

**14th Assembly of the
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MISSION STUDIES
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Conversions and Transformations:
Missiological Approaches to Religious Change**

PAPER PROPOSAL

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**Evangelism through Happiness? A Qualitative Case Study in the
Movement of Contemporary UK 'Post-Christians' towards Christian Faith**

UK society is increasingly secularised with each census showing less religious affiliation than the last. Evangelism is problematised in such a 'post-Christian' context. The paper will present one contemporary approach to evangelism in the UK context with a group of largely unchurched participants studying the subject of happiness over a period of six weeks. The pursuit of happiness is now an internationally recognised goal of Governments (from Bhutan to Britain) and the academy especially in the fields of economics and psychology. A wide-ranging set of literature and research exists in the field e.g.

<http://worldhappiness.report/>

The hypothesis of 'The Happiness Lab' is that in engaging with what it means to be happy participants will be moved to ask deeper spiritual questions about the source of their happiness and possibly discover more of the Christian faith as a result. The case study presented will test this hypothesis critically and theologically by field research methods such as a) participant observation b) longitudinal survey data and possibly c) semi-structured interviews as well as an extended theological reflection. It will require theorising what is actually happening in the participants through and beyond the course and therefore if, how and why the course shifts them towards Christian religion. It will move far beyond the crude 'Engels Scale' as a measurement for theorising distance of a person from conversion. Thus the paper will explore key themes of the conference in the UK context.