

Church & Mission in the Third Millennium



Programme

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27

10:00- **PhD workshop** (separate registration)

16:00

15:00 **Registration** (to the main conference) and coffee

16:00 **Edinburgh 1910 – Aarhus 2010. What have we learned for the future?**

What can we learn for the future from the history Edinburgh 1910 – Aarhus 2010? What impact will the encounter between Islam and Christianity have for the future? How should church and mission be organized to serve their cause in a multireligious third millennium? Professor Brian Stanley (UK), Professor Werner Ustorf (UK), Birger Nygaard (DK).

- Professor Brian Stanley (UK): The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910: Sifting History from Myth. The World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh in June 1910, will be widely celebrated this year as a milestone in both ecumenical and missionary history. My contribution to the panel will seek to delineate more precisely in what respects the conference did mark a new departure. Whilst some of the claims made for its significance are inaccurate, it remains the case that participants in the event returned home captivated by a more expansive vision of the future of the world Church than was allowed for in the conference's original terms of reference.
- Professor Werner Ustorf (UK): 1910-2010: A history of decline? Progress made; problems encountered. Are we going to close shop?
- Birger Nygaard (DK): Strategic reflections coming out of the present predicament for Christian mission.

18:15 **Dinner**

19:30 **Special Evening Programme**

- Kenneth Ross (UK): *Mapping Church and Mission in the 21st Century*
- The Rt Revd Munawar Kenneth Rumalshah (PA): *The Mission of the Church: To Be Christian Minority in Muslim Lands*
- Jacques Matthey (CH): *Missional Spirituality in Contemporary World*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28

8:30 **Professor Ross Wagner (US): Missional Hermeneutics I**

“In Memory of Her”: Mission in the Absence of Jesus

ABSTRACT: The story of the unnamed woman in Bethany who anoints Jesus' head with perfume (Matt 26:6-13) poignantly foreshadows the time when the disciples will no longer have Jesus with them. At the same time, read in light of the overarching missional trajectory of Matthew's gospel, this rather curious narrative offers the Church profound guidance for its practice of discipleship in Jesus' "absence."

THEME OF THE DAY: ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSION

9:15 **Keynote Speaker: Professor Stanley Hauerwas (US):**

Beyond the Boundaries: The Church Is Mission

ABSTRACT: The church is mission. That is to say, the church does not have a mission but it is always mission in its very essence. That we now live in a multicultural world does not change the church's necessity to be a witness. The question is: how, after Christendom? I will explore what it means to be church, or mission, in a non-Constantinian mode. In particular, I will address Nathan Kerr's book *Christ, History, and Apocalyptic: The Politics of Christian Mission*.

Respondents: Professor Jan-Olav Henriksen (N) and Professor Niels Henrik Gregersen (DK)

11:00 **Keynote Speaker: Professor Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (DE):**

The Church in a Multi-religious Europe

Respondents: Professor LeRon Shults (NO) and Associate Professor Arne Rasmusson (SE)

12:30 **Lunch**

Poster session

13:30 **Parallel paper sessions:**

1. Ecclesiology and Mission.
Chair: Professor Tormod Engelsen (NO)
2. Church Renewal for the Third Millennium.
Chair: Professor Hans Raun Iversen (DK)
3. Church in Cyberspace.
Chair: Professor Kajsa Ahlstrand (SE)
4. The Future of Missiology.
Chair: Professor Mika Vähäkangas (FI)

16:30 Panel Discussion: Missional Ecclesiology and Ecclesial Missiology

What impact do secularization, globalization and multireligiosity have on the relationship between church and mission? How does this affect the study of church and mission, respectively? What future trends in ecclesiology and missiology might this lead to? Participants: Professor Darrell L. Guder (US), Professor Bryan Stone (US), lecturer Martin Reppenhagen (DE).

