

IAMS Matters: September 2024

Dear IAMS Members and Friends,

One of the major tasks I wanted to achieve as the president of IAMS was to renew the IAMS website. On the final day of the Sydney Assembly, I proposed three tasks for myself as the new president. The first was to invite more voices of scholars of the majority world into the IAMS community. The second task was to enable scholarly discussions in IAMS in languages other than English. Thirdly, I hoped to encourage closer community-building among IAMS members throughout the globe by facilitating better communication and sharing of missiological research outcomes in this new day and age. With the relaunch of the website, I am glad to say that at least one of the tasks I proposed has been accomplished.

Thanks to the advancement of artificial intelligence technology, the website can now automatically translate the content into the main language of the user's country, enabling us to overcome language barriers. The newly designed website offers an improved user experience through an accessible navigation interface and enhanced security. The new website is also more aesthetically pleasing for visually-tuned younger generations while continuing scholarly communications that are conducted based on written language. In this website relaunch, we also focused on enhancing access to IAMS' academic journal, *Mission Studies*. Along with the new website, the new IAMS Member Portal will facilitate better communication among members and make space for active sharing and communication in study groups.

The second phase of the IAMS website relaunch will be the construction of this new Member Portal to which the existing membership data will be migrated. I hope this phase also progresses smoothly, and I sincerely thank Korea IAMS Fellowship for their financial assistance with the website relaunch.

Sincerely,

Prof. Bokyoung Park
President, IAMS
Professor of Missiology, Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, Korea

Announcement for IAMS Members: Webpage Update & Development of Member Portal for Study Group Community

I am pleased to share some exciting news with you. The development of the new IAMS website is nearing completion. We recognize that the current website does not fully meet our members' expectations, and thus, we are creating a new one. While the integration with the database is still underway, it will take a bit more time for the site to operate smoothly. However, you can preview the new website and its features by visiting the following link: [<https://newmissionstudies.org>]. We hope you will find significant improvements plus new features that were unavailable on the previous site.

The new website focuses on three key aspects to enhance member engagement and facilitate growth within our community:

1. **Simplified Membership Registration and Approval Process:** By introducing a new authentication system (Email Verification + reCAPTCHA), we have improved both the convenience and security of website logins.
2. **Streamlined New Membership Approval for Administrators:** The membership approval process has been significantly simplified, reducing the time required for final approval.
3. **Enhanced Communication Functions for Study Groups:** A significant feature of the updated website is the enhanced communication platform for study groups. We hope this will allow for more active engagement and collaboration among group members.

To further assist with member communication and the efficient management of the website, Dr. Rebekah Lee has kindly agreed to serve in this capacity. For any inquiries or concerns regarding the website, please get in touch with her directly at hwajhin@gmail.com.

Bright Myeong Seok Lee, PhD.
General Secretary, IAMS
Assistant Professor, ACTS University, Korea

Renewed Publishing Terms for IAMS Members in Mission Studies

At the beginning of 2024, the IAMS Executive (led by our Hon Treasurer) renegotiated our contract with Brill (now De Gruyter/Brill after a recent merger) with some significant new advantages for IAMS members – *both* individuals and anyone within an institution which is a member. This applies now from 2024 until 2028.

For those who are not aware – in order to publish “Open Access” (OA) in our journal (OA is where the paywall for reading the paper is removed), normally an Article Publishing Charge (APC) is made to the author.

Here are the things Brill is now offering us members:

- 50% discount on the article publication charge (APC) for members of IAMS when publishing their article in *Mission Studies* in Open Access;
- 50% discount on the APCs for all authors publishing in special themed issues;
- The APC price will be capped at 2000 EUR per article for IAMS members;
- IAMS Editors to decide on 2 articles per year to be placed in OA for free;
- An annual Best Article Prize of €300 with the winning article being offered Open Access in the journal (the winner may or may not be a IAMS member);
- The Issue with conference papers of the General Assembly will be placed in OA for free (which takes place once every 4 years).

