

Tuesday, June 15th, 16:00-18:00
Student Research Presentations I (5 Parallel Sessions)

Session 1

Chair: Vasile Nechita

Room # VIII

(1) Paula Bud (*Cluj-Napoca*): Naming and Thinking God from the Old Testament to our Times in the Light of Romanian Theology

The essay proposes an overview of the Old Testament divine names as reflected in the work of Romanian theologian Athanase Negoita. Within this thematic area, distinction is made between two stages: firstly, the reduction imposed on the category of divine names by their translation into Greek (LXX) and secondly, further reduction imposed by transposing the revealed message into vernacular languages. Throughout the process, the original accuracy of expression naturally decreases, with consequences for the use and signification of Hebrew divine names in modern Bible editions. These names of God may be defined in our times as contemporary expressions of faith. A second level of the essay asserts that naming and thinking God is only possible while living in God, with reference to the work of another Romanian theologian, Father Dumitru Staniloae. From this perspective, naming and thinking God opens the way for interreligious dialogue.

(2) Ivaylo Atanasov (*Sofia*): The Trinitarian Disputes and the Popular Christianity in the Fourth Century

The paper aims to present the period between the First and the Second Ecumenical Councils in the perspective of their theological significance as well of their influence on 'popular' Christianity of that time. The analysis of these problems should raise two main questions. The first task is to understand to what extent the Trinitarian disputes seemed to be important and familiar not only to fourth-century bishops and theologians but also to 'ordinary' laity. The second deals with the drawing of boundaries between Ortho-doxia and Arianism and how much the contemporary conception of heresy could be applied to the forth-century context. Such approach is of present interest because it could give a meaning to the various interpretations of religiously normative texts in the respective socio-cultural areas.

(3) Bogdan Florin Chiriluta (*Constanta*): God: Trinitarian Love into a United Europe

The Orthodox teachings point out that the Church was founded by the Incarnate Son of God, through Cross and Resurrection, and that the Church brings the Trinitarian love of God to society. Europe is a community of nations destined to receive the divine love extended to humanity. In this way, in a Europe united in accordance with the Christian principles, the final goal would be realized when each nation is able to keep dialoguing both with God of love, and with all other nations that belong to the European community, in the spirit of human brotherhood bringing the fruits of peace, love, and prosperity.

Session 2

Chair: Kristin Kwasniewski

Room # IX

(4) Hayrettin Nebi Gudekli (*Istanbul*): How the Attributes are Predicated of God: Abu Hashim al-Jubbai's theory of States (Ahwal)

The early and classical period of mutakallimun thought thoroughly about the problem of the divine attributes, which is the essential subject of Islamic theology (kalam). They suggested some approaches to this problem that, being well-proportioned with the framework of the problem of the divine attributes, are concerned with the basic concern of: "How are the attributes predicated of God?". They suggested some theories to resolve this problem. One of these theories belongs to Abu Hashim al-Jubbai, who was a mutakallim during the late period of the Basrian School of the Mutazila. Abu Hashim suggested his theory of states (ahwal) to find a solution to difficulties that result from the ontological aspect of the problem of divine attributes which arose out of the problem of "How are the attributes predicated of God?". According to Abu Hashim, God maintains the attributes by means of some states which are present at His essence (zât), but which are not qualified by "existence" or "non-existence". Abu Hashim, by proposing that these states (ahwal) are not "existent" or "non-existent", intended to negate these two difficult positions—that is, "the problem of multiple eternal beings" (taaddud al-qudama) and "the problem of the existence of contingent beings on the spot of God's essence" (mahall al-hawadith)—that arise when one asserts that God has ontologically real attributes.

(5) Mirza Hadzirusovic (*Birmingham*): Pelagianism and Mu'tazilism: Convergence of Two Heresies

In Christian-Muslim dialogue there is often a tendency to compare and contrast the orthodoxy of Christianity with orthodoxy in Islam. For the most part, other forms of Christianity and Islam are seen as heretical and not worthy of attention. This essay explores two heresies: Pelagianism and Mu'tazilism. Since its very inception in the fifth century, Pelagianism was condemned as a heresy by the Church. Mu'tazilism is a theological school of thought within Islam, which emerged in the beginning of the eighth century. By the early thirteenth century, however, Mu'tazilites were reduced to a heresy and condemned by the majority of Islamic scholars. This essay attempts to show similarities between Pelagianism and Mu'tazilism. In showing the similarities between Pelagianism and Mu'tazilism, this essay opens a new venue for interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

(6) Martin Schroter (*Frankfurt*): Babel's Heritage: Solving the Confusion about the Attributes of an Ideal

What is the source of confusion in inter-religious dialogues? Why do we even encounter these problems? What do we mean when we talk about God? Why are there so many different interpretations of Him? In this essay I would like to present an epistemological approach based on the concept given in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by Immanuel Kant. As an allusion to the story of Babel in Genesis 11, this work reveals that the core of God can be understood as an idea of Reason. Precisely because this core only gives an abstract idea, completely void of any empirical

concern, it can be augmented by contingent (not necessary), personal, emotional or political attributes. Those different augmentations lead to varying perceptions of God and are the epistemological cause for the inter-religious confusion. As a resolution, I propose that this confusion can only be reconciled by applying a critical-theological approach, as understood in a Kantian way, which must be determined in a common, institutionalized theological interpretation defined by churches or other religious authorities.

Session 3

Chair: Adrian Cristea

Room # X

(7) Andrea Ujhelyiova (*Szeged*): The Romanies and Religious Faith

In order to draw general outlines of the religious life of the Romanies, my presentation will examine aspects of Romani migrations, as may have been influenced by religious practices in the countries through which they passed. The Romanies gradually adopted Christianity, originally Roman Catholicism, in order to be accepted by Christian populations. Romani spiritual life (a spiritual world does not mean only religious life within the official church- it includes also popular forms of religion or various forms of spiritual culture in general) will be examined within this essay, as well as Romani ritual life and beliefs, specifically those features, symbolism, and aspects of profane life, that act to establish a permanent and firm personal contact with God. Finally, terms such as syncretism, adaptability, and identity that influence ethnic traditions will be considered, as well as those territories where the Romani live.

