

WHAT DOES THEOLOGY DO, ACTUALLY? PART III

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND ITS
HISTORIES

7-9 JULY 2022

celebrating 15 years of
#ecumenicalstudies in Bonn

What does
Theology
Do,
Actually?



Zentrum für Religion
und Gesellschaft



BonnNET

ECUMENISM & HISTORY

The Masters in Ecumenical Studies (MEST) Program at the University of Bonn is a research-oriented masters degree equipping students for research on the histories and presents of the Christian churches. A distinctive of the MEST as an "ecumenical" effort is its interest not in advancing Christian unity but in facilitating mutual understanding of differences. In 2022, the MEST is celebrating its 15-year anniversary. In the 15 years since its inauguration, the MEST has graduated students from over 36 different countries and has seen over 20 twenty students go on to pursue doctoral research. The What Does Theology Do project will partner with the MEST for WDTD3, devoted this time to the discipline of Church History, in celebration with the MEST of work accomplished and in anticipation of the challenges ahead.

To speak of "challenges" is not an arbitrary choice of words. "WDTD3: The Unity of the Church and its Histories" seeks to engage the seemingly irresolvable tension between the idea of a universal church and the particularity of Christian traditions from historical perspectives. In so doing, challenges arising from this tension related to confessional identity, belonging and acceptance take center stage. Building on the WDTD Project's interest in the confessional and cultural diversity of approaches to work in the theological disciplines, WDTD3 will consider how the work of the History of Christianity or Church History is evolving as the participants and actors doing this work engage their field interculturally and in conversation with issues of contemporary global concern.

In conversation with the current class of MEST scholars from India, South Korea, Iran, the UK, the USA, Ghana and Nigeria, five such issues have been identified as holding particular importance for scholars of Christian history and for church leaders. These form the foci of the conference panels:

- Church History between theology of the Church and histories of churches
- Monocultural churches in multicultural societies: historical perspectives
- Political resistance and the formation of religious identity in the history of Christianity
- The contributions of women to representations of the Church historically, in ecumenical focus
- Ecological perspectives on the history of Christianity

REGISTRATION

This symposium is being hosted by
the **Masters of Ecumenical Studies Program** of the
University of Bonn

Thursday, July 7th, 18:00-21:00

Friday, July 8th, 9:00-18:45

Saturday, July 9th, 9:00-Open End

Registration is free but required.

To register, scan QR Code

or visit our homepage at

<http://whatdoestheologydo.uni-bonn.de/>

With questions or for more information, contact:

Dr. Matthew Ryan Robinson,

Dr. Julia Winnebeck

and Dr. Maria Munkholt at:

gnet@uni-bonn.de



celebrating 15 years of
#ecumenicalstudies in Bonn

What does
Theology
Do,
Actually?



SPEAKERS

Amélé Ekué (Togo)
Wolfram Kinzig (Germany)
David B. Smith (USA)
Jibin Thomas (India)
Heekyung Jeong (South Korea)
Mark Chapman (UK)
Raimundo Barreto (Brazil/USA)
Elaine Flowers (USA)
Vasile-Octavian Mihoc (Romania)

Christina Pettersen (Denmark)
Farid Esack (South Africa)
Benedikt Brunner (Germany)
Maria Munkholt (Denmark)
Fulata L. Mbano-Moyo (Malawi)
Charlotte Methuen (UK)
Bishop Thomas (Egypt)
Panu Pihkala (Finland)

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, 07.07.

- 18:00-18:15 Welcome and Anniversary Opening
- 18:15-18:45 "MESt at 15: Looking back, looking forward"
Wolfram Kinzig, MESt Director of Studies
- 18:45-19:30 **Anniversary Keynote**
Transcultural Perspectives on Ecumenical Studies:
The Next Fifteen Years
Amélé Ekué. Academic Dean, Globethics.net
- 19:30-21:00 MESt Anniversary Reception

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, 08.07

09:00-09:30	WDTD3. Welcome and Introduction
09:30-11:00	Openings. Our Histories before, in, as the Church.
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	Panel 1. The Church in, or as, History
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-15:30	Panel 2. Among kindred spirits. The significance of culture, ethnicity, and social order in the formation of Christian communities.
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break
16:00-17:30	Panel 3. Church, Religion and Political Resistance.
17:30-17:45	Break

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, 09.07

09:00-10:30 **Panel 4.** A History of Overcoming Barriers. The Significance of Gender in Narrating Church History.

