

2019 ESITIS Conference Programme

THE HOPE AND DESPAIR OF RELIGIONS: **Exploring the Nexus of Theory and Praxis**

24-27 April, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

PAPER SESSIONS



ESITIS 2019 CONFERENCE - PAPER SESSIONS PROGRAM

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Paper Session I

Thursday, 25 April 2019, 14:00 – 16:00

GROUP I:

THINKING BEYOND EUROCENTRIC AND TRADITIONAL PARADIGMS OF RELIGION

Location: classroom 1, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Wolfram Weisse, University of Hamburg, Germany

Religion Without Culture: Developing a Method for Interpreting Indonesian Inter-religious Engagement

Nicholas Adams, University of Birmingham, UK

For the last three years, Eckhard Zemrich (Berlin) and I (Birmingham) have been gathering materials on two inter-religious engagements in Indonesia. The fieldwork is now complete and it is clear that the materials do not readily fit familiar models for interpreting religion. What is needed is a method which takes the views and practices of the local practitioners seriously, without forcing them into an unsuitable grid. This paper develops a method out of two studies of local religious life: Robert Orsi's *Madonna of 115th Street* (2010, 3rd edition), , and Timothy Jenkins' *The Life of Property* (2010 first ed). I show that both, in different ways, take local actors' viewpoints seriously, and they do so in part by jettisoning the use of 'culture' or 'religion' as guiding categories. I then suggest why this method might be suitable for interpreting the Indonesian materials.

New paradigms of spirituality for 21st century dialogues

David Cheetham, University of Birmingham, UK

As the 'believing without belonging' idea gains currency in the West, we need a new set of parameters for inter-religious dialogue that takes account of the nature of spirituality and religion in the 21st Century. The debate in the theology of religions and, latterly, comparative theology, still deals in the familiar religious territory of the 'post-Axial' religions and the issues that arise out of the meetings of these particular 'world' faiths – complete with their scriptural, institutional, spiritual and ritual traditions.

However, do we now need to take account of the new post-secular environment which sees spiritualities *embedded* in the secular frame (Taylor)? Moreover, does recent work on ineffability in contemporary philosophy of religion and by 'new phenomenologists' (e.g. Marion) mean that there are other immanent expressions of spirituality that suggest potential common ground not revealed by contemporary theological thinking on ethical or soteriocentric issues? This paper will briefly seek to outline the contribution of phenomenology to our understanding of spirituality and how this maps (or not) onto the conventional theological terrain, before considering broader questions about how this forces us to reconsider the conceptual arena for inter-religious dialogue in the 21st C.

Balancing Religious Spiritual Development and Charitable Outreach in a Public Relations Centered World

Leland Dixon, Leuven, Belgium

This paper will demonstrate that there are ways for religious organizations to maintain their identities as channels for spiritual growth and development while serving as leaders in charitable outreach. While the advancement of technology has offered many opportunities to religions and religious groups throughout the developed world, this same advancement has also presented problems which these groups have never had to deal with. This balance has become an issue in recent years due to many issues. Some of the issues which will be addressed in this paper are listed below:

Agnostics, atheists and anti-theists currently view religious groups as nothing more than charitable organizations whose sole mission should be to help the poor and the needy. Although assisting the poor and the needy is a tenet of most organized religious groups, the fundamental doctrines of these groups, those doctrines and teachings which attract followers to a particular faith and entice them to continue attending worship services, have been pushed aside in favor of good public relations and maintaining a positive social media presence.

Because of this problem of maintaining good PR, some religious leaders feel that some of the fundamental teachings of their particular group have not only been lost, but have been replaced with principles that fail to endure, but instead are the current 'trend'. They do not dispute the need to assist the poor, but they also stress the need for personal spiritual development.

Religious groups in developed countries have reported a sharp decrease in attendees of regular worship services, which appears to correlate with a sharp decrease in funds being donated, not only for basic church operations, but also toward religious charitable organizations. There appears to be a direct correlation between active church attendees and donations to charities. That is a good thing. It is this balance between teachings about spiritual development and the necessity to provide charitable relief efforts organized through religious groups which I plan to expand upon in this paper.

Religion vs. secularity – a Jewish question?

Lynn Claire Feinberg, University of Oslo, Norway

Jews of Norway only begun to settle after 1851 and there never were many. Most embraced a Norwegian way of living, yet lived according to Jewish tradition and in proximity to a Jewish community. The Norwegian Holocaust made a deep impact. (1942 approx. 2200 Jews, 1945, less than 1500 returned from Sweden, almost 800 Jews deported and killed). After WW2 the two small communities were re-established and created places to gather and connect. However, some survivors felt a need to hide their Jewish identity and raised their children outside a Jewish community context.

In Norway there is a general tendency to live secular lives. This is also true for Jews, yet most still belong to a Jewish community. A general rise in personal economy has also meant that Jews now live farther away from the communities. Norway has become increasingly multicultural, and the society at large has in recent years enabled venues from where Jewish culture and history as well as knowledge about the Holocaust has become more visible and accessible to the Norwegian public. This has given many Jews, also those who had hidden Jewish identities, a greater sense of being proud of their Jewish roots and sense of feeling safer in the Norwegian society at large.

In my PhD project my aim is to examine how the Holocaust might continue to be a factor for bad or for good, in the lives of the children and grandchildren of survivors of the Norwegian Holocaust. Many of my informants identify as Jewish, yet not religious. In light of this backdrop I want to share how a direct link to the Norwegian Holocaust might give renewed understandings of what being Jewish means.

GROUP 2:

INTERRELIGIOUS TEACHING

Location: classroom 2, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Marianne Moyaert, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Acculturation and the Dialogical formation of young muslim identity: Development of an intervention based on Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and its implementation.

