



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual McCormick International Colloquium

May 22-31, 2014 / Erfurt, Germany

Theologisches Forschungskolleg Erfurt

Loyola University Chicago Theology Department

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## Table of Contents

<u>REFLECTIONS FROM HILLE HAKER, PH.D., RICHARD A. MCCORMICK, S.J., CHAIR OF CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGY</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>FINAL REFLECTIONS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>APPENDIX B: CONFERENCE SCHEDULE</u>	<u>22</u>

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# 3rd Annual McCormick International Colloquium

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From May 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, a group of professors and doctoral students from the Theology Department of Loyola University Chicago visited Germany. This trip was a follow-up on the McCormick International Colloquium that had taken place in Chicago in 2013. On that occasion, a group of scholars, research fellows, and doctoral students from Theologisches Forschungskolleg Erfurt, the only Catholic faculty in East Germany, had visited Loyola University Chicago to engage in the conference topic “Christianity in a Pluralistic Society”, and to explore the religious and spiritual traditions of our city.

The goal of the two-year exchange was to facilitate opportunities for international collaboration and networking, not only for the full-time faculty, but also for the doctoral students and candidates in the ISET program. The return visit to Germany was also meant to give the participants the opportunity to further this collaboration and visit some historic sites in Germany within close proximity to both the arrival city of Berlin and the conference city of Erfurt.

The conference topic chosen for this year’s conference was: “Christianity and the City”. The paper presentations were distributed to all participants prior to the conference, and the discussions were complemented by a public lecture given by Loyola scholar, Dr. John McCarthy. This public event enabled the group to meet with members of the theology faculty of Erfurt and others from the general public who were not part of the conference itself.

*Interdisciplinary  
International  
Inter-Religious*

...

I was excited for the trip, but I didn’t fully appreciate why the trip mattered for our formation. Thus it was only through my experience of the conference that I was exposed to the impact of such an interdisciplinary, international, inter-religious conference. During the colloquium, I encountered its power – I saw us grow together as a program, I witnessed the enhancing of our cultural competency, and I saw the power of relationship with the “other” as we were shaped by our German Colleagues, their history, their location, and their theologies.

- Sara Wilhelm Garbers,  
ISET Ph.D. Student



Conference Location, Bildungshaus St. Ursula, Erfurt

Most of the participants expected the reflection on the conference topic to be the main goal of the trip; hence, they expected everyone to engage in scholarly work on the ‘city’ in its biblical and theological, historical, political, architectural, social, and symbolic meaning. What they did not foresee, however, was the impact of the location, in which one engages with these multiple meanings, on one’s work, one’s perception, and on the overall communication between the participants.

The topic of our conference was “Christianity in the City.” Most of us from Loyola chose theoretical topics about what it means to be in a city or how religion functions in a city. Our conclusions tended to focus on the ethical implications of those reflections. I expected the same from Erfurt, but found instead that the students from Erfurt were much more attentive to historical particularity. Their approach could be described as doing theological history. They did not muse about theoretical cities, but particular cities at particular times and what happened there. While they too ended with theological and ethical implications, their focus was on capturing historical moments as accurately as possible.

- Wendy Morrison, ISET Ph.D. Student

Implicitly or explicitly, the presentations by the Americans were deeply shaped by the American context, as the German papers were by the German context. The Loyola students and faculty included papers on the Storefront Churches in the US, Evangelicals and US cities, the role of philanthropy in

contemporary democracies, mass incarceration, and the question of neighbors in the city – a reminder of how the different cultures and social structures shape the way Christianity is and was lived in Northern American cities. Loyola participants spoke about the concepts of the sacred and the profane as they are performed within the city, and also of sites of care and hospitality (i.e., in hospices). In the public lecture, John McCarthy explored the question of what the concept of the ‘holy city’ might mean today, in a theo-ethical way. Attending to one’s history would become one of the threads of the conference, a theme addressed already in the very first paper, by Loyola’s Dr. Jon Nilson. Looking back, he reflects upon one particular element of US city culture:

The ruthless segregation of African Americans into urban ghettos must be part of any adequate contemporary understanding of white supremacy. - Dr. Jon Nilson

The presentations of the German scholars included papers on religious spaces during the GDR regime; these papers concretized the secularization of East German culture via politics, with the demolishing and re-modeling of religious spaces during the Communist era, and explored the re-development of Christian communities over the last twenty years. Other papers addressed questions of inter-religious dialogue and its failure, and the problems contemporary Germany faces in view of social changes affecting the family, the intellectual culture, and inter-religious dialogue.