We really hope this will be significant advantage to our members and that you will be taking advantage of these offers over these next years. For instance you will be able to publish OA in the journal for Euro 1000 or less from now on.

Rev Canon Dr. Nigel Rooms
Treasurer, IAMS

IAMS Africa Inaugural Conference

In July 2022, the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) convened and held its 15th General Assembly in Sydney Australia with the theme: Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World. The African chapter of IAMS gathered in Cape Town at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Stellenbosch, led by Prof RW Nel as the Dean, from 28 to 30 August 2024. This conference continued with the theme, exploring the issue of ‘Mission as Vulnerability’. The conference explored several sub-themes including among others the following:

- Unmasking powers and systems which exploit Africa’s vulnerability.
- Mission, Missiology as vulnerability: Reimagining Africa’s response.
- Biblical mission in the context of vulnerability in Africa.
- Mission in the context of ecological vulnerability in Africa.
- Mission in the context of economic, racial, ethnic, cultural vulnerability in Africa.

This was a historic gathering in many ways. First, it was the maiden or first IAMS African chapter conference. Secondly, the organising team was able to reach out to all regions, and representatives from the Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern parts of Africa with both Anglophone and Francophone were present in this gathering. We still need to connect with North Africa region. Thirdly, this gathering was organised without external funding, except for the grant from the Executive Committee of IAMS under the leadership of Prof Bokyoung Park from South Korea. Fourth, the occasion was graced by the presence of stalwarts of IAMS such as Professors T Kgatle, JNJ Kritzinger and P Verster among others. And lastly, this gathering, speaking to the very interdisciplinary nature of mission studies — as a gadfly in the house of theology — managed to bring African theological practitioners and theologians from different fields and societies.

This was indeed for me a precious moment to be able to gather in this fashion to sail together as Africans in the uncharted waters as it has become part of our struggles to sail through different oceans like the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Indian, and many others as we join the migrant God in seeking refuge in other African countries and the global communities. As we gathered in Stellenbosch for the first time, we were heart-warmed with the presence of colleagues from South Korea, Dr Seungbum Kim and Mr James Lee.

I would like to thank the organising team of Professors L Mangayi and Eugene Baron, who were assisted by Ms Atele Coleman serving as an administrator and the CEO of Simply Mashau Productions aka Mulanga Mashau who provided the technical support in terms of generating our website and social media platforms, and also capturing this moment in pictures and small videos.

We gather as the African region not to just lick our wounds as a coping and redeeming mechanism, but we tried to reimagine how Africa can contribute to her healing and serve as a spring of refreshing waters to ourselves and the global communities. The dilemma that we still face is perhaps captured by image of Valley of Baca / Weeping or Cries in PSALM 84:6. Our cry is the cry for freedom, justice and peace in Africa and the global communities which is ravaged by ranging social ills such as poverty, inequalities, global wars and global pandemics, Gender-Based Violence, racism, homelessness and so on. These tears are better captured by Allan Boesak who said: “what has Soweto to do with Ferguson, or New York with Ramallah, or Baltimore with Cape Town? A lot, it seems. The cry for freedom and justice is heard everywhere. From the Arab Spring: *al-Sha’b Isqat al-Nozam!* “Injustice Must Fall!” From occupied Jerusalem, “I am not leaving!” From the United States, “Black Lives Matter!” And from Palestine the simple, but utterly convincing truth—because it is prophetic, and one of the most audaciously hopeful and defiant cries I know—written on the famous Israeli apartheid wall: “This Wall May Take Care of the Present but It Has No Future”.

This conference also elected the inaugural executive committee of IAMS Africa, namely: President: Prof TD Mashau; First Deputy President: Dr L Kobe, Second Deputy President: Prof Fohle; General Secretary: Prof E Baron; Deputy General Secretary: Dr K Mokoena; Southern Africa Regional Representative: Prof L Mangayi. Representatives of other African Regions are to be announced in due course.

Prof Thinandavha Derrick Mashau
Deputy Executive Dean, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa
Vice President and African Regional Representative, Inaugural President, IAMS Africa