ABSTRACTS:

- Professor Darrell L. Guder (US): The intention behind the term “missional,” as I see it, is to change fundamentally the way that we think about and interpret the purpose, character and action of the church. If we can learn to do our ecclesiology in concordance with the Biblical witness to God’s saving purposes in both redemption and election, then we can leave the “scaffolding term” missional aside. To change our ways of thinking about the church, we will have to focus on interpreting the Scriptures missionally (“missional hermeneutic”), sorting out the reductionist problems that have emerged within western Christendom, and reclaiming the apostolic vocation of the people of God in both its personal and corporate dimensions.
- Professor Bryan Stone (US): The Ecclesiality of Mission in the Context of Empire. The emphasis on a “missional church” and an accompanying shift away from ecclesiocentrism to a focus on God’s mission in the world is a healthy corrective to the Christendom tendencies of the church in relation to empires. But if salvation is, in fact, ecclesial and if the missio dei is God’s calling and formation of a people who embody and thereby proclaim to the world a new humanity that stands in contrast to imperial social orderings, then the church cannot merely be derived from mission nor instrumentalized in service of mission. The church must be missional, but mission must also be ecclesial.
- Lecturer Martin Reppenhagen (DE): The missional church and the “homo areligiosus” The Eastern part of Germany seems to be one of the most secularized areas of the world. For the people here the term “homo areligiosus” was coined. We don’t have a religious quest, is the experience here, although for many the church stands for moral values. The East-Germans don’t even go to the Dalai Lama. During the last 50 years the churches have experienced several waves of minorisation and marginalisation. Around 75% of the population don’t belong to any church. But missional and diaconical church plants and projects within the established churches make a significant impact for the neighbourhoods. Educational projects to advance the Christian faith are well received.

19:00 Reception at the Mayor’s Hall

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29

8:30 **Professor Ross Wagner (US): Missional Hermeneutics II**

“The Aroma of Christ”: The Paradoxical Presence of Jesus in Mission

ABSTRACT: "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession!" (2 Cor 2:14; NRSV). Can such apparent grandiloquence and triumphalism be anything but a stumbling block for a Church striving to imagine its missional calling anew in a postcolonial, multireligious third millennium? This session will explore the ways in which Paul's ironic evocation of Imperial triumph calls the community to embody Christ's victorious, life-giving presence in the world through embracing weakness, suffering and death in loving service to others.

THEME OF THE DAY: FUTURE WORKSHOP

1) The Missional Future of Ecclesiology

9:15 **Keynote Speaker: Professor Knut Lundby (NO): The Church in Cyberspace**

ABSTRACT: This keynote will critically examine the notions of Church and Mission that emerge from contemporary practices on the Internet. How valid is the metaphor of Cyberspace in this respect? The speaker takes a communication perspective based in sociology and media studies. How does new forms of digital communication challenge and transform church and mission in a multireligious third millennium?

Respondent: Professor Göran Larsson (SE)

11:00 **Panel discussion: Church Renewal for a Third Millennium**

The dramatic changes in society at large call for a profound renewal of the church. Different avenues are analyzed and brought into discussion with each other. Participants: Professor Pat Keifert (US), Professor Pat Taylor Ellison (US), Adjunct Professor John Drane (UK), Bishop's Adviser Helene Egnell (SE).

ABSTRACTS:

- **Professor Pat Keifert (US):** Professor Keifert will bring insights from his 30 years of work directly with congregations and the church bodies that support them. He will focus on what has brought the Church to the places it occupies here and now in various corners of the world, and particularly where it sits in the North American context at this moment, drawing from his recent books *We Are Here Now*, which describes the journey congregations take in Church Innovations' *Partnership for Missional Church*, and *Testing the Spirits: How Theology Informs the Study of Congregations*, a volume of essays that follows and comments upon moral deliberation and spiritual discernment in real congregations.