Thüringer Grillfest, Erfurt



While in Erfurt, the group also had the opportunity to visit its major sites in a historical city tour, offered by a church historian of the Erfurt theology faculty; was led on a guided tour of a Methodist church and conversed with the (US) parish pastor who had been among the Erfurt participants of the meeting in 2013 and since then has taken on this post in Erfurt; celebrated a Sunday Eucharist in one of the city churches, followed by a meeting with parish council members of St. Wigbert. In all these conversations with local members of the different Christian communities, the living and lived Church was experienced as an ongoing effort in a specific city, at a specific time. It became clear how different parish life is in a city that was once one of the most important trade centers and intellectual cities in central Europe, famous for its medieval theology (Meister Eckhart), and for Martin Luther who began his theological formation in Erfurt. Today, after decades of forced secularization during Communism, the Catholic Church in Eastern Germany is slowly growing again – new and creative ways are being explored to reach out to the citizens and to non-Christian religions and communities, efforts to overcome the reluctance of Erfurt citizens to enter a church or parish.

That Erfurt's public and political life is alive – albeit sometimes in ways discomfoting to observe – became clear when the group found itself in the middle of a (right-wing) demonstration in the wake of the election of the European Parliament. Discussions about the “Anger”, the German term for the public meeting place in the city, reminded the participants of similar places in Europe and other regions of the world, and initiated conversations about the role of public spaces for lived democracy. The Maidan, the Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the Tahrir Sqare – all public spaces that have become the symbol of civil movements – were contextualized with the Erfurt students' experiences of the peaceful revolution in 1989.

## *Collaborative Professional Relationships*



Tremendous learning occurred with regard to how religion exists in the largely secular Eastern German culture compared to the religiosity of the United States. There was a sharing of experiences that was possible due to the immersion nature of the conference, and we experienced great hospitality from our German hosts. The conversations, formal and informal, that I participated in at the conference deeply shaped my educational experience there. Also, collaborative professional relationships were formed that will extend far beyond the week of the conference.

- Tara Flanagan,  
ISET Ph.D. Candidate and  
Schmitt Fellow

The conference was followed by visits to two nearby historical sites of German history that contrasted with each other in radical ways. First, the group visited the former concentration camp of Buchenwald, a disturbing experience for everyone, but certainly for more than one reason. Buchenwald does not represent the images one may have in mind of a concentration camp, often provided by history books and documentaries on the Holocaust, because the buildings of the camp were demolished in 1950. The beauty of the natural environment of Buchenwald contrasts radically with its recent history during the Holocaust: the German term “Buche” stands for birches, and so the group first walked through a beautiful forest, only to be confronted with the perversion of the concept of human rights and justice. And yet, it is justice itself that was chosen as the ‘motto’ of the camp in 1937: *Suum Cuique*, or in the German words: “Jedem das Seine” which cynically translates into ‘everyone what he/she deserves’.



Konzentrationslager Buchenwald

Weimar, on the other hand, was one of the cultural centers of 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany, the site of the Anna Amalia Library, the Goethe Museum, and also the now newly renovated city center. Weimar is located in the neighborhood of Buchenwald, or vice versa. To visit both sites in one day, and in this order, resulted in many informal conversations among the Germans and the Americans, and it became more and more clear that it matters to understand how a country deals with its history, its dark and bright sides alike.

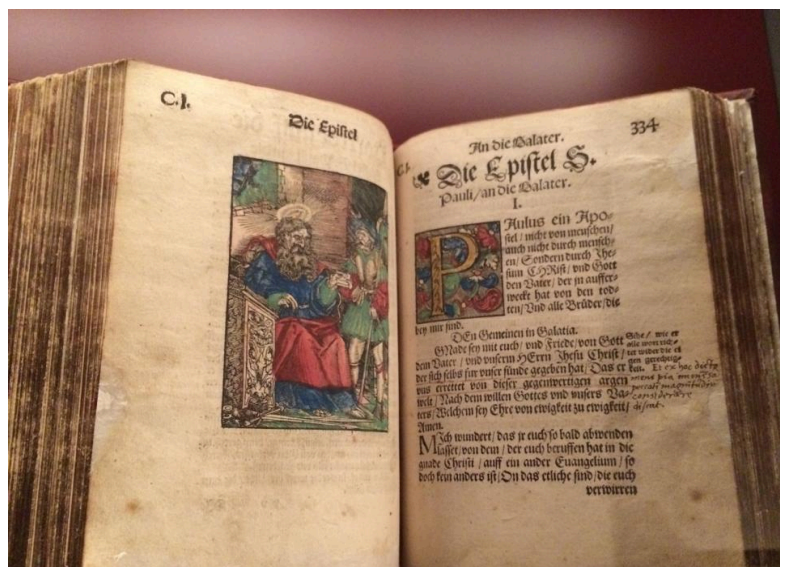
I found myself very struck by the different kinds of questions and the different kinds of conversations that people wanted to have around historical memory and responsibility, and I am still thinking about how to continue the conversation in ways that honors all these questions. - Dr. Deborah Schoenfeld

The hospitality of the Erfurt colleagues was experienced as a major factor in the success of this part of the trip: Professor Benedikt Kranemann and Professor Christof Mandry had put together a perfect program around the conference, and the assistants and students cared for everything the visitors could think of. Students organized a (German-style) barbecue party, and again and again created the space for informal conversations and discussions.