10:30-10:45 Coffee Break

10:45-12:15 **Panel 5.** The ekklesia of Creation and the Ecologies of the Church: Church-Historical Reflections

12:15-13:30 Lunch Break

13:30-15:00 **Panel 6.** CALL FOR PAPERS: "The Future of the Past: Possible Futures of Research in Church History and the History of Christianity".

16:00-
Open End **Evening MEST BBQ**
Brüdergasse 8
Katholische Hochschulgemeinde Bonn

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 1. The Church in, or as, History

Panel 1 aims at the cultivation of deeper understandings of the role, aim and method of church history as a theological discipline in different confessional and geographical settings. In Western Europe, in the context of (particularly Protestant) academia, historical critical methods have been implemented as the fundamental tool in the field of "Church History", and the discipline is understood to have both a critical and constructive relation to churches (typically state or people's churches). In other contexts, historical research on Christian churches is dealt with differently. The title of Elizabeth E. Clark's notable article "From Patristics to Early Christian Studies", for example, indicates the development that there has been in the field of "Church History" at North American universities. This shift is just one example illustrating a broadening and complexification in the field, as it has moved beyond studies of dogma and (male) ecclesial authorities towards an embrace of intercultural and cultural-scientific approaches to the historical study of Christianity.

In the light of this historical development of the field of the historical study of Christianity, the panel will ask: 1) Is it even possible today to give a description of the current state of church-historical studies, or has the field lost its unique mandate in a variety of sub-fields with varying agendas and methods? 2) What is the future of the past in research on Christianity, particularly in light of realities such as the colonial stain that marked so much of Christianity globally or when some of the fastest-growing Christian groups around the world today are protestants with a stronger connection to Scripture or experience than tradition? What are current trends, and what will be future needs in the field(s)? 3) What does it mean for the relationship between academia and the churches that both the idea of "the Church" and the discipline of church history are themselves in constant historical development, as reflected, for example, in different churches' understanding of the unity of the Church and what diversity this unity might be able to sustain?

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 2. Among kindred spirits. The significance of culture, ethnicity, and social order in the formation of Christian communities

Christians with migration backgrounds or in diaspora and expat situations living abroad often turn to churches to preserve their own religious and cultural identity, while majority (national and people's) churches tend to display likewise high levels of national and ethnic homogeneity even in increasingly multicultural societies. Is this a modern phenomenon or a tendency observable throughout history? The history of Christianity offers plenty of examples of Christian minority communities whose members lived in societies dominated by different beliefs and traditions as well as examples of the ways majority Christian societies have treated Christian and other religious minorities. Studies of these encounters have sometimes focused on the question of what separated them dogmatically, ethically or liturgically from the churches or other religions of the surrounding societies. Other factors, however, such as factors related to cultural and socio-ethnic identity and the impact of factors like social or national homogeneity for community resilience are less well-researched.

This panel aims 1) to thematize the dynamic interrelations of culture, ethnicity, and other identity framings in minority-majority ecclesiological encounters, 2) to explore the significance of these identities vis-a-vis dogmatic conviction in historical examples, and 3) to discuss historically the problem of cultural identity in intercultural and ecumenical theology. The discussions will complexify topics like church identity, doctrine, and liturgy with social- and cultural-historical perspectives. How do historical and present-day minority churches reflect on both the identity of their own community and the church traditions of the surrounding societies? What role does the history of this community play (e.g., the narratives of its foundation or shared history and traditions with other churches)? How do factors of joint cultural or national heritage affect ecclesiological self-understanding in these communities?