- Professor Pat Taylor Ellison (US): Dr. Ellison will discuss the radical culture shift in congregations who choose to participate in God's mission in their towns and places, accomplished through a year of deep listening and discovering partners, a year of missional experimenting and bridge community formation, and a year of focused action. She brings 25 years of congregational experience, church body teaching and her doctorate in communal adult learning to her presentation which will lift the unique approach Church Innovations brings to congregational studies and God's perceived presence and activity within and outside local churches.
- Adjunct Professor John Drane (UK): Drane's work on *The McDonaldization of the Church* has found deep resonances among Christians of many different traditions, concerned with the creeping rationalization of structures and ministries and the consequent tendency to view the Church as a bureaucratic entity rather than the body of Christ. Building on his subsequent work in *After McDonaldization*, and using insights drawn from his experience as chair of the Church of England's Mission Theology Advisory Group and as a member of the board of Fresh Expressions Mission-Shaped Ministry, he will suggest that authentic Christian faith for the 21st century must be rooted in a renewed Christology and a rediscovery of divine creativity.
- Bishop's Adviser Helene Egnell (SE): In an increasingly individualistic society church renewal must emphasize the character of the church as community. I would like to highlight three aspects of this community: 1. a "community of equals" as elaborated by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 2. a "minority community" that takes seriously what Krister Stendahl always emphasized: that the images of the Christian community in Jesus' teaching are minority images, 3. a "community of difference" where pluralism and diversity is appreciated.

12:30 **Lunch**

Poster session

13:30 Parallel paper sessions:

1. Ecclesiology and Mission.
Chair: Professor Tormod Engelsen (NO)
2. Church Renewal for the Third Millennium.
Chair: Professor Hans Raun Iversen (DK)
3. Church in Cyberspace (see below).
Chair: Professor Charles Ess (US)
4. The Future of Missiology.
Chair: Professor Mika Vähäkangas (FI)

The paper session on church in cyberspace is replaced by a panel discussion:

Church and social media

Christian institutions seek to exploit new communication technologies, including social networking sites, blogs and micro-blogs, etc. especially in hopes of attracting newer and younger participants. Our panel reviews recent examples of such efforts and evaluates their outcomes, both positive and negative, from multiple theoretical and cultural perspectives. Participants: Professor Charles Ess (US/DK), PhD fellow Stine Lomborg (DK), Associate Professor Stefan Gelfgren (S), Associate Professor Pauline Cheong (US), Associate Professor Mark D. Johns (US), and Assistant Professor Heidi Campbell (US).

ABSTRACTS:

- Professor Charles Ess (US/DK) and Stine Lomborg (DK): From radio and movies to the internet and the web, mainstream religious institutions have lagged behind more marginalized traditions in exploiting new communicative possibilities. Currently, "Web 2.0" is highly touted for its interactivity and the "pro/sumer," as exemplified in social networking sites. But do either history, theory or practice the last exemplified by a recent pilot study on the web practices of the Danish Lutheran Gellerup Kirke [church] - suggest that the mainstream Church will exploit these more recent innovations any more quickly or effectively than previously?
- Associate Professor Stefan Gelfgren (S): Media for communicating the Gospel. Comparing aims and hopes of 19th century and post millennial Christianity. Communicating the word of God has always been essential for the Church. Different media have throughout history affected both ways to communicate, and faith and associated practises. Has the Internet fundamentally changed the way Church can communicate today? Is this a historically new situation? The question is if there are similar forces behind, encouraging use of new media, today as during the 19th century. The British church historian Callum G. Brown has coined the notion "salvation industry"

to describe revivalist communication during the 19th century – is this an accurate description of the contemporary situation? The paper will compare the media situation today with 19th century revivalist movements (with Pietist and Methodist origin). In both cases new media of the day are used with great hope and expectations. A historical perspective on Church and media can give the contemporary discussion new nuances.

- Associate Professor Pauline Cheong (US): *Twitter of Faith: Understanding Web 2.0 and microblogging rituals as religious practices*. This paper examines the ways in which twitter is appropriated by faith users to develop innovative and interactive forms of evangelization, prayer and meditation, and discusses the implications of these new sociotechnical practices, termed here as "microblogging rituals", for religious community building. Specifically, this paper proposes that the creation and circulation of microblogging rituals including "faith memes" functions to constitute and fuel the stream of lived sacred experiences, thereby ideologically connecting twitter believers. Moreover, microblogging rituals facilitates the promotion of organized religion as churches construct distinctive "faith brands" to publicize their mission and encourage loyalty to church leadership and church growth. The paper concludes with a discussion of microblogging and the mediatization of religion with its potential dark sides for faith believers and organizations.