I found The US theological academe desperately needs access to and engagement with international conversations, as we have much to learn from how our global neighbors have addressed complicated questions about tragic history, and their haunting memories, but also about strategies for rebuilding and restoration. A common theme in our week long conversation(s) was about how best to cultivate a hopeful future when it is clear that the past still requires so much from us. The past continues to break into our present, demanding not just remembrance but justice, burdening us with its calls for attention and reparation. The experience of gathering an international group of students and scholars to explore these questions (and their theological and political valency) together while also encountering seminal historical sites of terror and trouble was truly transformative, mostly because it happens so infrequently. - Silas Morgan, ISET Ph.D. Candidate and Schmitt Fellow

From Erfurt, the group went back to Berlin via Wittenberg, where we visited “the Luther House” and listened to a city guide who told the life-stories of the most famous citizens of the city, namely Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchton, and the brothers Cranach.

I am sure that reading the Reformation texts on the ISET exam reading lists will not be the same now that all of us—faculty and graduate students—know the historical contexts all that much the better. -Dr. John McCarthy



Lutherbibel, Wittenberg



The last destination of the trip was Berlin, where the group had time to explore the different historical phases of German history. During a walking city tour, a major emphasis was put on the 'divided city' during the Cold War, as this had been the historical context for most of the Ph.D. students of Erfurt, and the theme of so many conversations. The impact of the wall, and the re-unification/peaceful revolution certainly changed the understanding of the more recent German history.



Berliner Mauer, Berlin

Another part of the Berlin visit concerned the heritage of National Socialism. While walking through the Holocaust Memorial, everyone experienced how this heritage is negotiated and re-negotiated in the capital city of Germany. But while neither the concentration camp in Buchenwald nor the Memorial in Berlin put faces to this heritage, the Holocaust Museum, as well as the Museum of the Nazi Terror ("Topography of Terror"), personalized this heritage through the narratives of victims and perpetrators alike.

One lasting impact from our conference in Erfurt this past May, which still remains with me, is how deeply felt the effects of soviet occupation (or, at least, the version of the occupation experienced in East Germany) continues to be in the social, cultural, political, and religious matrices of the former GDR. From a US perspective, I have always assumed Germany to be an indisputably united nation in the post-Wall era. However, what became very clear to me throughout our trip was the myriad ways soviet era ideology and occupation have impacted, and continue to impact, the culture of the former GDR. The effects can be seen in everything from economic development in the area to socio-cultural integration among the people. While many in 'West Germany' have adopted the language of 'unity' to characterize the relationship between the west and east German regions (this was, at least, the impression I got from our German colleagues), the people we met in the former GDR throughout the course of our time in Erfurt, Weimar, Wittenberg, and Berlin pointed out some of the tensions latent within this very comfortable image. It took me some time, for example, before I began to refer to the fall of the Berlin Wall – a very 'western' characterization of the end of the GDR – as the Peaceful Revolution – the interpretation of the same event from the East German perspective.

- John Crowley Buck, ISET Ph.D. Candidate

In Berlin I was introduced to an example of what is, perhaps, among the least inadequate responses. The „Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas“ juxtaposes ambiguity and specificity in a way that invites dialogue around the multiple, individual stories of those impacted by the holocaust. I hope my theology might be able to perform a similar task by highlighting the simultaneously ambiguous and individualized character of theological history. – Dr. Bill Myatt, Graduate of Loyola

The last evening of the trip was dedicated to reflection upon of the impressions, conversations, and scholarship experienced by the participants during the prior week. It included a presentation by Devorah Schoenfeld who had taken part in an overall Christian conference and excursion as a scholar of Jewish Studies. Throughout the week, the group had engaged in conversations of ecumenical theology and in inter-religious dialogues as much as inter-cultural dialogues; doing this in Germany, the root of 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, and 20<sup>th</sup> century dramatic climax of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism culminating in the Holocaust, to say the least, is different from having the same conversations in the US.



Holocaust- Mahnmal, Berlin

Perhaps the deepest lesson of the conference - and the program - for me was the variety of ways of dealing with painful memory, from dueling polemical monuments to gum on the Berlin wall to the parking lot over Hitler's bunker, and from detailed historical research to recover positive or troubling moments to more abstract attempts to synthesize a model. – Dr. Devorah Schoenfeld