(8) Bogdan Claudiu Giorgescu (*Constanta*): Romanian Orthodoxy, Bridge Between the Orient and the Occident

The Christianization of Romania's inhabitants extended and intensified in the 2nd century after Christ, after Dacia was conquered by the Romans in the year 107 and was made into a province of the Roman Empire. Colonists were brought to Romania from throughout the Roman Empire, some of whom were Christians, who shared their faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ with other Romanians. From the amalgamation of the native Dacians on the one hand, and of the Roman soldiers and colonists on the other hand, was born a new nation. The Romanian people became established, speaking a language of Romanian origin and having an Eastern Christian faith. The nation of Romania was Christianized at the time of its ethnogeny: the Baptism and ethnogeny of the Romanian people are simultaneous. It is for this reason that we do not have a precise year of our becoming Christians.

(9) Corneliu Chivu (*Constanta*): The Rediscovering of the Patristic Orthodox Spirituality within the Western Space: an Opportunity for finding the Spirit of the first Millennium European Christian Cohesion

The Renaissance, Humanism and the Enlightenment have been ample cultural movements which have gradually delimited themselves from the Western Christian tradition. "The restoration of all values" (Nietzsche) in the nineteenth century and the disasters which have happened during the twentieth century (e. g. the two World Wars, dictatorships, mass exterminations) are the result of taking the Western

rationalism to its limits, a fact which led to reason as the ultimate argument and which leads to nihilism (the belief or philosophy according to which nothing has any meaning or value). Patristic spirituality has the Gospel as the main source of authority and is based on the idea of the effort of inner cleansing so that man can regain his lost (through the fall) spiritual health. The process of rediscovering the patristic way of thinking represents the chance to resurrect our souls within the civilization of a united Europe, which has a body but does not have a soul.

Session 4

Chair: Egle Zinkute

Room # XI

(10) Svetoslav Ribolov (Sofia): The East Orthodox Understanding of Divine Inspiration

This essay provides a short review of the current discussion in East Orthodox Theology regarding the Divine Inspiration during the 20th Century and tries to analyze the various influences that affect different topics in the framework of this discussion.

(11) Ercan Alkan (Istanbul): Naming God in Sufi Thought at a Glance

The act of naming God and the various names of God have been the subject of a long debate in the history of Islamic thought, particularly in its early formative period and in the classical period. As well as Islamic theology and philosophy, Sufism provides its own unique approaches to this problem. For the Sufi thinkers, the divine names are the main sources of our knowledge about God and universe. Ibn al-‘Arabī, a well-known and prolific Sufi writer, is particularly notable. He places divine names at the centre of his metaphysical and mystical system. In this essay, I aim to present the subject of God’s names as evident in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s writings. My exposition here will be mostly descriptive rather than interpretative.

(12) Christian Wegeberg Chistensen (Aarus): The Spiritual Revolution and the Future of Religions

Sociologists of religion Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas declare in their book *The Spiritual Revolution* that the future of religions is in the holistic milieu, and that there will be an even greater decline in traditional churches in the West than we have seen so far. It is the challenges of this holistic milieu that have driven Christian groups and individuals to either rediscover their own religious inheritance or simply adopt the expressions of the holistic milieu. This essay will outline some of these expressions and evaluate them missiologically.

Session 5

Chair: Patrick Claffey

Room # XII

(13) Elena Tabus (Bucharest): Romanian Orthodox Christianity in a Pluralist World

In a world submitted to secularization and globalisation, where the idea of God's death is developing, Romanian Orthodox Christianity has the duty to keep the faith instituted on the Romanian territory by Saint Andrew the Apostle, and confessed even at the cost of life by Christians who have become saints and martyrs over time. The goal of the essay is not only to underline the identity and continuity of the Romanian Orthodoxy, even in these cloudy times, but also show its openness to peace, to tolerance in the relations with other religious beliefs. For, there is a pressing need for understanding between people of various plans, including religious ones, in a world where we seem to understand each other at technological and industrial levels, while at the spiritual level there is a deep difference in thought, attitudes and values of people of different cultures and religions.

(14) Doru-Emanuel Pantazi (*Constanța*): The Church's Mission in a Secular Europe

A secular society and globalisation are two concepts which have been more and more frequently used starting with the 1990s, and, which have a tendency to customize the world, by favouring individualism and pluralism that express themselves through a wide range of beliefs and denominations but also through numerous possibilities of religious commitment throughout the world. At the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare (1998), globalisation, with its double meaning of universalising and customising at the same time, was acknowledged as an "ineluctable reality of life", a challenge for finding new ways of involvement of the Church in the society. In this context, the Church's mission is more necessary than ever as the loss of Christian identity is becoming more and more obvious. Without keeping this Christian identity there is no such thing as unity or society.

(15) Katharina Rensinghoff (*Münster*): Perspectives of a Theology in Context for Europe

In the seventies the Catholic Churches of Asia, Latin America, and Africa generated the concept of theology in context in response to the prevalent European prerogative to represent the one generally admitted 'real' theology. In the meantime, academic theology experienced a change in perspective. By becoming aware of itself as also contextually bound and contingent- this theology could no longer be valid as a universal directive. This change entails important perspectives for ecumenical cooperation, as the contextual understanding of theology facilitates the realisation of similarities with other denominations at the same place. Thereby mutual understanding and common assignment can be advanced. At the same time the encounter with other religions and cultures within Europe can be put on a collective foundation.

Thursday, June 17th, 16:30- 18:30
Student Research Presentations II

Session 6 (session 8 in the conference order)

Chair: Hugh Durnin

Room # Arts Block, Rm 3025

(16) Triin Kapp (Tartu): The main Aspects of the Dialogue in the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission in the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century

The official Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission was established in 1981 by the Pan-Orthodox Conference and Lutheran World Federation. My essay will briefly introduce all the common statements that have been the result of the discussion. The main part will concentrate on the Commission's paper "The Mystery of Church", which consists of five subtopics: A. Word and Sacraments (Mysteria) in the Life of the Church (2000); B. Mysteria/ Sacraments as Means of Salvation (2002); C. Baptism and Chrismation as Sacraments of Initiation into the Church (2004); D. The Holy Eucharist in the Life of the Church; D.2. The Holy Eucharist in the Life of the Church: Preparation, Ecological and Social Implications (2008).

