

IP Student Research Presentations – Groups

Session 14 - Tuesday, May 3rd, 14.30 – 16.30

Group 14:1 (Room ?) Fluid Boundaries of Religions

Martin Radermacher (Münster)

Aspects of Islamic Roots in Contemporary European Esotericism

The present essay will deal with the Islamic roots of contemporary esoteric movements. Religious orientations in contemporary Europe do not emerge as clearly distinct entities, but present themselves as highly fluid symbolic systems which draw their communicative references out of various religious contexts and make use of both Islamic and Christian sources.

Helena Risthein (Tartu)

God's Eyes, Fatima's Hand and other common or close Symbols in Christianity and Islam

From the perspective of an art historian I am going to present and discuss approximately 50 images depicting the Eye and the hand of God in Christian art, as well as Fatima's hand in Islam, or Chamsa in a Jewish house, with inscriptions of prayers and wishes. The aim of the presentation is to investigate the similarities (or otherwise) of images found in both Oriental and Occidental sacred art and everyday life. Having analyzed the connotations in sacred texts and theology, as well as in superstition I will draw on the work of a range of Estonian and international researchers pertinent to my subject to further the comparison.

Samuel John Ekpo (Nijmegen)

The Doctrines of Islamic and Christian Eschatology: African lessons for Europe

In my presentation, I will discuss the Islamic and Christian doctrines of Eschatology from an African perspective with possible lessons for Europe. In the process, I will investigate concepts of death, judgement, after-life, Jesus and the *Dajjal*, as well as heaven and hell in the context of the New Testament.

Hendrik Rungelrath (Salzburg)

Figurations of the Messianic in Muslim and Christian Theology

According to the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions *Nostra Aetate*, Muslims and Christians share an eschatological hope. From the Christian perspective, the second coming of Christ, the *Parousia*, is constitutive. Therefore, a messianic form of knowledge seems to be at the very centre of Christian theology. The question is, however, how this form of knowledge is concretely shaped and what differences or relations it can uncover. The paper will try to adopt a micrological perspective of comparative theology to deal with Messianic figurations in Christian and Muslim theologies, focussing especially on the eschatological figure of *al-mahadī*, the "divinely guided one". With that it tries to look for traces that can contextualize and concretize Christian theology in treating questions regarding the concrete messianic reference to social and epistemological orders.

Group 14:2 (Room ?) Religious Minorities in Muslim State

Hacer Kontbay (Marmara, Istanbul)

Dhimmîs (Non-Muslims living under Muslim authority) in Islamic law

Since it precedes the emergence of the concept of the “nation-state”, citizenship in an Islamic state is based on religion- which is determined by the preference of the individuals themselves- instead of nation that is based upon coincidences. Consequently, being a citizen of this type of state is related to the religion one has adopted. In terms of relations with the Muslim state, the status of the non-Muslim person may be one of the following four: 1. If he/ she is subject to a non-Muslim state which is at war with the Muslim one, he/ she is named *harbî*; 2. If he/ she is subject to a non-Muslim state which has a treaty of peace with the Muslim state, he/ she is named *mu’âhid*; 3. If he/ she comes to a Muslim state with a certain permission and for a limited period, he/ she is named *muste’men*; 4. Finally, if he/ she is legally accepted to be a member of the Muslim community, he/ she is a *dhimmî*. A non-Muslim acquires Muslim state’s citizenship through a contract- namely the dhimma contract- between him/ her and the state. This concept of citizenship has many similarities to its contemporary meaning, but the two differ in certain ambivalent aspects. This paper discusses the legal status of non-Muslims living under Muslim authority, of which, theoretically, the same legal and permanent form is the “contract of dhimma”. Patterns of experience from different periods, especially from the Ottoman Empire will be treated- without forgetting the fact that these examples do not reflect the orthodox view, but are forms of interpretation; or conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Andrei Vlădăreanu (University Ovidius, Constanta)

Special rights of the Christian Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire- the first half of the 18th century

Some privileges of the Christian Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, as they emerge from the documents and contemporary writings of the first half of the 18th century- with especial regards for the legal status of sacred objects and certain rights of the clergy- are the concern of the present paper. In the course of discussion comments will refer to some Immams issued between April 1667 and April 1755 by Sultans Mustafa II, Ahmed III, Mahmud I, and Osman III presently kept in the collections of the library of the Romanian Academy.

