already has begun in this world in different dimensions of concrete solidarity. When solidarity is being practiced it connects communities, people, cultures and continents. Within the last 30 years Europe has adopted solidarity cooperation in order to ensure a better life for all citizens. In the same spirit Western Europe and its Christian communities advocated strongly for integration of the Eastern and Western part of Europe. But how does Eastern Europe understand solidarity and the influence of the "foreigner"— even when these foreigners are European – and how does, out of solidarity, a dialogue emerge about the future for a better world and not only for a better Eastern Europe?

Cristian Sonea (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca/Romania Faculty of Orthodox Theology)

The "Liturgy after the Liturgy" and Deep Solidarity. The Orthodox Understanding of Christian Witness and its Implications for Human Society

The paper will investigate the orthodox understanding of mission as "liturgy after the Liturgy" and its consequences for the human life. The Eucharistic Liturgy understood as an experience of God where the community of saints reveal the absolute model of unity must be replicated in human society as another type of liturgy, a liturgy of solidarity. The research will present how starting from the Eucharistic community we can reach the wider community in solidarity.



Cristian Sonea is an Orthodox priest, belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church, and an Assoc. Prof. of Orthodox Missiology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania). His research interests include contemporary theology of orthodox mission and the common Christian witness. He is interested also in ecumenical theology, being involved actively in the ecumenical dialogues. Currently he is the vice-dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Cluj-Napoca.

[Ladislav Nemet SVD \(Bischop of Zrenjanin/Serbia, President of the Bishops' Conference of the Saints Cyril and Methodius for Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Republic of Macedonia\)](#)

[Solidarity Between East and West: Dependency or Renewal?](#)

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a new wave of solidarity came upon the countries of Eastern, South-Eastern and Central-Europe. Many international actors started realizing big investments in the countries of this part of Europe, trying to bridge the overwhelmingly big gap between Western-European states and these regions. Who are the major actors within this movement of solidarity? What are the main results of this movement? Are the people in the beneficiary regions getting too much used to “outside help”, getting tied up with foreign investments? Are there strings attached to these acts of solidarity? How and what can new initiatives for dialogue between East and West like *“Piccolo gregge”* contribute to solidarity and renewal in Europe?



Ladislav Nemet SVD, Bishop of Zrenjanin, Serbia (b. 1956), served as religious of the Society of the Divine Word in different countries and continents. Before being appointed bishop in Serbia (2008), he used to teach for many years as professor of systematic theology in Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Poland. His research focuses on Christian anthropology, eschatology and missiology.

| 18:30-21:30 |

[Dinner & Garden Party](#)

[OUTLOOK: 2020 IAMS CONFERENCE IN Sydney](#)

Tuesday 27 August 2019

| 08:00-10:00 |

[Breakfast](#)

| 10:00-12:00 |

[Farewell and Departure](#)

Imprint

Conference Website, Information and Registration

<http://www.missionswissenschaft.eu/>

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- Orthodox Mission Network (OMN)

Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

Arrival / Opening Fri 23 Aug 2019				Departure Tue 27 Aug 2019
	DAY 1 / Sat 24 Aug 2019	DAY 2 / Sun 25 Aug 2019	DAY 3 / Mon 26 Aug 2019	
	Naming Wounds and Transformations	Locating Baptism in Vulnerable and Transforming Europe	Missions to the Wounds Solidarity and Transformation	
9:00-10:30	② Geographies of Religion and Politics of the Wounds	⑥ Mapping Baptism in Territorial Churches and Nation Building	⑧ Christian Communities as Vulnerable Missions w/ IAMS Study Group	Breakfast Departure
11:00-12:30	③ Vulnerability as Socio-Cultural, Ethical and Theological Concept	⑦ a. Baptism in Multi-Faith Europe ⑦ b. Baptism and Secularization	⑨ Religious Freedom in Missions ad Vulnera w/ IAMS Study Group	11:00-12:30
14:00-16:00	3-4 Parallel Corridors of Ideas / Papers Sessions	3-4 Parallel Corridors of Ideas / Papers Sessions	3-4 Parallel Corridors of Ideas / Papers Sessions	14:00-16:00
Arrival Opning Dinner	④ Complicity and Mission in a Wounded World w/ IAMS Study Group	Visit of Migrant Churches in Cologne-Müllheim	⑩ Missions of Deep Solidarity and Renewal	16:30-18:00
① Locating Mission in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation (Opening Keynote)	⑤ European Platform of Missiological Networks Business Session	Evensong & Cultural Evening w/ Iraqi Migrant Church Choir <i>Sun of the Arameans</i> & Women's Schola <i>Ars Choralis Coeln</i>	Dinner & Garden Party Outlook IAMS Sydney 2020	19:00 or 20:00-22:00