(17) Emrullah Cuma Akgunduz (Leiden): Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Ottoman Setting: Eastern Catholic Churches in the Mardin Collection

Religious dialogue was not only present between the majorities and the minorities of old Empires but also within minorities. The Eastern Catholic Churches, also known as the Uniate Churches, became increasingly influential in the Middle East over the last few centuries of the Ottoman Empire, mainly due to the increased missionary activities coupled with schisms that occurred within the Eastern Churches. The relationship between the Uniate Churches and their non-Catholic counterparts during the last few centuries of the Empire continuously proved to be full of tension and competition where both sides ceaselessly tried to gain support of the other actors, be it the Ottoman government, the local officials, or the Westerners. In this essay I will be presenting the dynamic relations between these actors by looking at a selection of texts from the Mardin Collection.

(18) Maria Wernsmann (Munster): Interreligious Dialogue and Interconfessional Ecumenics

Interreligious processes are more and more frequently mixed up with, and described as ecumenical processes. But what have interconfessional ecumenics and interreligious dialogue really in common, what are the differences between them? How do interreligious and interconfessional processes interact? These questions demonstrate a lack of theory about ecumenical and interreligious processes. Thirty years ago Peter Lengsfeld developed the "Kollusionstheorie", a concept of the inseparable interaction of the factors "truth", "sociality" and "identity" in ecumenics- unfortunately his work has not been widely acknowledged. Therefore, my essay will focus on theory building in the fields of ecumenics and interreligious encounters linked to Lengsfeld's ideas. Interreligious relations as well as ecumenical processes may thus turn out to be determined by the interaction of various factors.

Session 7 (session 9 in the conference order)

Chair: Kieran Flynn

Room # to be seen

(19) Michaela Johanna Neulinger (Salzburg): Christian-Islamic Dialogue in Early Abbasid Baghdad

Dialogue doesn't simply happen. Dialogue takes place in specific political, social, intellectual circumstances. The aims of the presentation are to point out the prerequisites that made dialogue in Abbasid Baghdad possible and fruitful and to come to conclusions for today's dialogue of religions. First of all I will give a short portrait of early Abbasid regency. In a second step fields of Christian-Islamic encounter and dialogue will be presented. From there I will try to find out about preconditions of fruitful dialogue from an interdisciplinary perspective. In the end there may be some clues for today's dialogue of religions.

(20) Alena Kharko (Munster): Russian Orthodox Church and Islam: Principles of Dialogue

The presented essay examines some aspects of religious dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and Islam in the Russian Federation. The relationship between the large Orthodox and Muslim populations in Russia is fragile. As such, the Russian Orthodox Church is currently working toward developing new principles of dialogue that may be applied to its relations with Islam. These new principles suggest a policy of non-interference in the interior affairs of Muslim communities, the rejection of orthodox mission among Muslims and the importance of developing an understanding of Islamic theology. It is proposed that this special form of dialogue between Russian Orthodoxy and Islam may present a new means of approaching dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

(21) Simone Sinn (Munster): Contested Pluralism amid Vibrant Religious Diversity. Current Processes of Legitimizing and Limiting Religious Pluralism in Indonesia

Since the end of Suharto's autocratic regime in 1998, Indonesia has experienced considerable socio-political change, moving towards more democratic procedures. Religious practice and discourse about religious plurality also have gained new vitality and increased visibility. This paper gives an outline of the current discourse about religious pluralism in Indonesia and exemplarily analyses the perspectives of Andreas A. Yewangoe, chairman of the Indonesian Council of Churches. Religious diversity is often regarded as a hallmark of Indonesia, at the same time the notion of "officially recognised" religions points to the fact that legitimizing and limiting pluralism have been intertwined processes. This analysis shows that a shift in public discourse is emerging. For decades, the question has been debated as to *where* the limits of legitimate religious pluralism are located. More recently, the question as to *who* has the legitimate authority to define the limits is openly asked.

Student Monday, June 21st, 15:30- 18:00
Research Presentations III (5 Parallel Sessions)

Session 8

Chair:

Room # VIII

(22) Peter Meiners (*Münster*): Amos: Prophet of Interreligious Tolerance? A Lecture of the Book of Amos in Dialogue with Michael Walzers

The permanent provocation for a tolerant interreligious dialogue is the retention of universal truth claims. Its basis is the conviction that there is one God, and because there is one God, one divine salvation and one true form of adoration. In contrast to this idea of a “converging-law version of universalism” Michael Walzer, a Jewish American social philosopher, prefers the concept of a “reiterative universalism”, which has its basis in the idea of one God as evident in the biblical prophetic tradition of the book of Amos. My essay continues and enlarges the difference between the “converging-law universalism” and the “reiterative universalism” by referring to some passages from the book of Amos. Thus, it addresses the question, how this difference can open new ways of thinking for the various ways of ‘naming’ and ‘thinking’ God across different cultures of faith, and in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Accordingly, a “moral minimum” can be designed, which is absolute, universal and separate from any idea of a saving truth.

(23) Johannes Kleiner (*Münster*): Towards an Appreciation of Diversity- Interreligious Dialogue and Kwame A. Appiah’s Vision of Cosmopolitanism

How can we best live together in the globalized world of the 21st century? The question sounds banal but is of prime importance. The British-Ghanaian Princeton philosopher Kwame A. Appiah presents a challenging concept of cosmopolitanism based on the pillars of conversation and the process by which we get used to each other and develop habits. What he does not elaborate on is the role religion plays in peaceful cohabitation. How can religions position themselves in the global web of cultures, values, and convictions without becoming destructive? How should religions and religious people deal with the variety of religious beliefs? There is only one way: a new appreciation of diversity through a truly cosmopolitan conversation across religious and denominational lines.

