January 2018 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

A very Happy New Year to you all. It was great to see so many of you this past November in Boston for the EI Sessions at the American Academy of Religion which were a tremendous success and very well attended. This newsletter contains several exciting items of information for you they include:

1. Details of the Final Call for this year’s Twelfth International Gathering of EI on Migration and Refugees: Global In-Difference and the Church, Toronto, Canada, 25-27 June 2018
2. Final Call and EI Session Details for the European Academy of Religion, Bologna, Italy, March 5-8, 2018
3. Call for Papers – EI Sessions at the American Academy of Religion, Denver Colorado, November 17-20, 2018
4. Congratulations to our new EI AAR Steering Committee Chairs and Steering Committee Members

1. Final Call for this year’s Twelfth International Gathering of EI on Migration and Refugees: Global In-Difference and the Church, Toronto, Canada, 25-27 June 2018
Migration and Refugees: Global In-Difference and the Church
Twelfth International Gathering of the Ecclesiological Investigations
International
Research Network
Toronto, 25-27 June 2018
“I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a ‘sign of the times’...” – Pope Francis

The plight of refugees and migrants is perhaps the single greatest issue facing our world today. We live in a time when the migration of peoples, for the vast majority journeys and displacement forced upon them by external circumstances, has never been a situation of greater urgency: demanding that churches, faith communities and all people of good will explore the root causes of such migration, the implications and outcomes of mass human movement and the potential strategies and courses of action to help alleviate the most acute situations readily, as well as ensuring just and equitable policies and laws are implemented both within and across nations to safeguard the rights and futures of all migrants, refugees, displaced peoples and itinerant peoples.

The Twelfth EI International Conference seeks to bring together scholars, practitioners and leaders from around the globe to examine the relationship between the Church and Migration: historically, in our times and prospects for the future. We seek to explore the stories of those affected, the journeys they have undertaken, the ways in which churches and other religious communities, as well as secular organizations and societies, have sought to welcome them – and otherwise. And we will explore the key issues and challenges at stake, the key initiatives and documentary engagements with migration and ways in which we can learn from the past in both positive and critical ways alike.

Call for papers and further conference details are live at http://eiresearch.net/toronto2018/
All are welcome.

2. Final Call and EI Session Details for the European Academy of Religion, Bologna, Italy, March 5-8, 2018

a. The Francis Factor Five Years On: Taking Stock, Looking Forward
We call for papers that will explore the papacy of Pope Francis as he nears the fifth anniversary of his election as pontiff. We invite submissions of papers of 20 mins length from multiple disciplinary angles, including but not limited to theological, historical, political, social, media, liturgical, economic, etc. etc. What have been the
most significant achievements of the papacy so far? What have been the most important changes he has introduced across the church? What are the areas where there is work to do and where challenges remain? What features best epitomize his ecclesiological vision for the church and its mission? What have been his most astute appointments both in curial terms and in terms of the global episcopate? We are especially grateful to receive submissions exploring the ecclesiological, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue aspects of the pontificate as well as papers that compare Francis’ papacy with other historical periods of church history. (NB there are TWO EI sessions on this topic).

b. The Future of Ecumenism: Shaping Method and Practice for Today’s Times
The perceived ‘golden age’ of ecumenism in the mid-late twentieth century was marked by an increasing bureaucratization of ecumenical engagement, dialogue and practice, helping to contribute to the decline of ecumenical endeavor as many organizations and entities engaged in dialogue slipped into a form of ‘industrial-scale’ ecumenism. The old-style approaches taken by bi-lateral and multi-lateral dialogues have reaped fewer and fewer results in recent times and have frequently been peopled by the same professional class of ecumenists, speaking about the same old issues and employing the same old methods. What new ways and means for advancing and promoting ecumenism for today’s world are emerging? What new methods and forms of ecumenical engagement and practice might be developed in the near future? What are the reasons for the decline in the effectiveness of the old-style forms of ecumenical method and practice? What lessons can be learned from other forms of dialogue both throughout history and in differing forms beyond the ecumenical movement? Which institutions and organizations are best suited and best equipped toward being able to help facilitate the advancement of ecumenism today and into the future? What will tomorrow’s forms of dialogue look like and who can and should be involved in them? How can official church bodies and ecumenical organizations alike be persuaded to bring in differing voices and to listen to those voices? To what ends should ecumenical dialogue be pursued today? (NB there are TWO EI sessions on this topic, one in collaboration with the Volos Academy).

c. Resisting the Politics of Exclusion - Expanding Dialogical Horizons
A roundtable conversation about promoting Religious Pluralism and facilitating Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue for the 21st Century. Our world has never been in greater need of dialogue both within and between faith communities and of initiatives to promote religious literacy and religious pluralism. What are some
examples of successful ventures toward such ends in recent times and what opportunities might there be for new types of initiatives along these lines in the future? This panel explores the origins and outcomes of a series of initiatives that have been developed at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, in recent years to promote Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue, and particularly religious pluralism. It will take the form of a roundtable discussion – each speaker will talk for 15 minutes initially, and then the conversation will be opened up to explore questions and interaction between the panelists and with the audience. (NB – this is a panel session so there is no open call for this topic).