Omer Gurlesin, Ina ter Avest, Alper Alasag

Internationalisation and globalization are ongoing developments. People – belonging to a minority or majority group - have to live together on a local and at an international level at the same time. This affects individuals and their cultures, of which religion is an integral part, living in a diverse and secularized context. Religion plays a role in the educational processes of Muslim migrants – a minority group in Western Europe. The plurality of religious orientations – of which their parents' religious heritage and the western (religious and secular) value orientation are only a few – gives raise to conflicts, possibly resulting in radicalization and fanaticism.

Identity development of Islamic youngsters is hereby threatened by radicalization. Prevention of radicalization, thus, is high on the agenda. Urgently needed is a method to guide muslim youngsters, living in western plural countries, in the development of stable religion related *I*-positions in their 'society of mind'. In our research the aim is first to explore young migrants' religious identity development, and secondly to develop an intervention that stimulates insight in and further development of youngsters' 'society of mind' in particular regarding their religious positionality.

Central in our research is the game 'Wise men's chess', a diagnostic and development stimulating game. This age-old game is turned into an up-to-date method for religious education for muslim youngsters. Playing the adapted game, in dialogue with other players, facilitates the emergence of a broader perspective on possible *I*-positions regarding (the variety within) the Islamic and other (religious and secular) traditions.

Basis for the adaptation of this game is the Dialogical Self Theory with its focus on the variety of *I*-positions inhabiting the 'society of mind'. The game improves youngsters' reflective competencies and stimulates their insight in their (religion related) *I*-positions. The game is a space for exchange of ideas and practices with others.

Transformation & Resistance in the Interfaith Classroom: Reflections on Teaching in the Canadian Context

Elizabeth Fisher and Amy Panton, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, Canada

Although Canada is a religiously plural society, interfaith theological learning is still relatively uncommon. This reflective paper explores the experience of team-teaching in Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology's Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS), an interfaith program with Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist streams. The MPS is a professional degree that trains students to become chaplains, psycho-spiritual therapists and spiritual care providers within the Canadian context.

The dynamic and diverse group of students who made up the Fall 2018 "Introduction to Counseling and Spiritual Care Practices" class included twenty-four students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, gender identities, and self-identified disabilities. They belonged to a range of faith communities including religious and cultural margins; the classroom was approximately one-third Muslim, one-third Christian, and one-third Buddhist or Spiritual But Not Religious. The majority of students were people of colour and cultural minorities.

Our classroom was a site of active resistance and peace-building where we invited students into a "brave space" in order to learn from one another through listening, dialogue and role-play. Using anecdotes from our classroom experience, our paper reflects on three values central to inter-religious learning: interfaith teaching as an act of resistance; the teacher as an expert in facilitation rather than a "sage on the stage" (McWilliam, 2009); and fostering transformation through ritualized role play (Couture, 1999). Interfaith learning calls us as teachers to a stance of risk and bravery, believing that spiritual transformation happens as we encounter difference with openness and humility. We move from teaching our students what to believe to modeling for our students how to engage wholeheartedly with one another to build peace in response to individual and societal trauma and discord.

GROUPS 3 & 7 COMBINED:

COSMIC AND EMBODIED NARRATIVES OF ENDINGS, RESILIENCE, AND HOPE

Location: downstairs seminar room, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Conveners: Lidia Rodriguez Fernandez, Deusto University, and Anne Kull, University of Tartu

Religious queerness in the lives of Croatian Catholics

Alen Kerić, Central European University, Hungary

This paper integrates religious and queer discourses through life-stories of Croatian Queer Catholics. The source for the paper comes from a study done in 2015 in Croatia where catholic-identifying lesbian women and gay men have been interviewed through life-story interviews, focusing on the narratives that embrace Catholicism and Queerness. Within the paper, I will delineate the political situation for the LGBT community in Croatia and highlight the influence of Catholicism within this country, in order to highlight the political setting for this community. Further, through analyzing the mentioned interviews, as well as a public discourse analysis, I aim to demonstrate the complexity of Queer Catholics in Croatia and the extent to which these two identities can be considered separate, as well as the possibility for an integrated living experience with the two identities. Following this analysis, I will make separate policy recommendations for both Catholic leaders, as well as LGBT activists in Croatia. These aim to help envision a space where Croatian Queer Catholics have a space in public discourse, including the policy work of the Catholic Church and LGBT activists/organizations in Croatia.

Narratives of faith against politics of ethnic division in Sarajevo

Franziska Singer, University of Marburg, Germany

In my contribution, I will present how young Muslim women (20-35) in Sarajevo, speak about their faith as distinct from, and an antidote to, current ethno-political uses of religion. Focusing on Islam, the narratives, gathered during semi-structured interviews, tell of faith and practice as an internal process and a personal choice. The women position themselves as distinct from those they see as misusing religion to gain political and economic power through playing on division. While continuously affirming that it is impossible to know another persons religious experience from the outside, they reiterate how “good behaviour” is more important than explicitly religious acts.

The difference in if practices are seen as being more ethno-political in intent or reflecting an inner faith is in the performance. The same act, done with declaration to the outside audience, is seen as less genuine than if performed discreetly.

This contribution is an excerpt of my PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Marburg in Germany, examining the self-positioning of young Muslim women in Sarajevo. Using a grounded-theory inspired approach, it builds on 24 months of fieldwork in Sarajevo, surrounding areas and the internet. Two main sources of data are semi-structured interviews with self-identified believers and fieldnotes of participant observation.

Through their life-stories and personal positions that develop distinct from mainstream Bosnian-Herzegovinian interpretations of religion and identity, they offer a counter-narrative to divisions based on ethnicity. Coming from practitioners, many of whom have a religious education and theological knowledge, this creates a powerful alternative narrative for the social fabric and the future of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and beyond.