(24) Patricia Mckee-Hanna (*Dublin*): The Stranger’s Gaze, Liminality and Pilgrimage: Three Different Approaches to Religion and Interreligious Dialogue in a Secular Age

Drawing on the work of Charles Taylor, this paper examines three different ways of understanding religious and inter-religious dialogue: Reporting from a distance, the stranger’s gaze involves observation upon return. Liminality crosses the threshold and provokes transitional and troublesome knowledge. Pilgrimage demands that one leave behind the bounded self to surrender to the unknown and a new and sometimes bewildering experience of the absence and presence of the sacred. While acknowledging that the three approaches have different goals and starting points, this

paper sets out to explore the blending and intersection of each one, while recognizing the tensions between them. The work of Cornille and Knitter will be examined as will the stranger's gaze, particularly concerning the peculiar inhabitants of Ireland. The three approaches will be related to Taylor's narrative of the secular age and the possibilities he hints at regarding the third way.

Session 9

Chair: Peter Admirand

Room # IX

(25) Katarina Lycken Abstract (*Uppsala*): "Let us talk about peace"

The Swedish secondary school project "Let us talk about peace", jointly launched by Jews for Israeli and Palestinian Peace (JIPF) and The Palestinian Association in Stockholm (PAF) in 2004 is examined as a uniquely Swedish approach toward concrete action in Swedish Jewish and Palestinian dialogue and cooperation. The potential benefits of this school program are considered through three categories of student response: as a project of peace, as a means of establishing and maintaining commitment to the issues concerned, and with regard to the role of religion within "Let us talk about peace". Common themes are identified within these three categories. These categories are primarily examined via first-person interviews with student participants.

(26) Miriam Leidinger (*Munster*): Indecent and Queer – A Christian and a Jewish Perspective: Marcella Althaus-Reid and Danya Ruttenberg

In this paper I would like to attempt a dialogue of two queer and "indecent" women, one is a Christian Quaker (Marcella Althaus-Reid), the other a Jewish Rabbi (Danya Ruttenberg). Both women have applied Queer Theory to their Christian or Jewish theology, and have thereby started innovative and challenging discourses. Marcella Althaus-Reid engages in a queer Liberation Theology and creates an "Indecent Theology" that mingles and openly addresses topics of sexuality, economy, and religion. Danya Ruttenberg counts herself among the third wave of Jewish feminism and applies transgender theory to the Jewish mikveh ritual. Independent from their religious contexts, Althaus-Reid's and Ruttenberg's endeavours show what it can mean to apply deconstructive thinking into a metaphysical religious discourse.

(27) Alpar Hanko Nagy (*Cluj-Napoca*): When Cultures Clash, Churches Suffer – Implications of Nationalist Animosity upon the Life of the Reformed Church in Romania (1940-45)

This essay presents the relationship between the Romanian government of the early 1940's and the Hungarian minority of Southern Transylvania, specifically the Reformed Church. This relationship crucially illustrates how the animosity between two nations or cultures affects the life of different religious denominations. Romania and Hungary held an open debate during the period of 1940-45 regarding the effects of the Second Vienna Award, which rendered Romanians in Hungary and Hungarians in Romania a hindered minority. And so – even though Romania had declared itself a Christian state – the possibility for religious freedom and the continuity of the Reformed Church were seriously narrowed by different measures of the authorities.

This essay presents all the reasons that backed the attitude of the Romanian government and public opinion, and includes a quick survey of the various injuries and atrocities that were committed against the Reformed Church. This essay will conclude that even though the Reformed Church was a traditional European and Christian religious denomination, there was no place for it in 1940's Romania, due to nationalism and Nazi ideology mixed with fundamentalist Greek Orthodox religiosity, which left no place for pluralism in the country in the early 1940's.

Session 10

Chair: Heleen Murre-Van den Berg

Room # X

(28) Magdalena Kreuzer (Salzburg): Interreligious Marriages between Christians and Muslims

Matrimony is a phenomenon which one may encounter as an institution in many different cultures. This institution was always affected and controlled by the respective religious ideas. It was and it is still important for the identity of the religious community that its members avoid marriages with believers in different faiths, such that they are forbidden to do so in the religious law. The predominantly Christian European countries are now faced with rising migration of persons from Islamic countries. So the number of marriages between Christians and Muslims is also going up. Those interreligious and cross-cultural matrimonyes are often faced with problems caused by different appreciations of matrimony, varied gender roles and religious laws. I aim to show the main differences between "matrimony" in Christianity and in Islam, which could prove to be evident in all interreligious couples.

(29) Joke Lambelin (Leuven): Interreligious Dialogue as Feminist Solidarity

The space of encounter between Christian and Muslim women within different (urban) contexts in Europe and the Middle East—a contact zone of multiple identities—is a fragmented space, ridden with implicit structures and relations of dominance and oppression. The interaction between two 'religions' with asymmetry of power is often not voluntary and one-dimensional, so full of tensions, fractures, and resistance (Kwok, 2002, 70). The focus of this paper, then, is not on the formal practice of 'interreligious dialogue', but on a contemporary feminist theological debates and reconstruction of the *interrelatedness* at work within Islamo-Christian encounter. We draw on the feminist concepts of 'sisterhood' and 'solidarity' in order to come to an enriched understanding of 'Islam-Christian dialogue' not as an 'intellectual' space, but as a highly complex reality of a (dis)engaged encounter 'inbetween'.

(30) Egle Zinkute (Dublin): Virtues through Necessity: the Possibilities in Dialogue, and 'The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue'

Confronted with the question regarding the (im)possibility of interreligious dialogue, this paper proposes to modify existing approaches, in this case Catherine Cornille's hermeneutics grounded in 'epistemological virtues' - by taking a more critical look at

the structures of dialogical understanding as such. By reconsidering these existing hermeneutical approaches- which, continue to participate in the weaknesses of their often implicitly assumed Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutical frameworks- from the sharpened perspective of a ‘critical hermeneutics’ (as formulated by Hans Herbert Kögler) we will be able to better account for the dimension of power in all (self- and pre-)understanding. This will allow the substantiation of my thesis that the conditions of the possibility of all dialogue lay in the very *structures* of dialogue and that the only way to effectively connect interreligious dialogue to the *self-understanding* of traditions is through a thus informed *practice* of dialogue.