# Expressions of Thanks

Many people made the trip possible, both financially and practically. First and foremost, Loyola University Chicago has established several Endowed Chairs who are given the means to engage in creative scholarship. Richard McCormick S.J., one of the major US moral theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the ‘godfather’ of the international colloquia that the current McCormick Chair, Hille Haker, has established: he was committed to the Jesuit mission and vision about how to ‘do’ theology, namely with open eyes, thorough scholarship, and immersion into the ‘signs of the time’. But without international colleagues who share their ideas, commit themselves to a project, and take upon themselves to host a large group of US scholars, this trip would have been ‘just another’ international conference. That it turned out to be a transformative experience for everyone, is not the least the result of Benedikt Kranemann’s and Christof Mandry’s efforts. Together with a team from Loyola’s McCormick Chair, the organizational burden was shared: on Loyola’s side, the team consisted of Sara Wilhelm Garbers, Randall Newman, and Silas Morgan. On the German side, one person was ‘constantly in charge’, namely Brigitte Benz. Sebastian Holzbrecher should have been awarded the prize for the best Barbecue cook ever, Henning Buehmann, the prize for most encyclopedic knowledge of German history, and many other people in the Erfurt Theological Research College who made the trip a success.

Loyola University Chicago stepped in when external grants did not go through and the budget of the McCormick Chair could not provide more than a fraction of the necessary funding: Sam Attoh, the Dean of the Graduate School, provided funding for the doctoral students; Reinhard Andress, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, secured funding for the trip when it became clear that foundations would not fund an international conference for doctoral students and faculty alike – a fact that is counter-productive to contemporary research. And the theology department generously dedicated a good part of a donation to the

If this program was of significant benefit to the students and faculty, it was, I think, of even more benefit to Loyola University Chicago as a whole. We struggle to achieve a national and international reputation as a leading center for ethical and theological scholarship. Other programs across the country can wield more significant financial support that we can. ...

It is the possibility of experiences like this for our graduate students that lifts our other academic efforts into the spotlight that would allow us to attract the best students and to make the kinds of contributions that a Catholic university like Loyola should be making. I can only hope that programs like this one can be continued and supported enthusiastically by our administration—they are life changing and institution changing efforts.

- Dr. John McCarthy

department for the trip. The whole group wants to thank everyone for their help, their generosity, and finally, for the confidence that Loyola's scholars and students, as well as future students in other parts of the country, will benefit from this experience.



Berliner Reichstag, Berlin

## Final Reflections

As the organizer of the last two International Colloquia with Erfurt, I was often reminded of a statement that I have made both in Germany and in the US for several years: the reception history of German-speaking theology in the English-speaking world, especially in US theology, was alive for centuries until the mid-1970s. At that point, less and less works were translated, either from English to German or vice versa. But while German scholars had begun to learn English as the lingua franca, and were therefore able to read the works of their American colleagues, this is no longer the case in the US. By now, almost a whole generation of theological scholarship, both in Systematic Theology as in Christian Ethics, has been lost in and for the reciprocal reception. The vision for the future can only be to correct this – but with the present book market, there is no international ‘canon’ of theological books one can easily turn to; rather, it is through international conferences and conversations, that (young) scholars will learn how to engage with European and American theologies, whom to read, and in what languages to communicate.

International collaboration and communication certainly requires bridge-building efforts, and it requires language skills, too. The latter was an obstacle that needed to be overcome on several occasions. For example, Loyola participants had to learn that for some of their colleagues, namely those who had grown up in the GDR, English was not the first foreign language they had learned (this was, of course, Russian). Translation, of course, means much more than transferring the meaning of a word into another language. The potential sources of misunderstanding go further than the linguistic level; they include the understanding of the other's culture, prejudices (Gadamer), history, and intellectual traditions, among them the traditions of religious reasoning. Although this process of understanding and misunderstanding is certainly a common experience for any scholar engaging in international scholarship, it may result in the effort to 'see the world from another's perspective' as part of the ongoing learning experience of theology itself.



Katholische Akademie, Berlin

Inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, I saw, needs time. Furthermore, it needs opportunities to become concrete in order for learning to happen: *this* church or parish in *this* city, in *this* country at *this* moment, struggles to re-define itself, with all its historical and symbolical meanings and plural interpretations attached to this struggle. While in 2013 Loyola participants of the colloquium were struck by the differences of the participants' interests in 'pluralism', the 2014 colloquium made it clear that research questions have, and/or should have a space that is reflected upon as the starting point of any research – in the words of John McCarthy's lecture, quoting Henri Levebre's work: a perceived



space as the geometrical location in which a scholar is situated (Chicago/Erfurt), a *conceived space* as planned or constructed, dividing neighborhoods, public and private spaces, or ‘profane’ and ‘sacred’ spaces; and finally, the *lived space*, as it is represented by the citizens, by the residue of history, the signatures of culture, or the symbols and sites of societal tensions.

While the group exchange with Erfurt has come to an end with this Colloquium, we hope to have paved the way for more individual networking and collaboration. One or the other of the scholars may spend a summer in Erfurt, one or the other scholars may spend some time at Loyola University Chicago. This more individualized communication and collaboration will certainly continue in the coming years – made possible by two years of learning to understand each other, and learning to understand each other’s spaces.