Tarrying with a Thief in the Night: Interrogating the Eschatology of the (Oneness) Pentecostal Theology in the Philippines

Hadje Cresencio Sadje, ETF Leuven Belgium, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany

For a few decades, a growing number of scholars, including philosophers, have become interested in eschatological topics; the final events of human history or the last things. But, the most interested group with a strong emphasis on eschatology is none other than the oneness Pentecostal movement. Most of them predict world events based on its interpretation of the biblical text. For instance, before the end of December 1999, Year 2000 bug, also known as Y2K problem or Millennium bug, are often used as an example of many Pentecostal preachers as the imminent fulfilment of end times bible prophecy. However, the Y2K problem turned out to be a failed prediction. Despite of critics, many oneness Pentecostal adherents continued to embrace and uphold the doctrine of rapture theology, particularly among Filipino oneness Pentecostal believers. For that reason, the interrogation of rapture theology is crucial, because it goes to the heart of the oneness Pentecostal eschatology in the Philippines. Like many other Christian denominations, the oneness Pentecostals perceive eschatology as one of the central “Apostolic” teachings, to some extent, shapes their social behaviour and public engagement. Although oneness Pentecostal eschatology, takes different forms, the popular form is rapture theology---“a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2 ESV). This paper examines the rapture theology which is the popular eschatological thought (dispensationalism) among oneness Pentecostal churches, especially Filipino oneness Pentecostals. Using Jürgen Moltmann, Jon Sobrino, and Slavoj Žižek, I explores the possibility of expanding and radicalizing the oneness Pentecostal eschatology. Put is differently, oneness Pentecostal eschatology become more attentive, sensitive, and responsive to Philippine socio-economic-political problems.

Facing the end of the world

Anne Kull, University of Tartu, Estonia

Conventional eschatology in the Western culture is based on the apocalyptic worldview. The present age will come to an end and a new age will dawn. Is our hope for a dramatic and supernatural intervention of God designed to relieve us of our responsibility to pull our weight in this world? Science can help our religious faith to remain realistic.

The classical eschatological propositions are the outcome of a historical trajectory, rather than expressions of a timeless truth. E.g. platonic, Pauline, gnostic, orthodox, etc. Another historical, and secular, trajectory of doom is expressed by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Since 1947 they had set the hands of the so-called Doomsday Clock once a year. For many years, they used to set the hands based entirely on the probability of nuclear hellfire. In 2007 they added climate change to their ponderings, and in 2017, cyberwar. The 2019 statement added infowars. While it is a fact that life on Earth

is rather resilient, despite at least five major mass extinctions, we do know there are a variety of kinds of catastrophe that are certain to occur and which will be absolutely destructive in their consequences. The constructions of the IPCC reports, the National Climate Assessment, and the *Lancet* Countdown help clear a path for a cosmic dimension in eschatology. With a new interest in ecology and an appreciation of materiality as such, the new eschatologies cannot be as anthropocentric as they used to be. Escapist eschatology is not enough!

Religions, like individuals, cultures, societies, need attentive stewardship; to sustain them we must recognize the real enormous problem is an absence of climate policy. All religions can search for the best ways to express a clear vision of hope for the earth itself (not just elected humans).

GROUP 4:

HOW TO RESEARCH RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: MOVING BEYOND A BIFURCATED FIELD

Location: classroom 3, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Stanisław Grodź, Anthropos Institute, Germany

Transnational studies of religion: migration and intercultural hermeneutics

Jorge E. Castillo Guerra, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

The central question of my paper concerns a new approach of religion of migrants from the 'transnational turn' in the Migrant Studies and the intercultural hermeneutics.

Most scholars study religion from particular perspectives such as a historical, cultural, political or religious. Research on religion usually is contextually demarcated by geographical boundaries, mostly national or regional, and that results in theologies commonly labelled as Asian, Western, or Caribbean and so on. Worldviews, academic traditions or the research agendas of countries determine how scholars collect information about religion and how they interpret it. Rites, expressions of faith such as hymns, popular devotions or understandings of religion such as the 'post-secular society' (Habermas) or the 'secular age' (Taylor) are interpreted from the scope predominantly limited by national or regional boundaries.

What is the impact of the contextual approach for the study of the religion of migrants, as people that articulate their faith from relations they carry across borders?

Current studies on religion and faith of migrants deploy an analytical focus originating in the context where migrants are established. However focusing on only one context these studies does not contribute to the development of knowledge based on those practices that take place across the national or regional borders. That implies a significant reduction of the religious world of migrants and a limited understanding of their process religious transformation. We need a cross-border approach to understand religious practices of migrants in their interaction with religious orientations in diverse places.

In my paper I will reflect on this questions from the 'transnational turn' in the Migrant Studies. This means the understanding of the religion of migrants as *one unified field of analysis*, a transnational field. Secondly, I will address this topic from the 'intercontextual dialogue' such as developments in the intercultural hermeneutics.

Intermarriage and Religious Conversion to Polish Catholic and Russian Orthodox Christianity in Sweden

Angelika Drigo, Uppsala University, Sweden

As a first-year PhD student within Interreligious studies, I will present the project of my doctoral dissertation. This ethnographic study draws upon the conceptual tools of interreligious studies to explore intermarriage and religious conversion across widely differing cultural orientations. The dissertation will analyze the phenomenon of intermarriages between Polish Catholics and Russian Orthodox with Swedes (those belonging to the majority culture) and will identify the cultural dimension of religious conversion. This project has the goal to analyze the process of religious and cultural change for both spouses in the process of religious conversion and the role of foreign partners as, perhaps, "implicit

missionaries.” The study will examine how spouses serve as “implicit missionaries” who facilitate and shape conversion to Polish Catholic and Russian Orthodox Christianity in Sweden and will investigate the aspect of religious conversion as a move to a new system of values. It also strives to develop the concept “implicit missionaries,” which implies that Polish and Russian spouses are the main “agents” for the conversion of their Swedish husbands/wives. The data will be collected through fieldwork in Catholic Churches (Polish and Swedish services) and Orthodox Churches (Russian and Swedish services) in Sweden and qualitative semi-structured interviews with 15-25 individuals, including religious leaders (who are often the gatekeepers for the community) and spouses (both converts and “implicit missionaries”). I aim to present my project with a particular focus on previous research, methods, literature review, and theoretical framework.