Session 11

Chair: Ulrich Winkler

Room # XI

(31) Alex Pandarakappil (*Paris*): Christological Paradox and Theology of Religions According to Claude Geffre

In order to recognize the intrinsic values of non-Christian religions, the French Catholic theologian Claude Geffre opts to return to the very centre of Christian faith: the mystery of incarnation. He concentrates his reflection on the person of Christ as the Universal Concrete. This paradox signifies the identification of the transcendent God to the concrete humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. For Geffre, this very distinctive feature of Christian faith or this specific nature of Christian Revelation does not allow us to absolutize Christianity as a historical religion. To arrive at this conclusion, he bases himself in the criticism of absolute Christianity made by the Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich (1886-1965) for whom the identification of the person of God as Jesus Christ directs us to a transcendent God who exceeds all identifications.

(32) Sigrid Rettenbacher (*Salzburg*): Outside Ecclesiology No Theology of Religions: Epistemological Reflections on an Ambivalent Relationship

Ecclesiology is an ambivalent topic in the project of a theology of religions. On the one hand the Church is the warrantor for maintaining one’s Christian identity and thus must not be relativized. On the other hand this self-concept of the Church generally has not facilitated a positive relationship to other religious traditions as the history of the axiom “*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*” shows. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the epistemological role of ecclesiology in a theology of religions. How have certain conceptualizations of the Church helped to construct one’s own Christian identity and the identity of the religious other. Conceiving of ecclesiology in a framework of a hermeneutics of difference can help to face some of the present challenges in a theology of religions.

(33) John Alwyn Dias (*Paris*): Universal Salvation and Sacramental Principle: Revisiting the Christian Doctrine in the Writings of John Henry Newman

The question of salvation or cry ‘to be saved’ is at the very heart of human existence; it resounds all along for all time: *‘all our fears, all our hopes are in view of our future life’*. From the very beginning of its genesis, the Christian faith has never failed to proclaim God’s salvific design for humanity revealed and accomplished in and

through His Incarnate Son Jesus Christ, the mediator and the Redeemer of humankind. As in the era of post modernity this Christian claim is put in question by other religious traditions pretending to claim themselves as ‘one of the ways’ of salvation. This context of religious pluralism incites one to look for the theological principles and foundations of the Christian doctrine in the history and tradition of the Church. I ask: In what way can John Henry Newman shed light on this matter for us? Can his conception of the sacramental principle open new horizons? How might humanity be grafted into the Body of Christ?

Session 12

Chair: Frederico Squarcini

Room # XII

(34) Simplicio D’Souza (*Leuven*): Brahmabandhab Upadhyay’s theology as a Key to Rethinking Hindu-Christian Dialogue

Since Christianity came to India, it has been viewed as a ‘foreigner’. This led to an ongoing attempt to rethink Christianity, in such a way, as to inculturate it in and through the Indian thought. One such attempt has been made by the 19th century Indian thinker Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, who developed an explicitly Hindu-Christian theology by combining Christian thinking with the Vedanta tradition. In this paper we will offer an introduction to and critical assessment of the way in which Upadhyay combined Hindu and Christian thinking, seeing whether and how Upadhyay’s thought might contribute to a fruitful dialogue with Hinduism and to the inculturation of Christianity in India today.

(35) Nicola Jolly (*Birmingham*): Gandhi and the Quakers, Relationships and Resonances

This paper builds on research by Vasant Bawa and Margaret Chatterjee, examining the dialogue between Gandhi and Quakers and comparing Gandhi and George Fox respectively. This is taken further, in particular, bringing it up to date with an exploration of the current dialogue between contemporary Quakerism and Gandhi's thought and example. The most important figure, historically, in the dialogue is Horace Alexander, a lecturer from Woodbrooke Quaker College. He formed a personal friendship with Mahatma Gandhi as well as collaborating on shared concerns regarding peace and social issues in India. It is these personal connections and shared concerns, which for both are religious and moral, in a tradition which does not separate the two, which explain this deep dialogue. These features remain prominent in the collaborations between Quakers and followers of Gandhi today, as evidenced for instance in the work and collaborative partnerships of Quaker Peace and Social Witness South Asia. These factors offer the explanation for the deep and lasting nature of this dialogue.

(36) Anita Suneson (*Uppsala*): Indian Christians living with Religious Plurality: Theological and Practical Strategies

The essay discusses attitudes and practical choices among Pentecostals in Bangalore (South India) as interpreted from empirical research. These are compared with

reflections made by Indian scholars focussing on the theology of religions, such as S. J. Samartha and the Pentecostal Geomon K. George, who advocates a positive attitude towards other religious traditions. The empirical material shows theological positions that differ markedly from those of the theologians discussed here. However, at a practical level the Pentecostals' actions emerge as being nearer to the perspectives of the academic theologians.

Thursday, June 24th, 15:30- 18:00
Student Research Presentations IV (5 Parallel Sessions)

Session 13

Chair: Anne Kull

Room # VIII

(37) Constantin Ciobanu (*Constanta*): Ethnic and Religious Pluralism in Dobrudja Country

The greatest part of the south-eastern European population is Orthodox. However, this region (which partially- only the southern part of the Danube- has been occupied for almost five centuries by the Ottoman Empire) has, in the long run, seen religious and ethnic pluralism utterly different from other parts of Europe. Above all, the Dobrudjan region exemplifies such a kind of pluralism because of the fact that in the respective territory, situated between the Danube and the Black Sea, there have been living (without any restrictive delimitations) many different populations, such as Greeks, Macedo-Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Turks, Tartars, and Macedonians. They have all been living together here for centuries and thus, they already exemplify an established model of what might be called a genuine interreligious and intercultural symbiosis.