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 3. Church, Religion and Political Resistance

The question of whether Christians should engage with secular politics and stand up to oppressive and unjust rulers is as old as Christianity itself. The approval or disapproval, as well as the nature and extent, of Christian resistance have regularly been linked to theological understandings of the sovereignty of God, creation, the Church's relation to the World, the last judgment, and the arrival of the Kingdom of God. From Jesus to Paul to Augustine to Luther, theo-logics interrelating God, Church and World have inspired resistance or submission, and have been perceived as catalysts of or bulwarks against political instrumentalization. But what effects have resistance and protest had on the formation of religious identity for Christian churches and other religious groups in their relationships with Christian churches or Christian-majority societies?

In the present, there is again a growing expectation that churches and other religious groups actively intervene on issues of socio-political concern in the public sphere. This invites historical reflection on the theo-logics that have motivated and stymied religious resistance and in particular a discussion of the ways such interventions can become definitive for their sense of identity as a chosen, righteous, holy or sacred community. In sociopolitical situations of resistance, the self-identity and boundaries of groups may be influenced, both inwardly and outwardly. This panel will engage with the problem from both the theological and sociological perspectives. Moreover, the topic will be approached from the perspective of non-Christian religious communities, allowing it to transcend religious boundaries. Possible questions which might be addressed are: 1) How are experiences of resistance and oppression effected by religious communities' self-understanding? 2) How are historical self-(re)presentations of Christian groups presented, enacted and reiterated in liberating movements? 3) In what ways can social-political resistance be recounted interreligiously?

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 4. A History of Overcoming Barriers. The Significance of Gender in Narrating Church History

Once history writing was dominated by the idea that history is made up of great men and their achievements. Ecumenical history is still often told as a story of founding fathers and great male leaders. This is of course largely due to the fact that until recently women were not invited or seen as eligible for leadership positions in most Christian churches. Even today, women and their experiences are still not adequately represented in many ecumenical contexts.

Advances produced in feminist scholarship and insights drawn from gender theory in the last decades have led to radical new ways of approaching history, including the histories of Christianity. Not only are relevant female figures increasingly sought out in Christian sources, but the traditional way of writing history is also being questioned. Since Christian women are mostly known in historical sources from writings by male authors, many have begun to ask what the 'male gaze' means for the way women have been depicted. Going a step further, this panel seeks to explore the significance of women and gender dynamics, not only for understandings of women throughout Christian history but for the conception of the Church in general and the ecumenical movement in particular. 1) What is known about women's engagements in the cultivation of churches' self-understanding as "the Church" over the course of Christian history, whether in homiletical, liturgical and catechetical settings or via church-political or private channels? In particular, how have women's voices been included in the depiction of this history? 2) How have women influenced the modern ecumenical movement, and were there precedents to their labors in earlier clashes or negotiations among churches? Finally, 3) what are the experiences of women who have worked towards ecumenical unity in recent history?

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 5. The ekklesia of Creation and the Ecologies of the Church: Church- Historical Reflections

Christian ecclesiologies are rooted in moral relationships, between love of God and love of neighbor. And yet, in consideration of the "more-than-human" (non-human animals, plants, ecosystems and landscapes) that have been encountered and inhabited by Christians over the centuries, Christian behavior has often been rather less than neighborly. The panel is thus to be oriented by three sets of considerations and questions: 1) Ongoing relationships with the more-than-human in all its manifestations, whether ideational or embodied, are a fact of existence for all human communities, and church communities are no different.

How these relationships have been conceptualized historically and then negotiated in practice is a question of growing contemporary significance. How have "church" and "ecosystem", as unities both immanent and transcendent, be seen to interrelate on a spiritual level? 2) More specifically, how has the non-human historically been understood by Christian groups in relation to various conceptions of "church", from local congregations rooted in particular communities (both particularly human and more broadly ecological) to the totality of the transcendent union with God, and how has this varied between different denominations and traditions? 3) Finally, is there a difference between approaches at local, denominational and ecumenical levels? How might indigenous and other perspectives that have often been underrepresented in church-historical research but that promote a relationship with the natural world rooted in greater fellowship and respect, provide a useful resource for re-conceiving Christian relationships with the wider environment?

PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

Panel 6. CALL FOR PAPERS: "The Future of the Past: Possible Futures of Research in Church History and the History of Christianity"

It has been said, "The past is not dead; it's not even past," and in all of the symposium's panels, the questions are modern, while the phenomena are not. But what kind of futures might these ancient presents produce? WDTD3 will conclude in the same way as WDTD1-2 with a panel of visionary young scholars imagining possible futures for the disciplines of Church History and History of Christianity. What can be learned from "histories of the Church"? Who will need them and how will they use them in the future? For the final panel of the symposium, we invite proposals for future-oriented papers from outstanding current doctoral students, scholars with diagnostic insight into the vitality of academic research on, with, and in the histories of Christianity. The panel is devoted to two basic questions: Why do scholars continue to conduct research on the histories of Christianity today, and why will they do so in the future?

Within this framing, more specific questions will include: Which histories of Christianity are being researched more, which less, which will need to be researched in the future? Are scholars who conduct research on the histories of Christianity interested in history in and of itself (and if so, on what kind of understanding of those histories as religious or theological is this interest based?), or are they interested in the histories of Christianity because of how these refer to or reflect other issues? And then what are those other issues: perhaps cultural and societal, existential or philosophical? How are those categories constructed and "found" in traditional historical sources and what new sources or approaches to the conception of source material? This panel strongly encourages bold, vector-charting proposals that are constructively (self-)critical of past approaches, insightful of present cultural and institutional conditionalities of historical research, and that approach possible futures in creative, norm-bending ways.

WELCOME TO BONN

Getting to Bonn

Bonn is reachable by air transport into the Bonn-Cologne (CGN) airport, into Düsseldorf (DUS) and into Frankfurt (FRA).

From the Bonn-Cologne airport, the SB60 bus runs from monday to friday every 30 minutes directly to Bonn central train station (Bonn Hbf). It takes about 40 minutes and costs €8,70. The Hbf is 10 minutes walking distance from the university main building, where all conference events will be held.

From the Düsseldorf airport, the regional express train runs every 60 minutes to Bonn central train station (Bonn Hbf). It takes about 1:10 hours and costs, depending on time of booking, about €19,60.

From the Frankfurt airport train station, the Deutsche Bahn high-speed rail runs every 30 minutes directly to Bonn Siegburg (Siegburg Hbf). It runs about 50 minutes, prices vary depending on time of booking. From Bonn Siegburg, the number 66 S-Bahn line runs every 15 minutes directly to Bonn central station (Bonn Hbf) and costs €11,40.



WELCOME TO BONN

Staying in Bonn

The Motel One Bonn-Hauptbahnhof, IntercityHotel Bonn, and President Hotel are within 10 and 20 minutes' walk of the university main building. Many other hotels and hostels can be found nearby.

Motel One Bonn-Hauptbahnhof

Am Hauptbahnhof 12
53111 Bonn
+49-228-763824-0
bonn-beethoven@motel-one.com

President Hotel

Clemens-August-Str. 32-36
53115 Bonn
+49 228-7250-0
info@presidenthotel.de

IntercityHotel Bonn

Quantiusstraße 22
53115 Bonn
+49 228-926181-0
bonn@intercityhotel.com
Single: €98 / Double €124; incl. breakfast
Reservation until 23.02.2022

WELCOME TO BONN

What to do

Bonn Minster (German: Bonner Münster): This Roman Catholic church is one of Germany's oldest churches, having been built in the 11th century. It has the only well-preserved Romanesque cloister north of the Alps.

Beethoven-Haus: The house where Ludwig van Beethoven was born is always interesting to visit. A new permanent exhibition opened in the Beethoven Year 2020. But not only Beethoven was home in Bonn, but also Heinrich Heine (during his studies), Ernst Moritz Arndt as professor and Robert Schumann.

Botanical gardens: In spring, the flowers begin to bloom! The botanical gardens surround the Poppelsdorf Palace, which was carefully restored after the Second World War.

Museum Mile and Government Quarter: The road from the center to the government quarter is the so-called "Museumsmeile". Here you will find a variety of important museums that are interesting to visit. For more than 40 years Bonn was the capital of Germany, numerous ministries still have their headquarters here and Bonn is the German UN site.