Simon Birol (Münster)

The ambivalence of the 21st century: Syriac-Orthodox Christians in Turkey between old repressions and new hope?

The sudden call “to return to your homeland” from the Turkish Prime-Minister Ecevit in July 2001 raised hope for Syriac-Orthodox Christians (Syriacs) all over the world for a new life in peace, equality and without any discrimination in their native country- Tur-Abdin, in the Southeast of Turkey. But what was the situation of the Syriacs before this call was made? What has changed in Turkey since the call from the perspective of the Syriacs? What is the view of the Syriacs on the return to their country under the government of Prime-Minister Erdogan? To answer these, and other related questions the presentation will engage the actual situation of Syriacs from Turkey; including the restoration of old churches and houses, and the complete return of some Syriacs to Tur-Abdin on the one hand, and the attacks, juridical problems and the ambivalence of the restored monastery of St. Gabriel, for example, on the other hand.

Group 14:3 (Room ?) Christians in the World of Islam

Ravza Aydin (Marmara, Istanbul)

Relationship between Muslims and Christians: Acculturation between them

Although there is no consensus about how and when the Syrian Christians who are the first adherents of Christianity arose, the general perception is that they are of Armenian origin and are called *Suriin* (today Assyrians), who had accepted Christianity through disciples who came from the city of Sur in

38 A.D. In my presentation, I will discuss these first adherents of Christianity, the relationship between these first Christians and Muslim groups, and their similarities. I will examine the emergence of Syrians and Syrian Christians, as well as relations between Muslims and Christians at the time of Prophet Mohammad (*pbuh*), the early Islamic history, the Ottoman Period and during the Turkish Republic.

Michaela Neulinger (Salzburg)

East Syriac Christians in the Abbasid Translation Movement

Ancient links of translators and abbreviators show the importance of East Syriac Christians in the process of the transmission of Greek heritage during the first centuries of Abbasid reign in Mesopotamia. However, their specific contribution has rarely been investigated to date. The paper will introduce the manner of East Syriac affiliation with Greek sciences; the social, political and theological components of the East Syriac engagement in the translation movement and the consequences of this contribution.

Sven Grebenstein (Göttingen)

The first Christian-Muslim Dialogue and its Theological Argumentation: The Case of Patriarch John I. and an unnamed Emir

The letter about a debate between the West Syriac ('Jacobite') patriarch John I. and an unnamed Emir is generally considered as the earliest document about an interreligious dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim. While most scholarship on this text concentrates on questions regarding its historical context, only few attempts have been made to examine the theological argument itself. The aim of the presentation shall be to offer a more detailed analysis of the theological concepts and ideas in this disputation.

Group 14:4 (Room ?) Thinking Religious Pluralism

Sándor-Béla Visky (Cluj-Napoca)

Christianity and World Religions in Hans Küng's Interpretation

Between the great world religions there are many similarities: each religion searches man's prevailing existential situation, his relation with the cosmos, God, with the other person, and speaks about his sin, suffering, death and the possibility of his salvation. H. Küng thinks that based on the teachings and phenomenology of these religions we can distinguish three major fields where all of these religions overlap with each other: a) each religion recognizes man's estrangement; b) salvation can be achieved somehow; c) behind each religion we can find determinant personalities in whom the final Reality has been revealed.

Ashlee Kirk (K.U.Leuven)

Comparative Theology: A Method of Improving Interreligious Relations?