Dom St. Marien, Erfurt

The whole Colloquium would not have been possible without the enormous work and commitment by two of our doctoral students: Sara Wilhelm Garbers and Silas Morgan. They put countless hours into the planning, organization, execution, and follow-up over the past year. Randall Newman worked hard on the organizational and financial matters. The photos were provided by John Crowley-Buck and Sara Wilhelm Garbers. I want to thank all of them for their work and effort, and their concern to shape the ISET program of Loyola University Chicago, Theology.

Dr. Hille Haker

# Appendix A: Participant Reflections

## ISET Faculty

### Dr. John McCarthy:

I think it is hard to overstate the benefit of a program like the one that was organized by Professor Haker for both the graduate students and for the faculty. It is one thing to write articles or to share ideas via the internet, but it is quite different to partake in an international conference that was as focused as this one was. The sustained contact with the faculty, students and location of Erfurt and the surrounding area for a period of four days allowed for a real historical and theological immersion. I am sure that reading the Reformation texts on the ISET exam reading lists will not be the same now that all of us—faculty and graduate students—know the historical contexts all that much the better.

If this program was of significant benefit to the students and faculty, it was, I think, of even more benefit to Loyola University Chicago as a whole. We struggle to achieve a national and international reputation as a leading center for ethical and theological scholarship. Other programs across the country act can wield more significant financial support that we can. And yet with the work and contacts of Professors like Hille Haker and Edmondo Lupieri, we are on the verge of making our graduate program a leading one. It is the possibility of experiences like this for our graduate students that lifts our other academic efforts into the spotlight that would allow us to attract the best students and to make the kinds of contributions that a Catholic university like Loyola should be making. I can only hope that programs like this one can be continued and supported enthusiastically by our administration—they are life changing and institution changing efforts.



Dinner at Bildungshaus St. Ursula, Erfurt

**Dr. Jon Nilson:**

A conference devoted to the city attracted me on account of my work on racism as a theological issue. The ruthless segregation of African Americans into urban ghettos must be part of any adequate contemporary understanding of white supremacy. Yet, after exploring the complexities of “the city” in Erfurt, we also encountered vividly the horrors of 1933-1945. The Nazis committed their crimes in just a dozen years in identifiable places, such as Buchenwald. The evils were so open and blatant that attention had to be paid. The oppression of blacks in the US has lasted for centuries, however, in literally innumerable places. Thus, it has come to seem all too normal, unremarkable; simply “the way things are.” I fully expect this contrast to reverberate throughout my future work on racism.



Konzentrationslager Buchenwald

**Dr. Devorah Schoenfeld:**

The conference helped me to better understand the relevance of my work in Jewish Studies to various conversations around theology and ethics, both in the department and in the field as a whole. It left me with many questions: How can I make the connection between the specificity of a historical experience and abstract theological concepts? How can I articulate the relevance of Jewish theological thinking for an internal Christian conversation without compromising differences not only in theological conclusions but in the very questions that

are asked? I found myself very struck by the different kinds of questions and the different kinds of conversations that people wanted to have around historical memory and responsibility, and I am still thinking about how to continue the conversation in ways that honors all these questions.

Perhaps the deepest lesson of the conference - and the program - for me was the variety of ways of dealing with painful memory, from dueling polemical monuments to gum on the Berlin wall to the parking lot over Hitler’s bunker, and from detailed historical research to recover positive or troubling moments to more abstract attempts to synthesize a model. I found this diversity of approaches for dealing with the troubling past to be fascinating and powerful, and something that I will keep in mind as I continue to think about approaches to teaching and dealing with the troubled history of the Jewish-Christian relationship.



## Post-Doc

### Dr. Bill Myatt

“The intention to teach is inimical to the chance to learn from actual history.” -- Markus Gyorgy

The theological task is unique. It involves the theologian in a trajectory, historically considered to culminate in truth. After an event as evil as the Jewish holocaust, however, one must ask along with Pilate, “What is truth?” One feels pretentious, indeed guilty, for pursuing anything that might reduce the atrocity of such evil to a step in a process.

In Berlin I was introduced to an example of what is, perhaps, among the least inadequate responses. The Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas juxtaposes ambiguity and specificity in a way that invites dialogue around the multiple, individual stories of those impacted by the holocaust. I hope my theology might be able to perform a similar task by highlighting the simultaneously ambiguous and individualized character of theological history.

I especially intend to cultivate such a proposal by incorporating stories that refuse to give way to easy assimilation. The philosopher Walter Benjamin called these stories “monads,” moments where time stood still, causing a tension that exploded the easy repetition of “more of the same.” It is in the naive repetition of history that theologians open the door for a continuation of evil, and so it is only by inviting disruptive narratives that they will work against it.

Because Christian theologians claim the cross as the de-centering center of their religious identity, they already have an impetus for taking up nonconformist stories. To the extent that it is possible not to perpetuate a victimizing history, I hope to make my theology cruciform, engaging stories that explode easy conformity and thus constructing what one hopes is an appropriately Christian theology.

