



International Association for Mission Studies 15th General Assembly



Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World Sydney, Australia July 9-14, 2020

The International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) will convene for its 15th Assembly in Sydney, Australia, from July 9 to July 14, 2020. Occurring for the first time in Oceania, the IAMS Assembly will be hosted by the Australian Association for Mission Studies, and the meeting will take place at Morling College in greater Sydney.

In determining the chosen theme, “Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World,” the Executive Committee of IAMS is seeking to name and explore our perception that missionary activity is now and has always been undertaken in a world constituted by wounds in many forms. We want to consider this mission—past, present, and future—mindful of the wounds the world and its peoples face, wounds to which Christian mission has sought to respond and which it has at times helped create. To that end, we would like our assembly to consider Christian mission as addressing powers, inequalities, and vulnerabilities from a variety of perspectives across the spectrum of mission studies.

Power is a constitutive aspect of Christian mission, an inescapable context in which it is pursued. Powers, understood collectively, name such realities as well as the ways that life-enhancing and life-diminishing structures can take a social and cumulative quality. Of course, those powers are understood differently depending on theological assumptions—that is, as spiritual or material, political or economic, human or non-



human, individual or collective. Most Christians understand Christ as one who both wielded power and confronted power, though in surprising and counter-intuitive ways.

Inequality has always shaped Christian mission. In the first place, one meaning of mission has always been to bring the Gospel to those who do not know it—who thus are unequal compared to those who bear it. Aware of this longstanding notion, we also appreciate other inequalities that have shaped Christian mission—contexts of inequality in which mission has proceeded, that have shaped mission, been exploited by missionaries, and to which Christian mission responds. These include the inequalities based on gender and race shaping historical processes such as colonial and imperial domination, economic exploitation, corrosive corruption, lack of access to health care, education, or security, as well as numerous discriminations based on a variety of other social distinctions—for example, sexual orientation, ecological circumstances, culture, language, social class, geographic location, age, physical or other disability. Christians appreciate that Christ was born into a world shaped by inequalities and that he responded to them with compassion and, at times, prophetic denunciation.

Vulnerability is a human constant, shaping every human life. Yet vulnerability is also distributed differently across different human groups, part of ever-present inequalities and differences in power in human experience. Self-critical practitioners of Christian mission embrace their own vulnerabilities as they share the *missio Dei*. They also seek to mitigate the vulnerabilities that render so many human lives precarious. In addition, mission has exploited and increased vulnerabilities of people at times, often in situations of unequal distributions of power.

At the 15th Assembly of IAMS, we want to offer new perspectives on Christian mission as mission in the context of a wounded world. Pressing global and regional concerns reflect such wounds, including those linked to the forced dislocations of populations, discrimination toward migrants, increasing economic inequality, rising nationalisms, and climate change. New perspectives on such issues linked to mission and reflective of a world shaped by power, inequality, and vulnerability might draw from theological or from any other disciplinary perspectives, mindful of the broad nature of mission studies today.

IAMS-2020: Study Groups and Thematic Panels

The academic procedure for the 2020 Sydney Assembly includes Plenary Sessions, Study Group sessions, and Thematic Panels.

Many papers will appear within the framework of the work of IAMS' nine ongoing Study Groups:

- BISAM: Biblical Studies and Mission
- Children, Youth, and Mission
- Christian Communities and Mission
- DABOH: Documentation, Archives, Bibliography and Oral History
- Gender and Mission
- Interreligious Studies and Mission
- Pentecostal/Charismatic Expressions in World Christianity
- Religious Freedom
- Theology of Mission



Hoping to cover other areas of mission studies and to encourage scholarly innovation, we also invite proposals for what we are calling Thematic Panels. These would be the fruit of organized efforts to assemble at least three papers around a theme not easily circumscribable within the existing Study Groups. These papers would be presented as a group, with at least one person serving as convener of the Thematic Panel.

The organization of the panels will be done in dialogue between the conveners and the Academic Committee of IAMS. All proposals with abstracts will be reviewed by the IAMS Academic Committee that will finalize the Sydney program in early 2020.

1. Proposals for Thematic Panels are due by **30 September 2019**.
2. Paper proposals of 250 words, whether for Study Groups or Thematic Panels, are due by **30 November 2019**.
3. Applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their papers in **January 2020**.
4. Draft papers of 2000 words are due **31 May 2020**.

Panel and paper proposals should be sent to:

conferencepapers2020@missionstudies.org.

For general questions regarding the conference:

conferencesecretary2020@missionstudies.org.

Guidelines for writing papers:

1. Papers presented during the conference are not to exceed 2000 words—thus a presentation time of **20 minutes—to allow 10 minutes to be allocated to questions and answers**.
2. If conference participants intend to submit their papers to *Mission Studies* for publication after the conference, they should develop them to between 6000 and 10,000 words, including notes.
3. Authors are expected to adhere strictly to the Style Guide for *Mission Studies*:
https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/MIST.pdf

Papers admittance criteria

While writing your paper and before submission, check that you can answer the following questions positively:

1. Is your paper topic relevant to the IAMS-2020 Assembly general theme? Is it also relevant to the theme of a particular Study Group? Or, as the case may be, would it be better as a free-standing Thematic Panel?
2. In what way does your paper make an original contribution to the chosen field of study?
3. Does your paper show the following features?
 - Clarity and logic of argument
 - Originality and concreteness of content
 - Level of engagement with relevant scholarship
 - Accuracy of form, expression, and language inclusiveness
4. Is your paper abstract less than 250 words, and your draft paper for presentation less than 2000 words?