Boundaries Revised. Debating Religion in Lebanon

Rahel Fischbach, James Madison University, USA

My paper explores whether and to what extent secularism as a normative, ideological tenet is operative in debates over historical criticism of the Qur’ān in Lebanon, principally within the Interfaith movement. My premise is that discussions of historical Qur’ān hermeneutics express and negotiate alternative ways of being in the world and of organizing social and political life. They hence constitute a pertinent site for examining the boundary disputes among various interest-groups intent on shaping society according to their ideals of religion and shed light on various aspects of socio-religious change today.

Proponents of historicizing hermeneutics often blame the belief in the Qur’ān as the “direct word of God” for the “stagnation” or “violence” of Muslim societies. Euro-American discourse has long linked historical-critical understanding of scripture to the rationalization and privatization of religion, believed to be needed for a truly pluralist society. Per this rationale, Muslims must historicize the Qur’ān to understand it properly, achieve “progress,” and accept religious pluralism as a positive, normative value—an assumption shared by much of western social-scientific research. Its contestants, on the other hand, see historical-critical Qur’ān hermeneutics as an attempt to alter Muslim religious subjectivities by aligning Islam epistemologically to a curtailed form of religion along the lines of liberal Protestantism and, therefore, as a concession to global normative secularity that destroys indigenous epistemologies.

Challenging core assumptions of both “camps,” examination of the recent discussions in Lebanon demonstrates the sophistication with which both contestants and proponents of Qur’ān hermeneutics rethink epistemological and religious pluralism, often beyond liberal assumptions. Taking seriously the politico-religious structures in which these discussions take place, and understanding that participants in these debates are intent on shaping these structures, helps to conceptualize the socio-religious views expressed through Qur’ān hermeneutics outside the framework of clear binaries, such as indigenous/western or religious/secular.

Learning and Teaching (as) Research: Report on a German-Ethiopian Exchange

Matthew Ryan Robinson, RFW Universität Bonn, Germany

One of the challenges of intercultural theological research between developed and developing contexts is that researchers from institutions with an abundance of resources do not meet their colleagues coming from situations with a paucity of resources on equal footing. The disparity of access to economic, technological, and social-global forms of capital can create a hierarchical relationship, which further re-inscribes the problem of boundaries that conveniently demarcate traditions noted in the Group 4 panel description. One way of evening out this hierarchy can be to invert the relationship of teaching and research to re-posture research as learning and vice-versa. The paper presents the use of this method in an experiment in intercultural pedagogy conducted in the summer semester of 2018 through the Protestant Theological Faculty of the University of Bonn, in which the author organized a seminar and 14-day excursion under the themes “Ecumenism, Power, and intercultural Practice: The Case of Ethiopia.” The results of this experiment are being published in a special issue of *Pastoraltheologie* devoted to it in March-April 2019; in other words, the experiment produced concrete results for practical and systematic theological research which will hopefully be helpful for European theologians and

pastors. However, the seminar and the excursion were organized in such a way as to give priority to Ethiopian voices and to make Ethiopian colleagues the teachers. Participants read many texts written by Ethiopians in preparation for the excursion, and during the excursion the group met with more than twenty-five religious leaders, educators, lawyers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and social-development actors. The format of a seminar and excursion served to ensure that all participants from Europe – including the professors – remained in the position of students. The paper will summarize the strengths of this approach to research as well as critically assess its limitations, including its effectiveness in cultivating mutual theological understandings.

GROUP 5:

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: PROPHETS AND PROTECTORS?

Location: classroom 4, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Yaser Ellethy, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Presentation time 20 minutes (-/+ 2000 words) + 10 minutes Q/A & discussion.

Ephraim Radner's contribution to the self-understanding of the Church's moral authority to contribute to conflict resolution and encourage civil society

Louisa Collington, Trinity College Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Ephraim Radner's *A Brutal Unity, The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church*, is a deeply passionate and profound study of the Church. Radner posits a direct analysis of Christian disunity, addressing issues of authority, tradition and experience in the figurative "Church as such", its leaders and its members. Realistic, and deliberately so, in his approach, Radner attempts to understand the Church's unity and division in contrast to an 'ideal' articulation which, he claims, has tended to encourage the "moral degradation of Christian witness and human well-being" (p. 457).

The book raises questions of church complicity in violence. It looks at the deferral of responsibility by those in positions of authority and its consequences; personal identity in decision making; social conditioning of understanding "the other"; self-expenditure of bishops and self-interest versus self-giving. It extensively critiques the work of Church councils, the pragmatic procedures of unity and what it means to find agreement. It searches for an understanding of the modern Christian conscience in its multiple forms, attempts to construct a definition of consensus and reflects on the moral and ethical implications of acquiescence.

Whilst many of these topics are suggestive and interesting, for this paper, I will focus on the themes of authority, responsibility and acquiescence of Church leaders in Europe. I'll use Radner's study to develop future approaches to unity and conflict resolution, looking at limitations in a 21st century individualist society and how a self-understanding of the relationship between church and state in modernity - the Church's self-recognition of its authority in this relationship - has the potential to impact political imagination and to instruct consciences on issues of morality, responsibility and choice.