Details to propose and register are here:
https://www.europeanacademyofreligion.org/program
https://www.europeanacademyofreligion.org

3. Call for Papers – American Academy of Religion, Denver Colorado, November 17-20, 2018

Call instructions (all submissions online only)
- https://papers.aarweb.org/content/general-call-instructions

Ecclesiology and Gender: Human Equality and the Unity of the Church(es)
In this session, we consider how gender questions influence division and dialogue, both between church(es) and within officially united churches and denominations. Such questions include the role of women and men in our communities, including ordination, the growth in experience of non-binary gender and transgendered persons, and questions of “gender ideology” and differing understandings of gender across contexts and cultures. We invite papers that explore how attempts to promote equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all members of our churches have influenced the unity of these communities. These could include both continuing questions regarding the role of women in our churches, and more recent questions regarding how newer understandings of gender have affected the churches. We are interested in papers that explore the interplay between ecclesial concern to preserve the churches’ theology and practices, and attempts to respond to new phenomena as signs of the times, and how those experiences affect unity between and within churches.
The Church and Courage
As the AAR focuses upon the role of religion in the public sphere, we invite papers that focus upon the virtue of ecclesial courage in the public sphere. In 2018, we look back fifty years to the meeting of the Latin American Catholic Bishops at Medellín that solidified a public role for a church of and for the poor. At the same time, in an increasingly fractious and polarized world, we see opportunities and challenges for the churches to be courageous in their public mission. We invite papers that help us better understand the theologies of courageous churches in the public sphere, whether historical treatments of past successes and failures, reports of contemporary cases that provide examples of the church courageous, or constructive proposals that explore courage in relation to mission, structure, or other themes in ecclesiology.

Co-sponsored session with the African Association for the Study of Religions
The African continent is one of the global locations where Christianity is increasing most rapidly. The history of Churches in Africa is contextualized by colonial encounters between European forms of Christianity and varieties of African religions, spiritualities, traditional belief systems. This has produced various strains and adaptations of Christian ecclesiologies that are still emerging, distinctive, and in some instances dominated by traditional practices. While interest in studying enculturated forms of African ecclesiologies and their social, cultural, and political contextualizations enjoys increased study, for example, missiology, African Biblical hermeneutics and translation, African theology and philosophy, or Africana Studies there remain many areas of interest and lines of inquiry. We, therefore, invite papers that focus upon churches in the African context and are also in conversation with African scholars of Christianity whether located in an African country or in its Diaspora. Such papers could be theoretical treatments of the church in frameworks and models arising from African experience (e.g., church as family, church and mission in Africa, church and ancestors, etc.), or could be ethnographic studies of ecclesial structures and institutional realities in particular contexts or church communities. We are particularly interested in papers that address poverty, colonialism, the role of women, sexuality, and Christian/Muslim/African Traditional Religion relationships as they relate to the life of the church in Africa.

4. Congratulations to our new EI AAR Steering Committee Chairs and Steering Committee Members
Our very deepest gratitude to Mark Chapman and Brad Hinze, who recently completed two very successful full terms of office as joint-chairs of the EI AAR
Program Unit. Their tenure featured many highlights and witnessed ever more and new themes and topics being covered, consistently high turnouts for sessions each year and new partnerships for joint sessions with a growing and diverse range of other program units. The biggest highlight of all was their oversight of the review process for EI AAR, which saw the Academy renew the program unit with much approval for the next five years. To help with the leadership transition, Brad and Mark will continue to serve on the steering committee for a further term. Sincere and deep gratitude also to Angela Berlis who completed her term of office on the Steering Committee.

We are, therefore, also, delighted to announce and welcome our New EI AAR Leadership team:

Joint Chairs:
Brian Flanagan, Marymount University
Vladimir Latinovic, Tübingen University

Steering Committee:
Bradford E. Hinze, Fordham University
Dennis Doyle, Dayton University
Mark Chapman, Ripon College, Cuddesdon and Oxford University
Miriam Haar, Lutheran World Federation
Miriam Perkins, Milligan College

Brian and Vladimir are veteran servants of the EI Network over many, many years and will exercise wise and innovative leadership for many years to come as EI continues to develop and grow as a much valued component of the AAR for so many scholars. We also welcome two further EI veterans in Dennis Doyle and Miraim Haar to the AAR committee who, alongside Miran Perkins who continues in office, will bring many valuable insights to the work of the Program Unit in coming years. Many congratulations to all and we are very lucky to have such a dedicated team of international and ecumenically diverse scholars leading the way.


We are delighted to share with you links to recent and new volumes in our ever-growing Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue Series (with Palgrave Macmillan):


Mapping the Differentiated Consensus of the Joint Declaration Rinderknecht, J. (2016)
William Temple and Church Unity Loane, E. (2016)

Watch out for several exciting new titles forthcoming this year!


As ever, Paul Avis, editor of the peer-reviewed journal Ecclesiology, is always happy to receive scholarly submissions of articles for consideration for publication in the journal.

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All the very best, as ever, from your coordinating team,

Gerard Mannion, Mark Chapman and Vladimir Latinovic