For Francis Clooney, the primary goal of comparative theology is fresh theological insight into one's own tradition, which is accomplished through the careful, in-depth study of multiple traditions. Given this methodology, one might also wonder whether the improvement of interreligious relations could be accomplished through the practice of comparative theology. This question is explored in the present paper, in particular, the strengths and weaknesses of the comparative theological approach as pertains to improving interreligious relations.

Mirza Hadzirusevic (Birmingham)

The Quest of the Historical Muhammad in light of the Quest for the Historical Jesus: Some trajectories

Since the publication of Reimarus' work on the historical Jesus in the latter part of the 18th century, the quest for the historical Jesus has gone through various phases and emphases. Various alleys have been explored, and still, the quest for the historical Jesus seems to be an unending project among historical

Jesus scholars. Similarly, though slightly later, the quest for the historical Muhammad began in the first part of the 19th century, and it also has gone through various stages and development. In this essay, my aim is to explore chronologically various phases in the quest for the historical Jesus, i.e; old, new and the third quests. At the same time, I will be exploring the development of the quest for the historical Muhammad. In doing so, my aim is to look for similar trajectories in both quests. By locating similar trajectories, and particularly in reference to the historical Jesus quest, I will attempt to distinguish various phases in the quest for the historical Muhammad, i.e; old, new and possibly a third quest.

Group 14:5 (Room ?) Philosophies of the Other

Thomas Seissl (Salzburg)

Precursor of Modern Thinking. The Problematization of Hegel's Idea of Subject in the Philosophy of De-construction of Jacques Derrida

The postmodern announcement of the "Death of the Subject" has become a commonplace in our social and academic life. In my paper I want to explicate the original place of postmodern disbelief in 'strong' subjectivism and expound its problems of a *post*-novel exposure. That is, to demonstrate that the exaggerated Hegelian idea of subject is not sustainable in postmodern thinking, but, nevertheless, that the same gives important impulses for a disempowered subject. Even in this double-bind the idea of the subject appears as obsolete. In conclusion, I will show that we have to attain to a new concept of singularity, individuality, responsibility, freedom and subjectivism, which are irrecoverable for Christian belief. Our discourse of subjectivism then cannot be without consequences for fundamental theology and the theology of religions.

Erdiņç Atasever (Marmara, Istanbul)

The Feasibility of the 'Other': The Trinitarian Underpinnings of Hegelian 'Otherness' and its Conceptual Deficiency in an Interreligious Engagement

In Hegel, the other is juxtaposed with the self, by which the ultimate identity of the self is constructed. Use of the concept of 'other' with hope of leeway in interreligious engagement veils the underlying presupposition of selfhood, which 'resists the power of death' in the Hegelian sense of artfully sublimating the other. Notwithstanding the surface recognition of the other, a somewhat self-acclaimed selfhood is still retained. Therein lies the problem. Conceptually taken, selfhood is absolute: only that which is absolute may be a self. Claim to absolute selfhood, the integral principle that sets the dialectic with the 'other' in motion, may only be engendered by a doctrine that embraces belief in incarnation by which the human subject becomes the self as such, or the absolute which pits itself against the 'other' so as to sublimate it. It is tempting to reserve this approach exclusively to Hegel, yet that would amount to overlooking philosophy after Hegel. Especially the conceptual emergence of otherness as a vital aspect of a triune dialectic, a dialectic by which the self becomes- through the other (at its expense), and more momentarily- the ground by which the pertinent Hegelian ground is fed: the doctrine of Trinity.

Session 19 - Thursday, May 5th, 14.30 – 16.30

Group 19:1 (Room ?) Spirituality and God-talk Today

Gabriella Dénes (Cluj-Napoca)

Is there a gap between the interest in Spirituality and the communication of Christian traditions today?

Increasingly, the word 'spirituality' is regarded as something linked to magic and esoteria. At the same time, traditional churches and religiousness is not attractive any more. New religious forms and groups are present everywhere, in Eastern Europe too. Believer and members of the different traditional churches can choose whether they wish to stick to their religious group, or if they prefer to switch to another one. The main question is why they choose any of these. Can the process be anticipated and prevented? What can the Catholic Church do in order to resolve the possible discontent that may be the cause of people leaving?