Thank you for kindly providing financial assistance to make this trip possible. I will continue to think about it for some time.

- Konzentrationslager Buchenwald



**Dr. Jesse Perillo:**

Partaking in the conference entitled “The City as an Intersectional Site of Ethics and Theology” proved valuable because it offered an opportunity for many of the participants to reevaluate how many of our theological concerns and academic experiences are unique to our own environments or developed through our own contexts. I do not think the ability to have this reevaluation, or to recognize the need for it, is always apparent from just reading the text of an essay. As imaginative as I like to believe myself to be, the ability to really appreciate the key concerns of the German participants in this conference came from many days of conversations in the conference room as well as from breaking bread with participants and through visiting important sites in Germany and discussing the impact of those sites. Because of these activities and conversations I find myself questioning which authors I privilege, the proper relationship between church and state, and the legacy of American intervention abroad. Additionally, this conference allowed me the opportunity to meet others doing similar research and to understand how my specific interest in trauma and liturgy must be structured and developed differently in Germany due to different political and religious environments. I am grateful for the opportunity to be challenged by such difficult questions and for the chance to make my current and future work appeal to more than a North American audience.



St. Wigbert's, Erfurt Katholische Kirche

**Ph.D. Candidates & Students**

**John Crowley-Buck, Ph.D. Candidate:**

One lasting impact from our conference in Erfurt this past May, which still remains with me, is how deeply felt the effects of soviet occupation (or, at least, the version of the occupation experienced in East Germany) continues to be in the social, cultural, political, and religious matrices of the former GDR. From a US perspective, I have always assumed Germany to be an indisputably united nation in the post-Wall era. However, what became very clear to me throughout our trip was the myriad ways

soviet era ideology and occupation have impacted, and continue to impact, the culture of the former GDR. The effects can be seen in everything from economic development in the area to socio-cultural integration among the people. While many in ‘West Germany’ have adopted the language of ‘unity’ to characterize the relationship between the west and east German regions (this was, at least, the impression I got from our German colleagues), the people we met in the former GDR throughout the course of our time in Erfurt, Weimar, Wittenberg, and Berlin pointed out some of the tensions latent within this very comfortable image. It took me some time, for example, before I began to refer to the fall of the Berlin Wall – a very ‘western’ characterization of the end of the GDR – as the Peaceful Revolution – the interpretation of the same event from the East German perspective. The full impact of this new awareness on my part is still unfolding in my thoughts and in my work. From a methodological perspective, when it comes to theology and ethics, my experiences in the former GDR have reminded me of the importance of locating one’s voice in the contexts and experiences of one life, and recognizing that others do will, and must, do the same. I am yet more convinced that hermeneutics, as a philosophical standpoint that tries to recognize and attend to a pluriformity of perspective and interpretations, may well be the key for the future of theological and ethical discourse. From a pedagogical perspective, I would like to try and incorporate into my classes more attention to the GDR and post-Wall Germany in order, on the one hand, to keep this history and memory alive for my students, and, on the other hand, to provide a relatively recent perspective on how human subjects relate to each other – religiously, ethically, culturally – in spaces of current, and former, coercive domination.

**Tara Flanagan, Ph.D.**  
**Candidate and Schmitt Fellow:**

Attending the International McCormick Colloquium proved valuable for multiple reasons. High among them was the interaction that occurred between the German participants and the United States participants, both on the student level and on the faculty level. Tremendous learning occurred with regard to how religion exists in the largely secular Eastern



Berliner-Mauer

German culture compared to the religiosity of the United States. There was a sharing of experiences that was possible due to the immersion nature of the conference, and we experienced great hospitality from our German hosts. The conversations, formal and informal, that I participated in at the conference deeply shaped my educational experience there. Also, collaborative professional relationships were formed that will extend far beyond the week of the conference. In addition to the intercultural component of the conference, there was also a comparative aspect to the gathering. Those from the Catholic tradition,

xthe Protestant tradition, and the Jewish tradition gathered together in the spirit of dialogue and learning. I cannot overstate the value of this multireligious aspect of the conference. Both personally and professionally, the conference enhanced my ability to speak knowledgeably about various manifestations of religion in Europe, in architecture, educational models, and in politics. It was an honor to represent Loyola University at the conference, and I am deeply grateful for the dedication to international, religious dialogue shown by the university in supporting such a conference.