Assistants and Coordinators, the new religious leaders of the ICBH?

Amina Selimović, University of Oslo, Norway

In 2015 the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ICBH) officially created a section which would focus on the issues of marriage, family and women's activism. The section was named accordingly as the Section for Marriage, Family and Women's Activism (Odjel za brak, porodicu I zenski aktivizam). The Section is intended, accordingly to the official statements, to be headed by women, and focus on issues and activities that are in some way related to women and women's needs. The hierarchy of the Section follows the overall hierarchal structure of the ICBH, with semi-local and local sections. According to obtained information, more than 100 women are doing the work as coordinators on different levels.

The head of the Section is a female theologian with a PhD. in the relevant field, and she holds the title of *assistant* (strucna saradnica). Women who are employed or engaged on the semi-local and local levels also have a theological

education and they are titled *coordinators*. When it comes to the focus areas and activities offered to women, each of the coordinator's has the responsibility to follow the guidelines given by the leader of the Section, but also to tailor to the needs of her immediate community.

In this paper I wish to explore the role the coordinators play and to what degree they are (understood to be) religious leaders. I wish to do this by looking at the focus areas of the Section, and the activities that are offered to women through its network. As such this paper is of a descriptive character.

Junzi: Reevaluating Moral Leadership in Light of Sino-Holy See Rapprochement

Max Wolfgang Rosner, Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland

In September 2017, the Chinese Community Party and the Holy See signed a provisional agreement on episcopal appointments. In light of this recent rapprochement, renewed, formalized exchange between Confucianism and Catholicism can advance the respective policies of President Xi and Pope Francis under the purview of "win-win cooperation." As leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis has demonstrated a prophetic voice as it concerns climate change and the Church's role in the world. Meanwhile, Xi Jinping's words and actions attempt to harness the moral authority of Confucianism in order to strengthen Chinese societal ethics and his own legitimacy. Both leaders can benefit politically from a renewed social and ethical exchange that is consistent with their respective approaches. In this presentation, I will address the provisional agreement, explain the pre-existing policies of these leaders, and explore possibilities in this new era of cooperation. Additional topics include re-thinking both moral authority and inter-traditional dialogue as they relate to social challenges and political legitimacy.

The Orthodox Bishop as a Change Leader in Multi-cultural and Multi-religious Societies: A Stakeholder Analysis

Berge Traboulsi, Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon

The Orthodox Church is characterized as 'Traditional' where traditionalism is perceived in different ways: a) the Church is changeless and faithful to the past and thus there is no need or place for change and reform; b) the definitions of faith along with their sources are absolute and unchanging; and c) the Church considers the present times, deals with their challenges and requirements, and lives its faith in a forward movement and progressive manner towards the future rather than restoring the past or transmitting its fossils and traditions.

The Orthodox Church has a complex organizational structure where the clergy and laity live their ecclesiastical life together under the supervision of a Synod and the overseeing of a diocesan bishop. In fact, the bishop is endowed during his election and consecration "with the threefold power of (1) ruling, (2) teaching, and (3) celebrating the sacraments" (Ware 1993). It is to note that the elected-bishop pledges, during his consecration, to keep the unity, peace, teachings, dogmas and traditions of the Church.

The Orthodox Church needs to conduct change and reform in various ecclesiastical areas in order to face various and numerous challenges and problems pertaining to leadership and administration, human rights, ethics, poverty, corruption, modernization, intellectualism, fanaticism etc. Needless to say that unfreezing the Church status quo, abolishing outdated religious and socio-cultural traditions, transforming the Church, and getting the support of the right stakeholders, are difficult tasks to achieve. Furthermore, failure will be inevitable if any of the following elements is missed; i.e., vision, consensus, skills, incentive, resources, and action plan. Accordingly, the intent of this short paper is twofold: (1) to reflect on the ecclesiastical and social changes' goals and roadmaps, and (2) to analyze the role of the bishop-leader and the various stakeholders in the change process.

Paper Session II

Friday, 26 April 2019, 11:00 – 13:00

GROUP I:

THINKING BEYOND EUROCENTRIC AND TRADITIONAL PARADIGMS OF RELIGION

Location: classroom I, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Wolfram Weisse, University of Hamburg, Germany

The case of *burqa* bans in Europe: The rhetoric of „us” and „them” in public, academic and political discourses

Ajla Čustović

After the *burqa* was first banned in 2004 as part of a ban on showing any religious symbols in state schools, in 2011 France was the first European country to completely ban wearing *burqa* in public sphere. The banning of *burqa* intensified already heated discussions which followed the Danish Prophet Mohammed cartoon scandal in 2005. Both cases tackled the question of Islam and liberal concept of human rights and resulted as a discussion about different values of two different moral traditions framed into counter-productive question whether Islam is (in)compatible with the idea of universal human rights. In this presentation the claimed „public safety” reason behind the ban laws is challenged. Raising the question whether the *burqa* ban laws reflect the increasing antagonism of Europe towards Muslims manifested in „us” and „them” rhetoric in public, academic and political discourses, the presentation aims to show that Europe does not have an issue with face covering in public *per se*, but with the one that is regarded Islamic.

The Role and Importance of Religion during the Process of Deradicalisation and Disengagement: Analysis of Activities and Programs for Islamic Extremists

Heidi Maiberg

Returning Islamic fighters from conflict areas have created the need for deradicalisation and disengagement programs. As the ideology and the narratives of Islamic terror organisations are based on Islam, the question of its role has arisen. Taking into account the practices of various European Member States, this analysis assesses the influence of religion during the process of deradicalisation and disengagement.