Julia M. van Zilfhout (Leiden)

The diffusion of religious experience

During this age of individualization and secularization, sociologists and psychologists of religion have noticed an attitude-change towards religiosity. Instead of turning to clerical institutions to seek guidance, more and more people find themselves on a quest to find their 'inner' spirituality. This makes for an ongoing broadening of the definitions of religion and religiosity, up to the point that sociologists find a 'religion' in Star trek fandom, and psychologists see religious experience in intense emotional experiences similar to 'classic' religious experiences, but this time without the mention of God, the Holy or Sacred. In the present paper I will investigate the ongoing diffusion of these religious aspects with a focus on religious experience.

Jan Zabranský (University of South Bohemia)

God-talk in Society where God is Absent

This essay is based on the experiences arising in the Czech context. We begin with a description of the position of Abrahamic religions among the different religious and spiritual streams (eastern religions and philosophical systems, syncretism, new paganism, various cults, and atheism) in modern society- a society without religion (in the majority). We then ask, how does this thinking influence people's values and attitudes. At the centre of the presentation are considerations, and search for ways and possibilities of speaking about God in the modern (consumerist, atheistic, concrete Czech) society. That is how to mediate the message of traditional religion, and how to approach religious education (form, content, aims etc.).

Group 19:2 (Room ?) Interreligious Dialogue for Justice

John Mosbey (ISE, Dublin)

Muslim and Christian Perspectives and Interpretations of Divine Justice: how these affect the manner in which justice is applied in society

The present paper focuses on two of the major Abrahamic traditions view justice as it is applied to God's actions towards humankind. The essay also includes a brief examination of how Islam and Christianity conceptualize human applied justice in society. Presupposed is the idea that both Muslim and Christian concepts of a human justice system are rooted in how both of these Abrahamic traditions view and interpret Divine Justice as it is directed towards humankind. Addressed are the questions of how Muslim and Christian views on Divine Justice are explained, and how concepts of human justice systems reflect the respective perspectives of the two Abrahamic traditions.

Konstantinos Giannis (Thessaloniki)

The Importance of Inter-religious Dialogue in Resolving the Social Problems of Poverty and Financial Hardship

In this presentation we will discuss the social problems of poverty and misery found in every country and every religion. Particular attention will be given to how each religion deals with these situations. We will also focus on the fact that both Christianity and Islam give great importance to the charity towards fellow human beings suffering from poverty and lacking access to basic human needs. There is hope that under the cornerstone of love and charity to our fellow citizens, interreligious dialogue will be more than beneficial.

Bertil Åhman (Uppsala)

Interfaith and Intercultural encounters in a local context

The present paper is based on the personal experience of volunteering at a faith-based centre for intercultural encounters between immigrants/ refugees (manly from the Middle East) and “old Swedes”. It draws on the experiences from this centre and reflects on the conditions for fruitful encounters in a late modern context in a secular society.

Group 19:3 (Room ?) Mission and Ecumenics

Lucian Nicodim Codreanu (Cluj-Napoca)

The Ecclesiological and Spiritual Characteristics of Christian Mission. An Orthodox Perspective

The text aims to extract some essential aspects regarding the orthodox Church mission. It is a perspective on the theological deep basis of mission, not an official missionary practical program which, in fact, Eastern Church doesn't bring forward. The mission of Church is linked to the Church's being, and it represents the Church's program on earth. We would emphasize the spiritual-pneumatic characteristic of mission, as operated by grace, the concrete work in the world of the Holy Spirit. These aspects and dimensions can provide an image of internal and external principles of the mission of Eastern Church in the context of multicultural, multiconfessional and plurireligious society.