WELCOME TO BONN

Where to eat

Dining options at a variety of price points may be found throughout the walkable city center. For lunch, the "Marktplatz" (Market Square in front of the old Rathaus) features a fresh market and many food trucks daily. The following dine-in options are also local favorites. NOTE that all restaurants currently require: (full vaccination) + (booster OR a negative quicktest < 24hrs old).

Tuscolo (Italian)

Gerhard-von-Are-Straße 8
53111 Bonn 53111 Bonn
Open from 11:30 am to 23:30 pm
+49-228-42976605

Bistro & Bar Pendel (European)

Friedensplatz 12
53111 Bonn
Open from 09:00 am
+49-228-9766064

Makiman (Asian)

Sterntorbrücke 11
53111 Bonn
Open from 12:00 pm to 21:00/22:00 pm
*49-228-7216957

Black Coffee Pharmacy (Coffee)

Bonner Talweg 46b
53113 Bonn
Open from 10:00 am to 19:00 pm
*49-1511-0000595

WELCOME TO BONN

Wifi

Access information will be made available on site at the conference.

Contact information during the conference

The G_NET team email will be monitored throughout the conference: gnet@uni-bonn.de. If a response is needed, please include your preferred contact information in your inquiry.

For non-medical and non-police related emergencies, you may call +49(0)15770206339 for assistance.

Emergency contact information

For medical emergencies, dial 112

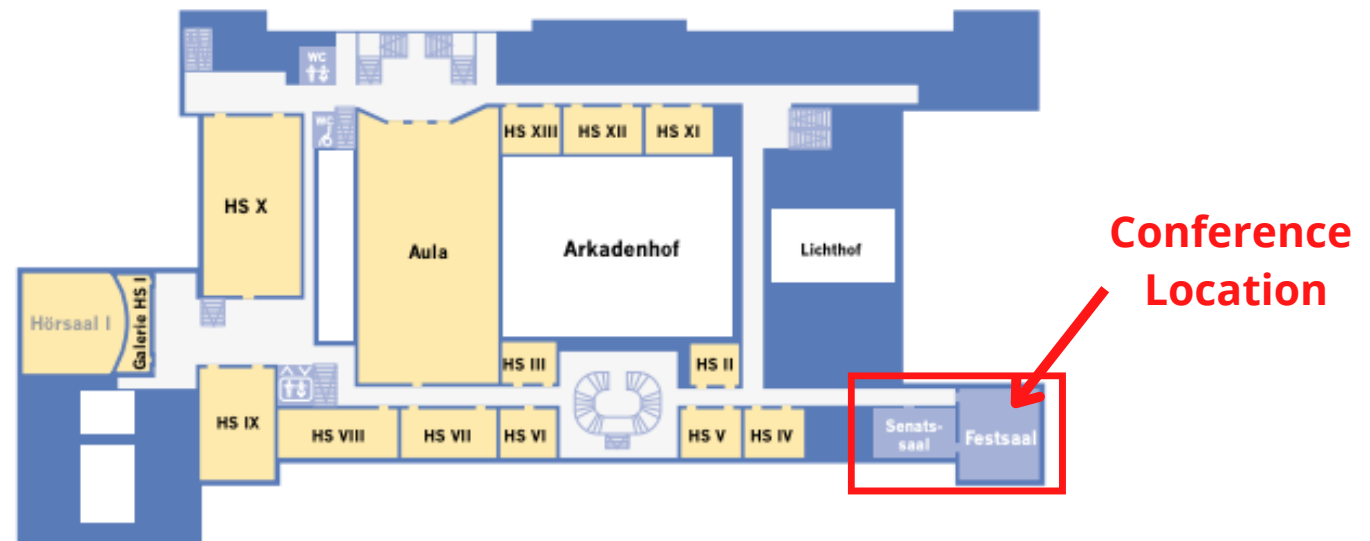
For fire department, dial 112

For police, dial 110



CONFERENCE MAP

1. Obergeschoss



Erdgeschoss