(38) Mate Voneki (*Szeged*): The Influence of Easternisation in Hungary

The aim of this study is to give a short summary of the 'influence of Easternisation' thesis in Central Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary. In recent decades the Eastern religions are more and more popular in Western societies, and many new religious movements apply some kind of Eastern concepts such as karma, reincarnation and enlightenment. While the Eastern religions in Western Europe had appeared already in the sixties and the seventies, in Central Eastern Europe these kinds of religions could appear only after the change of the regime. The main topics and questions of my study are the following: How did thinking about God change after the appearance of the Eastern attitude? How can we describe and categorize the Eastern and Western religions? How can we describe an Eastern religion which lives in a Western society? Is there any unique feature of the faith of Hungarians following an Eastern religion?

(39) Jan Liska (*Budejovice*): Interreligious Dialogue in the South Bohemia Region

My paper focuses on the dialogue between (Catholic) Christianity and the unchristian religions. First of all I will try to lay theoretical foundations of interreligious dialogue and will determine the necessary conditions for its possibility. I will also attempt to sketch the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to unchristian religions throughout Church history. Finally, I will pay attention to religiosity in the Czech Republic and to one particular problem (that was the construction of a mosque in Brno). I will conclude by mentioning some facts about interreligious dialogue in the South Bohemia region.

(40) June Cromer (Dublin): Pentecostals and the Redeemed Church of God

This essay is built on a case study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), a Protestant Pentacostal group based at Faith House International, Athy, Co. Kildare. My aim is to introduce this group by discussing features such as the organizational structure and mode of worship. I will then look into the life of this ‘migrant led church community’ using the empirical data gathered during field research with a specific focus on issues such as inculturation, theological anthropology, and other aspects pertinent to this community as a ‘face of World Christianity’.

Session 14

Chair: Frantisek Stech

Room # IX

(41) Donatus Nduluo (Paris): The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu

Against the backdrop crisis of the major traditions in Western theology (specifically, Calvinist and Anglican) and, especially, contemporary liberation theologies (including those of James Cone), the *ubuntu* theology (an African concept recognizing that persons and groups form their identities in relation to one another) is relevant in this age of mounting emphasis on the issues of diversity and multiculturalism. My research asks if this model of theology can offer a Christian paradigm for resisting oppression where ever it appears and whether it could offer renewal of the Christian faith in the context of South African post-apartheid theology. Does the way in which Tutu’s theology emerge out of the particularity of contextual theology, or reconstruction theology, offer a way to identify the Christian contribution in social justice issues and in conflicting human identities?

(42) Judit Toth (Szeged): Religious Pluralism on the Billboards at the University

The topic of my paper is the symbolism of advertising on the billboards at the University of Szeged. I would like to examine what kind of advertising appears on the billboards which includes religious content and what kinds of symbols are used. I have asked those people who posted the advertising why they used those particular symbols and figures on their adverts. I have visited some programs also, and I have talked to the people about what kinds of contacts have had an influence on these. Furthermore, I also examine those adverts which do not have religious content, although on which religious symbols were also used.

(43) Eva Varga (Szeged): Syncretism and Nationalism in Hungarian Religions

There is a tendency in Hungarian religions resembling a type of nationalisation, where the historical traditions are just as important. The emphasis is on the Christian tradition of the country, which is part of even the Neo-Pagan and New Religious Movements to some degree. In my essay I would like to present three of the most remarkable peculiarities in Hungarian Religions: the understanding of Trinity that includes a specific interpretation of God, the Virgin Mary and Christ. The tendency towards nationalisation is well known in Central-Eastern Europe, as is syncretism, but I believe that these three examples will show a unique part of Hungarian religions.

Session 15

Chair: Anne Thurston

Room # X

(44) Mihai Iordache (*Bucharest*): The Loss of the Christian Identity, the Depersonalisation of the Person and the Cancellation of the Mystery

The exaggerated multiculturalism and the (communitarian) tendency to accentuate religious pluralism lead to a major decrease of Christian identity. In addition, the hyper-complexity of the social system where the human being is now-a-days “integrated” attacks and slowly erodes the identity of the person. Whereas, the authentic person cultivates a strong relationship with history, promotes values and has a vertical, dignified and responsible identity. In our times, there is an eager tendency to examine, explore and measure everything including such issues as the aforementioned problem of Christian identity.

(45) Abdullah Selman Nur (*Istanbul*): Relativity and Faith: Reconsidering Faith From a Relativistic Perspective

In this paper, I am going to discuss the meaning and character of faith from a relativistic perspective. First I am going to point out the problems inherent in objectivistic epistemologies, and to explain why we need a relativistic perspective. Then I will attempt to assess the possibility and the nature of faith within a relativistic perspective. In this regard, I am going to deal with questions such as: “Is it possible to be a relativist and a believer at the same time?”, and, “Does relativity necessarily force one to accept that his faith is no more true than that of others?”.

(46) Elizabeth Fonsmark (*Aarhus*): Radical orthodoxy, secularism and the Modern State

In my essay, I will try to deal with some of the issues concerning religion in the public square, especially when it comes to Radical Orthodoxy. This type of orthodoxy claims to have a solution, or at least a different way of thinking, when it comes to what it identifies as the “implosion” of modern thought. Modern society is stranded in hopeless nihilism, because God is obliterated from our society. Thus, we have a public square, that claims to be neutral, but in reality, is everything *but* neutral as people will always bring something with them. Since this space cannot be neutral-Christianity should at least be part of it, or as, Radical Orthodoxy will argue, *is* a part of it, albeit not recognized.

Session 16

Chair: Roja Fazaeli

Room # XI

(47) Habibe Gülsüm Müftüler (*Istanbul*): The Universal Virtues of Islam

In my paper, I am going to focus on some basic concepts of Islam concerning the universal virtues, values and principles. They are considered to direct and enlighten the way of life of persons as human beings in general, not only as individuals but also

as families, social units and as the world-wide community. I am going to discuss some concepts chosen from the Quran, which is the Holy Scripture of the Muslims.

