

International Association for Mission Studies

16th General Assembly

Walking Together in Mission: Facing Global Challenges for a Sustainable World

Pretoria, South Africa

July 17-21, 2026



© Hein Waschefort, CC BY-SA 3.0

Call for Papers

The International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) will hold its 16th Assembly at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, South Africa, from July 17 to 21, 2026. This significant conference will be hosted by Africa IAMS.

The theme, "Walking Together in Mission: Facing Global Challenges for a Sustainable World," encompasses two interconnected components that address the pressing issues of our time:

Walking Together in Mission: Contemporary Christian mission can be likened to the journey of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as described in Luke 24:13-35. Their experience culminated in the profound realization of Jesus Christ's resurrection; this journey not only led

them to discover the risen Lord but also deepened their friendship in transformative ways. Christ's abiding presence throughout this journey underscores the essence of mission as walking together, ultimately transforming participants into witnesses of a changed existence, filled with renewed purpose and understanding.

This concept emphasizes that global challenges cannot be effectively addressed by any single group, method, or generation. Instead, mission is inherently a shared journey that requires collaborative effort and collective wisdom. This notion resonates with the idea of "synodality," which invites all members of the global church—who are, as pilgrims, journeying toward the Kingdom of God—to engage collaboratively in God's mission, thereby enriching the diversity and depth of our collective experience.

Facing Global Challenges for a Sustainable World: In the current era, we are confronted with unprecedented challenges that demand a level of global and ecumenical cooperation never seen before. Ongoing conflicts, the relentless influx of refugees, and escalating global economic inequalities contribute to increasing political polarization, exacerbating tensions and fostering opposition to differing viewpoints. The climate crisis poses significant threats to the very foundations of life on Earth, intensifying existing divisive ideologies and fueling inter-generational conflicts that seem increasingly intractable. Furthermore, advancements brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution—particularly in artificial intelligence and the emergence of a digitally integrated world—add further layers of complexity and uncertainty to our understanding of the future.

Addressing these multifaceted challenges and fostering a sustainable future will require comprehensive and holistic missionary responses that transcend regional and ecclesial divides. We must engage in collective, transnational, and inter-generational efforts that surpass the boundaries of specific regions, social classes, or age groups.

In light of these considerations, we encourage submissions that explore specific areas such as:

- Climate Justice and Creation Care
- Interfaith collaboration in Mission
- Ecumenical collaboration in Mission
- The role of technology and artificial intelligence in mission work
- Sexuality and Gender Identity in Mission
- Practical applications of mission strategies in addressing global challenges
- The development of public theologies that offer Christian solutions in secular contexts
- Other topics related to the fostering a sustainable world

In summary, at the 16th Assembly of IAMS, we aim to present innovative perspectives on Christian mission as a collective journey, emphasizing collaboration among the global church community. The pressing global and regional challenges we face—including forced population displacements, discrimination against migrants, escalating economic inequality, rising nationalism, and the urgent crisis of climate change—demand our attention and reflection.

We invite contributions that explore these critical issues through the lens of mission, drawing insights from both theological frameworks and interdisciplinary perspectives. This approach acknowledges the expansive nature of contemporary mission studies and invites a diverse array of voices and methodologies to enrich our discussions. By engaging with these multifaceted concerns, we seek to deepen our understanding of mission and its implications for our world today.

IAMS-2026: Study Groups and Thematic Panels

The academic procedure for the 2026 Pretoria Assembly includes Plenary Sessions, Study Group sessions, and Thematic Panels.

Papers will appear within the framework of the work of IAMS nine study groups. They are:

- 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 panels will be organized in dialogue between their conveners and the Academic Committee of IAMS. All proposals with abstracts will be reviewed by the IAMS Academic Committee that will finalize the Pretoria Assembly program in early 2026.

1. Proposals for Thematic Panels are due by **30 September 2025**.
2. Paper proposals of 250 words, whether for Study Groups or Thematic Panels, are due by **30 November 2025**.
3. Applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their papers in **January 2026**.
4. Draft papers of 2000 words are due **31 May 2026**.

Please submit panel and paper proposals using the following Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/rWCsTn5h6Njs9JZ66>

For general questions regarding the conference: conferencepapers2026@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 be 6000 +/- 10% words - i.e. up to an absolute maximum of 6,600 words, including footnotes and bibliography.

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-2026 Assembly general theme? Is it also relevant to the theme of a particular Study Group?
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?
 - A. Clarity and logic of argument
 - B. Originality and concreteness of content
 - C. Level of engagement with relevant scholarship
 - D. 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?