The referred information is mainly sourced from interviews carried out with scientists, social workers and public servants working in this field at a local and European Union level: altogether 21 people from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Estonia. Three primary conclusions were made:

❑ **Throughout the process, the role of religion is often secondary.**

Deradicalisation and disengagement procedure is individual. Although there are exceptions, the main motivators are associated with different factors like socio-economic condition, identity and sense of belonging, not with theological causes.

❑ **There is no systematic approach for covering religious matters.**

The topics covered during disengagement conversations are chosen by the participants and not from a set concept created for religious subjects.

❑ **Religious counseling is carried out by local congregations, imams and mentors.**

For those interested, religious counselling is organised by a local congregation and imams. The quality of work depends on the authority and influence of the imam. Furthermore, it relies on the will of the local community and congregation to welcome an (former) extremist among themselves.

Results demonstrate that religion is not always the main reason why people radicalise and join Islamic terror organisations. Therefore, equal focus should be placed on all of the various motivating factors in the prevention, deradicalisation and disengagement work.

Does interreligious dialogue construct and frame interreligious encounter?

Miriam Schneider, University of Basel, Switzerland

Interreligious Dialogue aims to promote mutual understanding and peaceful living-together among people from different religious backgrounds. It also claims to be between equal partners, who respect and tolerate each other. Interreligious dialogue is generally seen as something good that should be promoted the religious communities, academia and politics furthermore. This common sense does not consider critical reflections on the limits of interreligious dialogue and the question if interreligious dialogue in fact has the capacity of its aims.

A critical approach to interreligious dialogue can be found in the study by Muthuraj Swamy, who discovers three main problems in interreligious Dialogue, namely: Dialogue is elitist and doesn't require the ordinary people; dialogue is discursive and only requires the cognitive dimension; and dialogue constructs a certain understanding of what religion is.¹ In this paper I will discuss – in connection to the study by Swamy – the question, how the notion and practice of a model like interreligious dialogue constructs and frames interreligious encounters and to what extend Swamy's critical observation can burst those frames. The goal of this critical reflection is to discover problematic aspects of interreligious dialogue e.g. in order of power relations - not only in a certain dialogue group setting but beyond and what impact dialogue can have on interreligious encounters.

Indonesian „Agama“ as „Religion“: Some aspects of a hybrid notion

Eckhard Zemmrich, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Germany

“Agama” is the term officially used for the six fully recognized religions in Indonesia to this date: Islam, Protestantism, Roman-Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. However, investigations into the semantic field of the term and empirical findings reveal complex political, theological, juridical, and practical entanglements between colonial and postcolonial developments both in Europe and in Indonesia – and in their mutual interaction. Based on recent and yet unpublished research, the paper seeks to trace some of these aspects and suggests some theorizing consequences.

GROUP 2:

INTERRELIGIOUS TEACHING

Location: classroom 2, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Marianne Moyaert, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Theologies of Accountability: Addressing the Needs of People with Racialized Bodies, Religions, and/or Cultures

Shannon Frediani, Starr King School for the Ministry, USA

Decolonizing interreligious education requires that we take into account what was erased from the field and examine the way that interreligious education has been framed. One current challenge is that interreligious engagement is being asked to account for harm done when our very belief system or Western lens, or both, have caused tremendous damage to others as individuals and communally. Colonialism is history, but not the patterns of coloniality, which are continued in the matrix of power we know as modernity. Drawing from the field of peace studies assessing how experience become knowledge, as well as drawing from practical theology, in particular, spiritual care studies done on multi and interreligious ritual as a form of healing for communities most impacted by systemic injustice, key insights are revealed that are relevant to interreligious education and studies.

This expanded version of interreligious education building on the foundational elements of engaging relational and integrative learning, but integrating examination of power, subjugated knowledges and systemic injustice, I have named Theologies of Accountability. There is a need for ritual that addresses the realities of multireligious diasporic communities as well as indigenous communities dealing with oppression and internalized prejudices against their traditional ways because of the legacy of Christian initiated coloniality. There is a need for interreligious ritual that reverses the symbology of empire and essentialization of history that miscast representations of others due to culture, religion, and racialized constructions, that also allows for expression of grief, naming systemic injustice, and expression of resistance and resilience. I contend the field of interreligious education has the responsibility to steward theologies of accountability to prepare interreligious educators and scholars in responsible handling of the issues that were erased from our field and our world's history.

¹ Muthuraj Swamy. *The Problem with Interreligious Dialogue. Plurality, Conflict and Elitism in Hindu-Christian-Muslim Relations*. Oxford 2016

From monoculture to multifaith at Nordic hospitals- insight into interfaith chaplaincy work in Denmark, Sweden and Norway

Naveed Baig

Many European countries have today established multi-faith chaplaincy services in various institutions including hospitals, prisons, armed forces and education. These services to a certain degree also include Muslim chaplains who deliver care and counselling to primarily Muslim clients in need. Many European countries are supporting these initiatives morally, economically and structurally. Demand for professional chaplains/imam and the effects of being employed by the state has its own dilemmas in the Muslim communities. But coinciding with these developments is also the influence of the 'multifaith reality' at various public institutions where pastors and imams as well as volunteers from different cultures and religious affiliations work together. Can public institutions pave a way for an interfaith model of co-existence beyond its walls or are these models a compromise for sustaining a kind of normalcy? The paper will shed light upon the chaplaincy models of Sweden, Denmark and Norway and give insight into the interfaith models of those countries through observations made by the author during study trips to hospitals alongside his own practical experiences from Danish hospitals.

