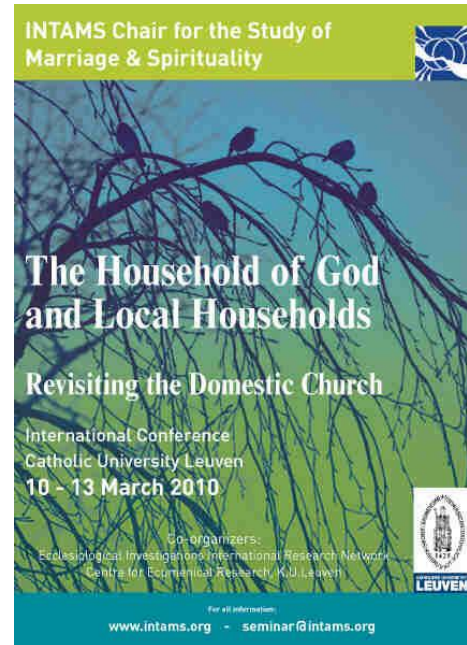


International Conference

The Household of God and Local Households:
Revisiting the Domestic Church

10 > 13 March 2010

Organized by
INTAMS Chair for the Study of Marriage & Spirituality,
K.U.Leuven
Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi
in collaboration with
Ecclesiological Investigations International Research
Network
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Theme

In the growing body of theological and spiritual literature on the family over recent years there is hardly any publication that does not explicitly refer to the “domestic church”. Christian households are said to be or called to become “little churches of and in the home”. Since the Second Vatican Council’s retrieval of this concept from patristic precedents, more recent magisterial teachings of the Roman Catholic Church speak of the Christian family as “a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion” (FC 21). In spite of this broad interest and official endorsement, however, the concept itself today still dwells in a “doctrinal vacuum” (Michael A. Fahey). Where the model of the “church in miniature” is not used to further align the family with the ecclesial institution, it simply serves as a ‘pious metaphor’ to restore some spiritual dignity to the Christian household. Likewise, theological treatises on the Church seem more concerned with its universal character than with its smaller, local units and so the “domestic church” has remained a marginal and exotic note in ecclesiology as well. One may wonder, however, whether small communities, as families are, have indeed so little to tell the “new family of God” to which Christ has called his disciples to belong. Can the churches really afford to neglect the specific competences that families have when it comes to serving and sharing with each other, to dealing with differences and otherness of its members, be they related to gender, age, ethnicity or religious conviction, and to encountering God in ordinary life with its everyday ties, duties and responsibilities?

The conference is intended to revisit critically the notion of domestic church and to explore the potential, both theological and pastoral, that the idea of *minusculae Ecclesiae* may have for the life of the churches and of families.

The conference is targeted towards scholars and practitioners who are working in the fields of

ecclesiology, family studies, ecumenical theology, moral theology, social ethics, practical theology, contextual theology, public theology, gender studies, feminist theology, church history, biblical studies, patristics, and hermeneutics, amongst other fields.

Call for Papers

Both junior and senior scholars are welcome to deliver papers of 20 minutes on all topics related to the theme of the conference.

All contributors are invited to explore in a critical fashion what the idea of domestic church can offer to the church, both in conceptual (e.g. ecclesiological) terms as well in terms of the lived reality of ecclesial life. Therefore, contributions focusing on theological, pastoral, ethnographic, sociological, intercultural and, finally, moral dimensions of the idea of domestic church, are all welcome.

The main working language of the conference is English but papers can be presented in French, German, Italian and Spanish as well, providing that an abstract and one-page list of the main points of the paper are also presented in English.

Valid proposals must include:

- 1) An outline or **abstract of approximately 250 words**. Scholars who are planning to present in French, German, Italian or Spanish should also send in an abstract in English;
- 2) A short **academic profile**, including bibliographical information where applicable.

Evaluations of paper proposals will take place from November 25, 2009.

Any person wishing to participate and who will travel from a long distance should submit as early as possible in order to be able to receive a decision in time to book economy flights etc.

The final deadline for the acceptance of proposals is January 31, 2010.

Authors of accepted proposals will be notified in the month immediately following their evaluation.

Please send all correspondence with regard to proposals to Dominique van Haelst.