Ilie Petre (University Ovidius, Constanta)

The future of religious Identity in the context of the ecumenical movement

The new millennium has started as a time of tensions and paradoxes. We can say that we live between the desire for unity, and ethnic and religious conflicts. On the one hand, international organizations like U.N., NATO, and UNESCO strive to create new relationships between nations. On the other hand, autonomist accesses result in a distorted unity, experienced as absolutism, and removal of difference. During the beginning of the century, the Church has only one answer: “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).

Aikaterini Pekridou (ISE, Dublin)

Bilateral Dialogues of the Eastern Orthodox Church: A Historical Overview

According to the decisions of the Third Pre-Council Pan-Orthodox Conference (Chambesy, 1986), “The aim of dialogue is above all to discover in each confession that which truly belongs to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. But this alone is not sufficient for unity. Each Confession, Christian Church must identify herself with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In practice this means that different Christian confessions must together investigate their basic dogmatic divergences; they must find paths of concord in questions of faith and thus remove the existing dogmatic and ecclesiastical barriers. The Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference was unanimous on the point that the concord in questions of faith was imperative and the only way to bring Christendom to the One Undivided Church of the first eight centuries, to the true unity of Churches.” The present paper is a historical overview of four such dialogues, namely the international bilateral dialogues of the Orthodox Tradition with the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and the Reformed Traditions.

Group 19:4 (Room ?) Praxis of Christian Engagement

Naomi Bedford (Leiden)

Making Sense of Christian Healing in the Western World Today

Jesus is the central figure in the Christian religion and biblical accounts that bear witness to his life tell several stories of his healing encounters with people. Jesus sets the example for Christians to follow in praying for the sick. However, although many Christians are familiar with, and strive to follow Jesus' moral commandments, much less seem to comply with Jesus' commands concerning healing, such as Matthew 10:8. Why is this? There are still claims today, even in the West, that some Christians do experience healing. If this is so, why do more Christians not pray for, and expect healing? In this paper I will explore the impact that the metaphysical paradigm of many Western Christians has on their attempts to make sense of healing as Jesus has modelled.

Erik Berggren (Uppsala)

Ethnicity and Ecclesiology: Trajectories in South African Church Life

For many years, South African society was ruled under apartheid legislation that permeated the whole of its fabric and resulted in Churches being divided along ethnic lines. The struggle against apartheid induced many churches and religious groups to take united action against the government. In the early 1990s, thanks to the anti-apartheid movement and wise leaders, South Africa avoided violence and political uprisings and succeeded in a process of peaceful democratization.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended that churches be part of the building of the new democratic society. The commission asked the churches to contribute to the development of a society of peaceful co-existence. It also encouraged them to become more ethnically integrated. Today, even though the rest of society is changing, the churches of South Africa are still divided along ethnic lines. This raises the question, if ethnicity is a social construction, and if a church identifies itself as a *koinonia*, how is it then possible for it to be divided by ethnic belonging? The South African situation, moreover, is not unique and other national or ethnic churches continue to be faced with similar challenges.

Veronica Băcanu (University Ovidius, Constanta)

The Christian Emancipated Woman

The Christian woman takes an active part in economic, political, social, scientific, artistic and literary life alongside man: with the same title and the same rights as himself. She can study, engage in science, learn any profession, and be invested with any public dignity. Orthodox Christianity supports and blesses women's noble aspirations and her efforts in the field of social life.

Jonas Lindberg (Uppsala)

Christianity as ideological part of and tool for Nordic nationalist parties against the presence and impact of Islam

In Benedict Anderson's classic book *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* there are several connections made between nationalism and religion. And yet these are not explicitly expressed, which might seem strange as empirical evidence clearly could show strong bonds of such kind existing. In my presentation I attempt to demonstrate empirically how the nationalist or Radical Right-Wing Populist political parties in the Nordic countries not only incorporate religion in its cultural sense within their ideologies, but also use Christianity as a tool against the presence and impact of Islam.

Group 19:5 (Room ?) Hybrid Religions

Feyza Uzunoğlu (Istanbul)

Cathars as a Dualist Heretical Movement in Medieval Europe

Betül Özel Çiçek (Istanbul)

Frithjof Schuon's Concept of the Holy Virgin: A Unifying Approach?