(48) Per-Erik Nilsson (*Uppsala*): Can Muslims Speak Secularism? A Discourse Analysis of French television media during the “Islamic Veil Affair”

In 1989 we saw the beginning of what in France came to be called “The Islamic Veil Affair”. In 2003-2004 debates reached a peak and they did so with regard to the forthcoming law banning ostentatious religious symbols in public schools. It is the author’s argument that the debates centred around two master signifiers- Islam and secularism (*laïcité*). Based on the assumption that some kind of adherence to secularism was a major key to gain access to public debate, the author asks the rather simple question “Who could speak ‘secularism’?” To answer this question a number of televised debates on the topic of secularism and Islam are analyzed. The analysis is theoretically anchored in discourse theory and Lacanian inspired analysis of ideology.

(49) Kameliya Slavcheva (*Sofia*): The Importance of Knowing Human Rights and Religious Freedom

The society has to be well informed about its rights and the possibilities of protecting itself when its rights are violated. The knowing and observing of the human rights and the religious freedoms is naturally connected with an upbringing in social responsibility and tolerance, and in education against racism and hostility. The securing of human rights has to be connected with the task of learning how to tolerate others in their differences. Religious freedom can act as a bridge between cultures, a way of communicating between them, a way to sustain peace. Knowing and tolerating different faith is an opportunity for coexistence of different cultures in the same location, which is a basic fact of today. The right to choose your own faith brings an irrefutable social benefit for everyone and according to the criteria of the secularism—brings mutual understanding between believers and nonbelievers. All this transforms religious freedom into a phenomenon with fundamental meaning for the life of today’s society and promises the fundamental right for every democratic legal system.

Session 17

Chair: Manuela Kalsky

Room # XII

(50) Magda Robu (*Cluj-Napoca*): The Post-Critical Belief Scale: A Valid Measurement of Religious Attitudes across Cultures

The Post-Critical Belief Scale (PCBS, Hutsebaut, 1996) orders different approaches towards religion along two dimensions: (Inclusion vs. Exclusion of) Transcendence and (Symbolic vs. Literal) processing of religious contents. Initially, the scale was developed on a sample of Flemish population, but since then it was translated into and used in several different languages. The results show that the internal structure of the different versions of the scale is predominantly identical even when it is used, for example, with a sample of Iranian people. Thus, the scale seems to be a valid

measurement of religious attitudes across cultures, making it possible to conduct intercultural and interreligious research. The aim of the essay is to present the theological background of the scale and the most important research regarding the PCBS and its use in different languages and cultures.

(51) Kerstin Sturzekarn (*Frankfurt*): The ‘Aggiornamento’ of God. An Attempt to Learn from Secular Sources

To stay alive religious traditions have to find new ways to express their beliefs. In this essay I will try an approach to a renewed expression of the Christian belief in God that learns from contemporary philosophy. Modern philosophy focuses on the human person. Thinkers like Honneth and Ricoeur continue this tradition in their attempts to reflect intersubjective relationships of recognition. I will outline the consequences their discourses have for the thinking of God. That will lead to a set of elements for an understanding of God appropriate to the insights of contemporary philosophy. The resulting concept of God will then be related and compared to the biblical and Christian tradition in order to find out whether it can be integrated there.

(52) Fatma Sengül (*Istanbul*): Images of God in Modern Turkish Society

The idea of God is the oldest and most universal concept in the history of humankind. It is also a strong source of meaning and value for human life. In this vein the issue is an important research area for the discipline of religion psychology. In this presentation it is intended to share the findings of two preliminary studies focussed on samples of Turkish adults and children, thus to give an idea about the images of God in modern Turkish society.

Friday, June 25th, 10:30- 12:30
Student Research Presentations V (4 Parallel Sessions)

Session 18

Chair: Zuleika Rogers

Room # VIII

(53) Marius Maftai Retegan (*Bucharest*): Religion in the Age of the Blogosphere: the Case of Romania

The essay offers an overview of the Romanian religious blogosphere. Questions relevant to the subject shall be: can we speak about a Romanian religious blogosphere? If so, what are its beginnings? What is its evolution to the present moment? What are the specific features of this blogosphere? How relevant as such is the Romanian religious blogosphere? The method used to answer these questions will be content analysis. Some points of interest might be: membership (or not) in a religious organization/ church; attitude towards the hierarchy; and, other secondary topics, as for instance the promotion of feminism.

(54) Anneli Winell (*Uppsala*): Existential Issues in Women's Magazines

Media has become an important arena when it comes to the debate, the presentation and the reflection on religion. This essay, based on a study in the sociology of religions, will discuss the impact of religion and change throughout a Swedish lifestyle magazine for professional, middle-aged, middle-class women focussing on the magazine's construction of its target readers, their religious identity, and their relation to existential issues. Whereas the magazine presents a woman dedicated to a holistic and subjective spirituality of a life practicing yoga and mindfulness for mental and physical health, a focus-group of readers- while accepting a general wellbeing agenda- seems to be challenged by the magazine's spiritual outline.

(55) Rita Kovacs (*Szeged*): Religion and Theatre: Religiosity and Mode of Performance

The aim of my presentation is to demonstrate the present modern theatre from the perspective of the study of religion. Numerous symbols can be observed in performances, histrionic acts and realizations of artistic work. Use of symbols, animation of rites, and their history and philosophy assist extensively in the cognition and comprehension of the present society. Representation of god, manifestation of religious components, reception, and understanding of these stagings play an important part in the arts as well as in everyday life.

Session 19

Chair: Gesa Theissen

Room # IX

(56) Toomas Schvak (*Tartu*): Challenges of Modernity and Postmodernity to Christian Tradition: Past and Present

Contemporary globalised society seems to challenge Christian churches and their membership in many unprecedented ways but we need to ask if these challenges are really as novel as they seem. This essay, written from the perspective of a church historian, will analyse the potential role of church history in addressing them. It will also present a case study of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, a small church community in a family of tradition-based Christian churches, going through rapid changes in the first half of the 20th century, striving both to maintain and transform its Christian Orthodox identity. Such case studies of religious flexibility, fluidity and change from the past could serve as examples for the world of today, the author claims.