The Value of Lived Religion Methods for Interreligious Pedagogy and Leadership

Hans Gustafson, University of St. Thomas, USA

This paper makes the case for the value of Lived Religion (LR) approaches and pedagogies in the field of interreligious/interfaith studies for instructors and institutional leaders on campus (as well as scholars and scholar-practitioners working in the field beyond the campus). In particular, this paper focuses on LR's value for drawing out the complex nature of religious identities and encounters. As such, the paper calls attention to issues related to intersectionality, hybrid identities, and the role power and privilege can play in particular interfaith encounters and relations. LR approaches help to overcome the major obstacles of religious essentialism and reductionism by promoting particularities through relational practice and encounter. Furthermore, this paper a) includes a case-study in which LR is deployed as a method for relational interfaith encounter at the community level; b) promotes the pedagogical practice of civic and community engagement with locally lived religions; c) raises the concept of "religious reflectivity" in the context of secularization and the rise of multiple religious identities (MRI) in the West; and d) concludes with a reflection on the importance of the LR method for cultivating the leadership virtue of interreligious wherewithal, which refers to being aware of potential tensions or opportunities in (inter)religiously complex situations and having the skill to do something constructive about them through thoughtful action, leadership, and motivation of others.

GROUP 5:

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: PROPHETS AND PROTECTORS?

Location: classroom 4, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Yaser Ellethy, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Presentation time 25 minutes (-/+ 2000 words) + 10 minutes Q/A & discussion.

A Place for Implicit Religiosity in Ethno-Religious Coexistence and Tolerance: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aid Smajić, Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Ethno-religious coexistence and tolerance could be approached and understood also as a personal attitude of individuals towards the members of respective ethno-religious out-groups. As such, it is usually determined by various and specific socio-political, religious and psycho-spiritual factors in their complex and continuous interaction. Accordingly, apart from social teaching of respective religion, it is an individual's experience of referent religious worldview in particular socio-historical context too that eventually decides his / her standpoint as believing person towards surrounding out-groups. Given idiosyncrasy of individual religious experience and some degree of selectivity present in personal decision of a believer to follow religious injunctions in general and those pertaining social relations in particular, altogether significantly influenced by on-going debates and cleavages in the society, the end product is a limitless variety of implicit religiosity that does not inevitably approximate explicit teaching of one's own religion in regard to relevant ethno-religious out-groups. This, therefore, rather raises the question as to whether the religious outlook and conviction currently prevailing among Bosnian citizens solely and on its own have capacities to provide

solid ground for ethno-religious coexistence and tolerance at the moment when major socio-political divisions and fierce political debates are taking place along ethno-religious lines. Is it realistic at all to have such expectations towards individual religious sentiment of Bosnian believers? In the light of existing empirical data, the author argues that it is very difficult to provide positive answer to this question. He also insists that blame for peace building weakness of individual faith should not solely be directed towards main religious institutions of Bosnian Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox, but towards other significant socio-political actors in the country as well. Share of this blame should be *measured up* according to the extent they altogether diminish a sense of common social identity among Bosnian peoples and contribute to their feeling of existential fear that expectedly overpower the tolerance-building capacity of their spiritual sentiment in the context of their attitudes towards the ethno-religious others.

Religious Leadership from a Social Identity Perspective: Religious Leaders as In-group Champions and Entrepreneurs of Identity

Annemarie Foppen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The religious leader is known to be the key figure within religious communities as religious groups depend largely on their leader for their identity formation (Van Saane, 2012). When we define religious leadership as a process of influence (Yukl, 2010), we can distinguish two spheres of influence. On the one hand, the religious leader primarily influences members from their own community, and on the other hand, he or she also influences individuals outside of their own community. In current times, managing both spheres can be a challenging task to do. How can religious leaders act in their groups best interest, protecting group identity, but at the same time have a positive impact on society as a whole?

In my paper, I will discuss this dilemma from a social psychological perspective, examining the two spheres of influence by means of the Social Identity Theory of Leadership (SITL; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2010). The central premise of the SITL is that in order for leaders to be effective and influential, they need to be 'in-group champions' and 'entrepreneurs of identity'. Using these two central notions from the SITL, I would like to explore the possibilities for religious leaders to demonstrate existing group values, attitudes, and behaviors (i.e. in-group champion) as well as to shape and create group identity according to leaders' own visions of peace and hope (i.e. entrepreneur of identity). How can religious leaders use their influence to embed the traditional norms and values of their faith on the one hand, while simultaneously having a leading role in shaping and creating the way forward on the other?

Inconvenient truth claim or convenient pluralism? Towards Muslim hermeneutics of knowledge, truth, and relativism

Yaser Ellethy, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Truth-claim has always played a crucial role in religious conflicts. Notwithstanding the influential theses of prominent modern scholars, such as W.C. Smith's antiessentialist religious pluralist position and J. Hick's pluralistic hypothesis, the idea of how a monist or a pluralist approach to a religious truth-claim relates to the notion of inclusiveness and tolerance towards other forms of faith still persists. This results in some pertinent questions in the context of our postmodern plural societies, such as: What is the relationship between truth-claim and the limits of tolerance? Should relativizing one's religious truth-claim be seen as a *sine qua non* premise for being, pluralistically, tolerant? In other words, is it right to ask whether a peaceful, fair and good encounter between followers of different worldviews is at odds with their truth claims, or, whether this truth claim should be involved as a precondition for this encounter in the first place? This paper focusses on an Islamic perspective of the issue of truth, human relativism, the role of revelatory knowledge and the eventual tension between a religious truth-claim and a pluralistic worldview, as this could be delineated from the Islamic scriptural sources.

I will start with a generic discussion of the limits of truth related to the human relativism and the Quranic truth claim. Afterwards, I move to the universality of the concept of pure monotheism (*tawhīd*) in Islam, how it constitutes the bedrock of the Islamic truth claim and its implications on the Muslim view of religious plurality. Finally, I conclude how a Muslim truth claim relates itself to a pluralistic worldview and the soteriological aspects of such a claim.