**Silas Morgan, Ph.D. Candidate and Schmitt Fellow:**

The recent international meeting between scholars and students of Loyola University and Erfurt University was one of a kind. Its robust engagements, multi-religious participants, and historical settings set the groundwork for an energetic, sobering, and rewarding academic and cultural experience. The US theological academe desperately needs access to and engagement with

international conversations, as we have much to learn from how our global neighbors have addressed complicated questions about tragic history, and their haunting memories, but also about the strategies for rebuilding and restoration. A common theme in our week long conversation(s) was about how best to cultivate a hopeful future when it is clear that the past still requires so much from us. The past continues to break into our present, demanding not just remembrance but justice, burdening us with its calls for attention and reparation. The experience of gathering an international group of students and scholars to explore these questions (and their theological and political valency) together while also encountering seminal historical sites of terror and trouble was truly transformative, mostly because it happens so infrequently. The uniqueness of the conference, coupled with the cultural and historical tours, also pairs well with the particular mission of the ISET program at Loyola University. The doctoral program, committed to the difficult Ignatian task of integrating faith with public life through experiential learning, works to find space to challenge ourselves to ask that troubling, but prophetic

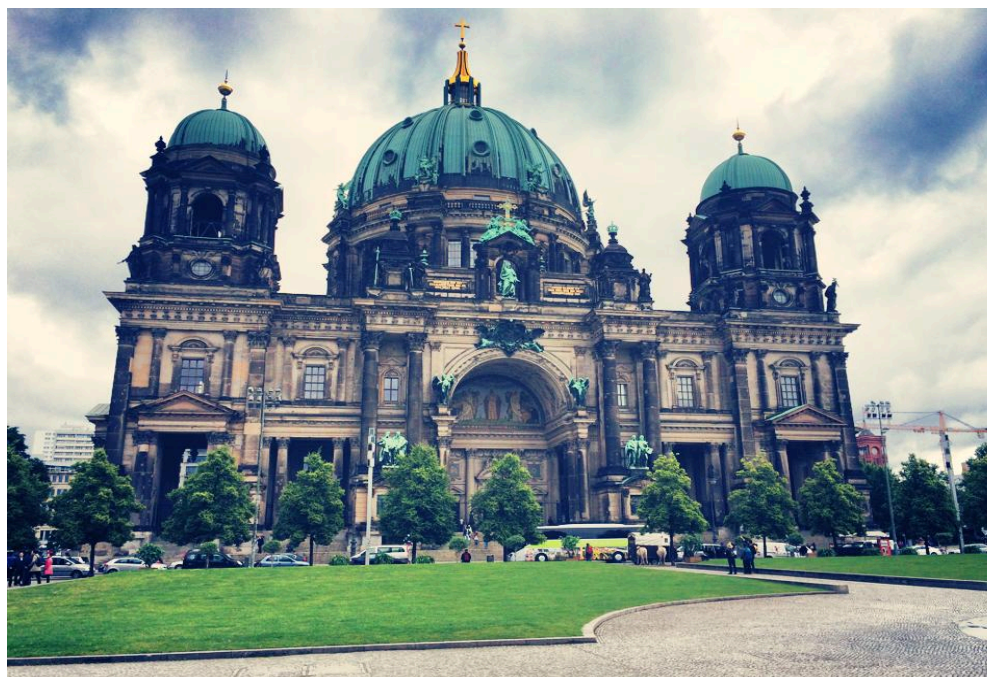


Neue Wache Memorialabandon, Berlin

question paraphrased from the work of the Catholic theologian, J.B. Metz, “what does authentic Christian faith look like within the particulars of history, given the ambiguous conditions of modern society?” There is no doubt that the Erfurt conference, with its rigorous intellectual discussions, cross-cultural experiences, and multi-religious relationships, will prove essential and transformative in that endeavor as we all struggle with how best to answer this question from within our various traditions and contexts.

**Wendy Morrison, Ph.D. Student:**

The topic of our conference was “Christianity in the City.” Most of us from Loyola chose theoretical topics about what it means to be in a city or how religion functions in a city. Our conclusions tended to focus on the ethical implications of those reflections. I expected the same from Erfurt, but found instead that the students from Erfurt were much more attentive to historical particularity. Their approach could be described as doing theological history. They did not muse about theoretical cities,



Oberpfarr- und Domkirche (Berliner Dom), Berlin

but particular cities at particular times and what happened there. While they too ended with theological and ethical implications, their focus was on capturing historical moments as accurately as possible. Their dissertation topics followed a similar trend. Their thorough explanations of the context of East Germany helped us to engage with their papers and

understand their theological conclusions. Moving forward with my own work, I certainly do not intend to abandon theory. I do hope to incorporate their contextualization though. In Erfurt and East Berlin, I also experienced how different their context is than my own here in Chicago. While my approach has been sufficient for my American peers, I realize now that if I want to expand my audience, I need to offer more historical contextualization for my work to be understood.