It has been argued that by the emergence and spread of the monotheistic religions, the feminine symbols and representations of the divine have been overshadowed. Although throughout the history of monotheistic religions they have frequently found new expressions- however subtly it may be- comparatively their presentations within these religions remained limited and generally marginalized. At the least they were considered as reinventions and reflections of male constructions of female symbols of the divine which are believed to be used “to put women firmly in their place as auxiliary to male spiritual development”. However, it is also observed that for every feminine symbol of the divine that is masculinized, re-formed or repressed, a new powerful set of feminine symbols of the divine has arisen. Might this be attributed to humankind's general need to find balance and harmony in affirming and devoting themselves to a deity that accepts and includes both the male and the female? With all these in mind, comes the question: Can the acknowledged Perennialist and Sufi master Frithjof Schuon's stand concerning the Holy Virgin (his identification of her as the Religio Perennis itself, defining the level where religious divergences are reconciled with the domain of the Virgin Mary; calling her “the mother of all prophets and the prophecy and the substance of the original sainthood” from the beginning and outside at time; claiming that her wisdom is “of necessity metaphysical mystical and also eschatological” and “thereby contains in virtuality every possible science, as the one and colourless light contains the warred and colour hues of the rainbows”; and, finally his establishing his Sufi order under the celestial patronage of the Holy Virgin and thus putting into the practice his teachings on the Holy Virgin) lead the way for constituting a new and balanced ground for masculine and feminine aspects of symbolism of the divine to be represented in mutual harmony?

Anita Vajda (Cluj-Napoca)

Is God Dead? The God-problem in Nietzsche's mirror

There is nothing particularly new about the announcement that “God is Dead” since Nietzsche's madman ran to the Marketplace to exclaim the Death of God. By the end of Nietzsche's prophetic tale it is clear that the fool has not been understood by the people. We may say that, perhaps, the time has now come, and the people are ready to listen to the fool of Nietzsche's prophetic tale. In my presentation, I would like to discuss the fool that Nietzsche has created, who's not understood by the people, and the logical conclusion concerning the Death of God.

Session 22 - Friday, May 6th, 14.30 – 16.30

Group 22:1 (Room ?) Migration and Gender

Lucie Krausova (University of South Bohemia)

Interfaith couples and possibilities of dialogue in the family

The aim of the present essay is to answer the following question: “Can interfaith couples be beneficial for their own family’s spiritual faith?” Before attempting an answer we will be thinking about the conditions concerning interfaith couples that are necessary for good and healthy relationships. We will then enquire about the advantages and disadvantages in the upbringing of children of interfaith couples.

Age Jimoh (Tartu)

Estonian Women's Identity as Muslims

This paper aims at providing an overview of the contemporary religious situation in Estonia which is one of the least religious countries in the world. In this small Eastern European country public opinion is characterized by prejudice against Islam, where the media portrays it negatively, as a threat to the state, independence, and individual liberties. It proceeds by investigating why in spite of such hostile atmosphere the number of Estonian women who have chosen to become Muslims has increased in recent years. It proceeds by analysis of these choices and of the emergent new identities. These identities combine Islamic and Estonian culture and traditions, and can be analyzed in terms of how two different paradigms have intertwined to affect those women and their attitude towards society.

Group 22:2 (Room ?) Religion(s) and European Values

Florentina Georgiana Popescu (Ovidius University, Romania)

The right to Life in the light of the legislation of the European Union

In my paper I will analyze the right to life, the way in which it is regulated in the legislation of the European Union, by the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Constitution and by the 2001 Treaty of Nice. I will also mention the national legislative stipulations regarding this right from the perspective of adherence of Romania to the Union. Similarly, I will examine the link between the Bible, the Quran and the ways in which their provisions are reflected in the aforementioned European legislation.