GROUP 6:**GENDER, RELIGION, AND VIOLENCE: SEEKING TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES****Location:** classroom 3, Catholic Theological Faculty (Josipa Štadlera 5)

Convener: Jude Lal Fernando, Trinity College, Dublin

Wives of war martyrs in Bosnia-Herzegovina seen through religious perspective

Emina Abrahamsdotter, University of Birmingham, UK

The Muslim wives of war martyrs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, nowadays a distinct social category, commonly stay unmarried long after the experience of losing their partners. The reasons – social, cultural, religious - vary but for many women this decision is deeply rooted in the prevailing patriarchal and religious oppressive gendered norms and structures according to which a widow of martyr is expected to stay unmarried as a sign of deep respect and devotion to the dead husband. These expectations are not merely individual and originating from the family, but also projected from the society as an important symbol of men's domination over women. To remarry after losing a husband in the war is considered to be a shame, and staying unmarried demonstrates pride. Also, not remarrying is commonly seen as an act of faith, as some widowed women choose to cover as sign of piety and sexual unavailability. This attitude is supported and reinforced by public policies and laws advocated by conservative and nationalist parties that provide the wives of martyrs with widow pensions and benefits, as well as various types of welfare services and privileges providing for social status and economic security to them and their children. Thus, women's subordination to men is continuously reproduced even after the death of the husband.

This paper explores the underlying reasons for the practices related to widowhood and remarriage, with the attempt to understand to what extent and how they are rooted in the Islamic religious tradition. The paper uses a single case study methodology drawing on interview data to analyze the case study of a 49 year old widow with children. The life history of the interviewee will be gained through unstructured interview and then constructed as a case study that will enable an analysis of the relationship between the individual lived experience in the context of the broader social, political and religious forces that influence this.

The Power of the Feminine: Women's Voices in Religious Peace-building and Transformation of Negative Gender Stereotypes and Prejudices

Nadja Furlan Štante, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

The presentation brings together perceptions and concerns about the practical consequences of the misconceptions of the concept of women's bodies as symbols of cultural identity. Here the prejudice of women's bodies as not considered fully their own, but considered to be the property of men at large, is analysed. Such explanations supply the background that creates callousness toward even the most violent denials of women's bodyright. In armed conflict, there is a widespread practice of targeting women for particular abuse, precisely because of their association with the identity and well-being of their community. The use of rape and other forms of sexual humiliation as a weapon of war (Kelly Oliver) is analysed within the universal orientation of the impact of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices formed and perpetuated within religion-society circle and confronted with the issue of understanding women as symbols of collective victimhood.

On the other hand, the role of women in the process of healing traumas and reconciliation in terms of religious peace-building will also be investigated. Although voice of women and their engagement in interreligious dialogue and the religious establishment for peace, at least on a visible formal level, is often left out, ignored, it is at informal levels, in the expression of concrete actions, the women's effort to restore peace is very much alive and present. The issue of women's voices, as the missing dimensions of the interreligious dialogue, will serve as a bridge between the interreligious dialogue and the phenomenon of religious peace building. It should be noted, however, that the issue of equal sexual recognition or recognition of women and their visible role at formal levels is, in fact, very closely connected with the question of understanding and positioning of the religious (O)ther. Therefore, the key to the equal recognition of women's voice is one of the key components of a quality interreligious dialogue, or the key to the equal recognition of the religious (O)ther.

The difficult practice of peace-building. Saming and othering in interreligious encounters

Gé Speelman, PThU Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Interreligious encounters often aim at overcoming stereotyping the religious other. They pose models for peace-building, based on ideas about deep understanding, the ability to place oneself imaginatively in the role of the other and departing

from common ground. In practice, many interreligious encounters however lead on occasion to emotional and deep conflicts among the participants. Simultaneous mechanisms of saming and othering can be at the roots of such emotional clashes. 'Saming' and 'othering' are concepts used in postcolonial studies (Spivak 1985, Ashcroft et al. 1998), intercultural education (Abrams 2001) and in care-ethical contexts (Tronto 1993, Canales 2010).

In this contribution, I want to make an inventory of these theories and apply them to three concrete clashes that occurred during different interreligious encounters between Christian and Muslims women in the Netherlands. What is the nature of these clashes, and how can they be fruitfully employed in order to make mutual understanding at a deeper level possible?

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Violently Belonging. Gender, Solidarity and the Motivations of 'Religious Violence'

Lucien van Liere, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Asked why he committed the atrocity of 9/11, Osama bin Laden referred to the violent deaths of the children in Palestine and the famine under UN embargo in Iraq, killing thousands of children. When Imam Samudra, one of the Bali bombers, was interviewed after being captured and imprisoned, he declared that he was avenging the children that were killed by US air raids in Kabul in November 2001. Both bin Laden and Samudra saw their revenge as a religious obligation.

Solidarity with victims of violent conflict is a returning pattern in the self-profiling of religious perpetrators. Harm done to "children" as in the examples above, but also to "women and children" are often loudly present in discursive justifications of violence, revealing a gender-perspective on (male) honor and on revenge as a moral obligation. The causes of revenge are often linked to solidarity with 'vulnerable' victims, often belonging to the perpetrator's own religion or group.

In this presentation I will analyse statements made by religious perpetrators about the motivations of their actions and show why it is better to understand (communal) violence as a generative force reflecting (religion-based) solidarities than as a force motivated by religious convictions as such.

This analysis asks for a complementary method in the study of so-called 'religious violence'; a method not so much based on legitimation and justification of violence in religious convictions but on a complex fusion of (social) motivation, solidarity, gender-perspectives and honor.