**Sara Wilhelm Garbers, Ph.D. Student:**

Having spent the nine previous years working in higher education administration, I found that the McCormick Colloquium proved correct my intuitions to enroll in the ISET Ph.D. at Loyola University. What I mean by is this is that while pursuing my Master of Divinity at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, I also worked full-time in enrollment management. By my second year of this dual student/administrator role, I realized that I had found my calling: I desired to become a leader in theological education. I soon began to wrestle with how best to pursue this vocation, and considered whether a Ed.D. or a Ph.D. was best. I decided to pursue a Ph.D. in Ethics because it was important that I both journey the pathway that academics encounter through a Ph.D. program, and I also desired

be steeped in the theoretical and philosophical formation one encounters in a doctoral program. In other words—I embarked on this Ph.D. because I wanted to become a leader who both understood the pragmatic work of higher educational leadership, while also embodying the vision and spirit of the liberal arts tradition.

So quite honestly, when I helped Dr. Haker with the planning of this conference (I was her research assistant this year), I was excited for the trip, but I didn't fully appreciate why the trip mattered for our formation. Thus it was only through my experience of the conference that I was exposed to the impact of such a interdisciplinary, international, inter-faith conference. During the colloquium, I encountered its power—I saw us grow together as a program, I witnessed the enhancing of our cultural competency, and I saw the power of relationship with the “other” as we were shaped by our German Colleagues, their history, their location, and their theologies.

I emerge from this conference not only with an increased desire to become better in terms of my own scholarship, but also with a new set of questions and insight into the import of such international conferences and collaborations; I trust that this time will deeply shape my own leadership into the future.

Thank you for your support of such an effort! I am very grateful to have been a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual McCormick International Colloquium.



Christianity and the City Conference, Erfurt

# Appendix B: Schedule of Conference

## “Christianity in the City – Theological and Ethical Considerations“

<b>Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	
	Arrival at Tegel Airport and transfer to Erfurt
19.00	Get together and Opening reception
<b>Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> May: Conference</b>	
9.00	Greeting and introduction: Benedikt Kranemann
9.15	<b>Papers Session I: Paper (30-40 min) and discussion</b> Jon Nilson, “CAN I GET A WITNESS?” APPROACHING THE THEOLOGIES OF STOREFRONT CHURCHES
10.45	Break
11.00	<b>Papers Session II</b> Sebastian Holzbrecher, <i>Christianity in the City? – Thoughts and reflections from East Germany</i>
12.30	Lunch
14.00	<b>Paper Session III</b> Benedikt Kranemann, <i>Architecture of Religion in the City</i>
15.30	Coffee break
16.00	<b>Paper session IV: Round tables (per paper [7-10 pages] 30 min.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Müller, <i>Fatigue Society (Byung-Chul Han) and Its Nihilistic Implications</i></li> <li>• John Crowley-Buck, <i>Cosmopolitanism and The City</i></li> <li>• Silas Morgan, <i>Political Theology in the Postsecular City: How Big Philanthropy Buys and Betrays ‘Social Justice’</i></li> <li>• Sara Wilhelm Garbers, <i>‘Altruistic Suicide’ &amp; Mass Incarceration in the United States: A Revival of Durkheimian Societal Analysis for Conceptualizing al Liberative Ethic in the City</i></li> </ul>
18.00	Dinner
<b>Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> May: Conference</b>	

10.00	Sunday service at St. Wigbert's and talk with parochial representative
12.30	Lunch
14.00	<b>Paper Session V</b> William Myatt, <i>God in Gotham: Evangelicals, public theology, and the "Big city"</i>
15.30	Coffee break
16.00	<b>Paper session VI: Round tables (per paper [7-10 pages] 30 min.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joseph Gulhaugen, <i>The Festive City: Gatherings toward the Possibility of Hope</i></li> <li>• Anna Kroll, <i>The loss of importance of the Christian Models of Marriage and Family in view of the pluralization of life styles and family structures</i></li> <li>• Tara Flanagan, <i>Aging Alone in the City: A Phenomenological Case Study of Assisted-Living Facilities in a High-Density Urban Environment</i></li> <li>• Wendy Morrison, <i>The Cataphatic City</i></li> </ul>
18.30	Dinner
20.00	Meeting / Reception with of the President of Erfurt University
<b>Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> May: Conference</b>	
9.00	<b>Paper Session VII</b> <i>Juliane Mihan: Jews and Christians in the city</i>
10.30	Break
11.00	<b>Closing Session / General reflection / End of conference</b> Hille Haker/ Christof Mandry
12.30	Lunch
14.00	Guided Tour Erfurt; Beginning with Scott Moore in the Aegidien-Church
	Free time
18.00	Dinner
19.15	<b>Public lecture at Faculty of Catholic Theology / Coelicum</b> John McCarthy, <i>Holy cities – challenges to theology and ethics</i>
	Reception with Erfurt faculty
<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	Visit of Weimar and Buchenwald
<b>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	Visit of Wittenberg and transfer to Berlin



<b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	<i>Berlin program</i>
<b>Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	<i>Berlin program</i>
14.00-17.00	Closing reflection, Devorah Schoenfeld at Catholic Academy
<b>Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May</b>	
	Departure form Tegel Airport