- Associate Professor Mark D. Johns (US): *Voting "present": Religious organizational groups and fan sites on facebook.com*.

The popularity of social networking web sites makes these sites attractive for religious organizations wishing to reach potential adherents. This research tracked groups on Facebook registered in the category of "religious organizations," observing that many vote affirmation for groups yet almost no interaction takes place within them.

Implications suggest that use of social networks needs to focus on building relationships, not merely on building large lists of fans.

- Assistant Professor Heidi Campbell (US): *How Religious Communities Negotiate and Utilize New Media Religiously*. This paper explores the religious socialshaping of technology, a theoretical and methodological approach which reveals the factors and strategies that inform religious communities and organizations responses to new forms of media. Through this lens we see tensions often occur when religious organizations adopt policies and plans that run counter to their confessional tradition or theological mission. This means religious groups seeking to utilize social media must do so with a greater level of self reflection on their own stories as well as the social milieu of digital culture.

2) The Future of Missiology

16:30 Panel discussion: The Future of Missiology

The classical missionary movement was immersed in colonialism. After decolonisation and religious revival where does it leave the missionary movement? Missiology, the academic discipline designed to study and accompany the missionary movement needs a new start. Here the inspirational building blocs are presented. Participants: Professor Andrew Walls (UK), Professor Ulrich Dehn (DE), Revd Dr. Darrell Jackson (UK).

ABSTRACTS:

- Professor Andrew Walls (UK): Third Millennium Missiology and the Renewal of Theology. The missiological task will include understanding and interpreting for the theological world at large the processes that have transformed the Christian Church over the last century, among them: 1 The Great European Migration which began around 1500 and shaped the modern world order ended in the twentieth century and has now gone into reverse, as migration from the non-Western to the Western world increases, with implications for Christianity and for other faiths. 2 The Church is now multicentric, and mission initiatives may emerge in any part of the world and be directed to any part of it, with little reference to previously established structures. 3 Western theology, shaped mainly by European intellectual history (and especially the Enlightenment with its small-scale universe), is proving too small in scope to deal with African and Asian realities. We can expect theological enlargement with increasing Christian interaction with African and Asian cultures, perhaps as creative as the interaction with Hellenistic culture in the early Christian centuries.
- Professor Ulrich Dehn (DE): Mission: Understanding Reality. Having a situation of Christianity being one element in a multicultural and multireligious world, mission is no longer to be thought in terms of transgressing borders, communicating the Gospel, evangelizing. It is the intercultural process of entering into narratives, gaining many perspectives of the other(s) and clearing one's own position in this process of constructing images. Missiology as intercultural theology needs to enter an intersubjective narration process of the many perspectives establishing our images of the multicultural reality.
- Revd Dr. Darrell Jackson (UK): As a research missiologist I am engaged in trying to understand how past and present mission practice informs the future of missiology. I must also reflect on whether this is principally an activity of prediction, prescription, or imagination. A discussion of missiology at the intersection of scripture, Christian tradition, and cultural context is conducted in an 'imaginarium' always open to the ever-expanding horizon of new cultural locations and contexts. The calling to be the church in mission is a call to live more imaginatively as a 'heterotopia', pointing to a renewed

world in which the *missio Dei* is transforming the fractured *imago Dei* through the questing presence of the *verbum Dei*. The canvases that hold the images of 'heterotopia', or the discourses of the Christian community in mission, are the canvases of transformed and transforming communities, liturgies and hymnodies. They also include the canvases of gospel proclamation and the mystical language of retreat. Human explorations of these divine poetries and tapestries inspire aspiration and vision and it is from here that the future of missiology emerges.

**18:00 Professor Viggo Mortensen (DK): From the Abundance of the Heart
A Missiology for the Future**

ABSTRACT: If the world's de-Christianisation in the next millennium should be prevented it is necessary to take a fresh look at the precarious history and the present identity crisis of Christian mission. The role of mission for the church's survival actualizes the question how the academic discipline of Missiology should respond.

19:15 Reception and Concluding Dinner

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

Departure