Katharina Fröhle (Münster)

The practicability of religious freedom

To get an equal cooperation of plural religious societies, like most of the European societies, secularization and religious liberty give the ideal preconditions. However, the statutorily arranged-based on human rights- freedom of religion, seems to be complex in implementation. After furnishing a definition of religious liberty, I would like to find the bounds of practicability, backed up with examples from Southeastern Europe, thereby provoking a debate about the utopian hue of the theory.

Brian Harrington (ISE, Dublin)

Western Personalism: a universal epistemology of man as an impositor of values on other world cultures

Before Vatican II, Bishop Karol Wojtyła (who went on to be Pope John Paul II) urged his fellow Bishops through the council to “recapitulate the inviolable mystery of the human person”. Personalist thinking went on to pervade many aspects of the council’s documents. Prior to this, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, the rights were considered to derive from the dignity and quality of the human person. This presentation, examines the rise of

personalist thought in Western (Judaean-Christian) countries, and examines how and if such values are universally applicable to all world cultures.

Group 22:3 (Room ?) Interreligious Dialogue and Peace

Androniki Stouiloudi (Thessaloniki)

Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Freedom between Christians and Muslims

This work summons Christians and Muslims to go beyond conceptual differences and seek together the significance of essential beliefs. Their co-existence has contributed to the creation of spiritual and historical bonds. The emergent key points for a healthy co-operation in the secular field are: faith in God, the meaning of the world and the value of the human being which are, simultaneously, the main principles for Christians, and the common views for the cooperation of the two religions in the dialogue for peace and freedom in today's world.

Rasika Pieris (ISE, Dublin)

Interreligious Dialogue: Contributions/ Barriers to Peace building in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a multi-religious country where the majority is Buddhist, along with minorities of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Even though thirty years have now elapsed since the ethno-religious wars between Sinhalese Buddhist majority and Tamil Hindu minority, there is no lasting peace or solution to this conflict. Since the root causes of the conflict go back for many centuries, all groups and individuals in the civil society, including religious groups, have to work authentically for peace building in Sri Lanka. With awareness of the situation in the country, as well as of the teachings of the religions I will deal with the contributions / barriers within Buddhism (the predominant religion) and Christianity (one of the minority groups). I will then attempt to show how Buddhist-Christian dialogue can play a major role in peace building in Sri Lanka.

Shiferaw Feleke Siso (Nijmegen)

The Significance of Christian and Islamic teachings on living in Peace with all people

The word "Christian" refers to a Christ-centred life. Christ is known as the Prince of peace. Likewise, the term "Islam" refers to peace (*shalom*) both with the creator and fellow neighbours. Therefore, both Christian and Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of peace and peaceful relationships. Scripture tells us to make effort to live in peace with all men, to live in harmony with one another, and to be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. Thus, both Christian and Islamic doctrines give significant place to the peaceful relationship with all people.

Group 22:4 (Room ?) Religion, Politics and Society

Ela Magda (ISE, Dublin)

The Role of Religion in the Croat-Bosnian War

All wars between Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia from 1991 to 1995 had a strong political and national background. However, religion has also been a great part of these conflicts. In my presentation I focus especially on the question: what was the role of religion in the Croat-Bosnian war? Was it merely politics disguised in religion, or can there indeed be discerned a religious-proper reason for it?

Ursula Haava (Tartu)

The influence of politics on the Church during the interwar period in Estonia and Latvia

After the Russian Empire collapsed, two small countries gained their independence. For the new governments one of the main tasks was to separate the church from the state. First the Church lost all its advantages and then had to obey the politics. Estonian parliament decided to forbid religious education in primary schools, but this was prevented by a referendum. Latvian government dispossessed the church of Latvian Protestants to give it to the Catholics to assure the unity of the state.

These and other circumstances influenced the society and forced the Church to cooperate with autocratic governments in the 1930s.