(57) Thomas Seissl (*Salzburg*): “The Weakness of Faith”- Perspectives on the Constitution of Christian Belief in a Postmodern Society according to Michel de Certeau

The evidence of the traditional institutional church has extensively disappeared. Instead today’s Christians are deprived of traditional certitudes and have to meet the challenge of being a Christian in an individualised society. Therefore, the French social anthropologist, historian, and Jesuit Michel de Certeau argues for a “weak faith” freed of dogmas and reputed certitudes. All the more, de Certeau tries to conceive of faith as an act which searches for a Christian lifestyle in the current pluralism. Practicing this faith and accepting its particular character without relativising oneself leads de Certeau to a differentiated consideration of the concept of “institution”. Hence my paper will discuss the perspectives of de Certeau’s thinking, but reveal its limits as well. In a second part, prospects will be offered to determine the rapport between faith, today’s European society and postmodernism.

(58) Stephen Retout (*Birmingham*): Eco-God Talk in the Public Square: Engaging with the European Transition Towns Movement

Over three decades there has been a multiplicity of practical and theological responses by the Christian churches and other faith groups to the ecological question. Some of these have been in co-operation with secular initiatives such as Agenda 21. The recent Transition Towns movement challenges the European churches and faith groups in a different way to previous secular projects and campaigns. The key difference is that the Transition Towns idea relies on grassroots involvement rather than a top-down approach. How should faith groups engage practically and theologically with a movement, which may appear New Age and even slightly wacky? Do the European religious institutions have sufficient eco-theological resources to respond co-operatively and positively to a secular led local community movement? Some answers to these questions are provided from a consideration of the ecotheology implicit in the poetry and prose of the Welsh poet R.S. Thomas (1913-2000).

Session 20

Chair: Jude Lal Fernando

Room # X

(59) Carol- Teodor Peterfi (*Tartu*): Ethnic – Religious Dimension of Security

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, new factors which possibly affect security environment have broken through on the international arena. The role of religious and ethnic factors in different cultural frameworks has significantly increased. There are several reasons contributing to this situation: the crash of ideologies, which had progressively been replaced by ethnic and religious trends. More and more tensions, accumulated in the cold war era, or had been triggered by the excessive overstatements that emphasized ethnical or religious differences, and became distorted in conflicts. Now-a-days it is compulsory to stress that beside other cultural factors, religion has the potential to generate heated tensions, but also to calm them, because it is not a frozen system, but an integrating and evolutionary one- open to dialog and cooperation for world peace.

(60) Judith Gruber (*Salzburg*): Re-membering Borders. Toward a Systematic Theology of Migration

Migration has become a sign of the times for contemporary theology, fostering the theological interpretation of a migrational reality and the migrational interpretation of theology. This mutual hermeneutic taps Europe's cultural memory and exposes a history of migrations as its foundational experience. Memories of transgression, alienation and marginalisation inform European consciousness and forge its identity in an ongoing negotiation of shifting borders. However, these migratory and liminal experiences have been buried deeply underneath a static self-perception, whose "centre vs. periphery" epistemology results in a lethal exclusion of the margins. The anamnestic retrieval of the cultural memory in a theology of migration has ethical implications for the politics of migration and offers a theoretical matrix for the theological reflection on migration: it draws on a translational methodology, a marginal epistemology and an intercultural hermeneutics of the stranger.

(61) Sarah Jahn (*Munster*): Resocialization as an Interreligious and Intercultural Concept?

Resocialization is part of the primary aim of imprisonment in Germany. This presentation discusses whether resocialization is able to serve as an interreligious and intercultural concept. The following two questions shall be discussed: (1) What does the concept of resocialization mean in an interreligious and intercultural perspective? (2) How are the different definitions understood within the scientific community and in practical implementation in German prisons? These questions shall be explored upon the assumption of a rising cultural and religious diversity in German prisons.

Session 21

Chair: Declan Marmion

Room # X

(62) Vitalis Anaehobi (*Paris*): The Gradual Integration of Development into the Social Teachings of the Church: A Study on *Gaudium et Spes*

The Second Vatican Council was a moment of great innovation in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the world. It was in the Council that the Church tried for the first time to give very serious attention to the social, economic and

political problems of the world in which she lives. This essay tries to examine the history of how and why the Church focused on the question of development and how she eventually developed her theological point of view on the question. This essay is presented in four chapters. The first chapter examines how the vocabulary of development was integrated into theological language. The second chapter studies how the Council enriched this vocabulary by giving it theological content. The third chapter provides a reading of *Gaudium et Spes* in the light of the two previous chapters and the fourth chapter deals with the practical realisations of the Council's teaching on development.

(63) Niklas Holmefur (*Uppsala*): Secular or Religious? The role and function of Faith-based Organisations in Swedish Development Cooperation

This essay discusses the role and function of faith-based organisations within Swedish development cooperation focusing on civil society. The issue at stake concerns the secular norm within Swedish development cooperation as it is carried out in part by faith-based organisations, particularly churches and church agencies. This issue is examined historically and through a close reading of two important policy documents before an examination of recent developments. Finally, suggestions are given regarding the need of further research in relation to the ambiguity of religion in Sida policy documents, and the need for a more thorough discussion of civil society. Throughout this essay, external reflection is highlighted.

(64) Sarah Rosenhauer (*Frankfurt*): Freedom and Will. Considerations on a Concept of Urban Spirituality in the Spirit of Ignatius

Are the realizations of spiritual praxis in urban secular contexts essentially Christian? Urban spirituality is on the one hand characterized by a tension between doctrinal tradition and individual religious experience, as well as by the secular context in which it is located on the other hand. Karl Rahner identifies a special signature, manifesting itself in the concept of the subject implied by the Ignatian spiritual tradition. This concept of the subject may be explicated by means of the transcendental-philosophic analysis of (the concept of) freedom as a subject which is essentially constituted in and by freedom. The secular affirmation of the subject's freedom may be demonstrated to be an essential part of the Christian tradition. This tradition thus includes a strong disposition for being realized within urban contexts.