Josephine Sundqvist (Uppsala)

Welfare and Religion in Tanzania

The aim of this paper is to analyze the function of churches as service providers within the social economy of Tanzania by examining government authorities' views. Developing countries in the Global South hold the heritage from colonial times with missionary societies establishing social religious welfare institutions. Ever since the independence movement in the late 20th century the administration of religious social institutions has been handed over to nationalized churches, but still these welfare institutions are funded by the international donor community. As part of the IMF introduced structural adjustment programs of the 80s, directly related to the privatization of the global economy, the countries of the Global South have to a large extent been directed to privatize the social sector and invite voluntary actors in health and education. In the Tanzanian context, religious actors have taken the role of filling the gap caused by the gradual withdrawal of the government from providing its citizens with basic services. The study therefore situates itself between the processes of a thriving, global, civil society and the questionable necessity for the nation states to be responsible for development in order to gain legitimacy.

Group 22:5 (Room ?) Perception of Religion in Public Discourse

Judith Ringnalda (Leiden)

Dutch Public Policy and religions "conflicts"

This presentation is concerned with the changing religious climate in the Netherlands. In connection to the increased presence of Islam changes have taken place, especially at the level of public policy. The reaction of public policy to this fact can be looked at through some influential religious conflicts. Thus, the aim will be to describe the changing political climate in Holland after the "multi-cultural" society.

Toomas Schvak (Tartu)

Christianity and Islam in the Public Discourse in Estonia

Estonia is currently one of the most secularised countries in the world. However, general indifference towards religion is contrasted by heated public debates over the role of religion in the society, offering ample possibilities of self-expression for both religious and militant atheist minorities. Most of those debates have focussed on Christianity. However, in the last 10 years Islam has also started to figure more prominently in the public discourse. I will take a brief look on how such public debates have evolved in the years of Estonian independence: 1918–1940 and since 1991. I will pay special attention to two groups: Eastern Orthodox Christians and Muslims, sharing largely a double minority status: religious and ethnic.

Carrie Kohler (ISE, Dublin)

Unloading Islamic Fundamentalism

During my presentation I would like to look at why and how fundamentalism came to be associated with Islam. Using a historical base, I hope to argue away some of the myths associated with fundamentalism within Islamic culture. Based on Bruce Lawrence's argument that Western culture brought in the concept of 'fundamentalism' I hope to see whether this argument is sound.

Group 22:6 (Room ?) Prospects of Environment

Iakovos Sifakis (Thessalonki)

Towards a Social Evolutionary Concept for a Convocation of Religious Interpretation. The Case of Environment

In this paper homo is considered as an environmental element; the society is considered as an evolutionary progress product; the religions are thought to be humans' assistants. Reality is a multi-perceptual entity; subjectivity is considered as a truth, which arises from that multi-visual point. The dynamic of religions, based on faith, hope and spirituality, in common with the social networking, is rendered as the creator of various dynamic fields which have a prospect for achievement. We should expect to observe a piece of convergence here, yet irrespective, we see religious wars and wars between religions. Still, the necessity of a common criterion for the needs of our civilized social lives appears rough. One beginning could be made from the obvious elements of our everyday's conceptions (environment, cooperation, tolerance, diversity).

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Theological ethics in an animal rights perspective

The three Abrahamic religions contain many stories about animal sacrifice as well as rules considering which animals the believers are allowed to eat and which are forbidden. There are regulations about how to slaughter an animal and there are parables such as the suffering servant, who is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. However, there are also quite a few stories and tales about holy women and men who have treated nonhuman animals as friends, and how spiritual leaders have preached to liberate the nonhuman animals, just as we have liberated slaves. Today, there is a growing movement struggling for a changed view of and attitude towards nonhuman animals. Many of those committed to the cause do it out of belief in the Abrahamic God. Such believers are still in minority in the religious denominations, and their commitment is often looked upon with disapproval.

In this paper I investigate the possibilities and difficulties for people, who engage in the animal liberation movement to meet across the frontiers of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. What do scholars of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ethics think of the potential of religious texts to contribute to consensus on the question? What can be gathered from the tales of holy women and men? What about God's demand of the first humans in Eden to only have seed-bearing plants and fruits for their food?